

**Chapter Three**  
**Sotterley - The Briscoe Era**  
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**1. Sotterley Plantation.**  
**Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**

## Introduction

Before Sotterley passed into the Briscoes' ownership in 1826, the family was already prominent in both the state and Southern Maryland. The family traced its ancestry as far back as the Norman Conquest of England in the eleventh-century, and the lords of Crofton Hall, in Cumberland, England.<sup>1</sup> The Briscoes' roots in Maryland began with the colony's founding, when Dr. John Briscoe arrived in the colony in 1634 aboard the *Ark*. Dr. John Briscoe had been personally invited by Maryland's proprietor, Cecil Calvert, to serve as the colony's surgeon. Calvert wrote to John Briscoe in 1633, a few months before the *Ark* and *Dove* departed England for Maryland:<sup>2</sup>

*about Sept. 1, 1633*

*LETTER to:  
Dr. John Briscoe  
Of  
New Biggin, Cumberland, England  
From Cecilius Calvert,  
Lord Baltimore.*

---



Cecilius Calvert,  
2nd Lord Baltimore

*Dr. John Briscoe,*

*Greeting:*

*Dear Sir:*

*As the Privy Council have decided that I shall not be disturbed or dispossessed of the Charter granted by His Majesty the "Ark" and pinnance "Dove" will set sail from Gravesend about the first of October and if you are of the same mind as when I conversed with you, I would be glad to have you join the colony.*

*With high esteem*

*Your most ob't. Servant*

*Cecilius Baltimore*

<sup>1</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

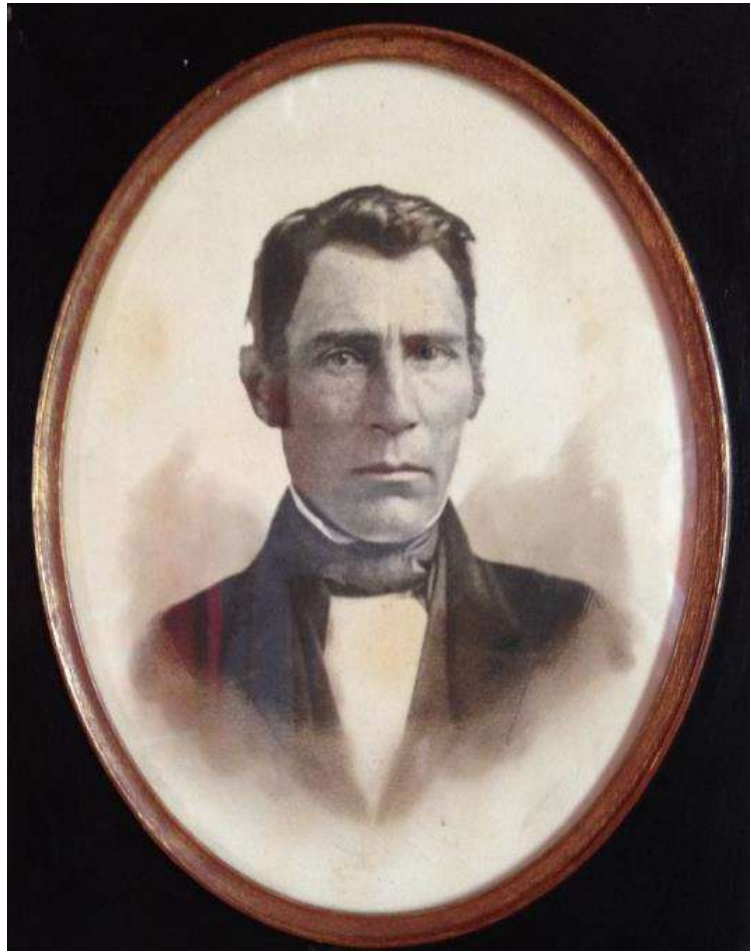
<sup>2</sup> Matthew Page Andrews, *History of Maryland*, "Province and State" in *History of Maryland*, (Baltimore: Traditional Press), 1965.

## Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe

The first Briscoe to own Sotterley was Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe. Born in Charles County in 1800, he was one of four children of William Dent Briscoe and Sarah Stone Briscoe. Dr. Briscoe's ancestral tree included both Pocahontas, the famous Native American princess, and John Hanson, a Revolutionary War leader and first President of the Colonial Congress under the Articles of Confederation.<sup>3</sup>

A graduate of Charlotte Hall School, Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe trained to be a doctor under Dr. N.R. Smith.

Dr. Briscoe came to live at Sotterley because of his marriage to Emeline Dallam. Emeline's stepfather, Thomas Barber, had bought Sotterley's Manor House and approximately 1,000 adjoining acres from Colonel William Clarke Somerville sometime after 1822. When Barber passed away in 1826, his will divided his property between his daughter, Lydia Barber, and his stepdaughter, Emeline Dallam. Lydia inherited the larger Fenwick Manor, which neighbored Sotterley. She married Colonel Chapman Billingsley shortly afterward.<sup>4</sup> Emeline, for her part, inherited Sotterley Mansion and 425 of its acres.<sup>5</sup> As Dr. Briscoe had married Emeline on August 30, 1826, several weeks before Thomas Barber's death, he gained effective control and ownership of the plantation and for sixty years thereafter he and his wife managed the plantation.

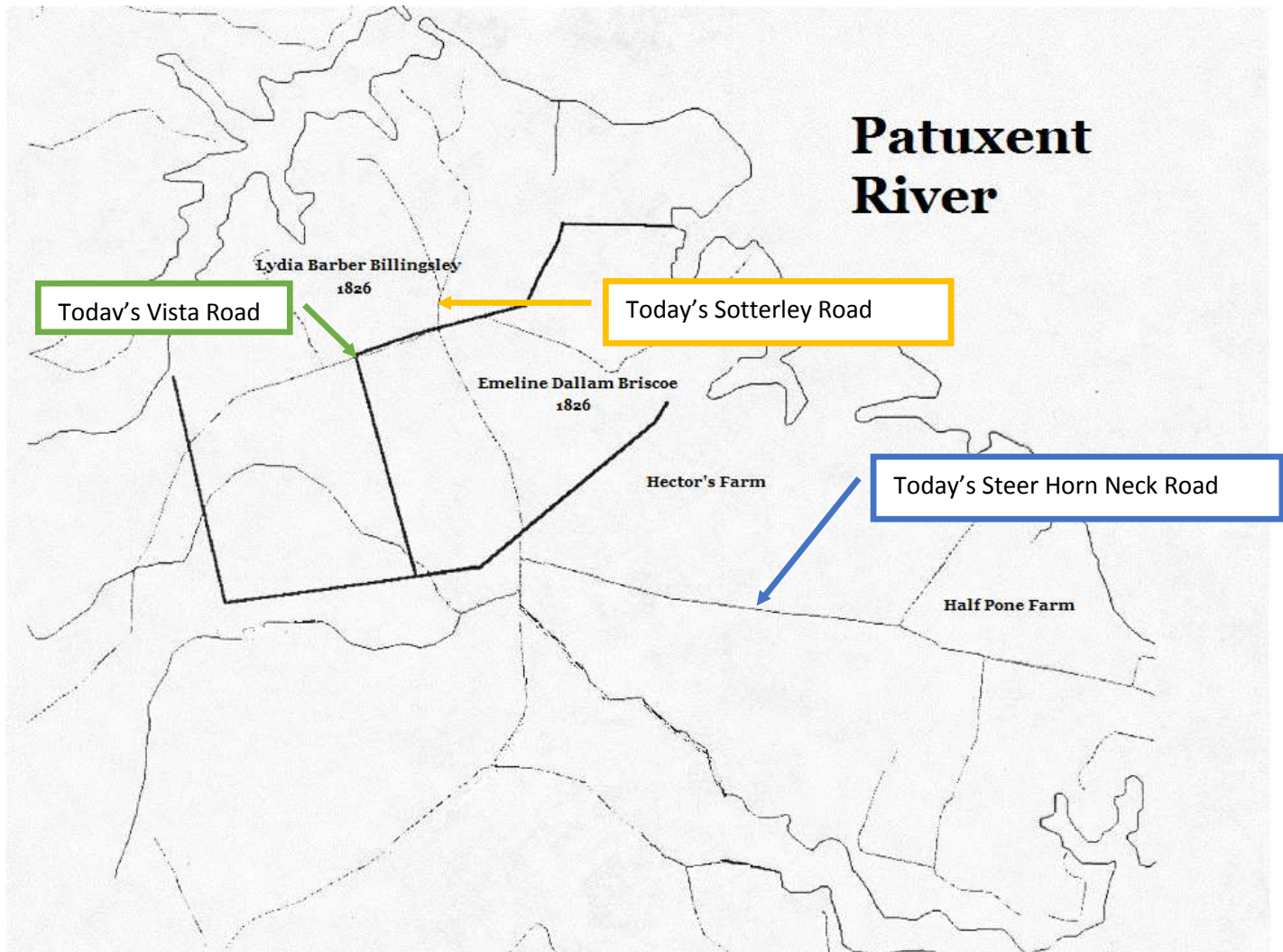


2. Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

<sup>3</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

<sup>4</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

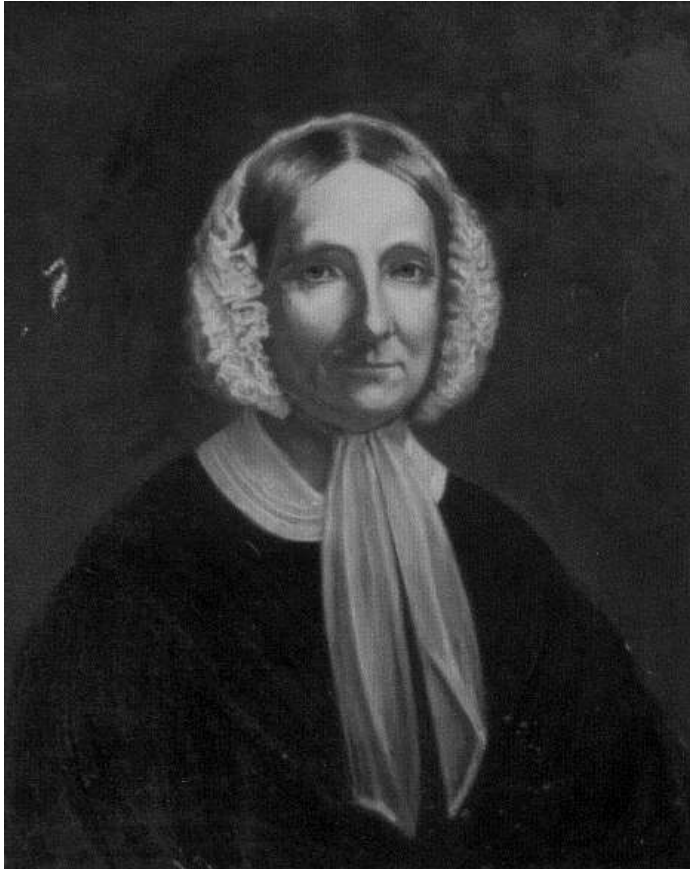
<sup>5</sup> Briscoe, John Hanson, Jr., *The Briscoe Family History*, 2013.



**3. The division of Sotterley between Emeline Briscoe and her sister, Lydia Barber  
Map drawn by Peter Himmelheber**

John Hanson Briscoe is a direct descendant of Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe and Emeline Dallam Briscoe. He gave many interviews in support of this project. He also served as the President of Sotterley's Board of Trustees.

John Hanson Briscoe: *"So here Dr. Briscoe, I can only assume, I don't know anything about where he was living at the time he met Emeline, but here is this magnificent plantation with ongoing farming. You know, it would be natural to go to the larger place; he inherited this magnificent piece of property. Now she could have sold it, but I guess the two of them chose to come there, you know the beauty of it. I don't think he lived on the water wherever he was living, and he sees this magnificent view of the Patuxent River. I don't know if there were any slaves there or what the labor was at that time, but when Dr. Briscoe married Emeline, she did not want to sell her inheritance and he married her, and of course by marrying her, obviously he became one of the owners of the property. And they decided to do that. But I don't know any anecdotes about it. They said, "This is such a beautiful place on the river; let's do it". But I think it is reasonable to assume that Walter Briscoe did not have that kind of property to take her to and*



**4. Emeline Dallam Briscoe (July 12, 1809 – September 9, 1887)**  
Courtesy of Dolly Buswell

*here is this magnificent piece of property which we all know is, of course it's more now than it was then, had the potential, was a working farm and he obviously liked farming because as we will talk about later that became the major source of his revenue."*

Audio 1. John Hanson Briscoe on his ancestor, Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe, and his marriage to Emeline Dallam:



As the head of the household, Emeline Dallam Briscoe had many roles in the manor house. The main job of women during this period was to plan and supervise the many household industries. Most of the chores around the house were performed by the slaves, but the women followed to make sure that all was running smoothly around their house. Like most women, Emeline probably rose early to the kitchen where the slaves were cooking breakfast. She would have to

inspect the house after daily cleaning and most likely would go over the job to make sure that it was done in the manner that she wanted. At dawn, Emeline would have had to make sure that all the lighting was working and help prepare the supper for the family at the end of the day. Though her jobs do not sound that hard, women were said to have a distaste for housework. For most women, this was a full day's work. Surely Emeline had a great deal on her mind in taking care of the huge manor house at Sotterley and the gardens that surrounded.

Women's roles in society were very defined, and Emeline was a good example of a successful leader of a plantation house. Emeline had to keep her composure and personify the picture of the Southern belle. One historian writes, "The figure of the lady, especially the plantation mistress, dominate southern ideals of womanhood." With Sotterley being such a prestigious part of the community, Emeline is known to have done a good job at presenting it to the community as the respectable household that it was. In Dr. Briscoe's will, he says that his wife was "true, faithful and affectionate." These three qualities are echoed all through history books about the way that "good" southern women were to behave as wives and as mothers. One historian writes, "The ideal woman of antebellum days was modest and innocent." Most women did behave in this way because they wanted to conform with the way that upper class society expected them to.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Snader, "The Life of the Briscoe Women at Sotterley," St. Mary's College of Maryland, 1997, 3-4.

