THE

Lindsays of America.

A

GENEALOGICAL NARRATIVE,

AND

FAMILY RECORD.

BEGINNING WITH THE FAMILY OF THE EARLIEST SETTLER IN THE MOTHER STATE, VIRGINIA, AND INCLUDING IN AN APPENDIX ALL THE LINDSAYS OF AMERICA.

BY

MARGARET ISABELLA LINDSAY.

"Every family is a History in itself and even a poem to those who know how to read its pages."—A. LAMARTINE.

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CHAPTER IX.

William Lindsay of Laurel Hill, in Fairfax county, the elder son of Robert Lindsay of "The Mount"—his wife Ann Calvert, a great granddaughter of Lord Baltimore — her remarkable beauty of person and character — her long widowhood — raising ten children — account of Susanna, her eldest.

The reader will have noticed in Robert Lindsay's will that he makes his smallest bequest to his elder son in these words:

Item. "I give and bequeath unto my son William Lindsay ten pounds current money as it runs and for him therewith to be content."

Although there is no tradition to the effect that he was not on good terms with his father, still those words must make his descendants suspect he was evidently not in as high favor with him as were his brothers, Opie and Thomas. I am told he was a remarkably handsome man, daring and adventurous. He began to battle with the world at an early age, and showed wonderful aptitude for making, though not retaining, money. He was generous, almost to a fault, and kept open-house to friends and strangers alike, in the usual warm-hearted Virginia way. He was an excellent host, full of repartee, spirit, and good humor, and the stranger left his board always his good friend.

In appearance, as I have been told by an aged relative, he was tall and muscular, and inclined to portliness, his face was decidedly of an aristocratic type, his complexion clear, his cheeks bronzed, hair dark-brown, and he had extremely penetrating gray-blue eyes, that could sparkle with fun or blaze in anger, with equal force and animation. He served in the war of the Revolution in one of Virginia's militia

regiments, and received a severe wound at the battle of Guilford Court-House, under General Green, which battle took place in May, 1781.

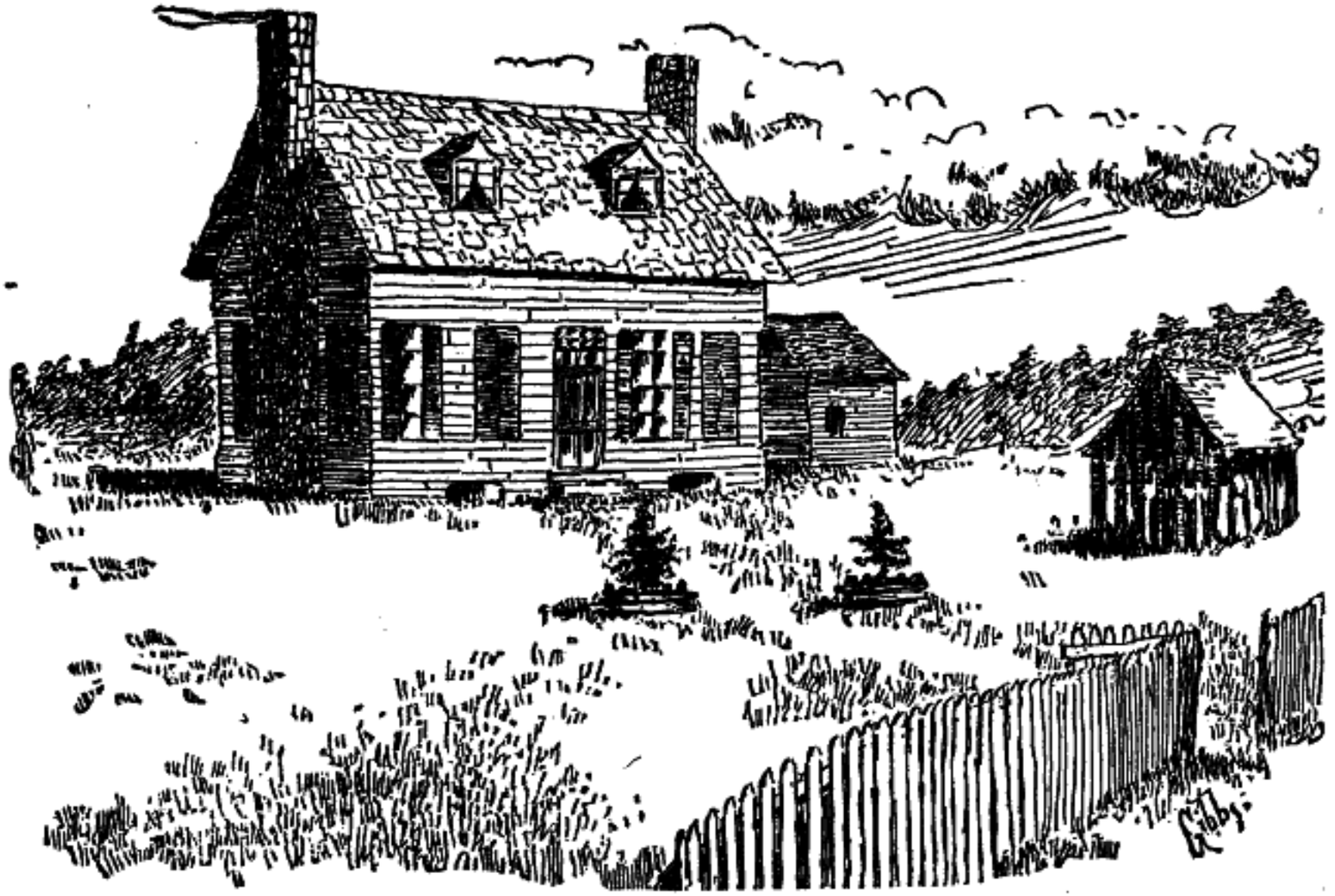
His first home was settled in Colchester, Prince William county, Virginia, where he did business, principally that of selling for the planters; in modern term was a commission merchant, and was what was called in his day a wealthy man. His children were born in Colchester, with the exception of the youngest ones. In the time that he resided in Colchester, it was *the* shipping port of the Potomac, and held the important position in this respect that Alexandria did afterward. It was situated on the Occoquan river, which ran into the Potomac, and was on the lands of my great-great grandfather, through my Grayson kin, Doctor Peter Wagener, one of the wealthiest land-holders of the vicinity. (See acts of the Virginia Legislature of the colony, 1753, wherein the town is mentioned as being on the land of the said Doctor Peter Wagener, "that it would be very convenient for trade, and that commissioners shall be appointed to lay out said town and call it Colchester;" which act was carried out and settled upon by the Legislature.)

