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THE LIFE OF SAMUEL MATHEWS.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts.

by

Edward Jefferson Clary.

University of Richmond

June 15, 1937.

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Preface.

My purpose in writing this paper came from the realization that the activities of many prominent men in the Colony during the early period of Virginia's history have been neglected by all historians. Realizing this fact, I am writing this paper with the purpose of better understanding and appreciating more the work which these men did. Samuel Mathews was the most prominent of these men and by looking at his life and activities, we can fully realize and appreciate the work which these men did. By looking at the life of Mathews, we can understand this whole period of Virginia history.

In this paper, I have tried to present a sketch of the life of Mathews based on the primary sources. Since there is little record of his life and activities while he was in England, I shall devote this entire paper, except for a slight reference to his background in England, to a study of his life after he came to the colony in the year 1622.

The only reference to his ancestry and background in England which the present writer has found is Memories of Virginia by Mrs. F. A. Darling which was published in Williamsburg in 1907. I am using this book as the source of all of my references to his background

in England. Since she gave no bibliography nor footnotes in her book, I have been unable to check any of her statements. Therefore, in telling of the early life of Mathews in England, I shall have to rely entirely on this book.

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Chapter I.

The English Background.

In 1622, a young English gentleman arrived in the colony of Virginia who was destined to play a very prominent role in the social, economic, and political life of the colony. This man was none other than Captain Samuel Mathews¹ who was later to become the Governor of the colony for a short period of four years. He arrived in the colony on board the ship "Southampton" in the year 1622 with a large number of servants,² and he settled on the lower north side of James River on a plantation some miles below Jamestown.³ His estate was at Denbigh, and it embraced part of what is at present Newport News, Hampton, and Point Comfort.⁴ This land was at one time the hunting ground of that great Indian Chieftain,

1. Although his name is variously spelled, I prefer to use this spelling since it is the way he himself spells it in signing all of his letters.

2. E. D. Neill, Virginia Carolorum, p. 21.

3. "Mathews Family", William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. 6, p. 91.

4. F. A. Darling, Memories of Virginia, p. 16.

Powhatan.⁵

Practically nothing is known of the birth and the early life of Mathews in England. However, he was undoubtedly very wealthy and prosperous as is evidenced by the large number of servants whom he brought over to this new land with him. Mathews, according to one author, was the descendant of a long line of fighting and founding men.⁶ Although his early ancestry is of no great importance, nevertheless it is very interesting to note from what early stock this young man supposedly came. The writer is relying upon only one book so you may take it for what you think it is worth. His ancestry dates back to Sir Galahad, who in 675 was the Chief in the Welsh Mountains. David, the first Lord Cardingshire, who lived about 1330, was the ninth generation removed from sir Galahad and he was the great-great-grandson of Louis VI, who had been the King of France during the early part of the twelfth century. In 1440, the first English line of Mathews was established in England by Sir John, who was the grandson of Lord David, through a bride of the House of York.⁷

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 13.

7. Ibid.

From this Welsh, British, French and Norman ancestry, Samuel Mathews, a direct descendant of Sir John, was born in the year 1592 in Essex County, England.⁸ By looking at this ancestry, one can answer in the affirmative the several queries that have been made as to the possibility of his being of royal descent.⁹ Also, it would show the error of Wertenbaker's statement that Mathews was of humble birth.¹⁰

Nothing is said concerning his early education in England, but he was undoubtedly a very well educated man as the excellent style and context of his letters so clearly indicate. A letter written to Sir John Wolstenholme¹¹ from Newport News on May 25, 1635,¹² which is the first letter which we have any record of his having written, clearly shows this fact. In part of this letter he writes, "The consideration of the wrong done by the Governor to the whole colony in detaining the foresaid

8. Ibid.

9. "Historical and Geneological Notes", William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. 21, p. 204.

10. T. J. Wertenbaker, Virginia under the Stuarts, p. 81.

11. Wolstenholme, who had been in the colony for more than twenty years, was a merchant and a close friend of Mathews.

12. "The Mutiny in Virginia, 1635", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 1, p. 416.

letters to his Majesty did exceedingly perplex them, whereby they were made sensible of the miserable condition of the present Governor, wherein the Governor usurped the whole power,----." In concluding this letter he writes, "In the meantime we rest in expectation of their answer according to which we intend to proceed. In the which I beseech God to direct us for the best. I conclude with an assured hope that Sir John Harvey's return will be acceptable to God, not displeasing to his Majesty, and an assured happiness unto this colony, wherein whilst I live, I shall be ready to do you all the true offices of a faithful friend and servant."¹³ Thus it is seen that his style is far superior to that of a man of ordinary education and ability. Mathews was a man of keen foresight who saw and took advantage of many opportunities which escaped the notice of the man of average intelligence and ability.

13. This letter was written concerning the usurpation of power by Governor Harvey. It will be considered further when I come to the subject of the eviction of Harvey.

Chapter II.

Planter and Trader.

As a planter and a trader, Mathews was surpassed by no one in the young colony of Virginia. Upon his entrance into Virginia, he received a patent for a large tract of land which he could use for the purpose of planting corn, tobacco, and many other such commodities.¹⁴ This grant of land was at a place called Denbigh, some miles below Jamestown and only a few miles above Newport News. It embraced a part of what is now Newport News, Hampton, and Point Comfort.¹⁵ The vastness of this tract of land was due to the fact that he brought over a large number of servants when he came from England. This patent was granted to Captain Samuel Mathews at a Quarter Court held for Virginia in London on November 20, 1622.¹⁶ However, the exact number of acres in this patent is not recorded. Nevertheless, an approximation

14. P. A. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia, Vol. 2, p. 252.

15. Darling, Op. Cit., p. 16.

16. S. M. Kingsbury, Records of the Virginia Company, Vol. 2, p. 132.

can be made from the number of servants whom he brought over. When he arrived in the Colony, he had paid the passage for twenty-three servants.¹⁷ Under the head right system, which granted fifty acres for each passage which was paid, Mathews was entitled to 1050 acres of land upon his arrival. In addition to this, he received several hundred acres of land for paying his own passage from England. This is a large grant of land to be given to anyone, but especially so for anyone who was as young as was Samuel Mathews.

Mathews also received several large grants of land on later dates. On August 20, 1642, he received a grant of three thousand acres on the west side of Warwick River.¹⁸ On the same date, he received a grant of two hundred acres of land beginning at Munie Point.¹⁹ On August 1, 1643, he received a grant of four thousand acres of land, which was a neck of land on the North side of the Rappahanock.²⁰

By the year 1646, at his plantation at Blunt Point on the lower north side of James River, Captain Mathews

17. Neill, Virginia Carolorum, p. 21, n. 2.

18. N. M. Nugent, Cavaliers and Pioneers, p. 133.

19. Ibid., p. 134.

20. Ibid., p. 144.

had prospered greatly as a planter, as a trader, and as a manufacturer. He had a large number of servants and all of these servants were trained in certain trades so that he might receive the best possible return for his money. He was a notable example of the ease with which a planter could procure all sorts of supplies from his estate if he managed his plantation in a skillful manner.²¹ His servants, all of whom he had trained to be artisans, now paid him very large dividends.²² In addition to having a large number of weavers and spinners, he had a tannery on his plantation and he employed eight shoemakers.²³ He evidently used the tannery as one source of his income by selling many of the shoes which were manufactured as well as many woolen and linen goods. The employment of eight shoemakers attests to the fact that a large number of shoes were made. Mathews evidently sold many of these shoes as he and his servants could not use all of them, thus adding greatly to his already large income.

This plantation at Blunt Point resembled a small

21. P. A. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia, Vol. 2, p. 455.

22. P. Force, Historical Tracts, Vol. 2, p. 14.

23. P. A. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia, Vol. 2, p. 475.

village in every respect. On his plantation, he raised everything that was necessary for subsistence. He planted corn and other commodities which were sufficient food for him and his servants to live on. His employment of weavers, spinners, and shoemakers would provide him with more than sufficient clothing. Thus, since he had to spend no money to buy the necessities of life, raising and manufacturing every necessity himself, he soon amassed a large fortune by selling many of his articles to others who needed them.