Both Dr. and Mrs. Briscoe were dedicated Episcopalians. They attended services at St. Andrew's Church, where Dr. Briscoe also served as warden and vestryman from 1829 until his death. Vestry minutes bespoke his dedication and leadership during those fifty-seven years, and, like George Plater before him, Dr. Briscoe "purchased" the rights to the front-most pew in St. Andrews Church.<sup>7</sup> When they passed, both Walter Hanson Stone and Emeline would be buried in the parish cemetery.

Though brothers-in-law and close friends most of their lives, there is an account of a duel fought between Chapman Billingsley and Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe. The story itself has uncertain origins, but it seems that in the 1930s, Herbert Livingston Satterlee, then the owner of Sotterley, invited Robert Davis, a friend and reporter from New York, to Sotterley for a week. There Satterlee entertained his guest with tales, possibly made-up, of the plantation's past, some of which made their way into Davis's column at the New York Sun. The following is Davis's column about Satterlee's account of the duel between Briscoe and Billingsley, published in the New York City paper that employed him.

*"With these weapons," said the implacable Briscoe, disdainingly the customary salutations common between two gentlemen who come upon each other of a morning, "we may settle our differences, the survivor departing without qualms of conscience."*

### "The Dilatory Duel"

Among the residents along the Patuxent River few rivaled in point of popularity or good breeding the Briscoes and the Billingslys [sic], representing the best blood handed down by the Cavaliers, the flower of the South, the custodians of good form, actuated by the highest ideals of ante-bellum days. Nevertheless, the Doctor and the Colonel, notable for their good sense and enduring qualities, became involved in a controversy that, paradoxically, was both grave and gay; a controversy threatened with bloodshed but fraught with delay; born secretly in a hot Southern heart, to be at last dissolved into a thin twist, finally to be blown away. It deserves to be recalled. Herewith the tale of the dilatory duel:

By way of preface let it be known that Col. Billingsly, a great lover of horseflesh was the owner of a high-jumping stallion addicted to taking fences set up as a protection to neighboring truck gardens. One morning, Dr. Briscoe, a lover of select vegetables, found Col. Billingsly's black stallion breakfasting on the Briscoe head lettuce, allocated to the private uses of the owner. In high dudgeon he sent a slave to the Billingsly estate with the request that the Colonel come and get his horse immediately. Col. Billingsly recovered the trespasser and apologized in a gracious letter. A second and a third time the equine epicure leaped into the Briscoe garden and took his pick of the crop, causing the Doctor's ire to rise to such a pitch that on the third offense he notified his neighbor and brother-in-law that it would give him great pleasure to shoot the stallion if another invasion occurred.

Thereupon Col. Billingsly in a brief but dignified epistle told Dr. Briscoe what he thought of him as a neighbor and a kinsman.

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<sup>7</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.



True to form and in accordance with tradition the vegetable fancier penned a letter to his brother-in-law, stating in substance that if he were a true Southern gentleman he would make an appearance the following morning come dawn at a certain spot where a black walnut tree felled by lightning lay prone upon the landscape.

“There it shall be my pleasure,” said the epistle, “to make plain my opinion concerning you.”

Undaunted, come tomorrow, Col. Billingsly proceeded alone in the uncertain light of the morning to the rendezvous named by Dr. Briscoe, who had arrived and was waiting, a deadly gleam in his eye.

“With these weapons,” said the implacable Briscoe, disdaining the customary salutations common between two gentlemen who come upon each other of a morning, “we may settle our differences, the survivor departing without qualms of conscience. Col. Billingsly, it is my proposal that we be seated on this log astride, each with a pistol before him; that I count three, allowing time to prepare for action; that at the final word we fire, with the intent to defend our honor and may God have mercy on our souls.”

Challenged and challenger, the former bewildered, the latter inflexible in his resolve, awaited the next move, the soft light of breaking day bathing the scene with supernal loveliness. It was Col. Billingsly who broke the spell of silence.

“Dr. Briscoe,” said he, “this is preposterous, the culmination of nothing less than frenzy. The shot that finds its mark will leave a widow, whose sister is wife to her husband’s murderer. It is not impossible that we may both die. What then? Who is to record the details of this insane proceeding? You have spurned the dueling code, scoffing seconds, witnesses, even a doctor. In a single stroke you would wreck the lives of two women we love best and drag through the dust names that today are stainless. I decline, sir, to fire upon you, or lift a hand to defend myself. You are a madman.”

“While you are a coward and a poltroon, and I shall so brand you throughout Maryland,” replied Briscoe, his dark eyes fixed upon Billingsly. “To my offer of satisfaction you reply with a volley of words. Will you, or will you not, be seated that we may conclude the business at hand?”

The owner of the black stallion, unconscious cause of all the trouble, flaunting the demand for gunfire, folded his arms and remained standing.

With a sneer upon his lips and in the manner of one absolved by his own sense of proportion from further responsibility the gentleman gardener gathered up his dueling pistols, let down the hammers, placed the cold lethal implements side by side in the velvet-lined case, snapped the lock and strode away, never again to make reference concerning the dilatory duel which in time came to be numbered among the important incidents in a land where hot fires were too often kindled in the hearts of men only to be reduced to ashes in the crucible of time. Nor did Col. Billingsly afterward take up the gauge even in jest. And the brother-in-laws lived happily forever after, as did the sisters-in-law, who, although they may have sensed the approach of war, were spared its culmination.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “Bob Davis Reveals: Strange Tales of the Patuxent River. No. 2 – The Dilatory Duel.” The New York Sun.

## Managing the Plantation

In the early 1800s few of the changes that swept northern and western Maryland and Baltimore affected life in Saint Mary's County. While industrialization, urbanization, and diversified commercial agriculture developed to the north, southern Maryland remained committed to a slavery, tobacco, and wheat regime. Steamboats were introduced to the Patuxent and Potomac waterways by the 1820s. While the establishment of regular steamboat routes was beneficial to the Patuxent region, steamboat traffic alone could not boost a local economy solely dependent on two commercial crops. Further, beginning in the mid—18th century and continuing into the 19th century, many smaller creeks and harbors became filled with rubbish and sediment, and the upstream river channel began to silt in, requiring periodic dredging so that large boats could pass. By 1824, navigation by 250—ton seagoing vessels ended approximately 50 miles upriver, compared with the early 18th century when 300—ton vessels could go the same distance (Shomette 1995: 123) . The changing face of the river was not the only impediment to economic development in the Patuxent region. Baltimore and the western Maryland counties were fast developing as commercial centers, providing heavy competition with southern Maryland cash crops, and drawing many young families to emigrate from southern Maryland (Marks 1979).

During the first half of the 19th century farming activities at Sotterley changed little. The collapse of foreign markets for Chesapeake tobacco encouraged the encroachment of Baltimore merchants into southern Maryland plantation country. These merchants created a market outlet for wheat, and many farmers in St. Mary's County shifted to producing a mixture of wheat and tobacco. Following this trend, the crops grown at Sotterley were more diversified in the years before and after the Civil War (Marks 1979). The coming of steamboats to the tidewater region in the 1820's brought about little change; a shift in the location of the wharf, and more consistent transportation of crops to market.

The nature of slavery in southern Maryland during the 19th century did change somewhat from that of the 18th century as the staple crop system which supported the institution declined. Many scholars have noted that slavery as a labor system operated best with staple crops that brought good cash return, and required large and consistent inputs of labor year round. Wheat production which requires only seasonal inputs of labor and rarely generates the high returns of luxury staples like tobacco, favors a hired labor system. However, while gradual emancipation was noted in southern Maryland, and the free black population was larger in Maryland than in any other slave state, there remained a commitment to slavery in southern Maryland. Slave owners mixed tobacco and wheat production, rented slaves to smaller farmers for use in their fields, and held onto their slaves (Marks 1979, Fields 1985) However, one result was that the average slaveholding was lower in Maryland than most other slave states, and slave communities tended to span several plantations, and to include the free and the enslaved. Both the Briscoes and Billingsleys continued to farm Sotterley land with slave labor, and the slave community of this period appears to have grown following the Bowles occupation. Claims made by Briscoe and Billingsley in 1867 for emancipated slave property note that 53 slaves had lived at Sotterley, and 33 slaves were resident at the adjacent property. The presence of 86 slaves living within the Sotterley neighborhood places this community among the larger slave communities in the southern Maryland region. By 1860, 90% of all slave holders in Maryland owned fewer than 15 slaves, with half of all slave holders owning three or less. Only 15 owners, or .1% of all slave holders in Maryland held what amounted to a large slaveholding in the deep south—between 100 and 200 slaves (Fields 1985: 24-25). Thus while Maryland slaves in



*lives more as roads, waterways, and other construction was being undertaken by local governments. The government's labor force was coming from slaves, and it would be most probably that the hiring out of anyone to the government would have been called a bounty."*

\* \* \* \* \*

**D**avid Brown, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, author of two books about Sotterley's history, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Sotterley, interviewed John Hanson Briscoe as part of Sotterley's Oral History Project in 2007.

David Brown: *Okay, slavery. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe, as you said, owned as many as 52 slaves at one time or another. This was quite normal in this part of Maryland at that time. But then the Civil War broke out. What were his attitudes on slavery and the challenge that it was receiving at that time?*

John Hanson Briscoe: *"Well, the only account I can give you, is I know that two or three of his sons did go and join the Confederate Army. I know that he was an anti-abolitionist which told you that. Here he is, he has this labor force that was common at that time. Obviously a very dark part of our history, but it was not uncommon. He wasn't the only one who owned them, and that's how these landowners managed to have cheap labor to run a farm - and of course what is cheaper than slavery, when all you have to do is furnish them food and a place to sleep? My father did say that his grandfather Briscoe was very good to his slaves, as good as you can be to a slave, it's kind of an oxymoron, but he was kind to them, didn't mistreat them, and when they were able to go, many of them stayed for a while.*

*"Now keep in mind, when Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe married Emeline, they both agreed to create a tobacco farm, if it wasn't already a tobacco farm, and as a result of that, acquired and purchased over the years as many as 52 slaves. So of course they were there before, during, and after the Civil War. And the major work force was the accumulation and purchase of up to 53 slaves. You asked me who managed them. I don't know how much hands on management he had. Of course, he had sons. And his youngest son, my grandfather, was a good farmer, cause he was a farmer, and he probably worked the slaves and I guess Dr. Briscoe did have slaves that were there that he trusted would report to him basically.*

*"Agnes Kane Callum, her ancestor, Hillary Kane was the driver, very close to my great grandfather. He treated him very nicely. Allowed one of his daughters to be married up near the plantation. And allowed some of the children to listen to the music."<sup>10</sup>*

\* \* \* \* \*

**I**n a separate interview, genealogist Agnes Kane Callum stated the following: *"Here on this plantation they were sort of isolated, because I have never been able to find any cruelty - all I heard of was the pattyrollers, which were patrollers. They were dressed up like ghosts, I guess, in white sheets and they rode around from plantation to plantation - that was to keep the slaves in check, because at night they worked up until dark. At night they would go to another plantation visiting friends, their relatives. And these pattyrollers would be around to sort of frighten them. But they weren't frightening nobody because the people still went back and forth.*

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<sup>10</sup> John Hanson Briscoe. *Sotterley Oral History Project*. By David G. Brown. February 20, 2008.

*“What I think that you’re not seeing is any lynching, anything really cruel – there wasn’t even a jail in St. Mary’s County. Or if there was, they used somebody’s house for a jail – they locked the person up in the bedroom for two days or a week or so. So I haven’t found the documents or what have you. I went through tax lists, I spent seven years up there in the [Maryland State] Archives, just looking for material about St. Mary’s County – negative or positive. And I didn’t find anything. So some of the negative things that were going on in other counties – and it wasn’t that much, but it was enough, but I didn’t find that for St. Mary’s. And that was partly what I was looking for.*

*“And then when I concentrated on this plantation, I still didn’t find any. I almost didn’t find out that Dr. Briscoe’s two sons were the overseers. Usually the overseer had a straw-boss or someone directly beneath them, which would be a black. I don’t think that was necessary – everyone had an assignment, and every day you did the same thing. You worked in the field, the washhouse or the fine sewing or something. So their mind, instead of running away and ducking and hiding for years, they stayed here. And why they stayed after the war, I’ll never know.”<sup>11</sup>*



**6. An aerial view of Sotterley’s grounds today.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**

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<sup>11</sup> Agnes Kane Callum. *Sotterley Oral History Project*. By Meredith Taylor. April 21, 2008.

## The Briscoe Children

Dr. Briscoe and Emeline Dallam Briscoe had 14 children. Most southern plantation households had around a dozen children, similar to the Briscoes. Having so many children was a great risk to Emeline. There was a good chance for complications during childbirth, which is described from one southern woman as “the most severe trial of nature.” Children were helpful around the house, and became the pride of the families in the South. The legacies of families were passed down through many children.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>12</sup> Snader, “The Life of the Briscoe Women at Sotterley,” 5.

Having all of the children in the Briscoe family must have been very rewarding for Emeline. There was an especially close bond between mothers and daughters in the plantation household. Though the slaves and the servants helped take care of the children, in a technical sense, mothers were the primary role models for their daughters. Emeline probably took great care in teaching her five daughters to read, write, sew, and work in the garden. Emeline also had the responsibility to teach the girls proper etiquette and behavior since they were not in public very much. Living so far from other people, the girls could not just fall into the behavior that was proper. They had to be told and reminded for when they had visitors or went out on outings with the family.<sup>13</sup>

A New York Times article written in 1911, after the purchase of Sotterley by Herbert L. Satterlee, spoke of the Briscoe children as follows:

“Their sons rode the best horses in Maryland, their daughters were attended by the most servants and driven in the costliest coaches. New York, Baltimore, and Washington knew them well, and the then wealthy people of those centers greatly envied the prodigality with which the aristocrats from these plantations spent money upon their occasional visits.”<sup>14</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Not much is known of the following Briscoe children:

#### **Walter, Jr.**

Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe, Jr. was born in 1827, the first of the Briscoe children. He died at the age of 13 years, three months, and 20 days in 1840, a victim of tuberculosis.