There is a tradition in the family that William Lindsay made two or three fortunes, and lost two or three. His latter home was in Fairfax county, not far from the Occoquan river and his former place of residence, and perhaps some ten or twelve miles from "The Mount," the paternal homestead. The plantation consisted of about a thousand acres, and on one of the elevated portions of this he erected his house, which was called "Laurel Hill." The homes of nearly all the Lindsays who could conveniently arrange it, were built on some hilly location. It was probably a feeling with them, also a belief, that the original home in Scotland was built (owing to its name) on elevated ground.

As far as I have been able to ascertain from some of our aged relatives, William Lindsay married about the year 1766 to 1767. His wife was Miss Ann Calvert of Culpepper county, Virginia, whose father came from the eastern shore of Maryland; a great granddaughter of Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, the founder and proprietor of Maryland. The Calverts were of royal descent from the Norman King William the Conqueror of England, the Saxon King Edward the Elder, and the Capuchin King Henry the First. (See Mr. Browning's book "Americans of Royal Descent.") And if blood is indicative of queenly appearance and bearing Mrs. William Lindsay bore undoubted evidence of her lineage.

She was but a little over fifteen at the time of her marriage and already famous for her loveliness of person and character. For the benefit of her female descendants I will add what I have gathered in regard to her style. She was about the medium height, symmetrical and graceful in form, her countenance of delicate and noble contour, complexion of dazzling fairness, the cheeks generally tinged with a soft rich pink, her dark-brown eyes full of brilliant lustre and heavily fringed with the darkest lashes, mouth mobile and expressive, head proudly set on lovely shoulders and crowned by dark-brown hair, small, well-shaped hands and feet, and her smile was the last, but not the least, of her unusual inventory of charms. She was somewhat cold and reserved in her demeanor to strangers and acquaintances, but to those she loved and cared for, most gentle, frank and winning. She retained her beauty to a remarkable age (I would that her secret of its preservation had been handed down to us, if secret it was), as 'tis said, seeming to grow lovelier with her years.

She survived her husband many years, dying at length at the age of seventy or more, at the home of her son-in-law,



LAUREL HILL.

Mr. Renald Grimes, at Patapsco, Prince William county, Virginia, in the year 1822, and was buried at Laurel Hill. My father, when a boy, was her especial pet among the grandchildren, and she frequently, he told my mother, patted him approvingly on the head, as she remarked, in accents of pride, "my child, if you had your rights, you ought to be a lord." These words of his old grandmother, he said, haunted his youthful imagination until he began to wonder why they were said, and it was greatly owing to them that he began to investigate the family history later on with such zeal. He was born under her roof, and it is told me christened on her knee by her priest, for she was of the Roman Catholic faith of her family. Her priest came twice or thrice a month to Laurel Hill from Alexandria to say mass for her, as she was unable to go so far to church.

William Lindsay was not permitted to enjoy his new home very many years; he died here in the prime of manhood, of that painful disease, gout, about the year 1792–3, during the very early childhood of his youngest children, Thomas and Catherine, and was the first adult laid away in the family burying ground on the plantation. His widow and children continued for a number of years at Laurel Hill; it saw many a sad and many a festive occasion; children were married from this home, grandchildren were born here, and the remains of dear relatives were carried thence to their last resting place, in the rear of "grandmère's garden," as the saying was.