As a tobacco planter, Mathews more than held his own with everyone else in the colony. That he was a leader in the attempt to stop the growing of tobacco in England after the English people had begun to grow it in their island country attests to the fact that a large amount of tobacco was grown on his plantation. Had he not grown much tobacco, he would not have had such a great interest in the growing of tobacco in England. This increase in the quantity of tobacco, which was the result of the growing of tobacco in England, would naturally cause the price of tobacco in the colony to decrease since it would deprive the colonies of a good market for tobacco in England which they formerly had. The people in England would buy English tobacco rather than import it from the colonies, thus practically

depriving the colonists of their main means of livelihood. It was only natural that the tobacco growers in Virginia should raise a protest. An act had been passed by Parliament which prohibited the growth of tobacco in England, but this act did very little good as it was constantly evaded. Tobacco was being grown in England on a much larger scale than it had ever been before the passage of this prohibitory act.

He presented his first petition to Cromwell on behalf of the people on May 28, 1653, asking that the growing of tobacco should cease since it was affecting the trade of the colonists and was putting the people in the colony in great want of clothing and food.²⁴ This petition was referred by the Lord Protector to a special committee which would "consider how the same may for the future be settled to its advantage, benefit and security and to the service of this Commonwealth," after questioning all persons who were acquainted with Virginia.²⁵ However, no answer was ever given to this petition by these men who had been appointed to consider the matter. Therefore, Mathews, who was already

24. E. N. Sainsbury, Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, p. 403.

25. Dejarnette Papers, Vol. 1, p. 270.

in England at the time,²⁶ asked that a day be appointed when he could present his reasons showing why tobacco should be prohibited, thus overcoming all oppositions to such a prohibitory act.²⁷ Mathews was never allowed to present his reasons in person, so he immediately sent another petition to Cromwell. This petition was sent to the Lord Protector on March 6, 1655, in behalf of the people of the colony of Virginia, beseeching him to enforce strongly those prohibitory acts which were continually being evaded by the people of England.²⁸ He said that the growing of tobacco in England was greater than it had ever been before in spite of the passage of the prohibitory acts. In this petition, Mathews says, "Whereas the planting of tobacco in England has been formerly prohibited by several acts and ordinances of Parliament, as also by a late ordinance of his Highness and notwithstanding the petition of the planters thereof desiring a toleration of the last year's crop which was granted, nevertheless contrary to their pro-

26. He was there as a personal agent of the colony to try to settle the questions which had arisen concerning tobacco and the controversy between Maryland and Virginia, as will be discussed later on in this paper.

27. E. N. Sainsbury, Calendar of State Papers, p. 417.

28. Ibid., p. 423.

mises they prepare far greater quantities of ground for that purpose than ever hath been formerly planted in England, which will prove utter ruin of most English plantations in America, and to the great prejudice of trade, customs and excise; Implores his Highness to take the premises into his grave consideration and to cast a favorable eye upon those plantations in America and in particular that hopeful plantation of Virginia, which in a few years may be in a condition to raise several staple commodities and set up trades and manufactures."²⁹

The Lord Protector considered this petition and on March 31, 1655, he referred it to the Committee for Treasuries for consideration.³⁰ After giving this petition very careful consideration, this Committee decided that the growing of tobacco in England could never be prohibited.³¹ Thus the question of tobacco was brought to a conclusion, the settlement being unsatisfactory to the people in Virginia.

Previous to this controversy over tobacco, a controversy had arisen concerning the importation of Spanish tobacco into England. In 1627, Mathews sent a

29. E. N. Sainsbury, Transcripts, Vol. 4, p. 138.

30. Ibid., p. 126.

31. Ibid.

petition to the Privy Council in England in behalf of the colony of Virginia asking for the sole importation of tobacco into England, requesting that all Spanish tobacco be excluded.³² This request was granted by the Privy Council and the importation of Spanish tobacco into England was greatly curtailed if not prohibited entirely.

The participation of Mathews in such matters shows that he had a very keen interest in tobacco from a very early time on down to the middle of the seventeenth century.

As a trader, Mathews was also very prosperous. In 1626, he asked the General Assembly and Council of Virginia to grant him permission to go into the Chesapeake Bay to trade for Corn.³³ This was granted to anyone who so desired because of the vast losses in crops which the colonists had sustained recently due to much bad weather, but this was especially granted to Samuel Mathews because of the fact that he was sufficiently provided with men, boats, munitions, and all other things that were necessary for one to become a success-

32. .E. N. Sainsbury, Calendar of State Papers, p. 84.

33. "Decisions of Virginia General Court", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 4, p. 157.

ful trader.³⁴ He was undoubtedly prosperous as is shown by the fact that he was so well equipped for trading. No other person in the colony was so well equipped for carrying on successful trading. Again in 1627, because of his great success in trading during the previous year, he was again commissioned by Governor George Yeardley for the trading of corn in the Bay of the Chesapeake for an indefinite period of time.³⁵

Further interest in the planting of corn and in trading was shown in 1629 when he sent four men, along with others sent by other men, to plant corn at a place called Kiskyacke.³⁶ This was at the request of the General Assembly on October 16, 1629.³⁷ Since corn was one of the principle commodities which was traded, this act showed a manifest interest in trading on the part of Mathews and the others who sent men to Kiskyacke. Mathews showed his great interest in trading by the fact that he sent four men to Kiskyacke, whereas no one else in the colony sent more than one or two men.³⁸ On September

34. Ibid.

35. "Notes from Council and General Court Records", Ibid., Vol. 14, p. 263.

36. Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1619-1659, p. 52.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

13, 1630, he was given the privilege of trading in the Chesapeake Bay for a period of one year.³⁹ This was a privilege which was granted to no other planter or trader in Virginia. All of these attest to the fact that Mathews was a successful and prosperous trader as well as a planter and manufacturer. There is no doubt that he was prosperous, since he was the wealthiest man in the colony.⁴⁰

He manifested a further interest in trading in the letter which he wrote to Sir John Wolstenholme⁴¹ and in the petitions which he wrote to the Lord Protector concerning tobacco and concerning the controversy between the colonies of Maryland and Virginia. In the letter to Wolstenholme, he lists as one of the main objections to Harvey the fact that he (Harvey) interfered with the trade between Virginia and Maryland. In both of his petitions, he says that both tobacco and the Maryland-Virginia controversy have greatly affected trade. This further shows the great interest which Mathews had in trading.

However, although he prospered greatly, he had to

39. "Extracts from Virginia Records", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 17, p. 7.

40. Neill, Virginia Carolorum, p. 111.

41. See page 3.

contend with several suits in court which were brought by people who made certain claims to some of his land. One such example is the case which was brought by one Hugh Crowther who claimed that a certain Captain Powell, who was his (Crowther's) father-in-law, and several others had cleared some ground which was then in the possession of Mathews.⁴² Crowther claimed that Mathews had illegally taken possession of this land in the absence of Captain Powell and that it rightfully belonged to the heirs of the said Captain Powell. He even had several witnesses who testified that the plot of ground in question really belonged to Captain Powell or his heirs and not to Mathews.⁴³ However, Crowther lost the suit as he was unable to offer sufficient proof to the Court whereby they could deprive Mathews, by a legal order, of the land in question.⁴⁴

Also, some contemporaries seem to have had a very poor opinion of Mathews, especially as a planter and a trader, as is shown in a letter which was written by Sir

42. "Minutes of the Council and General Court", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 23, p. 271.

43. Ibid.

44. "Minutes of the Council and General Court", Ibid., Vol. 23, p. 277

Edwin Sandys⁴⁵ in which he says that Mathew would attend to nothing but his crops.⁴⁶ Sandys was apparently mistaken since Mathews showed an unselfish devotion to the colony as will be seen a little later by certain things which he did for the general good of the colony. Very little explanation can be given for this statement unless Sandys made it because of personal enmity. It could not have been because Mathews accepted his appointment as a Royal Commissioner to investigate affairs in the colony since Sandys wrote this letter on April 11, 1623⁴⁷ which was six months before the appointment of the Royal Commissioners. The only logical explanation is that Mathews was in favor of the dissolution of the London Company, thus incurring the wrath and personal enmity of Sandys.

The best description of Mathews as a planter and as a trader is given by a contemporary on his, whose name is not known, in a pamphlet called "A Perfect Description of Virginia."

45. Sandys was the treasurer of the Virginia Company of London and was very prominent in all affairs pertaining to the colony.