#### **Margaret Ann**

Margaret Ann, born in 1829. She married Robert Hanson Wise in 1861, and died in 1902. Her grandson, Dr. Walter Dent Wise, was partner to Dr. Ford Loker in Baltimore and her great-grandson, also a Dr. Wise, was for 12 years the immediate neighbor of this chapter’s author, in the Roland Park section of Baltimore.

#### **Sallie**

Sarah E. (Sallie) was born ca. 1843. Sallie E. Briscoe received special concessions in her parents’ will, including \$3500, the piano at Sotterley, her bedroom furniture there, a silver tea set, and ‘a home at Sotterley,’ because she was unmarried when her parents died. She later married Thomas Bond who had been married to her sister, Susan Adelaide, after Susan died.<sup>15</sup>



7. Sallie Briscoe.  
Courtesy of Southern Maryland  
Studies Center, CSM-La Plata

#### **Susan**

Susan Adelaide was born in 1844, and in 1866 married Thomas H. Bond. At one point, Dr. Briscoe acquired an additional three hundred acre farm

<sup>13</sup> Snader, “The Life of the Briscoe Women at Sotterley,” 5.

<sup>14</sup> “The Morgans at the Plymouth Rock of the South,” *The New York Times* (New York, NY), Feb. 12, 1911.

<sup>15</sup> “Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe,” *St. Mary’s Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

called Hector's and later sold this to his son-in-law Thomas Bond (this being the currently state-owned "Bond farm" located between Sotterley and Greenwell State Park). In turn, Dr. Briscoe bought from Bond the 320-acre Half Pone farm, also located on Steer Horn Neck Road (the current home of many Briscoe descendants and relatives). Susan died in 1882.

Mabel Ingalls: *"She also told us a delightful tale, very indicative of the times I think about a wretched horse-hair sofa, which was the only piece of furniture left in the house when my parents bought it. Mrs. Bond said, "Oh! That is the sofa on which Mr. Bond first addressed me and then my sister and then, after her death, me again." Though I did not realize what that term 'addressed' meant, it was explained to me afterwards that this was his way of saying: 'He popped the question.'<sup>16</sup>*

### **Daniel**

Daniel S., died as an infant.

### **Mary**

Mary Ellen (May) was born in 1849 and died in 1875.



**8. Front view of Sotterley Plantation, circa 1906.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**

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<sup>16</sup> Mabel Ingalls, "September 1969 Tour of Sotterley Mansion," *Sotterley Archives*.



## The Civil War

The Briscoes, one of the most prominent planter families in Southern Maryland during the Civil War, were anti-abolitionists and sympathetic toward the Confederacy. A few days after the Confederacy's formation, the *St. Mary's Beacon* reported the formation of "Smallwood's Vigilantes," one of many militia-like organizations being formed across the South. The group's purpose would be to patrol Southern Maryland for escaped slaves. Doctor Briscoe was listed as the group's surgeon, but it is unknown how active the group was, if at all, or how active a participant Dr. Briscoe was in its proceedings.

A week after Lincoln's call for troops following the bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, and only days after rioting between Baltimore citizens and Northern troops, what was said to be the largest public meeting ever held in St. Mary's County saw eight hundred citizens assemble in Leonardtown on April 23rd for the purpose of "considering the present crisis and adopting measures for the defense of our rights, the security of our homes and the maintenance of the honor of our state." Chapman Billingsley, Briscoe's neighbor, was one of the organizers. Secessionist sentiment was in full fury that day. The meeting resolved that the county commissioners should be asked to provide \$10,000 to purchase arms with which the citizens could defend themselves. The meeting sent a committee of three, including Walter Briscoe, to secure the commissioners' agreement, which they did.

Though Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe never, to the best of what research and common folklore say, actively supported the Confederacy himself, four of his sons crossed the Potomac to fight for the Confederacy. In all, they and some 20,000 Marylanders fought for the Confederate States in the war. The Briscoe sons' activities were generally known, and the family, like many others in St. Mary's County, was under suspicion from Northern troops.

The Union officers who came to St. Mary's considered its slave owners to be "unscrupulous" and "secessionists." Dr. Briscoe's granddaughter Sarah Thomas said that when Union troops visited the family hid Doctor Briscoe in the attic over the kitchen out of the fear that he would be rude to them and provoke retribution on Sotterley.<sup>17</sup>

Uniontown was the old name for the area across from Snellman's store on Route 245. Union troops were quartered there.

Herbert Knott, Sotterley's longtime groundskeeper, said, "During the Civil War for quite a while, just how long, I don't know, they named it Uniontown. Snellman's used to have a T shirt with their name and Uniontown, Maryland on it. My father and mother used to get letters from some of the old ones from time to time and in place of having Hollywood on there they'd put Uniontown."

John Hanson Briscoe: *"Great-grandfather Briscoe, as I said, was anti-abolitionist, but I know of no information where he wrote to Lincoln or visited and said how terrible it was, or joined any groups. It just said he was anti-abolitionist. Now whether he belonged to some quiet secret committees; I can't say that he didn't, but I don't know that he did either."*

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<sup>17</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

David Brown: *“Okay, let’s talk a little bit about the Civil War period. Was there anything you heard from your father about Walter and Emeline's attitude toward the war?”*

John Hanson Briscoe: *“No, I don’t know that but it is reasonable to assume they were southern sympathizers; obviously being anti-abolitionist and owning slaves. It’s reasonable to assume they sympathized with the south. Two or three of their sons, I don’t have the exact details, went south and joined the Confederate Army. One of them was with Mosby’s Rangers. But one of them, one of [my great] uncles, was a southern sympathizer. Whether he was in the Confederate Army at that time or not, but he would go to Leonardtown, and of course, sometimes the Union soldiers were in Leonardtown, sometimes they weren’t. Well, he heard they were in town, the Union soldiers, and he wanted to go to town for whatever reason. So he decided so he wouldn’t get in trouble, he put on a Union uniform. Confederates had Union uniforms and they just interchanged them sometimes. Well, my father said that his uncle went to Leonardtown and had a uniform on, a Union uniform, but he was arrested and stopped and questioned. Dad said the reason why he was that he had the wrong gloves on. The Union uniform had certain gloves and he had on Confederate gloves.*

*“He was released. He was not incarcerated, but he was questioned. He apparently convinced the Union people who stopped him that he was not a Confederate soldier, otherwise they would have arrested him. He got out of it, but my father just laughed and he said he had everything right except the gloves. They were Confederate gloves and apparently there were certain gloves that the Confederates wore and they didn’t match. That’s the only thing I know about it. They definitely were southern sympathizers. My great grandfather, I believe, did resist allowing any of the blacks to join the Union Army. I know that President Lincoln at one time conscripted some of them but I don’t know of any real controversy as far as my great grandfather was concerned over that. He resisted of course any of his slaves going and becoming Union soldiers for obvious reasons. Not only because he sympathized with the South but he would be losing labor force. Because that’s what really devastated the farm once the Civil War was over and the slaves were freed. Of course a big part of the plantation life you know, all the work was done by the slaves. And they just took off; the majority of them did. So that obviously seriously affected the economic stability of the farm, and it was getting rough then.*

Audio 2. John Hanson Briscoe on his ancestors’ sympathies during the Civil War:



John Hanson Briscoe: *“I’d heard that when the Union troops did come there to Sotterley, they mainly took grain, food and provisions, supplies and perhaps took silver and China, They kind of raided the place a little bit, and took things like that. But as far as I know there was no activity concerning their trying to recruit any of Dr. Briscoe's slaves.”*

Agnes Kane Callum was born and raised in Baltimore, the fifth of twelve children. Her great-grandparents were slaves owned by Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe and Colonel Chapman Billingsley. Agnes served on Sotterley’s board of trustees, and is responsible for much of the current research about the Kane family’s time at Sotterley. She writes:

Despite the many vigilante groups in Southern Maryland and other obstacles facing them, black men from local plantations such as Sotterley volunteered for the Union Army. From the start of the Civil War, black men tried to enlist, but were not accepted until 1863, when President Lincoln ordered the formation of the United States Colored Troops. By October 19, 1863, recruiting had begun in earnest for slave volunteers. A Lieutenant Coates took station at

Mill Stone Landing, St. Mary's County. This location was vital to the transportation of troops to the battle fields of Virginia and to the Department of the South. About this time, Lieutenant White went on to Benedict, Charles County, Maryland, where a training camp was set-up for military instructions. This was known as Camp Stanton.

A few miles south of Camp Stanton where hundreds of Black men were drilling, marching, building huts, roads and pathways for their regiment, was St. Mary's County with over 6,500 slaves. The plantation owners were depending upon the labor of the slaves for their agricultural labor. General Birney was aware of the Black manpower and sent his officers to various parts of the county to recruit. Lieutenant Eben White and a squad of soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment approached the "S....." plantation "The Plains" where they encountered hostility in its worst form

"S....." was a Confederate sympathizer, as were many whites in St. Mary's County.



9. Colonel "S....." "The Plains," in wintertime. Date unknown.  
Courtesy of the St. Mary's County Historical Society

He had a son who was a soldier in the Confederate Army and who was home on a furlough. Lieutenant White and the Black soldiers were seen by "S....." as they marched up the road to the house. "S....." and his son came to the door and told the Lieutenant to get off of their property and to stop encouraging the slaves to leave. An argument ensued and "S....." shot the Lieutenant point blank three times. "S....."'s son turned the gun on Pvt. Bantum and shot him causing a dangerous wound. Pvt. Black returned to Camp Stanton. Later that day, officers came to recover the Lieutenant's body. They found the "S....."s had fled and the Lieutenant's body was in the same place where he had fallen. The "S....."s had shot the Lieutenant in the head as a coup de grace.

Immediately, the officials of the Union Army ordered the arrest of the two men for murder. Neighbors, friends and family sequestered the "S....."s and maneuvered them safely

across the river to Virginia. They remained in the South for the duration of the Rebellion. (Chronicles of St. Mary's, July 1962 Vol. 10, No. 7) By 1866, Officers of the Regiment heard that "S....." had returned to his plantation in Southern Maryland. They hoped that justice would be served now that the Sothorons were back.

Several months later, after the murder of Lt. Eben White, the Federal Government seized the "S....."'s plantation, and authorized free Blacks to work the land. "The Plains" was in the hands of the Union Army under the Bureau of Refugees, Freedman and Abandoned Lands Act until after the Civil War.<sup>18</sup>

Another slaveowner, John F. Dent of St. Mary's County, was very vocal about the method Col. Birney used in recruiting. Dent was a representative in the Maryland General Assembly for St. Mary's County. During the time of the General Assembly he resided in Annapolis and wrote daily to his wife and daughters. Some of his letters survived and his attitude and foresight concerning the recruiting of Negroes in and near his home was disturbing to him. In his letters to his wife, he often spoke of the slaves and their status. In a letter he wrote to his wife, he said, "I saw last night two soldiers, who were just from Benedict, who told me that the Negroes were dying like sheep there-that they had some disease, didn't know what killed them very fast. He said, "There wasn't enough money in the United States to pay him to re-enlist." He said, "I enlisted to help to restore the Union, not to free Negroes."<sup>19</sup>



**10. A slave cabin at "The Plains."  
Courtesy of the St. Mary's County Historical Society**

Dent was distraught about the tactics of the recruiters, who were called "Birney's Boys." Dent said that there was a recruiting station in Leonardtown, the County seat, and one in Chaptico, in addition, to others around the County. He noticed that slave recruitment was successful in Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties. He said, "Many a slave went off with them," meaning the recruiters.<sup>20</sup> Dent was probably representative of many of the slaveowners of Southern Maryland. Most

of his investments were in slaves and land. Before the Civil War, Dent owned 18 slaves and his land was valued at \$29,000. In 1870, the acreage of real estate was substantially reduced and his personal worth was \$2,300. He fared better than most because many of them lost their real and personal estates. After the War, Dent entered a claim against the Federal Government for the loss of his slaves and their productivity. He did not succeed in this case.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Colored Volunteers of Maryland Civil War: 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment United States Colored Troops, 1863-1866*, Agnes Kane Callum, 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> *Chronicles of St. Mary's County*, Vol. 28, No. #11, November 1980, p. 257

<sup>20</sup> *St. Mary's County Chronicles*, July 1979, Vol. 27, No. #7

<sup>21</sup> *St. Mary's County, Chronicles*, April 1979, Vol. 27, No. #4

## Briscoes in the Confederacy

When the Civil War broke out, several of the Briscoe children crossed the Potomac to fight for the Confederacy. These are those sons who did fight for the South:

### Henry

Dr. Henry Briscoe was born ca. 1832. He married Esther Cottman. He died sometime before 1885.

Henry lived a life typical of the son of a wealthy plantation owner. He was taught how to handle an axe, to shoot, to fish, and to farm and very likely received the benefits of a formal education, with tutors or in a boarding school.

He received his doctorate in medicine in 1855 from the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore. He began practicing medicine in Chaptico, boarding with an elderly relative, Eleanor B. Briscoe and locating his office in Mr. Robert Grey's Hotel.<sup>22</sup>

6. Esther Cottman, Henry Briscoe's Wife  
Courtesy of Southern Maryland Studies Center,  
CSM-La Plata



11. Henry Briscoe  
Courtesy of Southern Maryland Studies  
Center, CSM-La Plata

Henry held sacred the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution, but the vindictiveness of the North infuriated many southern Marylanders and, in 1862, Henry crossed the Potomac to serve in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Dr. Henry Briscoe was commissioned in the Confederate army in 1862 and assigned as Acting Assistant Surgeon General Hospital #2 in Richmond, Virginia. He was appointed Assistant Surgeon on November 24, 1862. As an assistant surgeon, Henry was on the field during battles performing triage on wounded soldiers and getting them ready for transport to the army hospitals. In the thick of battle, Henry was hit by stray bullets at least twice.<sup>23</sup>

In July, 1863, Henry was ordered to Charlotte, North Carolina and was later stationed at James Island, South Carolina.<sup>24</sup> In 1863 he was transferred to Wilmington, North Carolina, to organize a military hospital there.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel D. Hartzler, "Medical Doctors of Maryland in C.S.A. Md.," 1937.