The grandmère was not only a lovely looking old lady but an exceedingly neat, careful and excellent housewife, and her system and regime a pattern to all her children and grandchildren. None could excel her at the spinning wheel, even in her advanced years, and no family had finer linen, homespun as it was called, than hers. Her usual attire, I am told, was a homespun gown on week days, with

a French mull kerchief arranged prettily about her neck, and snowy white mull Normandy cap. On the Sabbath, and festive occasions, she donned a rich, dark turk satin that might stand by itself for quality, and the white mull kerchief gave way to a daintier lace kerchief, with finer cap to match.

She ruled by love and yet firmness; her slaves and all the attendants about the plantation revered and loved her. None were kinder where sickness and distress was, and gave readier assistance and sympathy, whether at neighbors or among the negro cabins; for the plantation hands, as was the usual custom, had each (that is the heads of families) a cabin to herself or himself. Even the faithful maid-servant of the grandmère, unless in case of sickness or for children, resided, at night, in her husband's or father's cabin, coming to the mistress' house in the morning.

The old lady was a fond gardener, and tenderly and proudly (ere she grew very old) brought up and watched her rose trees, the numerous varieties of which she was famous for, and to this day some of those rose trees bloom and bear fragrant roses as of yore. She had also a bed of notable cactus. Her rich and elegant silverware for table use, which was used daily, was a source of much admiration and pride to the younger portion of her family. The best set of candlesticks, an aged relative has told me, were so heavy and so tall that it took a strong man to lift them. She had her teapot and served this then expensive beverage to all her family, on certain occasions only. Chiccory and coffee were greatly used in that day, and also milk, with strong liquors for the men. The old homestead is a sample (for it is still standing and occupied, although by strangers) of the homes of the well-to-do planters of a hundred years ago.

The accompanying picture in this chapter is a copy of a hurried sketch I made of it on the occasion of my first visit to it a few years since. It is built of well-seasoned North

Carolina pine, which has withstood the wear and tear of the elements, not to mention "old time," most bravely. On either side are the old type colonial chimneys, which afforded, inside the rooms, those prodigious fireplaces of which we read in history and romance as affording such scope for the "yule log" to blaze and crackle so cheerily from for those gathered around it on winter or holiday nights, or the fugitive from justice, or the child at play. The ground on which the house stands is moderately high and reached by a serpentine carriageway of gradual ascent, and the surroundings are picturesque. You look from the dormer windows in front, as far as the eye will reach, over a gently undulating valley of green sward and woods, which terminates, at last, in a shining silvery streak, varying in size and serpentine in shape, which you would imagine a creek if you did not know was a glimpse of the lordly Potomac, once called, ere Lord Fairfax re-named it, Cohongoruton, which was the ancient name given to it by the Indians.

To-day the busy rattle and rumble and shrill voice of the steam horse is heard and seen piercing its rapid way through the near foreground, and numberless little villages peep forth now here or there, showing that man will come where the scene is promising and beautiful. The famous old Telegraph road, used throughout the Revolution for the mail and armies, and in direct communication with Mount Vernon, passed the dividing line of Laurel Hill. Sometimes, 'tis said, regiments halted here and the hospitalities of the old homestead were called into action, and always with credit to it. If there could have been any historical-loving soul of ready pen in the family at that period (and possibly there may have been, which knowledge is lost to us), what a number of interesting items I now might be relating to you from ancient journals of these stirring war-times of our grandfathers.

From the recollection of an aged relative, the oldest surviving granddaughter of William Lindsay and his wife, I am indebted for the following dates of the births of their children, the family Bible having been lost in the Grimes family.

An infant, died young	born	1767
Susanna	"	1769
George Walter (my grandfather)	"	1771
William Henry	"	1773
Ann or Nancy	"	1775
Hierome or Hiram	"	1778
John	"	1780
An infant, died young	"	1783
Sarah	"	1785
Maria	"	1787
Thomas	"	1789
Catherine, called Kitty	"	1791

Ten of the above grew to manhood and womanhood. I. Susanna, usually called by the young relatives Aunt Sue; their eldest daughter, was a most amiable and kind-hearted woman, with pleasing face and figure, the latter of which grew portly with her years. In youth her hair was of a fine chestnut hue, and her blue eyes mild and full of kindly light; she had one of those soft, winning dispositions that endeared her to every one. She married twice. Her first husband was William Triplett of Fairfax county, and a member of one of the best county families, but to whom she had no children. He served his country in the war of 1812 and, I think, was killed therein. Her second husband was a Mr. Johnston, by whom she had a son named Hierome Lindsay Johnston, who at nineteen left his home with friends to hunt, as was supposed, but was never seen by his widowed mother or relatives again, nor was there any clue ever found as to his whereabouts or death.

This was a sad blow to her who was a second time a widow, but time, the real healer of all earthly sorrows, at

last softened the pain, and her affectionate heart found, by degrees, a refuge and source of comfort in a nephew of her first husband, whom she had adopted as a boy, and who proved the staff and shield of her declining years, Leolin Jamison, in whose house, in Alexandria, Virginia, she passed peacefully away ere reaching seventy.