46. S. W. Kingsbury, Records of the Virginia Company, Vol. IV, p. 111.

47. Ibid.

In this pamphlet, the author says, "Worthy Captain Mathews, an old planter of above thirty years standing, one of the Council, and a most deserving Commonwealthsman, I may not omit to let you know of this man's industry.

"He hath a fine house, and all things answerable to it; he sows yearly store of hemp and flax, and causes it to be spun; he keeps weavers and hath a tannery, causes leather to be dressed, hath eight shoemakers employed in their trade, hath forty negro servants, brings them up to trades in his house: He yearly sows abundance of wheat, barley, etcetera. The wheat he selleth at four shillings the bushel; kills stores of bees, and sells them to victual the ships when they come thither, hath abundance of kine, a brave dairy, swine great store, and poultry; he married the daughter of Sir Thomas Hinton, and in a word, keeps a good house, lives bravely, and is a true lover of Virginia; He is worthy of such honor." 48

In short, he was a farmer, a rancher, a merchant,

48. P. Force, Historical Tracts, "A Perfect Description of Virginia", p. 14-15.

and a manufacturer.⁴⁹ From this description of Mathews by an unknown contemporary, we get a very good description, in a general sort of way, of the economic activities of Mathews, and of his home life, and a general description of his plantation.

49. M. W. Jernegan, "Slavery and the Beginnings of Industrialism in the American Colonies", American Historical Review, Vol. 25, p. 227.

Chapter III.

Political Aspects.

Immediately after the arrival of Mathews in the new land, he was elected to the House of Burgesses, thus launching his long and interesting career as a public servant. He first took his seat in the Assembly when it met on the first day of February, 1623.⁵⁰ He was a representative from Warwick River County.⁵¹ He became a member of the Council of Virginia two years later in 1625.⁵²

On November 3, 1623, Samuel Mathews, together with John Pory, John Harvey, and Abraham Persey, was appointed as a Royal Commission to look into the state of the Colony of Virginia.⁵³ They were appointed by the Privy Council in England on that date to make a particular and diligent inquiry concerning the present state of the

50. Journal of the House of Burgesses, 1619-1659, p. VIII.

51. J. Flske, Old Virginia and Her Neighbors, p. 136.

52. Journal of the House of Burgesses, 1619-1659, p. VIII.

53. A. Brown, First Republic in America, p. 556.

colony.⁵⁴ The purpose of this commission was to conduct a personal investigation of the fortifications, provisions, boats, public works, and general conditions of the colony.⁵⁵ The purpose of the Privy Council in appointing this commission was to add to the general stock of information available for study in deciding upon the problem of government after the dissolution of the company, which by this date was merely a question of time.⁵⁶ Therefore, they immediately, in a letter, requested the Governor and General Assembly to give their cooperation in the viewing of every plantation so that thus they could give an exact account of the condition of the colony.

In this letter, which was addressed to the right worshipful Sir Francis Wyatt, Governor and Captain-General of Virginia, and to the right worshipful and others of the General Assembly, they said, "Being at this present employed by the Lords of his Majesty's most honorable Privy Council, to give their Lordships an exact account of the present state of this colony, in divers considerable respects, and for that cause finding it necessary for us to view every particular plantation, we

54. Ibid.

55. W. F. Craven, Dissolution of the Virginia Company, p. 323

56. Ibid.

are to entreat you to give us you best advice and assistance herein, and now before the dissolution of this worthy Assembly to resolve of the best means how we may perform that service so much desired by their Lordships." 57

This request was signed by John Harvey, Samuel Mathews, John Pory, and Abraham Persey.⁵⁸ This request was granted by an order of the General Assembly which stated that all possible assistance should be rendered to this Royal Commission, particularly assistance in transportation from one plantation to another, but a guard of security would also be provided.⁵⁹

However, it soon became evident that the sending of these commissioners was simply a part of a plan of the King of England to secure damaging evidence against the Virginia Company of London so that thus he would have an excuse for making a change in the government of the colony.⁶⁰ When the members of the General Assembly realized this fact, they immediately withdrew further assistance to the Commissioners, refusing to

57. Kingsbury, Op. Cit., Vol. 4, p. 464.

58. Ibid.

59. Journal of the House of Burgesses, 1619-1659, p. 41.

60. "Virginia Colonial Records", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 15, p. 27.

furnish transportation any longer and refusing to guarantee any further security. These Royal Commissioners instituted a prolonged investigation, visiting all plantations and learning the general conditions in the colony.⁶¹ Their report was extremely moderate in tone, but it was less favorable to the contentions of the Company than it was to the contentions of its opponents, and it confirmed the King in his resolve to change the government of the colony.⁶² However, even though the report of the commissioners was not entirely favorable to the Company, this effort to gain damaging evidence failed to obtain results since the colonists were loyal to the company and because the sympathies of these Royal Commissioners seemed to have leaned somewhat toward the side of the colonists.

Stith severely criticises Mathews for accepting this commission, saying that he was going against the government of the colony after he had joined with the General Assembly in their acts. He (Stith) says, "And I cannot but remark that Captain Mathews, who had joined with the General Assembly in their public acts and representations against the former government, did like-

61. H. L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, p. 47.

62. Ibid.

wise join with the commissioners in all these proceedings: Whether he was brought over by the almighty force and irresistable allurement of private advantage, or whether he thought himself obliged to do something in conjunction with them, as he was included in the same commission." 63

As a result of the terrible Indian massacre of 1622, certain leading men of the colony were annually given commissions to make expeditions against several Indian tribes. This was done as a measure of safety, the object being to insure against the reoccurrence of any such massacre as had occurred in 1622. Mathews was one of the men to whom such commissions were given. In the year 1623, which was only a short time after his arrival in the colony, he was given a commission to go against a tribe of Indians which was known as the Taux Powhatans.⁶⁴ However, this commission was not carried out until July 23, 1624, when Mathews set out against the Taux Powhatans with an armed group of men.⁶⁵ In 1627, he was given another similar commission, this time to go against a tribe of Indians which was known as the

63. W. Stith, History of Virginia, p. 318.

64. "Minutes of the Council and General Court," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 16, p. 3.

65. Stith, Op. Cit., p. 303.

Warrosquoiaques.⁶⁶ There is no record preserved as to whether or not he received a commission for the intervening years.

In October, 1627, the General Assembly asked Mathews to secure as large a number of volunteers as he possibly could and to go against the Pamunkey tribe of Indians or against any other tribe of Indians, just as he thought fit to do.⁶⁷ He proceeded to carry out these orders and he did so with a great deal of unnecessary slaughter.⁶⁸

He was a member of the Council of Virginia from 1624 to 1644, although he was in England part of this time, having been sent there along with several others to answer the charges of treason which had been brought against them by Governor John Harvey because of their deposition of the Governor.⁶⁹ just a few years prior to 1644.⁷⁰ He did not return to his position in the Council of Virginia until the year 1652.⁷¹ As far as can be

66. "Minutes of the Council and General Court", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 19, p. 122.

67. "Minutes of the Council and General Court", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 28, p. 223.

68. Stith, Op. Cit., p. 303.

69. This will be discussed later. See pages 45-46.

70. "Virginia in 1624-25", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 7, p. 129.

71. Ibid.

ascertained, Mathews took no part whatsoever in the political affairs of the colony during the eight years from 1644 to 1652.

In addition to being a Councillor in the colony, he was made a commissioner, as the justices were called at that time, of Warwick River County in 1631.⁷²

In 1623, the next year after the great Indian massacre of 1622, the suggestion was made that a palisade should be erected for the future safety of the colonists. The purpose of this palisade was the protection of the colony against any further attacks by the Indians. Therefore, as a result of this suggestion which had been made in the General Assembly, in 1626, Samuel Mathews and William Claiborne offered to erect such a palisade from a certain point on the James River in the limits of Martin's Hundred to a place called Cheskiack on the Charles River. They further agreed to build houses at very short intervals along the line.⁷³ The only condition of the contract by which they agreed to erect this palisade was that they should receive a small grant of land along the line of the palisade at distances of six score poles

72. W. W. Hening, Statutes at Large, Vol. 1, p. 169.

73. "Williamsburg--The Old Colonial Capital", William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. 16, p. 1.

on either side. The purpose of this was to have certain places where they could build houses in which they would seat men who would act as guards.⁷⁴ This proposition on the part of Mathews and Claiborne which had been made to the Council of Virginia was put in writing and was forwarded to the Privy Council in England in order to obtain their approval for the erection of such a palisade.⁷⁵ As soon as this approval was received from England, work on the palisade was begun and it was completed in 1634.⁷⁶ Thus a secure refuge for live stock was established.