<sup>23</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

<sup>24</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

He was then assigned in 1864 to the 76<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment where he remained for the duration of the war.<sup>25</sup>

Assistant Surgeon Briscoe surrendered with his troops at Appomattox Court House in Virginia, but was paroled on April 10, 1865. Signing his parole, he listed his former residence in St. Mary's County as his destination.<sup>26</sup>

After the war, Henry Briscoe returned home and continued to practice medicine in Chaptico. Eventually, he entered the Confederate Veterans' Home in Pikesville, Maryland. No exact date is known for his death, but his father's will in 1885 makes mention of his "late son Henry".<sup>27</sup>

### **Chapman**

Chapman was born ca. 1834 and married Mary Lord Quayles.

Chapman Briscoe served as a sergeant in the Confederate Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Maryland Infantry.<sup>28</sup> He suffered a life-threatening illness during his year of service, and after recovery received a clerkship in Richmond.<sup>29</sup>

Briscoe, Chapman B. 4th Sgt., Co. H(2nd), 1st Md. Enl. Richmond 6/18/61. Ab. Sick in camp 10/29-31/61. Ab. Sick in hospital 11/4-12/31/61. Applied for Clerkship 11/7/61. Paid Richmond 7/17/62. Ordered to report to W.W. Crump, Asst. Secretary of Treasury 4/26/64 and 3/30/65. NFR.<sup>30</sup>

Chapman stayed in Richmond following the war's end.<sup>31</sup>

### **David**

David Stone was born ca. 1841, and was a Confederate soldier and sailor, and at one point a member of Mosby's Rangers.

Briscoe, David Stone: Pvt., Co. H(1<sup>st</sup>), 1<sup>st</sup> Md. Inf. B. Sotterley, St. Mary's Co. Enl. Richmond 6/18/61. Present 9-12/61. Discharged 6/18/62. Paid 6/23/62. Appointed Acting Master, C.C. Navy. Master of School Ship. Enl. Co. D, 43<sup>rd</sup> Bn. Va. Cav. As Pvt., date unknown. Elected 3rd Lt. 3/29/64. Paroled Winchester 4/22/65. 5'9", fair complexion, dark hair, grey eyes. Member, John S. Mosby and Franklin Buchanan Camp's Confederate Veterans, Baltimore, and Murray Confederate Association, 1909.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>25</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

<sup>26</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

<sup>27</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

<sup>28</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

<sup>29</sup> "Sotterley Plantation: A Generation Divided, A Battle Joined," *Civil War Trails*

<sup>30</sup> Robert J. Driver Jr., *First and Second Maryland Infantry, CSA*. (Berwyn Heights: Heritage Books, Inc.), 2004.

<sup>31</sup> "Sotterley Plantation: A Generation Divided, A Battle Joined," *Civil War Trails*

<sup>32</sup> Robert J. Driver Jr., *First and Second Maryland Infantry, CSA*. (Berwyn Heights: Heritage Books, Inc.), 2004.



12. An older David Stone Briscoe.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

In March 1864, David Briscoe was commissioned as a third lieutenant in Company D, 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Virginia Cavalry. Due to casualties in the unit, David became the company commander by the end of the war.<sup>33</sup>

He married twice, first in 1869 to Mrs. Ellen Forbes (Key) Bruce (with the ceremony performed by his brother, Rev. James Briscoe)<sup>34</sup>, and second in 1872 to Ella Straith of Charleston, Virginia. He was a lawyer, and died at his home in Baltimore, June 1914. He is buried at St. John's Episcopal Church in Baltimore.



13. David Stone Briscoe  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

## John

John Edgar, born 1847, died in 1901, in Baltimore. He was a purser on the Weems Steamboat Line.

On Christmas Day 1863, John Briscoe, then sixteen, was arrested in Leonardtown and charged with attempting to purchase goods for the enemy and lying about it. John told the authorities that he had done nothing more than place an order for gloves for his brothers David, who was then in the South. Whatever his real purpose, John was released, but the warning was clear.<sup>35</sup>

What follows is the report of his arrest:

Head Qrs. Cavalry Detachment  
Leonardtown, MD  
December 26, 1863

Sirs,

I have the honor to report that I arrested (by your order), Mr. John E. Briscoe, a citizen of St. Mary's County Md on the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> Ultimo. The circumstances of his arrest are as follows. He was arrested in the house of Mr. Simms, where I was visiting, on suspicion of attempting to purchase goods for the use of the enemy. He told me in answer to a question asked him after his arrest that he had not any Brothers or Relatives in the Confederate Army

<sup>33</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

<sup>34</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

<sup>35</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

and that his visit to Leonardtown, MD. Was partly for pleasure and to buy a pair of kid gloves. He afterward told me that he had four Brothers South & He believed one of them was in the Medical Purveyors Office at Richmond, that he had gone there since the Commencement of the War, and that he would that he would take his oath that none of them were in the so called Confederate Army, he also still further admitted that he came to Leonardtown, that day with the order on Mr. Simms for six pairs of Kid Gloves. Said order being from D.S. Briscoe, his brother, who was in Virginia. I enclose to you a letter which he gave to me, as evidence in his behalf.

I am Sir,  
Very Respectfully  
Your Most Obt. Servant  
F.W. Dickerson 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. 5<sup>th</sup> Cavl.

Lieut. Jon. Mix  
Commanding Cavalry  
Leonardtown, Md.

Examination of J.E. Briscoe, a citizen of St. Mary's County, MD. Charged with attempting to purchase goods for the use of the enemies of the United States & attempting to deceive the Officer (Lt. Dickerson 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry) who arrested him in regard to his (J.E. Briscoe's) real intentions by telling him (Lt. Dickerson) falsehoods in regard to his business in Leonardtown, MD, his family connections.

Question: What is your name?

Answer: John E. Briscoe.

Q- Where do you reside?

A- On the Patuxent River.

Q- What occupation or profession do you follow?

A- I have been assisting my father on the farm since October.

Q- How old are you?

A- Sixteen on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of last May.

Q- What was your business in town yesterday?

A- I came partly on a pleasure trip and partly to bring an order to Mr. Simms.

Q- What was the order for?

A- For six pairs of kid gloves.

Q- Who were the gloves for?

A- For D.S. Briscoe.

Q- Where is D.S. Briscoe?

A- I think in Richmond, VA.

Q- Is he a soldier in the service of the so called Confederate Government?

A- He is not.

Q- How did you receive this order?

A- It was given to me by a gentleman who requested me to give it to Mr. Simms.

Q- What was the name of this gentleman referred?

A- I refuse to give his name.

Q- How did you expect to get the goods to D.S. Briscoe?

A- I was only to give the order to Mr. Simms, not to receive the goods.

Q- Did you tell Mr. Simms who gave you the order?



A- I did not.  
 Q- How did he know who to deliver the goods to?  
 A- I do not know.  
 Q- How many brothers do you have?  
 A- Six.  
 Q- Where are they?  
 A- One at home, one in Baltimore and the other four in the South.  
 Q- How many of those in the south are in Public Service?  
 A- I know of but one who is, the others may be.  
 Q- What is the one you know to be in Public Service doing?  
 A- He is in the Medical Purveyors Dept.  
 Q- By Mr. Dickerson, was you afraid of being noticed when you delivered the order yesterday?  
 A- I had the order and did not wish anybody to know it.  
 Q- Did you say to Mr. Simms that you were afraid of the U.S. Officers noticing you were there?  
 A- No, I did not.  
 Q- Did you give Mr. Simms any other papers besides the order for Gloves?  
 A- I did not.  
 Q- Did Mr. Simms take any letters or papers out of your side pocket?  
 A- He did not.  
 Q- Did you not hold your Coat open and say it is here?  
 A- I did not.  
 Q- Did Mr. Simms say to you that they were not noticing you & for you to go out & sit down?  
 A- I did not hear him.  
 Q- What other persons were in the room when you had this private conversation with him?  
 A- I think either a Negro, Man or Woman.  
 Q- What did Mr. Simms do with that order after you gave it to him?  
 A- He tore it up.  
 Q- What was his answer to the order?  
 A- He said he had no gloves & he did not think there were any in town.  
 Q-What was your answer when I asked you yesterday if you had any brothers in the Confederate Army?  
 A- I said no- I had not.  
 Q- Did you not tell me after your arrest that you had contradicted yourself and that you had brothers in the Confederate Army?  
 A- I did not.  
 Q- Did you not tell me that you would take your oath that none of your brothers were in the Confederate Service?  
 A- Yes, Sir.  
 Q- Have your brothers gone south since the breaking out of the rebellion?  
 A- Three went in June- 1861 and the others Aug. 1862.  
 Q- About how often have you had communication with your brothers since they went south?  
 A- Once, about a year ago.<sup>36</sup>

**B**ounty rolls of slaves joining the Seventh Regiment United States Colored Troops from 1864-1866 list fifty-five slaves from St. Mary's County, Maryland. One of those slaves listed was George Briscoe, owned by Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe of Sotterley Plantation, St. Mary's County, Maryland. Originally born George Barnes, he was married to another Briscoe slave, Georgiana Shaw Barnes. The exact date of George Briscoe's flight from Sotterley is

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<sup>36</sup> "Transcription of the Arrest Report and Interrogation of John E. Briscoe," *Sotterley Archives*, December 26, 1863.

unknown, but it is believed to be in October of 1863, near to the time he enlisted with the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the United States Colored Troops.

7 U.S.C.T.  
 George Briscoe  
 Co. C, 7 Reg't U.S. Col'd Inf.  
 Appears on  
**Company Descriptive Book**  
 of the organization named above.  
**DESCRIPTION.**  
 Age 26 years; height 5 feet 2 inches.  
 Complexion Sole  
 Eyes Blk; hair Blk  
 Where born St. Mary's Md.  
 Occupation Farmer  
**ENLISTMENT.**  
 When Oct: 29, 1863.  
 Where St. Mary's Md.  
 By whom Dr. W. Stone; term 3 yrs.  
 Remarks: Mustered in at Camp  
 Stanton, Md. Nov. 5. 63. by  
 Dr. Col. Harshbarger.  
 Dr. W. Stone  
 Captain

Enlistment also marked the time George Barnes's name changed to George Briscoe. The Army made the adjustment, as it was their policy that the enlistee's name be recorded with the name of his owner.<sup>37</sup>

On August 25th, 1864, the Seventh Regiment USCT set up camp as a reserve for the unit in the trenches at Petersburg, Virginia. Soon they were ordered into the trenches and stayed there for two days, pinned down by steady rifle fire. After that, the reserve unit alternated every two days doing duty in the trenches and constructing fortifications. The Union troops laid siege to Petersburg for ten months.

It may be noted here that George Briscoe, the Sotterley slave, and Henry Briscoe, the Sotterley owner's son, served their respective armies on the same day at the same site in Petersburg, Virginia.

The 7th Regiment left Virginia in May, 1865 to serve eighteen months in Texas where the Regiment was divided into units to serve in different areas. George Briscoe's Company I was sent to Indianola, Texas where people were hostile to Black troops who served as police and who were stationed in the Court House.

In September 1866, the 7th Regiment was discharged. Former slaves had mustered into the Army for three years or for the duration of the Rebellion and now were given the order to move out to return to Baltimore from where many of the troops had come. Sadly, though, cholera broke out in Indianola, Texas, killing several soldiers who had made it through the war years. One such man was George Briscoe, age 26, formerly of Sotterley Plantation in St. Mary's County, Maryland.<sup>38</sup>

14. George Briscoe's Enlistment Card with the USCT.  
 Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>37</sup> *Colored Volunteers of Maryland Civil War: 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment United States Colored Troops, 1863-1866*, Agnes Kane Callum, 2.

<sup>38</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998



15. An unidentified soldier of the USCT who served at the Battle of the Petersburg, where George Briscoe and Henry Briscoe also fought.

Courtesy of the Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

## Briscoe Children Who Went Into Academia

Before accounting for the next group of children, it may be interesting to note Dr. Briscoe operated a school for girls on Sotterley Plantation. This was not normally done at that time. The ripple effects of this school for girls can be traced to several modern educational institutions: St. Mary's Ryken High School, Amherst College, and St. Mary's College of Maryland, and the Leonardtown campus of the College of Southern Maryland. The story behind these connections now follows:

Public schools did not exist in the colonies nor in the states for many years after the formation of the Union, in fact until after the War Between the States. Early attempts to meet this problem in Southern Maryland took the form of small schools wherever there was a group of well-to-do planters. This was the beginning of home or parish schools or neighborhood schools, as the larger ones were called.<sup>39</sup> Walter and Emeline Briscoe ran one such private school for girls at Sotterley, which many daughters of neighbors and relatives from other counties attended. Unusual for his time period, Dr. Briscoe was committed to education for both boys and girls. While sons of wealthy planters were often sent off to boarding schools and colleges, girls were prepared for household and child-rearing responsibilities.<sup>40</sup>



16. The schoolhouse, on the right, and the South Gatehouse at Sotterley.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

The school at Sotterley was run by Miss Mary Blades. She was born about 1815 in Caroline County, Maryland and was the only child of Levin Blades and Margaret Willis. In 1829 her father died and Mary was placed under the guardianship of John Leeds Kerr (father of Sophia Leeds Kerr, wife of George Singleton Leigh).<sup>41</sup> In 1830, the Leigh Family conducted a private school at Woodberry (near the site of the current Captain Walter Duke Elementary School in Leonardtown).

Their advertisement read "St. Mary's Academy for Young Ladies." This school was taught by Miss Mary Blades.

<sup>39</sup> Edwin Beitzell, "Early Schools of Southern Maryland," St. Mary's Chronicles, March, 1957, 7.

<sup>40</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," St. Mary's Chronicles, Winter 1998.

<sup>41</sup> Linda Davis Reno, "The Teachers of 'Woodbury'," Chronicles of St. Mary's, Winter 2013, 24-26.

Mary Blades, it is believed, was recommended to Dr. Walter Briscoe of Sotterley and others as a suitable teacher by Sophia Leeds Kerr Leigh. Exactly when she came to Sotterley is not known, but it was before 1846. According to the folks at Sotterley, "In 1846, the St. Mary's [Female] Seminary (the predecessor of St. Mary's College of Maryland) was founded, and Miss Blades was offered a teaching job, which she declined due to the low salary. At about the same time, Dr. Briscoe established a boarding school on Sotterley property with Mary Blades as teacher."<sup>42</sup>

A Briscoe relative, Maria Briscoe Croker, wrote about St. Mary's County, and Sotterley in particular, in 1934. This is what Maria Briscoe Croker says about the Sotterley school for girls.