This palisade covered an approximate area of 300,000 acres of land, covering an area almost as large as Kent in England.⁷⁷ The cost of construction of this palisade, the money for which was to come from Mathews and Claiborne, was about twelve hundred pounds sterling. The expense of maintaining the houses along the palisade and of keeping the palisade in good repair was about one hundred pounds sterling per year.⁷⁸

74. P. A. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia, Vol. 1, p. 30.

75. Ibid.

76. Sainsbury, Abstracts, p. 72.

77. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia, Vol. 1, p. 300.

78. Ibid.

In addition to this public act, Mathews also offered to rebuild, at his own expense, the old fort at Point Comfort. This fort was in a general rundown condition and it was badly in need of repairs. His offer was accepted after a committee, which had been appointed to look into the advisability of such an undertaking, reported very favorably on Mathews' proposal.⁷⁹ The erection of this fort was begun in the year 1631, and it was completed by the end of February of the next year. Captain Francis Pott was named to be the Captain of this fort. However, he remained at this post for only a short period of time as he was removed by Governor John Harvey in 1634, thus beginning a dispute with Harvey which later involved Mathews and resulted in the deposition of the Governor.⁸⁰ The name of the fort was "Fort George" and it was built of brick and lime.⁸¹ The front lines and the flanks of this fort are still traceable, but the rear lines have been obliterated by the excavation of the ditch of Fort Monroe.⁸²

79. W. Hening, Statutes at Large, Vol. 1, p. 150.

80. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 177.

81. "R. A., Fort George", Virginia Historical Register, Vol. 1, p. 21.

82. Ibid.

As a reward for the rebuilding of the old fort at Old Point Comfort, Samuel Mathews was given the privilege of exporting his tobacco from the colony of Virginia into England free of any charge whatsoever. This was a privilege which had not previously been granted to anyone in the colony. He received this privilege through the aid of Governor John Harvey, who had written to the Privy Council in England commending Mathews very highly for his rebuilding of the fort and for other such public acts, and he asked that some such privilege should be granted to Mathews as a reward.⁸³ This free importation of tobacco into England was the answer to Harvey's request. In addition to this privilege, he was allowed 103,000 pounds of tobacco by the Assembly and every tithable person was requested to pay him one-half bushel of corn.⁸⁴ Furthermore, he would receive all of the customs which would be collected in the future at Point Comfort.⁸⁵

Along about this same time, the General Assembly provided for the sending of an expedition of two hundred men for the purpose of searching for mines beyond

83. W. Hening, Statutes at Large, Vol. 1, p. 177.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

the falls of James River. This searching party was placed under the leadership of Mathews.⁸⁶ This expedition failed when the company was forced to return to Williamsburg because of a shortage of food and because they were overtaken by winter. The present writer was unable to discover how far they went before they were forced to turn back. Nevertheless, it shows that the General Assembly had a great deal of faith in him.

In 1656, Mathews was accused of being the ringleader of a movement to banish all Puritans from the colony.⁸⁷ John Hammond said that barbarous methods were used to extinguish them, that among other things, they were put in prison, that they were disarmed, and that they were banished. He accused Mathews of being the ringleader of this Puritan persecution in the colony.⁸⁸ He says, "And there was in Virginia a certain people congregated into a Church, calling themselves Independents, which daily increasing, several consultations were had by the state of that colony, how to suppress and extinguish them, which was daily put in execution, as first their pastor was banished, next their other teachers, then

86. Neill, Virginia Carolorum, p. 80.

87. C. Campbell, History of Virginia, p. 212.

88. John Hammond, "Leah and Rachel", P. Force, Historical Tracts.

many by information clapt up in prison, then generally disarmed (which was very harsh in such a country where the heathen lived round about them) by one Colonel Samuel Mathews then a Councillor in Virginia and since Agent of Virginia to the then Parliament, and lastly in a condition of banishment, so that they knew not in those straights how to dispose of themselves." 89

The disarming of these Puritans was considered to be the worst punishment imaginable since it left the individual without any protection whatsoever if he happened to be attacked by an Indian or by a group of Indians. Hammond contended that such punishment was much too severe as it was the same as putting them to death in a barbarous manner. However, this account by Hammond is probably grossly exaggerated since, being a staunch advocate and supporter of Governor John Harvey, he was undoubtedly prejudiced against Mathews. Nothing in the life of Mathews would cause one to believe that he would resort to any such severe persecution. To the contrary, he would probably have tried to eliminate all such persecution since he was a protestant himself and was subject to the same persecution as were these Independents or Puritans.⁹⁰

89. Ibid.

90. J. H. Claiborne, William Claiborne, p. 119.

In 1652, Mathews was sent to England for the sole purpose of regaining Maryland as a part of the colony of Virginia.⁹¹ The General Assembly of 1652 had ratified certain articles of surrender concerning the grant of a large portion of land to Maryland. Virginia was of the opinion that this land should be restored to Virginia, especially Kent Island,⁹² which had been held by William Claiborne. However, Maryland was not willing to restore any part of this region. These Articles of Surrender were drawn up in an attempt, on the part of Virginia, to get this disputed region.

The fourth article is of great interest, to wit: "That Virginia shall have and enjoy the ancient bounds and limits granted by the charters of the former kings and that we shall seek a new charter under Parliament to that purpose against any that have intrenched upon the rights thereof." ⁹³

With the adjournment of the General Assembly on May 5, 1652, Samuel Mathews was delegated to go to England as an agent of the colony for the purpose of getting these Articles of Surrender signed by a repre-

91. Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 12, p. 405.

92. Claiborne, Op. Cit., p. 118.

93. Neill, Virginia Carolorum, p. 227.

representative of the Maryland colony.⁹⁴ Lord Baltimore, the proprietor and representative of the colony of Maryland, refused to sign these Articles of Surrender. However, he showed his willingness to make a compromise.

The petition which was brought over by Mathews for the purpose of regaining Maryland was referred to the Committee for Plantations on January 22, 1656.⁹⁵ Then in July, 1656, this petition was referred to the Committee for Trade at the recommendation of the Committee for Plantations.⁹⁶ Since this Committee could make no headway, it was referred to the Committee of the Council for Foreign Plantations on December 17, 1656.⁹⁷ This last named committee drew up a compromise between the colonies of Maryland and Virginia. This compromise was called the "Articles of Settlement". These articles of agreement were satisfactory to the representatives of both colonies. Therefore, on November 30, 1657, this compromise was signed by Lord Baltimore in behalf of the Maryland colony and by Samuel Mathews who was the repre-

94. Ibid.

95. Gainsbury, Transcripts, Vol. 4, p. 161.

96. Ibid., p. 164.

97. Ibid., p. 168.

sentative of the colony of Virginia.⁹⁸

The terms of agreement as they were set forth in the Articles of Settlement are as follows:

1. Lord Baltimore was not to call in question any act committed since the disturbance of the province began.
2. The people in opposition were to have patents for such land as they could claim under Lord Baltimore's condition of plantations.
3. Lord Baltimore promised never to give his consent to the repeal of the Toleration Act of 1649, whereby all persons professing belief in Jesus Christ were allowed freedom of conscience.⁹⁹

Thus, the differences between the two colonies of Maryland and Virginia were settled in a peaceful manner. However, Virginia failed in her attempt to regain part of Maryland. Maryland has retained the disputed land until the present time.

Mathews as an individual did a great deal for the general good of the colony from the time of his entrance into the new land in the year 1622 until he became the Governor of the colony in 1656. The accusation has been

98.Neill, Virginia Carolorum, p. 249.

99. Claiborne, Op. Cit., p. 126.

made, and there may be some truth in it, that he did all of these things for the personal gain and glory which would come to him. However, this is hardly probable since he derived very little glory and less personal gain as a result of these things. He undoubtedly did them mainly because of his unselfish, loyal, and undying devotion to the colony of Virginia.

Chapter IV.

The Clash with Harvey.

The relations between Mathews and Governor John Harvey had been very peaceful for some years prior to the appointment of Harvey as Governor and for the first few years of his term as Governor of the colony. Both Mathews and Harvey were members of the Royal Commission which had been sent over in 1623 by his Majesty for the purpose of looking into the state of the colony of Virginia.¹⁰⁰ These two men were apparently on very good terms with one another at that time, and they were not drawn apart during the intervening years until the time when Harvey was made Governor. They were still very good friends during the early part of Harvey's term as Governor. This is clearly shown by the favor which was granted to Mathews by the King of England at the request of Harvey.

When Mathews rebuilt the fort at Old Point Comfort in 1630, Governor Harvey praised him very highly. In a

100. See page 18.

letter which he wrote to the King and Privy Council in England, Harvey praised Mathews saying that he was always ready to set forward his services for his Majesty's honor and to undertake, alone and at his own personal expense, any thing which was for the general good of the colony of Virginia.¹⁰¹ This was as high a tribute as could be paid by anyone in the colony, and it shows that as yet there was no enmity between these men,

In this letter which Harvey wrote to the King and the Privy Council, he also asked that Mathews, as a reward for his rebuilding of the fort at Old Point Comfort, should be allowed to export all of his tobacco from the colony into England free of any duty or import tax.¹⁰² In reply to this letter, the King promised to reward all deserving planters in Virginia, but especially Samuel Mathews because he had solely undertaken the erection of a fort at Old Point Comfort at the entrance of James River.¹⁰³ This letter was sent from Windsor castle and it bore the date of September 12, 1631.¹⁰⁴

101. "Virginia in 1624-25", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 7, p. 129.

102. Wertenbaker, Op. Cit., p. 72.

103. Sainsbury, Calendar of State Papers, p. 116.

104. Ibid.

Harvey probably did this favor with the main object in mind that he might secure the help of Mathews in everything which he undertook. With the backing of Mathews, since he (Mathews) was one of the most influential men in the colony, Harvey thought that he could thus attain more power which he could use for his own personal gain and glory. However, Mathews was not to be bought, being a man of a bold spirit, turbulent, and exceedingly strong.¹⁰⁵

Because of this desire on the part of Governor Harvey for personal gain and glory, it seemed that such amiable relations between these two men could not continue permanently. Mathews was soon alienated from Harvey by the executive's usurpation and abuses of power.¹⁰⁶ The beginning of this alienation was an argument concerning a certain Captain Young who supposedly had received a commission from the authorities in England to discover certain unknown parts in the colony of Virginia.¹⁰⁷ The argument started on July 10, 1634, after Captain Young had seized a servant of one of the planters, without the consent of this planter, and had

105. Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 12, p. 405.

106. Ibid.

107. Sainsbury, Calendar of State Papers, p. 183.

used him as a ship carpenter, after the planter had refused to lend this servant to him when Young had asked for him.¹⁰⁸ This action was in direct violation of a certain statute which had been passed by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, Governor Harvey upheld Captain Young in this action in spite of the statute which forbade such action.¹⁰⁹

Mathews opposed Harvey in this, saying that Captain Young had no commission from the authorities in England to explore the unknown regions of Virginia, and that such acts as Young had committed, that of seizing the servants of one of the planters, would breed ill-blood throughout the colony of Virginia.¹¹⁰ Mathews showed his great anger by "flinging away from the Governor in a very contemptuous and proud manner and lashing off the heads of certain high weeds with his truncheon." ¹¹¹ Seeing that they would be able to make no headway, since both Captain Young and Mathews were exceedingly angry, the Governor tried to stop any further argument and to eliminate any more hard feelings by saying, "Come

108. Wertenbaker, Op. Cit., p. 73.

109. W. Hening, Statutes at Large, Vol. 1, p. 124.

110. "Captain Mathews Behavior to the Governor", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 8, p. 156.

111. Ibid.

gentlemen let us go to supper and for this night leave this discourse and to-morrow we will meet betimes and consult our business."¹¹² However, probably because of his great anger, Mathews refused this invitation to supper which had been extended to him by Governor Harvey and he walked off from the scene of the argument in a very irreverent manner.¹¹³

There is no record to be found as to whether or not any more was said about this Young affair, but nevertheless it was the beginning of the ill-feeling between Mathews and Governor Harvey, which was very soon to develop into a much more serious and a much more complicated matter.

After this dispute which involved Harvey and Mathews, the grievances against Harvey began to pile up. By a recent act of Parliament, England had prohibited the colonies from trading with the Dutch. Nevertheless, in a bitter controversy, Mathews accused Governor Harvey of admitting merchants from Holland into his house and making large transactions with them, even though the Privy Council in England had commanded that all trade

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.

with the Dutch should cease.¹¹⁴ Thus the breach between Mathews and Harvey was gradually becoming wider and wider.

In a letter which he wrote to Sir John Wolstenholme, who was a merchant, from Newport News on May 25, 1635, Mathews listed many additional grievances which the people of the colony had against Governor Harvey.¹¹⁵ When Maryland was asking for her separation from Virginia, Governor Harvey took the side of Lord Baltimore. This was in direct opposition to the general sentiment of the colonists in Virginia. Furthermore, when the Council of Virginia wrote a letter or a petition to the King and Privy Council in England concerning the separation of Maryland, the Governor detained this letter and refused to send it to England.¹¹⁶ Such acts as these caused further displeasure among the colonists in Virginia.

In his letter to Wolstenholme, Mathews listed these and several additional grievances against Governor Harvey. The first grievance which he stated was the fact

114. Ibid.

115. "The Mutiny in Virginia, 1635", Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 416.

116. Wertenbaker, Op. Cit., p. 74.

that Harvey had detained certain letters,¹¹⁷ which the Council in Virginia wished to send to England. He said, "The consideration of the wrong done by the Governor to the whole colony in detaining the foresaid letters to his Majesty did exceedingly perplex them, whereby they were made sensible of the miserable condition of the present Governor-----." 118 Mathews further accused him of usurping his power, saying, "They had heard him in open court revile all the Council and tell them they were to give their attendance as assistants only to advise with him, which if he liked of he should pass, otherwise the power lay in himself to dispose of all matters as his Majesty's substitute." 119

Mathews further accused him of siding with the Marylanders, saying that Harvey did nothing when the Marylanders took Captain Claiborne's pinnaces and his men with goods in them. He also accused him of making a dangerous peace with the Indians, saying that he made it against the advice of the Council and the country although the Indians had offered many insolent injuries

117. The letters concerning the separation of Maryland as just previously stated.

118. "The Mutiny in Virginia, 1635", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 1, p. 416.

119. Ibid.

which could not be avenged because of this peace. Governor Harvey had also withheld from the Council certain letters which had come from the House of Lords and from the King, which was contrary to the commands which his Majesty had given, thus making a further usurpation of power.¹²⁰

Mathews concluded this letter by saying, "I beseech God to direct his Majesty in appointing of some worthy religious gentleman, for to take charge of this his colony, and I doubt not by God's assistance and the industry of the people, but Virginia in a few years will flourish. In the meantime we rest in expectation of their answer according to which we intend to proceed. In the while I beseech God to direct us for the best. I conclude with an assured hope that Sir John Harvey's return will be acceptable to God, not displeasing to his Majesty, and an assured happiness unto this colony, wherein whilst I live, I shall be ready to do you all the true offices of a faithful friend and servant." 121

Harvey was also accused of shutting the Marylanders from every trading place, thus placing many of the traders

120. Ibid.

121. Ibid.

in the colony, such as Mathews and Henefie, in a very distressing and very embarrassing predicament.¹²² This is the earliest evidence which we have of the political rivalry between the Governor and the Council. However, such disputes were very frequent somewhat later.

Governor Harvey claimed that Mathews was nourishing the faction against him, particularly in regard to the Maryland affair. In a letter which he wrote to Secretary Windebank on December 16, 1634, he said that Mathews was the patron of disorder in the Maryland affair, "Scratching his head and in a raging fury stamping, he cried a pox upon Maryland." ¹²³

On April 28, 1635, Mathews marched up to the house of the Governor with a group of men asking redress for the many grievances which they had against the Governor of the colony.¹²⁴ According to the account which was given by Harvey, this group of men with Mathews consisted of fifty musketeers.¹²⁵ The people were greatly displeased and angered by the acts of Harvey, and they wanted satisfaction. However, when Mathews saw that the

122. Sainsbury, Calendar of State Papers, p. 203.

123. Ibid., p. 193.

124. Ibid., p. 213.

125. Ibid.

Governor and the people could come to no satisfactory agreement, he asked the Governor to go to England to answer the complaints of the people. He (Mathews) said, "Sir, the people's fury is up against you and to appease it is beyond our power, unless you please go to England, there to answer their complaints." ¹²⁶ The Governor immediately flew into a rage, whereupon Mathews firmly held him in his chair and said to him, "Sir, there is no harm intended you save only to acquaint you with the grievances of the inhabitants and to that end I desire you to sit down in your chair." ¹²⁷ Although he had refused to go to England at first, he went with reluctance when he realized the great danger to which he would subject himself if he remained in the colony for any length of time.