"Miss Mary Blades, Dr. Briscoe's assistant, was an interesting person. While a martinet in the school room she possessed remarkable charm for the opposite sex. Miss Blades was loved by several eminent divines of the Episcopal Church, including the Revs Hawkins and Buck. This popular lady bestowed her hand upon Col. Richard Miles of St. Mary's. She became a convert to his faith, that of the Roman Catholic Church. The land upon which Saint Mary's Academy, Leonardtown, now stands was her legacy to the church of her adoption. This property at one time belonged to the Blackistone family.

"Some glimpses of life in the school room at Sotterley may be found in the letters of a remarkable lady, Miss Kate Thomas, now ninety-seven years old, who was a pupil there. She says: "I wish I could aid you in recalling to my mind facts and events of my school life at Sotterley. I was very happy there. As soon as my mother and father bade me dry up my 'homesick tears' when they left Susan and me there playing with a lot of strange children. I was not quite ten years old and now that I am ninety-five (1932), you may readily believe that what memory paints to me in sunshiny dreams may not be of the least bit of interest when revealed to others.



17. Junior docents re-enacting as some of the Briscoe school's pupils.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

"Dr. Briscoe's eldest daughter had been graduated at Bishop Doane's famous school (Albany) and he needed an instructor for the large family of boys and girls with which he was blessed. Miss Mary Blades of "The Eastern Shore" was governess while I was there and she was highly esteemed for her various "qualifying" qualities. All of Dr. Briscoe's sons except Henry and Chapman were her pupils, as were all the daughters ranging from Jeanette, a goodly

<sup>42</sup> Reno, "The Teachers of 'Woodbury'", 26.

number you may think. We started in English Grammar that first day. I think we must have made quick progress, for I remember that when I entered Saint Mary's Seminary two years afterwards I was put in the class with big girls and did not stumble in parsing "Young Night Thoughts." Grammar was so different from what is taught now. I can make young people of the present day laugh when I repeat to them Miss Blades emphatic way of putting Kirkman's Grammar lessons into our heads, I can never forget them.



**18. The Briscoe schoolhouse.**  
Photo courtesy of Historic Sotterley

“There was a nice little schoolroom just out of the front yard. There was a little narrow boarder in front of it and we were allowed to plant flowers for ourselves. There were a few boarding pupils at the time I was there, I can recall your Aunt Betty and Nannie and her sister Betty Bruce Briscoe from old "Hill Serene" Charles County; Kate Harris from Leonardtown, Nannie Webster from Calvert County and Nannie Crane from Charles County. I think these were all at that time, but there were many other girls that were taught there at different years. It was a favor, I think, if a home like the Briscoe home offered means also of education.

“There were several teachers that came and went after Miss Blade’s day. One of our amusements was dancing, as soon as school was dismissed. Susie Harris who was a sweet-toned musician had learned from real old time negroes to play on a comb, and was kindly willing to furnish music many times for the dancers. Living in the village (Leonardtown) she had become familiar with all the popular dances of the day; "Forward Toe," "Hands Around," etc. We thought it a beautiful sport. Dr. Briscoe thought it was very foolish. If he were living now perhaps he might say the same of basketball and other new games. In spite of all this fun we had some good religious training from the pious and honored heads of the house. We children used to fancy that Miss Blades had sort of pious training too, for the Rector of the Parish was often seen to hand her an interesting book to be talked over later.

“Miss Blades completed her fascinating appearance with a crown of hair composed of artificial puffs- a fashion of that day. It was her custom each morning to walk in the beautiful old garden. Once in passing under a lilac tree, one of the loosely fastened puffs clung to a lead and hung suspended over the pathway Miss Blades passed on unconscious of her loss. A few moments later a group of jolly girls came that way and the puff was discovered by Betty B., a merry and mischievous tease. Betty could not resist the temptation for some fun. Later when school had been called, the girls busy with lessons and Miss Blades seated primly on her chair Betty arose and audaciously twirled the poising puff before the eyes of the astonished girls. Its ownership was recognized immediately and the giggles that followed were suppressed with difficulty by the chagrined teacher. She wisely decided to take little notice of this delinquency- but Betty was never forgiven.

“Dr. Briscoe's daughter Jeannette, Mrs. James Richard Thomas, became the principal of St. Mary's Seminary at St. Mary's City, the school founded by act of Legislature 1839, to honor the founders of Maryland. Mrs. Thomas was highly successful in her management of this school. She was succeeded as principal by her daughter, Mrs. John H.G. Lilburn, affectionately called "Mrs. Lizzie". Her daughter Mrs. John B. Parran was also a teacher at St. Mary's. These women exerted a wide and ennobling influence on the young girls who attended this school from all sections of the state.”<sup>43</sup>

No known records exist of how many girls attended the Briscoes’ school in total over the years it was in operation, or what became of them afterwards. As for the Briscoes’ schoolteacher, in September of 1852, amongst great religious controversy and scandal at the St. Mary’s Female Seminary, Mary Blades, an Episcopalian, was offered and accepted the position of Principal of the School.

The Briscoe daughters were very fortunate to be educated, for this was not that common around the South. Not until 1850 did girls growing up on southern plantations have more opportunities to be educated as did boys. The oldest daughter, Margaret, had already been

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<sup>43</sup> Maria Briscoe Croker, *Tales and Traditions of Old St. Mary's County* (Reistertown: Whitmore Publishing Company, Inc.), 1934.

educated at Bishop Doane's prestigious school in Albany. The education of the girls made their leisure time more enjoyable for themselves. Girls from the time of the Briscoes were said to be reading works by Sir Walter Scott, James Fenimore Cooper, and other writers of the like. The Briscoe girls knew more about the arts and literature which added to their standing as social women.<sup>44</sup>

Miss Blades would teach the usual geography, grammar, and history in addition to reading, penmanship, and simple arithmetic to young girls (as young as ten) who would come from Charles and Calvert Counties.<sup>45</sup> But it has also been said that Miss Blades would often talk about interesting books she had been given to read by the rector of the local parish. Mrs. Kate Thomas, who attended the school, remembers maintaining a beautiful garden outside the small classroom in Sotterley's front yard.<sup>46</sup>

At least some of the Briscoe sons also attended classes under Mary Blades. Classes were held in a room somewhere in the front of the property, most likely in what is now called the north gatehouse.<sup>47</sup>

The Briscoes relied on the plantation's slaves to take care of the school and students, especially those students who boarded at Sotterley. Elsa Bond, a spinner and a laundress, tended to the laundering needs of the family and students. Although the slaves were not allowed to attend the school or learn to read and write, Hilry Kane's son Frank was responsible for lighting the fire in the schoolhouse and keeping the classroom clean.<sup>48</sup>

Agnes Kane Callum: *"This was a self-sufficient plantation. Now, one of them was Joe, they called him Joseph but his name was Joe. And his job was to go to that school every morning and dust, because they burned wood in that stove, and then dust and start a fire for the children that Dr. Briscoe had here as boarders. Dr. Briscoe had a boarding school here. And Joe came and said every morning he would go to this schoolhouse and they would sing a song, they would play music, and that's how they would start the day off. And he loved that music so well he would kneel down on the outside of the window and listen to them play and that way he learned how to play the banjo and the violin. And after he was grown he played in a lot of social affairs around the country—birthday parties and benefits for the church and whatever.*

*"Joe is the one that was kneeling outside of the window of the school and he could hear, and he'd pick up music by ear. And he also did a lot in the quarters, in the slave quarters. He entertained them. And I guess they entertained him while he was learning how to play. But I understand that he made his own banjo."<sup>49</sup>*

For some sense of scale of the school and plantation household, the tax list of 1832 lists Dr. Briscoe and his wife maintaining an academy and grammar school with 13 pupils, and eleven slaves.<sup>50</sup> Eighteen years later in 1850, there were 20 family members, teachers, and boarders living in the plantation house. This figure included Walter and Emeline, 11 of their

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<sup>44</sup> Snader, "The Life of the Briscoe Women of Sotterley," 6.

<sup>45</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

<sup>46</sup> "Miss Mary Blades," *St. Mary's County Historical Society*.

<sup>47</sup> Jeanne K. Pirtle, *Images of America: Sotterley Plantation* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing), 2013.

<sup>48</sup> "A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland," *The Maryland State Archive and the University of Maryland College Park* (Annapolis: The University of Maryland College Park Press), 2007.

<sup>49</sup> Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project*, By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.

<sup>50</sup> "Walter Stone Hanson Briscoe, M.D.," *St. Mary's County Historical Society*.



children, four girls aged 11 to 16, a woman of 45, and two women in their 60s, one of whom was Mary Blades.<sup>51</sup> The census indicates that Mary Blades was still a resident of Sotterley in 1850, and 7 of Dr. Briscoe's children and 4 boarders were attending the school."<sup>52</sup>

October 28, 1852

**ST. MARY'S FEMALE SEMINARY  
ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**

TEACHER WANTED – The institution offers to parents and guardians the best instruction in all the branches usually taught in female Seminaries together with Music, Drawing, and modern foreign languages, on more moderate terms than is afforded by any similar academy in the State. It is now open for the reception of pupils under the care and instruction of Miss Mary Blades Principal, Miss Mary P. Thompson Vice Principal. The Board of Trustees wish to engage the services of a more proficient instructress in vocal and instrumental Music, particularly on the Piano. This Assistant must be capable of giving some aid in the general course of study at the Seminary. To such a Teacher they will give three hundred dollars per scholastic year and board at the Steward's house. As they wish a fair representation of the different religious sects among the teachers, a preference will be given to a Lady of the Methodist church, but they invite proposals from all with testimonials of character and capacity, as they propose to secure the services of the best.<sup>53</sup>

The St. Mary's Female Seminary re-opened in the fall of 1859 under the direction of Miss Mary Blades as principal, assisted by "a corps of efficient teachers."<sup>54</sup> Serving under the newly elected President of the Board, Col. Chapman Billingsley, Sotterley's illustrious neighbor [and Dr. Briscoe's brother-in-law],<sup>55</sup> she brought Madam Despommiers, a graduate of the Academy of Paris, with her.<sup>56</sup>

"The Saint Mary's Female Seminary will be reopened on Monday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of October next, for the admission of pupils. Parents, guardians, and friends to female education generally, have great cause for congratulation in the opportunity now of giving to their daughters a thoroughly finished education without sending them abroad for that purpose.

"The Trustees of St. Mary's Female Seminary have succeeded in transferring the French and English Academy of Mad. Despommiers (now under the supervision of Mad. Despommiers and Miss Mary Blades) from Baltimore to the St. Mary's Female Seminary, where young ladies will enjoy all the advantages of one of the first schools in the Union at half the expense of such institutions generally.

<sup>51</sup> Jeanne K. Pirtle, *Images of America: Sotterley Plantation* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing), 2013.

<sup>52</sup> Reno, "The Teachers of 'Woodbury'", 26.

<sup>53</sup> St. Mary's Beacon, October 28, 1852.

<sup>54</sup> Charles A. Doub, "The History of Saint Mary's Female Seminary Prior to 1900", in *The History of Education in Saint Mary's County, Maryland Prior to 1900*, Master's Thesis, University of Maryland.

<sup>55</sup> "Miss Mary Blades," St. Mary's County Historical Society

<sup>56</sup> Reno, "The Teachers of 'Woodbury'", 26.

“Mad. Despommiers is a lady of rare accomplishments, being thoroughly educated and of most agreeable and refined manners.

“Miss Blades is too well known to require commendation, having most successfully taught for many years in St. Mary’s, and being favorably known abroad as assistant to Mr. Sargeant, Doctor MacCullough, and joint principal with Mad. Despommiers.

“The institution is beautifully situated on the St. Mary’s River, the site of the old city of St. Mary’s, accessible by steamboats several times a week, proverbally healthy, and within convenient distance of Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and Methodist churches.

“A lady of the Methodist persuasion will be immediately employed.

“The academic year consists of two terms of five months each.

Terms per session, payable in advance:

For all the branches of a thorough English education, including board, tuition, washing, fuel, lights, and bedding..... \$25.00

Stationery.....	2.50
Tuition for day pupils, including fuel.....	21.00
Separate branches:	
French.....	14.00
Music, with the use of instrument.....	25.00
Drawing and painting, exclusive of materials	6.00
Painting in oil colors, exclusive of materials.	10.00

Chapman Billingsley, President. (Baltimore Sun, September 27, 1858)

Mary Blades left St. Mary’s Female Seminary in 1860 to marry Col. Richard Miles of Baltimore, a devout Roman Catholic. Mary converted to Catholicism, and the two were married at the home of the Archbishop of Baltimore. Colonel and Mrs. Miles settled into married life at Rose Hill Farm outside of Leonardtown. Mary Blades died January 17, 1886, and is buried at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Bushwood.<sup>57</sup>

Shortly before her death, Mary Blades Miles made one more contribution to the cause of education in St. Mary’s County. She bequeathed Rose Hill to any religious order who would undertake the education of youth. The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth accepted the offer in 1884,<sup>58</sup> and their school, St. Mary’s Academy, opened the following year. The Academy remained in operation for 95 years before merging with Ryken High School. Today, Rose Hill is the site of the College of Southern Maryland.

Later Briscoe family members would help establish one more school on Sotterley’s grounds:

In 1907 Elizabeth R. [Rev. James Briscoe’s daughter] and J. Douglas Cashner sold 1 8/100s acres to the Board of County Commissioners “For the purpose of erecting thereon a

<sup>57</sup> “Miss Mary Blades,” St. Mary’s County Historical Society

<sup>58</sup> Beitzell, “Early Schools if Southern Maryland,” 7.

school building and using the same for the education of white children.” Included in this deed was the provision that once the property ceased to be used for educational purposes, both the property and the school building would revert back to the Cashners.