Immediately upon his arrival in England, he brought charges against Mathews and several others, saying that they had held secret and unlawful meetings. ¹²⁸ Governor Harvey considered Mathews to be the leader of the faction against him as is plainly evidenced by a letter which was written by him on December 16, 1634 to Secre-

126. Ibid.

127. Wertenbaker, Op. Cit., p. 76.

128. Sainsbury, Calendar of State Papers, p. 213.

tary Windebank, who was a very good friend to Lord Baltimore. In the part of the letter which shows his attitude towards Mathews, Harvey says, "This faction I find great cause to suspect is nourished from England, for this summer came letters to Captain Mathews who is the patron of disorder, as your Honor will understand by the bearer hereof, Lieutenant Evelin (and by his comportment in other matters as you Honor will find in these papers) upon the reading whereof he threw his hat upon the ground, scratching his head, and in a fury stamping, cried a pox upon Maryland; many letters and secret intelligences he and the rest of the Council have, especially Claiborne, and many meetings and consultations for which letters if I had power to search and examine their consultations, I doubt not but to find notable combinations." ¹²⁹ As is shown by this letter, Mathews was thought by Harvey to be the leader of the faction in the colony against his Governorship although the real source of the trouble was apparently coming from the enemies of Harvey in England.

Therefore, on December 22, 1635, the Privy Council in England requested that his Majesty should order that Mathews, John West, William Pearce, and George Menefie

129. Neill, Virginia Carolorum, p. 100.

should be sent to England to answer for their misdemeanors, they being the prime actors in the late mutiny, as it was so called, which had just taken place in the colony of Virginia.¹³⁰ Therefore, in response to this request which had been made by the Privy Council, the King ordered the Governor and the Council of Virginia to cause the aforesaid men to be sent to England in safe custody by the first shipping to face the several charges which had been brought against them by Governor John Harvey.¹³¹ The charges which Harvey had brought against them were considered to be very serious, and these men were subject to severe punishment if they were convicted. Deposition of a Governor of a colony was considered to be a heinous crime in England as it was, in a certain light, a denial of allegiance to the throne of England.¹³²

These men might have suffered very severe consequences had Governor Harvey chosen to press the charges which he had brought against them. However, he neglected the case almost entirely, sending an agent to England to handle the case for him, but taking no personal inter-

130. DeJarnette, Papers, Vol. 1, p. 153.

131. P. A. Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia, Vol. 1, p. 674.

132. "Extracts from Virginia Records, 1634", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 17, p. 114.

est in it.¹³³ This fact, added to the fact that many of Harvey's enemies in England were working in behalf of Mathews and the others, caused these men to go free, the case never coming into court.¹³⁴

It is interesting to note that Sergeant-Major George Donne, who was a son of Doctor John Donne, the great English poet and Divine of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, pleaded in behalf of Governor Harvey against Mathews and the others who had been sent to England to answer certain charges there.¹³⁵ Donne was sent to England by Governor Harvey as his agent at the same time as Mathews and the others were sent there, in order "to prosecute those persons who were lately seditious in the colony of Virginia." ¹³⁶

After he arrived in England, he wrote a pamphlet denouncing the government in the colony of Virginia. He described the government in the colony as being "by a multitude whose policy is gain, whose gravity is giddiness, and whose discretion is noise and tumult", thus encouraging many mutinies and rebellions against the

133. Wertenbaker, Op. Cit., p. 32.

134. Ibid.

135. "George Donne's Petition to the King", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 10, p. 427.

136. Brown, English Politics in Early Virginia History, p. 101.

government.¹³⁷ Donne denounced the Assembly as exerting too much power and exciting the people to rebellion. He claimed that the General Assembly was trying to take all of the power away from the Governor, who was nominally the head of the government in the colony and who should have had some power. This man was presenting Governor Harvey's side of the case, not mentioning any of the wrongs and abuses which had been committed by Harvey himself. He spent all of his time and efforts denouncing those who were opposed to the Governor.

However, there were a number of those in England who were opposed to the actions of Harvey in the colony and who were heartily in favor of Mathews and the others, or the Liberal party in the colony, as they were so called. Such prominent Englishmen as Sir John Danvers and George Sandys,¹³⁸ who were members of the King's Privy Council, took sides with the Liberal party in Virginia. As a result, mainly through the efforts of such men as these, Mathews and the others were allowed to go free, the case never being called to trial.¹³⁹ It

137. Ibid., p. 102.

138. He was a brother of Sir Edwin Sandys who had died in 1629.

139. A. Brown, English Politics in Early Virginia History, p. 102.

was also largely through the efforts of these men that Governor Harvey was later recalled to England in favor of Sir Francis Wyatt, who was like much better by the people of the colony.

Nevertheless, although Harvey was inactive in so far as the prosecution of these men was concerned, he was very active in trying to bring destruction and shame upon the property and relatives of Mathews and the others. In his extreme hatred, he wrought havoc upon the property of all those who had been sent to England, but particularly did he wreak havoc upon the estate of Samuel Mathews because he was one of the wealthiest men in the colony and because he had a much larger estate than did any of the others. Harvey confiscated practically all of his (Mathews') property, including his servants, cows, and all other such personal property.¹⁴⁰ An example of this is the giving of fifty cows which were the property of Mathews to a certain John Woodall. The basis for the giving of the fifty cows to Woodall, according to Harvey, was that Mathews, in 1622, had two cows which rightfully belonged to this same John Woodall.¹⁴¹ Woodall was awarded the fifty cows instead of a smaller

140. H. N. Stanard, Story of Virginia's First Century, p. 201

141. Kertenbaker, Op. Cit., p. 81.

number with the contention that those two cows which Mathews illegally had possession of in 1622 would have increased to fifty cows by this time. Some years later, after Mathews had returned to the colony from England, the court upheld him (Mathews) in his case against Goodall, and it was ordered that those fifty cows should be returned to him.¹⁴²

Such were the unjust and illegal measures which Harvey used in his attempts to bring ruination to Mathews. Such was the defense which was more of an excuse than a real defense, which was given for the confiscation of the property of Samuel Mathews. Governor Harvey once vowed that he would not leave him (Mathews) worth a cow's tail, so intense was his desire for revenge. He said that "if the (the Governor of the colony) stood the other should fall, and if he swam the other would sink:"¹⁴³ This shows that Governor Harvey was determined to get revenge upon and bring ruination to Mathews and the others regardless of how much the cost might be.

When Mathews and the others heard of this, it was only natural that they should make a complaint to the

142. Ibid.

143. Stanard, Op. Cit., p. 201.

Privy Council, asking that their property should be returned into the hands of those whom they had placed in charge of it.¹⁴⁴ In this petition, they entreated "that their distressed estates may be taken into favorable consideration and a letter speedily written to Sir John Harvey to restore the said goods, servants, and cattle to those to whom the petitioners have left their estates in trust with." 145 The Privy Council upheld them in this and on May 25, 1637, they sent a letter to the Governor and Council of Virginia ordering that all of the property of Mathews and the others should be left in the hands of those to whom it had been entrusted, and that all of the property which had been seized should be restored.¹⁴⁶ They required them "to take effectual order that whatsoever goods, servants or cattle of any of said petitioners have been taken from any with whom they left their estates in trust that same be presently and entirely restored back upon sight thereof; also to forbear to use or suffer any such course or proceedings against any of the said petitioners' estates, servants, or trustees on that side until further order from his

144. "Privy Council to Governor and Council of Virginia", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 9, p. 130.