**19. The old Black Gate Schoolhouse at Sotterley**

By 1936 the school was abandoned. It was then sold by the Cashners to Herbert L. Satterlee. The schoolhouse was later converted for use as a dwelling. County records list the structure as a “house” in 1945, located on the corner of Sotterley Road and Steer Horn Neck Road.<sup>59</sup>

Having given the background of education at Sotterley, we now turn our attention to the children of Dr. Briscoe who themselves had an impact on the education of others.

### **Samuel**

**S**amuel William was born ca. 1835. He married Cornelia Dushane Blacklock and died in Baltimore, 1866. Though he died young, Samuel was a well-known and successful doctor in

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<sup>59</sup> “Info on Sotterley/Black Gate School House,” Renee C. Marquart, *Sotterley Archives*, February 17, 2010.

Baltimore during his life. Though not directly tied to education himself, his daughter, Margaret Sutton Briscoe, became a writer and teacher at Amherst College.

**M**argaret Sutton Briscoe was born at the end of the Civil War - December 1864 - in Baltimore, MD, the daughter of a wealthy doctor, Samuel W. Briscoe and his wife, Cornelia Dushane Blacklock Briscoe. Although she had no memories of the war or slavery, the War marked an immense change in her extended family's fortunes, and she



**21. Margaret Sutton Briscoe**  
Courtesy of Ladies of Amherst Photo Album

had strong memories of Reconstruction. Briscoe's father died when she was two years old, and she, her mother, and infant brother moved in with her maternal grandfather and his wife. According to Briscoe, her grandfather doted on and clearly preferred her brother. She was educated at home by private tutors and later lamented the fact that she had not gone to school or studied at college, something that "wasn't done" in the circles she grew up in

Margaret Sutton Briscoe married Arthur John Hopkins in 1895 and gave birth to a daughter, Cornelia Dushane Hopkins in 1896. She moved with her husband to Amherst, MA, where he was a professor of Chemistry at Amherst College. She continued to publish under her maiden name after her marriage, although she stopped sometime in the early 1910s. In both New York City and later in her life in Amherst, Briscoe Hopkins was very definite about her identity as

a Southerner. Her writings drew heavily upon Southern themes and dialects, and she called herself a Southern woman.

Several other interesting facts about Briscoe: She was acquainted with Mark Twain and attended his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party in December 1905 at Delmonico's in New York City.<sup>60</sup>

### Jeanette

Jeanette Eleanor Briscoe was born in 1836. Among the children, Jeanette made the greatest contribution to the local community. In 1854 she had married Richard Thomas and moved to the Thomas estate at Deep Falls in Chaptico, St. Mary's County, but her love was education.



**20. Samuel Briscoe.**  
Courtesy of Southern Maryland Studies Center, CSM-La Plata

<sup>60</sup> Claire Lobell, "Margaret Sutton Briscoe Hopkins: A Woman of Enterprise and Gusto," *The Archives and Special Collections at Amherst College* (Amherst, MA), March 21, 2014.

A committee of trustees reported on a scheme for the organization of Saint Mary's Female Seminary on January 14, 1846. It reported that a competent and qualified person should be selected to act as principal of the school, and also to have charge of the boarding department and domestic arrangements. The principal was to be paid a salary of \$400 per year for her services. By 1858 Saint Mary's Female Seminary had fallen into a state of decay. Classes had been practically discontinued. The board of trustees had petitioned the State legislature to sell the seminary and its property and turn the proceeds over to the primary school fund of Saint Mary's County, or invest the money in another institution for the purpose of female education upon some site other than Saint Mary's City.

The St. Mary's Female Seminary, which had struggled before the Civil War, reopened in a more promising atmosphere. Jeanette was elected to become its principal in 1872, and she awarded the institution's first graduation certificate in 1874.<sup>61</sup> Jeanette Briscoe Thomas was continuously elected to one-year terms as principal from September 1872 until her death in November 1881.<sup>62</sup>



**22. Annie Elizabeth Thomas, Jeanette's daughter and the second president of St. Mary's Seminary.**  
Courtesy of St. Mary's College of Maryland



**9. Jeanette Briscoe Thomas**  
Courtesy of Southern Maryland Studies Center, CSM-La Plata

Her daughter, Annie Elizabeth (Lizzie) Thomas '77 (after 1894, Mrs. John Gray Lilburn) stepped in to assume the duties of her mother in the middle of the school year, although she was barely older than many of the Seminary students. She remained in office until 30 June

<sup>61</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

<sup>62</sup> J. Frederick Fausz, *Monument School of the People: A Sequicentennial History of St. Mary's College of Maryland, 1840-1890*, (St. Mary's City: St. Mary's College of Maryland), 1990.

1895, becoming the most popular and longest-serving principal of St. Mary's Female Seminary in the nineteenth-century. This much-loved woman also served concurrently as the first female postmaster in St. Mary's City (the post office was located in Calvert Hall), and she was fondly remembered by two generations of students as an inspiring teacher, administrator, and active member of the later Alumnae Association until her death in 1932.<sup>63</sup>

She was known affectionately to students of the time as "Miss Lizzie." Her two-story home was just down the hill from the Main Building, and it burned down around 1929. When it did, the College bought the "Lilburn lot" and used it for the Freedom of Conscience statue, the caretaker's cottage ("White House"), and three garages (soon dismantled). It was during the nearly quarter-century of this mother and daughter's leadership that the seminary established itself as a successful nondenominational school.<sup>64</sup>



**23. Modern picture of Calvert Hall at St. Mary's College of Maryland, where Jeanette Briscoe Thomas and her daughter, Elizabeth Thomas Lilburn, served as president.  
Courtesy of St. Mary's College of Maryland**

<sup>63</sup> J. Frederick Fausz, *Monument School of the People: A Sequicentennial History of St. Mary's College of Maryland, 1840-1890*, (St. Mary's City: St. Mary's College of Maryland), 1990.

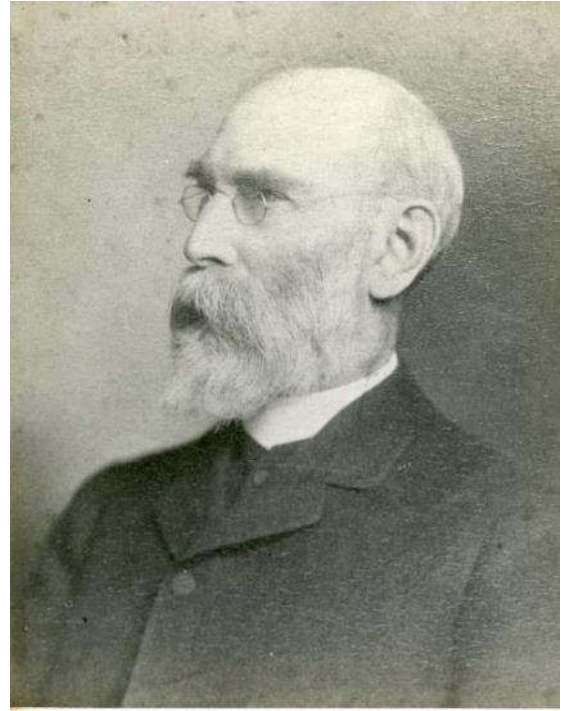
<sup>64</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

## Reverend James Briscoe

Reverend James Briscoe was born in 1838. He graduated from the University of Virginia in 1860 and became an ordained priest in 1868. Upon his ordination he left Sotterley, and his primary residence thereafter was at Cedarcroft in Baltimore County, Maryland. There he was an assistant priest and rector at St. Andrew's Church, in Baltimore. He was married twice - first, to Annie Sedgwick Huppman in 1872, and second, in 1892 to Mrs. Rosa Bailey.<sup>65</sup>

When Emeline Dallam Briscoe died she named her son, David Stone Briscoe, sole executor of the Sotterley estate. He was instructed to convert the estate into cash to be divided equally among her children. Accordingly, a public auction was held in August, 1890, at which the Rev. James Briscoe purchased the mansion and some four hundred acres of the original holding.

James Briscoe retained Sotterley until his death in March 1904. He left two children, James Briscoe, Jr., and a daughter, Elizabeth, who married John D. Cashner. Both children were "tenants in remainder" on the property, according to a legal notice. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 1905, James Briscoe and Sophia Howard Briscoe, his wife, deeded all the undivided half interest in Sotterley belonging to them to Elizabeth and John Cashner who then became the sole owner of the mansion and over four hundred acres...<sup>66</sup>



24. Reverend James Briscoe  
Courtesy of Buck Briscoe, by way of John Hanson  
Briscoe



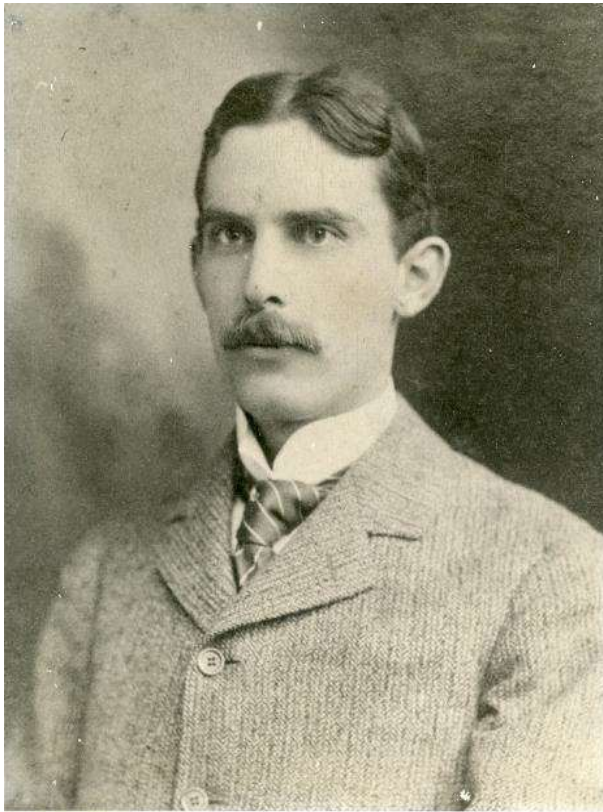
25. Sotterley barnyards in 1906, shortly after Sotterley passed to Reverend James' granddaughter, Elizabeth Briscoe Cashner.

Photo courtesy of Historic Sotterley.

<sup>65</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

<sup>66</sup> Marian McKenna, "The Briscoes," *Maryland Historical Society*, September 1951.

The grandson of Revered James Briscoe, Arthur Fenner Lee “Buck” Briscoe, would spend the first few years of his life at Sotterley, would later briefly attend the Charlotte Hall Military Academy, and then leave St. Mary’s for a career in Baltimore and New York. During the Second World War, “Buck” Briscoe made a fortune on government contracts. After that period, he returned to his roots in St. Mary’s County, and would for the rest of his life be known as “Mr. St. Mary’s County.” During one of my interviews with John Hanson Briscoe, he told me that Buck deserved to have a book written about him. I will follow John Hanson Briscoe’s advice, and a subsequent chapter of this historical project will be solely about Buck Briscoe.



**26. James Briscoe, Jr.**  
Courtesy of Buck Briscoe



**27. Arthur Fenner Lee “Buck” Briscoe.**  
Photographed by A. Aubrey Bodine.  
Courtesy of Buck Briscoe



## Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe, Jr.

Walter Hanson Stone, born in 1851, was the last child of Dr. Walter Hanson Stone and Emeline Briscoe, and he was the second to carry the name of Walter Hanson Stone, Jr. He married Maria Louisa Ford of the Cremona line of the Thomas Family on June 9, 1888.

Of all the sons, Walter was the only one to remain on the farm and not leave St. Mary's County. After his father's death, Dr. Briscoe, in recognition of his faithful service during his lifetime, left this last son his farm called Half Pone, as well as farm implements, horses, oxen, yearlings, sows, and shoats. He also inherited his bedroom furniture at Sotterley, the sideboard and mahogany dining table, and sofa and chairs from Sotterley.<sup>67</sup> When his brother, Rev. James Briscoe of Baltimore County bought Sotterley from their mother's estate, Walter managed Sotterley for his brother until 1893 when he moved permanently to Half-Pone.<sup>68</sup>

Walter Briscoe's only son was John Henry Thomas Briscoe (1890-1981), the last child born in Sotterley's main house, and his grandson was John Hanson Briscoe, Speaker of the House of Delegates and St. Mary's County Circuit Court Chief Judge. Half Pone Farm continues to be owned by descendants of Walter Briscoe to this date.

John Hanson Briscoe: "September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1890 is when my father was born at Sotterley, the last person born at Sotterley. He was born in the Red Room, which was that lower one. See the Briscoes had rooms upstairs, right? It was very cold up there and to protect the mother and baby, they usually would birth the children in the Red Room, and that's the way the story goes."

Audio 3. John Hanson Briscoe on his father's birth at Sotterley:



28. John Henry Thomas Briscoe, Jr., the last child born at Sotterley, in his infancy.  
Courtesy of John Hanson Briscoe

<sup>67</sup> "Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe," *St. Mary's Chronicles*, Winter 1998.

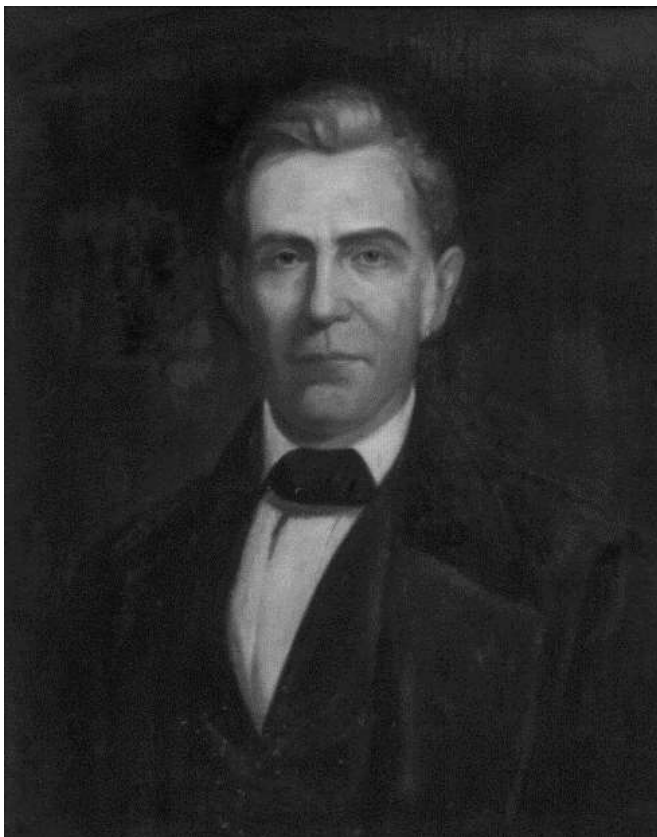
<sup>68</sup> David G. Brown, *Sotterley: Her People and Their Worlds, Three Hundred Years of a Maryland Plantation* (Baltimore: Chesapeake Book Company), 2010.

## The End of an Era

In 1864 Maryland ratified a new state constitution that ended slavery within the state. Overnight, the Briscoes and other plantation owners across Maryland lost their principal source of labor, and Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe struggled to keep the farm profitable in emancipation's immediate aftermath.

David Brown: *"Your great-grandfather adjusted to emancipation pretty easily."*

John Hanson Briscoe: *"He accepted it and went on with his life because he lived to be, until 1885. They obviously went to other things and he bought this farm here [Half Pone Farm] and his son, Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe Jr., actually managed the farm. That's how he ended up getting it in the will. He was his faithful son, his youngest son, but he did and I don't remember my father talking about any anxiety, or took up drinking because of it, or that there was any family strife. There was never a lot of money; they lived comfortably because they had all that beautiful place and again the labor force there to take care of those things. They lived comfortably, but as I said a very traditional life. After slavery went, there were still some former slaves around there. They still had some work force there. They were free to go. I assume they took care of them. Whether they paid them or not, but at least provided them with a so-called roof over their head and food, which they couldn't necessarily get you see. A lot they took off and went to different places, the south and west. But he got through it and again my father would have said if it was a real tragedy, if people had family strife over it. So he obviously adjusted to it, was not pleased with it but he adjusted to it."<sup>69</sup>*



1. An older Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe, date unknown  
Courtesy of Dolly Buswell

Audio 4. John Hanson Briscoe on Dr. Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe's adjustment to emancipation:



Sotterley remained standing but changed forever by the War of Northern Aggression. After emancipation, Hilry and Elsa Kane stayed on at Sotterley as tenant farmers until 1879, when they retired to a house of their own down the road from the plantation. They even saw their son married in Sotterley's Great Hall. Life at the plantation was somewhat buoyed by the presence of a post office, of which Dr. Briscoe was postmaster until his death in 1885, and by regular stops at Sotterley Wharf by the steamboat making its rounds from Baltimore and

<sup>69</sup> John Hanson Briscoe, *Sotterley Oral History Project*, By David G. Brown, February 20, 2008.



29. Sotterley's customs warehouse in 1906.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

Annapolis up on the Patuxent. The larger world outside the county was changing faster than St. Mary's itself, however, and Sotterley at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was once again in peril, not from attacks but from withdrawal. The post office closed; the steamboats cut back on services and eventually stopped running altogether. Members of the Briscoe family still held the property, but the task of caring for structures well over a hundred fifty years old without the cheap labor that had built up the manor was so overwhelming that the owners did little more than merely hold on.<sup>70</sup>

John Hanson Briscoe: *"The 1870 inventory of what grandfather Briscoe raised on the farm did not include tobacco. Again, they probably just gave up the fields that they were raising tobacco on. I don't know how much acreage they had, because it was so labor intensive. The slaves were gone. Raising the grains didn't require, of course, all that manuals to do.*

*"Tobacco, as you know, was the cash crop in those days. It was sent to England and rolled down the rolling road to the steamboats*

*that took it out of there. Now I have in my records, an inventory of great grandfather Briscoe's operation and they raised cattle, they raised swine, they raised chickens, they raised all the farm kind of things because as you know they would eat that. They did raise crops, they raised barley, corn, wheat, everything, the land would grow anything. But tobacco was the principal source of revenue.*

*"He had horses and they called them asses and mules. They had milch, cows that produced milk and working oxen, they had sheep, swine. They had spring wheat and winter wheat. They had rye. Probably made whiskey out of that, good rye whiskey. They had Indian corn, they called it, they even had some rice. They had wool; they'd take the wool and do things with it. Peas, beans, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes.*



30. Sheep at Sotterley, 1906. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

<sup>70</sup> "Phoenix on the Patuxent: A Curious House Called Sotterley," Sara Fisher, *Sotterley Archives*.

*“My grandfather, Walter Hanson Stone Briscoe was the only one who stayed here. And he was pretty much the manager of the property.”<sup>71</sup>*

Agnes Kane Callum: *“After the war, after the Civil War, only one person ran away from Sotterley and joined the Union Army and that was the only person or man here whose name was Briscoe. Dr. Walter Hanson Briscoe had over 60 slaves and none of them were named Briscoe except this one man. And this one man kept running away and he would go down in Prince George’s County where his wife was a slave. And they ran away, Dr. Briscoe knew where he was, well the sheriff would write a letter to Dr. Briscoe and tell him, “If you don’t come and get your slave, then I’m going to sell him again.” And Dr. Briscoe had to pay board, 32 cents a day, to board him in the jail – food, clothing, wash, and what have you. And after the war – during the war Dr. Briscoe refused to go get him so I don’t know if he joined the Union Army. Of course Maryland had six black units, called the United States Colored Troops and he probably joined one of them. Maybe not from Maryland but from another state – cause I always look for his name, I never found it again. But he – but the State of Maryland, after the war, didn’t pay these slave owners for their slaves – they were just free.*



**31. A hitching post and horse trough at Sotterley.**  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

*a very large concourse of neighbors and friends.*

*“Many of the slave owners, instead of investing their money in real estate or whatever, they invested in slaves. So when the war was over they didn’t – they weren’t compensated. Some of them went bankrupt, some of them were so angry that they lost all their money and their slaves. Cause the slaves got on the road and they were going along just looking for their relatives.”<sup>72</sup>*

\* \* \* \* \*

**W**alter Hanson Stone Briscoe passed away on December 30, 1885. His obituary was carried in the St. Mary’s Beacon the following week, on January 7<sup>th</sup>:

*“Dr. Walter H. Briscoe died at his late residence, Sotterley, in the 6<sup>th</sup> district, Wednesday morning of last week, in the 85<sup>th</sup> year of his age, and was buried at St. Andrews church on the following Friday, his internment being attended by*

*“In recording the death of this venerable and worthy citizen, we think it appropriate to accompany the announcement by a few words. Though adverse to and undistinguished by public honors, and home loving in his disposition, there were few or none of our ancient citizens who were better known to the generation now in the vigor of life than he, and none were more highly esteemed and revered. He was, indeed, a landmark. At his death, Dr. Briscoe and wife enjoyed the distinction of having lived longer in wedlock than any other couple in the county and are believed to have resided on the same estate for fifty consecutive years or more. But*

<sup>71</sup> John Hanson Briscoe, *Sotterley Oral History Project*, By David G. Brown, February 20, 2008.

<sup>72</sup> Agnes Kane Callum, *Sotterley Oral History Project*, By Meredith Taylor, April 21, 2008.

*these, though notable events, were not the causes which most attracted the notice of his fellow-citizens. Though ever walking quietly and unostentatiously, Dr. Briscoe arrested attention by his promptness and regularity in discharging his neighborhood, religious and public obligations. He was a man of strictest methods in his habit and dealings, demanding no more than was right but exacting what was due him. He was somewhat stern and brusque of manner, but those who knew him best, and especially his neighbors, represent this as a mere crust which covered great kindness of heart and a liberal in secret charities. He was a democrat in politics, and among the earliest in our county, and to his party, loyally adhered to all its vicissitudes, without the reward or the desire of it. In religion, he was an Episcopalian, and we believe a strict one. He so appeared to our observation at least, and seemed besides to be ever walking in his "Great Taskmaster's Eye" and in full sight of His commandments. Thus impressed, and knowing something of his usefulness and rectitude of life and the good example he gave, we indulge with his church the "reasonable hope" that he has found through mercy acceptance with his Maker."*



**32. A Briscoe family reunion at Sotterley Wharf, 1920.  
Courtesy of John Briscoe of Chester, California.**

Photo Album

FARM INVENTORY 1826	
Negros	1 lot broken plough gear
Ned age 40	1 flax brake
Harry age 28	1 iron tooth harrow
Sam age 23	1 old wheel barrow
John age 19	3 sets of hinges complete
Phil Carpenter	12 reap hooks
Jack age 22	3 cradles & blades
Leander, boy age 15	9 hilling hoes
Bill, boy age 10	10 weeding hoes
Andrew, boy age 14	6 wedges
Milly, woman age 45	3 grub hoes
Cecilia, woman age 26	14 axes
Eliza, woman age 17	1 how harrow
Sarah and child, age 22	1 dung fork
Fanny and child, age 60	1 spade & old iron
John, boy child age 3	½ bushel measure
Matida, woman age 33	2 watering pots
Charity, woman age 24	1 old wire sieve
Phibs, girl child age 8	1 lot carpenter tools
Mary Ann, girl child age 8	1 whip saw
Martha Ann, girl child age 3	1 cross cut saw
Emeline, girl child age 2	a lot of cedar posts
Julian, girl child age 8	1 linen wheel
1 Bull	1 coal hod
11 cows	1 willow basket
4 heifers	2 spinning wheels
8 yearlings	2 pr. cotton cards
42 sheep	2 pr. woollen cards

33. A partial inventory of Sotterley Plantation in 1826, when Emeline Dallam Briscoe inherited the property. Courtesy of Historic Sotterley.

OWNER Dr. Walter H. Briscoe  
 DATE April 16, 1865

Name	Sex	Age	Emancipated by	
			State of Maryland	Remarks
Andrew Brown	M	6	Nov. 1, 1864	
Edgar Guyther	M	28	" " "	
Frank Guyther	M	2	" " "	
Hilry Cane	M	1	" " "	
Alex Plowden	M	2	" " "	
Francis Millard	M	6	" " "	(223)
Margaret Brown	F	3	" " "	
Rebecca Wilson	F	1	" " "	
Catherine Barber	F	21	" " "	
Mary A. Barber	F	2	" " "	
Jeff Johnson	M	1	" " "	No. of Slaves #53
Col. Chapman Billingsley-Coker April 16, 1865				
Harris Hustin	M	15	Nov. 1, 1864	
Frank Medley	M	11	" " "	
McKelvey Hustin	M	16	" " "	E-Oct. 1, 1863
Harrison Hustin	M	20	" " "	E-Dec. 15, 1863
Baley Hustin	M	30	" " "	E-Mar. 10, 1864
Mortimer Hustin	M	28	" " "	
Charlotte Ann Hustin	P	20	Nov. 1, 1864	
Mary Medley	F	16	" " "	
Mollie Medley	F	15	" " "	
Grace Medley	F	14	" " "	
Alex Medley	M	12	" " "	
Edgar Medley	M	10	" " "	
George Medley	M	8	" " "	
Lewis Medley	M	6	" " "	
Matilda Medley	F	6	" " "	
Infant Medley	F	Age	" " "	
Jeff Johnson	M	20	" " "	
Alfred Lyles	M	24	" " "	
Lee Edwards	M	36	" " "	E-Dec. 15, 1863
Hilry Cane	M	46	" " "	
Thomas Plowden	M	57	" " "	
Infant Upton	F	Age	" " "	
Martha Steward	F	18	" " "	
Eva Steward	F	16	" " "	
Minie Steward	F	14	" " "	
Jane Plowden	F	10	" " "	
Charity Cyles	F	5	" " "	(226)
Eliza Piker	F	5	" " "	
Grace Anna Hustin	F	54	" " "	
Gene Hawkins	F	68	" " "	
Nancy Bush	F	17	" " "	E-Nov. 1, 1864
Chap Turner	M	19	" " "	E-Aug. 1, 1864
Infant Coker	F	Age	" " "	

Owner Dr. Walter H. Briscoe

NAME OF SLAVES	SEX	AGE	EMANCIPATED BY STATE OF MARYLAND
Harris Edwards	M	15	Nov. 1, 1864
George Cane	M	20	" " "
Frank Cane	M	17	" " "
Alfred Edwards	M	17	" " "
Thomas Millard	M	17	" " "
Horace Millard	M	12	" " "
Samuel Edwardt	M	17	" " "
Charles Medley	M	21	" " "
George W. Biscoe	M	26	" " "
Dick Brown	M	33	" " "
Robert Plater	M	37	" " "
Jam e s Millard	M	48	" " "
Hamilton Steward	M	49	" " "
Alex Medley	M	52	" " "
Leanda Edwards	M	52	" " "
William Barnes	M	52	" " "
Temperance Cane	F	18	" " "
Matilda Cane	F	22	" " "
Alice Cane	F	16	" " "
Eliza Cane	F	14	" " "
Sarah Cane	F	12	" " "
Charlotte Ann Biscoe	F	14	" " "
Mary Edward	F	21	" " "
Marie Millard	F	23	" " "
Mary Jane Wilson	F	13	" " "
Henny Cane	F	20	" " "
Ann Delia Barnes	F	21	" " "
Georgeann Barnes	F	19	" " "
Cecelia Edwards	F	19	" " "
Susan Guyther	F	22	" " "
Ellen Cane	F	24	" " "
		6	

Rebecca Brown	F	24	Nov. 1, 1864
Martha Ann Wilson	F	28	" " "
Nellie Plowden	F	29	" " "
Alice Cane	F	31	" " "
Henrietta Hall	F	27	L-Feb. 28, 1863
Presella Edwards	F	38	" " "
Eliza Mason	F	38	" " "
Mary Ann Millard	F	47	" " "
Louise Mason	F	52	" " "
Henrietta Barnes	F	58	" " "
Cecelia Plowden	F	52	" " "
Andrew Brown	F	6	Nov. 1, 1864
Edgar Guyther	M	28	" " "
Frank Guyther	M	2	" " "
Hilry Cane	M	1	" " "
Alex Plowden	M	2	" " "
Francis Millard	M	6	" " "
Margaret Brown	F	3	" " "
Rebecca Wilson	F	1	" " "
Catherine Barber	F	21	" " "
Mary A. Barber	F	2	" " "
Jeff Johnson	M	1	No. of Slaves - 53

34. Emancipation rolls, showing the slaves at Sotterley freed when Maryland ratified its new state constitution in 1864.

Courtesy of Historic Sotterley



35. Pictures of Sotterley's schoolhouse, south gate house, and re-enactors. In the picture immediately left, the school house, located in Sotterley's North Gatehouse, is in the foreground. In the picture below, the schoolhouse is seen beyond a close-up of the South Gatehouse.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley







**36. The North Gatehouse, site of the Briscoe school. Date circa 1906, identities unknown.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**



**37. Pupils of the white school established near Sotterley on land donated by the Cashners, circa 1920.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**

38. Bounty rolls showing slaves from Maryland who joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War.  
 Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

61.