145. Sainsbury, Abstracts, Vol. 13, p. 200.

146. Sainsbury, Calendar of State Papers, p. 253.

Majesty or this Board." 147

This order from the Privy Council was completely ignored by Governor Harvey. Therefore, on July 15, 1638, a second similar order was sent out by the Privy Council to the Governor and Council of Virginia.¹⁴⁸ In answer to this second order from the Privy Council in England, Governor Harvey wrote them a letter on March 23, 1639 from James City in which he stated that all of the servants, cattle and goods belonging to the estates of those men in England had been restored.¹⁴⁹ However, Harvey did not keep his word and certain individuals kept much of the property which rightfully belonged to these men who were at the present time in England answering the charges which had been made against them by Governor Harvey. In a number of cases, Mathews had to fight for some of his property as is evidenced by the Woodall case which has previously been related.¹⁵⁰ All of their rightful property was not restored to Samuel Matheww and the others until several years after their return from England, after Harvey had been re-

147. "Privy Council to Governor and Council of Virginia", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 9, p. 179.

148. Ibid., Vol. 11, p. 170.

149. A. Brown, The Genesis of the United States, p. 88.

150. Ibid.

called to England and Wyatt had taken over the reins of government in 1640.¹⁵¹

Since the case against Mathew and the others in England was never called into court, as has previously been related, these men were allowed to return to the colony if they so desired. Therefore, they returned to the colony some time during the year 1639. However, instead of burying the hatchet and letting bygones be bygones, these men were much more determined than ever to gain revenge upon Harvey for the many alleged wrongs which he had committed against them. "The fires of the old quarrels still burned brightly and the old councillors, West, Utye, Mathews, John Pott, and Pearce, who had been summoned to England, were untiring in their efforts to ruin Harvey."¹⁵² These men were not satisfied in their efforts to ruin Harvey until finally, partially through the efforts of these men in the colony and partially through the efforts of the enemies of Harvey who were residing in England, Harvey was recalled to England and Wyatt was sent over to the colony to take over the reins of government.

151. Wertenbaker, Op. Cit., p. 83.

152. "History of York County in the Seventeenth Century", Tyler's Historical and Genealogical Magazine, Vol. 1, p. 242.

Whether or not Mathews and the other men were justified in the action which they took in deposing Governor Harvey is a matter of opinion. It is true that Captain Young, who was a contemporary of both Harvey and Mathews and who once was involved in a dispute between Mathews and Harvey,¹⁵³ denounced their actions as being unjust and unfair.

However, very little confidence can be placed in this opinion since Captain Young was a very close friend of Harvey and since there was ill feeling between him and Mathews. Therefore, his opinion would undoubtedly be prejudiced to a very large extent. Judge Oliver Temple Perry in his book which he calls "The Covenanter, Cavalier, and Puritan" praises Captain Mathews and the others very highly for the action which they took in sending the tyrant Governor (Harvey) a close prisoner back across the sea to England.¹⁵⁴

Harvey committed many acts which would cause him to be branded as a tyrant who wanted to rule the people of Virginia just as if they were puppets acting in a marionette show. By his actions, he seemed to think

153. For this dispute, see pages 37-38.

154. "Book Review," William and Mary Quarterly (Old Series), Vol. 6, p. 154.

that the people should respond to every little movement of his hand. He wanted to be a dictator, placing no confidence or power in the General Assembly and the Council. However, on the other side of the fence, the people thought that they were privileged to have a voice in the making of the government.

Chapter V.
Governor of the Colony.

Upon the resignation of Governor Digges in the year 1656, Samuel Mathews was appointed to succeed him in that dignified position by Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England.¹⁵⁵ However, Mathews was not in the colony at the time of his appointment, having gone to England as a colony agent to settle the question of tobacco raising in England and to settle the differences between Maryland and Virginia, as has already been discussed in this paper.¹⁵⁶ He returned to the colony early in 1658 to assume his duties as Governor of the colony, being present at the session of the Legislative Assembly which met on March 13, 1658 at Jamestown.

During his term of office as Governor, he added to his already tremendous wealth. His salary as the Governor of the colony consisted of 25,000 pounds of tobacco which was to be paid to him by the different coun-

155. J. E. Cooke, Virginia, A History of the People, p. 205.

156. See pages 31-34.

ties in the colony, all of the duties which were levied on the masters of all vessels, and all marriage license fees.¹⁵⁷ This amounted to about two thousand pounds sterling, not including the fees obtained from the marriage licenses.¹⁵⁸ The total would have amounted to about ten thousand dollars, which would be the equivalent in value today of about thirty or forty thousand dollars.

Also, in 1659, Mathews received a large territory of land which the Wicomoco Indians had possessed, but had now supposedly abandoned in Northumberland County.¹⁵⁹ It was the custom of the time, and it was perfectly legal, to occupy any land which had been voluntarily abandoned by the Indians. However, this legal practice had been much corrupted, the white men often occupying Indian land after having forced the Indians to abandon that land. In order to avoid any further conflict with the Indians, the Legislative Assembly began to take measures to stop any such unjust and illegal actions. As a part of this plan, in 1660, they adopted the regulation whereby the heirs or descendants of Samuel Mathews, who had just recently died,

157. C. Campbell, History of Virginia, p. 234.

158. Ibid.

159. P. A. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia, p. 494.

should pay the equivalent of fifty pounds sterling to the Indians, the claim being that Mathews had hastened the Wicomoco Indians in the abandonment of their large tract of land in Northumberland County.¹⁶⁰

Governor Mathews had only one dispute with the General Assembly, but this single dispute caused a great furor, and for a while it threatened to destroy the political structure of the colony. In March, 1653, the House of Burgesses made the declaration that all propositions and laws should be discussed in private sessions and not in the presence of the Governor and the Council of the colony.¹⁶¹ By this move, the House of Burgesses were asserting their independence, and at the same time they were making a bid for much more power than was already invested in that body. In retaliation to this order, in a letter written from Jamestown and dated April 1, 1653, the Governor and the Council of Virginia declared that the present Assembly was dissolved. This letter read, "The Governor and Council for many important causes do think fit hereby to declare that they do now dissolve the present Assembly

160. Ibid.

161. Samuel H. Yonge, "The Site of Old 'James Towne,' 1607-1698", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 12, p. 45.

and that the Speaker accordingly do dismiss the Burgesses." 162
 This declaration was signed by Governor Mathews, Secretary William Claiborne, and by all of the members of the Council. 163

However, the Burgesses refused to be dissolved. They claimed that the power of the government resided in those persons who were empowered by the Burgesses themselves. They also claimed that the Burgesses could not be dissolved except by an order of the House of Burgesses. Therefore, on the following day, the second of April, in a formal declaration, the Burgesses declared that the power to elect and to appoint the Governor of the colony and all other officers in the colony resided in the House of Burgesses. They further ordered that Secretary William Claiborne should deliver up all of the records of the colony. However, this request was never met by Secretary Claiborne, and the Burgesses never made any urgent demands that this request should be obeyed. 164
 Thereupon, in accordance with the declaration which they had made, they chose Colonel Samuel Mathews, Esquire, to be the Governor of the colony for a term of two years,

162. Stanard, Op. Cit., p. 229.

163. Ibid.

164. Ibid.

giving him all of the rights and privileges which belonged to the Governor and Captain-General of the colony of Virginia.¹⁶⁵

This stand which was taken by the Burgesses was nothing but a farce, since it did not alter the affairs of the colony in the least. Everything would be exactly the same as it was before the argument first began. Realizing this fact, that the terms which had been set forth by the Burgesses did not alter things in the slightest, Governor Mathews accepted their terms as being satisfactory. Thus he brought to an end a three day bloodless revolution, his first and only clash with the Burgesses.¹⁶⁶

Many people have severely criticized Governor Mathews for accepting these terms, saying that he was allowing the Burgesses to rule him. However, there is no reason at all why these people should take such a stand against Mathews. The Governor realized that the opportunity had presented itself whereby everything could be settled in a peaceful fashion without changing the government of the colony in the least. Such an opportunity might never have presented itself again so that things might

165. Cooke, Op. Cit., p. 206.

166. Ibid.

have turned out much worse than they did. Had he not accepted this agreement when he did, things would probably have been a great deal worse for everyone concerned.

This was his only clash with the Burgesses and it is the only event of great importance which occurred while he was Governor.

However, several things of lesser importance, but of very great interest, happened during his term of office as Governor of the colony. Near the beginning of his term, he decided that the only way to insure safety for the colonists, particularly those who owned land along the frontier, was to expel the Indians from the country entirely. He immediately set out with this plan in mind, sending a letter to Governor Fendal of Maryland asking the aid of the Marylanders in his attempt to expel the Nanticokes and the Assateagues from this section of the country.¹⁶⁷

In this letter, which was addressed to the honorable Governor and Secretary of Maryland and which was dated August 24, 1659, he says, "The concern of safety depending on those persons in trust hath directed the intelligence of our present designs against the Assateague

167. J. C. Wise, Early History of the Eastern Shore, p. 160.

Indians and Confederates, which we have accomodated with sufficient forces now presuming the advantage of this opportunity, laying before you reasons political will press your endeavors to assault the common enemy who so long triumphed in the ruins of Christian blood, that war on the sea side will be on our parts prosecuted, and if the Nanticoke and Confederates be the subject of your design, it may, if not utterly extinguish yet sufficiently subject the insolencies of those Indians who now despise the English honor. Use and improve this." 168

Governor Fendal of Maryland assured the Virginians that he would give them assistance on all just and proper occasions, but he firmly but politely refused to give the assistance which had been requested in the letter. He said that they had no reason by which they could justly send an armed force against the Nanticokes or their confederates, since they were very peaceable at the present time.¹⁶⁹ However, the Virginians proceeded to expel the Indians from the country, mustering a large army with the sole purpose of expelling the Indians from the country entirely. Although this

168. Cooke, Op. Cit., p. 160.

169. Ibid.

large force set out to expel the Indians from the country, no record is preserved as to what they actually accomplished.

He had further intercourse with the Indians early in the year 1659. It seems that several white people had been murdered by several Indians from the Machoa-tick and the Nominy tribes. The white people in the colony became very agitated over the affair and they were in favor of taking revenge by immediately mustering and sending out a large expedition of armed men with the sole purpose of murdering every Indian whom they came upon. However, Mathews was opposed to taking any such action, considering it to be neither just nor necessary since these tribes had turned over two Indians who were supposed to have been the murderers of the white men. These two Indians had been immediately brought to trial and, being convicted of the murders, had been executed.¹⁷⁰

However, even after the execution of these Indians, the whites in the colony still desired to proceed to take further vengeance. Thereupon, on May 6, 1659, he wrote a letter to the Commissioners telling the court to go

170. "Execution of an Indian", William and Mary Quarterly, (Old Series), Vol. 6, p. 118.

ahead with the execution of these two Indians as they saw fit to do. However, he further ordered that they (the colonists) would assure the Indians that they would not proceed to vengeance against them so long as they (the Indians) carried themselves in a peaceful manner towards them (the colonists), since they had handed over the murderers to the whites for them to act in whatever way they saw fit.¹⁷¹ However, he did propose that the colony should raise men in defense of its safety and peace, thus insuring the colony protection against any invasion or attack of the Indians. By such actions as Mathews took in regard to this case, we can readily see that he desired to retain peaceful relations with the nearby Indians just so long as it was possible to do so.

It was during the term of office of Mathews as Governor of Virginia, in the year 1658, that Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector, died and his son, Richard Cromwell, succeeded him at the helm of the government in England. As soon as Richard Cromwell took over the head of the government in England, Governor Mathews was requested to pledge his allegiance to this new head and to pledge allegiance also on behalf of all of the

171. Ibid.

people in the colony of Virginia.¹⁷² Thereupon, at the meeting of the General Assembly in March, 1659, Mathews read, in the House of Burgesses, a letter from the authorities in England apprizing them of the fact that Richard Cromwell had succeeded to the head of the English government upon the death of Oliver Cromwell, and requesting them to pledge their allegiance to this man.¹⁷³

However, there were a number of people in the colony who were reluctant and unwilling to accept Richard Cromwell as the head of the government in England. This fact is very clearly shown by two letters which were written by Governor Mathews only several months after he had read this request in the House of Burgesses.

On April 3, 1659, he wrote a letter to the Sheriff of Lancaster County ordering the arrest of Colonel John Carter for his contempt of the new government in England.¹⁷⁴ Governor Mathews issued this warrant to the Sheriff of Lancaster County to arrest Colonel John Carter, who was "charged with contempt of the

172. "History of York County", Tyler's Quarterly, Vol. 1, p.

173. Ibid.

174. "Arrest of Colonel John Carter", William and Mary Quarterly (Old Series), Vol. 8, p. 33.

late commission of the government sent out by his Highness (Richard Cromwell) and the Lords of the Privy Council" and to bring him before the Governor and the Council at Jamestown.¹⁷⁵ It seems that this man had grumbled against the new authority when it had been read out by Governor Mathews in the House of Burgesses during the previous March. He was immediately brought to trial before the Governor of the colony and before the council at Jamestown, and he incurred a heavy fine for this offense.¹⁷⁶

On July 26, 1659, a similar letter was written by Governor Mathews to the Commissioners, or Justices, of York County, ordering that one Joseph Creshaw be suspended from the office of Justice in that County. It was alleged that he had questioned the present authority in England as had been read out in the House of Burgesses during the previous March, and he was for that reason suspended from office. Mathews claimed that such actions as these tended to the breach and detriment of the colony, and that they might have dangerous consequences.¹⁷⁷

175. "Book Review", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 2, p. 235.

176. "Arrest of Colonel John Carter", William and Mary Quarterly (Old Series), Vol. 3, p.33.

177. York County Records 1657-1662, p. 163.

In this letter, he (Mathews) says, "Whereas Joseph Croshaw hath disputed and questioned the present authority which was appointed and fixed by order of the Lords of the Council of State (in England), this his foresumption being and tending much to the breach and detriment of the peace of this our colony, I, having seriously considered the dangerous consequences of such practices, thought it meet and convenient to suspend the said Croshaw from acting anything as formerly in relation to a Justice of Peace until such time that he hath given a clear testimony unto the Court of the contrary. Fail not hereof as you shall answer the contrary at your peril." 178

This order was read in Court on August 24, 1659, the said Croshaw being present. Then, after being read, it was recorded. 179

This controversy over the acceptance of this new head of the government in England might have had serious consequences in Virginia had it not been for the fact that Richard Cromwell, realizing that he was not capable of holding such a responsible position and realizing that the people of England were dissatisfied with the

173. Ibid.

179. Ibid.

way he was running things, resigned. Therefore, England once more went back to Monarchical government, choosing Charles II as King. This restoration of Royal power brought to a halt any further controversy that may have threatened.

Nothing else of any consequence happened during the short term of Mathews as Governor of the colony. His career came to an end with his death in January, 1660.¹³⁰

130. Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 12, p. 405.

Chapter VI.

Conclusion.

Several authors have spoken disparagingly of this notable figure. However, there is considerable doubt as to whether or not there is any ground for their taking such a view. Beverly claimed that Mathews was merely a tool in the hands of Cromwell, the Lord Protector, saying that he did nothing to prevent the usurpation of the people by the head of the government in England.¹⁸¹

However, several authors have taken the exact opposite view to this. Campbell said that Mathews enjoyed the confidence of the people because there was no extravagance, rapacity, corruption or extortion during his short administration as Governor of the colony.¹⁸²

This latter view seems to offer more proof of truth than does the former view. Mathews seemed to have been a true citizen of the colony and of England.

181. R. Beverly, History of Virginia, p. 51.

182. Campbell, Op. Cit., p. 242.

The best example of his unselfishness and of his devotion to the well being of the colony is shown by his erection, with the aid of William Claiborne, of the palisade from a point on the James River to a point on the Charles River. A further example of his unselfishness is his undertaking alone of the rebuilding of the old fort at Point Comfort.

In addition to this, he showed his interest in the welfare of the colony by leading several expeditions against the Indians, as has already been previously discussed. There are also many other similar instances whereby he showed his willingness to be a public servant.

One of the highest tributes imaginable was paid to Mathews by one Flint who, being a prisoner at the time, said, "Oh, would Captain Mathews were by me and then I would have right." He repeated this statement twenty times.¹⁸³

It is true that Mathews made mistakes, but he always tried to be just and fair in all that he did, even in his affairs with the Indians. He constantly showed a passionate striving for true justice and sturdy

183. "Minutes of the Council and General Court, 1622-1629", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 30, p. 262.

independence.¹³⁴ Mathews was a staunch upholder of and a firm believer in justice, truth, honesty and sincerity.

134. Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 12, p. 405.

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