BOUNTY ROLLS - 1864  
 7TH REGIMENT UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS  
 COMPTROLLER OF THE TREASURY - SLAVE ROLL

NAME OF SLAVE	CO.	COUNTY OR CITY CREDITED	NAME OF OWNER	REMARKS
Brown, Thomas	G	Dorchester	John R. Spadden	
Bantum, Joseph J.	B	Dorchester	Ryder Henry	
Bantum, Joseph	B	Dorchester	Ryder Henry	
Bawley, Charles	B	Dorchester	Thomas B. Travis	
Bailey, Noah E.	C	Dorchester	John W. Dale	
Bennett, Robert	D	Dorchester	Wm. T. Goldsborough	
Baltimore, Thomas	E	Dorchester	Edwin Hooper	
Bailey, Mitchell	E	Dorchester	Rider Henry	
Brown, George	F	Dorchester	John Parker	
Brown, Wm.	B	Kent	Thomas B. Brown	
Barnes, Wm. H.	C	Kent	Elizabeth Sudley	
Benton, Emanuel	C	Kent	Wm. McVaughlet-Vannort?	
Brown, Alex.	C	Kent	Richard Henson	
Brooks, Felix	D	Kent	Henry Carvel	
Brown, Isaac	D	Kent	Col. H. Gale	
Butler, Daniel	D	Kent	James Glenn	
Benton, John F.	E	Kent	Ringgold Estate	
Bowzer, Emery	E	Kent	Capt. Haddaway	Free
Brown, Clement	E	Kent	Mrs. John R. Gray	
Brown, Ezekiel	E	Kent	Benj. Beck	
Bryan, Henry	E	Kent	James Dawson	
Bargus, James J.	F	Kent	Betsy Elizabeth Few?	
Berryman, James	F	Kent	E. F. Chambers	
Blake, Felix	F	Kent	Gale Livingston	
Bradford, James	F	Kent	Jacob Sutton	
Brown, Wm.	F	Kent	Robert Ruth	
Barnes, James	J	Kent	Merrit Miller	
Brent, John A.	G	St. Mary's	Maria A. Hopewell	
Briscoe, Abram	G	St. Mary's	Ann M. Woodward	
Brown, Augusta	G	St. Mary's	George H. Morgan	
Butler, Richard	G	St. Mary's	Mrs. Mitchell	
Brown, Philip	H	St. Mary's	George H. Morgan	
Briscoe, Geo	J	St. Mary's	Dr. Wm. H. Briscoe	
Briscoe, Iasiah	J	St. Mary's	Mrs. Richard Thomas	
Butler, Peter	J	St. Mary's	John H. Thomas	
Butler, Wm. H.	G	St. Mary's	Mary Shamwell	
Boon, Jacob	J	Charles	Lucretia Middleton or Lancaster	
Berry, James	J	Cecil	Mary W. Vezey	
Bowen, Alfred	J	Cecil	Richard Simmons	
Bacon, Wm.	J	Balto. County	John Brooks (Jean-Walker)	
Bowns, Geo.	H	Somerset	Sandy Alex. Donahue	

BOUNTY ROLLS - 1864  
7TH REGIMENT UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS  
COMPTROLLER OF THE TREASURY - SLAVE ROLL

NAME OF SLAVE	CO.	COUNTY OR CITY CREDITED	NAME OF OWNER	REMARKS
Ridout, Robert H.	H	Dorchester	James R. Donahue	
Reed, Samuel	A	Kent	George Hardy	
Russell, Thomas	B	Kent	Thomas Brown	
Rezen, Thomas	C	Kent	Wm. Stephens	
Roberts, Isaac	D	Kent	Philemon Davis	
Richardson, Benj.	F	Kent	Thomas Baker	
Richardson, Wm.	F	Kent	Thomas Baker	
Ringgold, Lewis	F	Kent	Joseph Webb	
Rolls, Charles	F	Kent	Joseph Howard	
Russell, Frank	J	Kent	Thomas Brown	
Reddy, John T.	J	St. Mary's	Dr. F. Neal	
Rustin, John M.	J	St. Mary's	Col. C. Redding (Billingsley)	
Rhodes, Henry	F	Cecil	John F. Stephen	
Raley, Henry	F	Cecil	Capt. Pierce	
Rebensen, Alex.	F		Thomas B. Robert	
Ryder, Henry	H	Somerset	Mrs. Mary Kelly	
Roach, John	J	Somerset	John Davis	
Roach, Wm.	C	Somerset	Algy Whittenden	
Reeder, Joseph	A	St. Mary's	J. Alex. Jarboe	
Swan, Jackson	A	Queen Anne	Annie M. Bryan	
Stout, Henry	A	Queen Anne	Addison Emory	
Smith, James	B	Queen Anne	Samuel Blunt	
Stanbury, Lewis	B	Queen Anne	P. Happers Estate	
Sampson, Charles	C	Queen Anne	Mrs. Matthews	
Smallwood, Samuel	C	Queen Anne	Charles Mitchell	
Steward, Lloyd	D	Queen Anne	George W. Smith	
Seney, Wm.	D	Queen Anne	James L. Wallaha	
Solon, Joseph	D	Queen Anne	Lewis Hergenrathrer?	
Smith, Franklin	E	Queen Anne	Thomas H. Kemp	
Sanders, James	F	Queen Anne	Charles Stephen	
Sniggers, Isaac	F	Queen Anne	Dr. DeCousey	

89.  
7th. REGIMENT UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS  
COMPANY I

NAME	RANK	AGE	ENROLLED	GOUNTY	TERM	REMARKS
Brector, Thomas	Sgt.	19	10/1863	Calvert	3 yrs.	
Briscoe, Isiah	Cpl.	28	10/1863	St. Mary's	3 "	
Bishop, Thomas	Cpl.	23	10/1863	Calvert	3 "	
Bacon, William	Pvt.	39	1/1864	Baltimore	3 "	
Barnes, James	Pvt.	35	1/1864	Kent	3 "	
Briscoe, Geo. W.	Pvt.	26	10/1864	St. Mary's	3 "	Died Indianola, Tx. 10/18/1866
Bond, Columbus	Pvt.	21	10/1864	Calvert	3 "	
Brown, James E.	Pvt.	22	10/1864	Calvert	3 "	
Brown, John	Pvt.	19	10/1864	Substitute	1 "	
Boyer, Littleton	Pvt.	30	10/1863	Somerset	3 "	
Butler, James	Pvt.	18		Substitute	1 "	
Brown, Jacob	Pvt.	23	10/1863	Charles		Died 7/17/1864 Dysentery Jackson-ville, Fla.
Bastin, Jno. E.	Pvt.	19	10/1863	Worcester		Died 11/18/1863 Benedict, Md.
Butler, Peter	Pvt.	(?)	10/1863	St. Mary's		Died 10/28/1864 wounds rec'd in battle.

39. Ledger showing some members of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment USCT. George Briscoe's entry notes his death from disease after the Civil War's conclusion.

Courtesy of Historic Sotterley



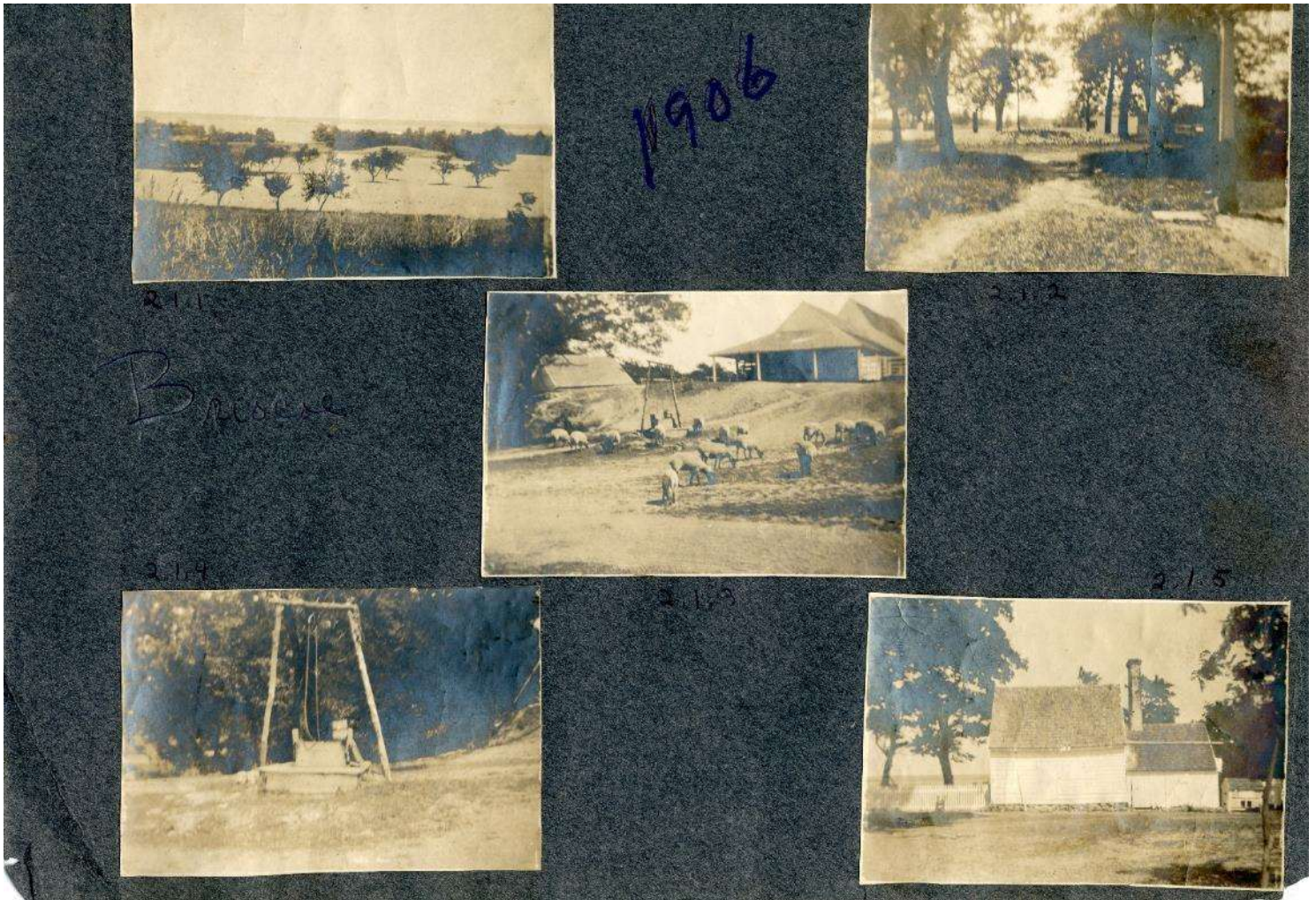
**40. The fields below Sotterley.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**



**42. Sheep near the toolshed at Sotterley.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**



**41. Sotterley's manor house in 1906.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**



43. A collage of photos from Sotterley, all from 1906.  
 Courtesy of Historic Sotterley



44. The "Briscoe" kitchen in 1906.  
 Courtesy of Historic Sotterley



**46. Taken in 1906, this pictures, possibly, Elizabeth and J. Douglas Cashner.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**



**45. Sotterley from the bottom of the hill, near the time the Cashners sold the farm.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**



47. The Sotterley gardens, circa 1906.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley

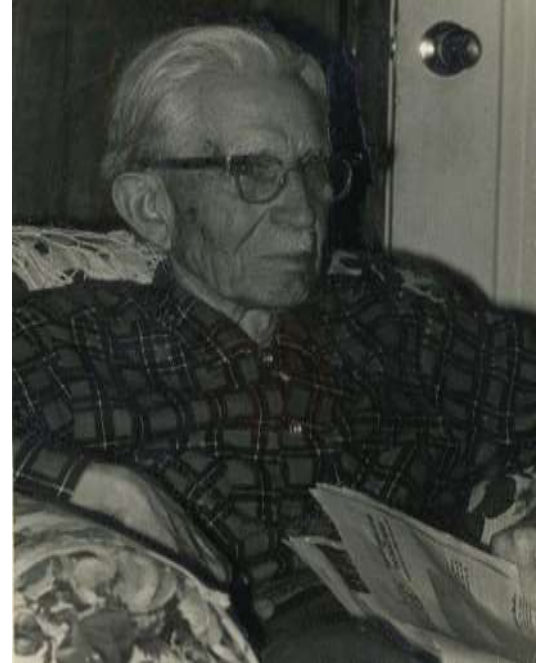


**49. Overgrown plants covering Sotterley's main house, circa 1906.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**



**48. Fields of grain grown at Sotterley, on the site of the modern Riverside Winefest.  
Courtesy of Historic Sotterley**





**51. An older John Henry Thomas Briscoe.  
Courtesy of John Hanson Briscoe**

**50. A young John Henry Thomas Briscoe, Walter Hanson  
Stone Briscoe, Jr.'s son, and the last child born at  
Sotterley.  
Courtesy of John Hanson Briscoe**



**52. John H.T. Briscoe and his wife,  
Hilda Maddox Briscoe, at Sotterley  
Plantation, circa 1970.  
Courtesy of John Hanson Briscoe**



**53. John H.T. Briscoe using an old hand plow, originally his father's from Sotterley.  
Courtesy of John Hanson Briscoe**