

Three Generations of Clagetts in Georgetown and Washington, 1751-1860

BRICE McADOO CLAGETT

This paper will tell something of the history of one branch of the large Clagett family of Maryland—a branch that was early settled in Georgetown and has, in large part, remained there and in Washington ever since. These were not persons of enormous importance, nor were their lives, on the whole, particularly colourful. If they have any interest at all to persons other than their descendants, it is only because they were here so long ago, participated in the earliest beginnings of this city, and have continued to take a constructive if modest part in the more local side of its life.

1. JOHN CLAGETT

The first member of the Clagett family to be connected with Georgetown was John Clagett, a younger son of Capt. Thomas Clagett II of "Weston," near Upper Marlboro, Prince Georges County, and his wife, Mary Keene. According to the Maryland Census of 1776 John Clagett was 63 years old in that year, and hence was born in 1712 or 1713; but the "Maryland Journal" of November 23, 1790, reporting his death, says he was then 83, which would make him born in 1706 or 1707. Census records are far from perfect, but newspapers being what they are I should guess that the Census is more likely correct.

John Clagett's father, Capt. Thomas Clagett II, received "Weston" by entail from his father, the first Capt. Thomas Clagett, who came from London in 1670 and settled at St. Leonard's Creek (which he named), Calvert County.¹ John's mother, Mary, was a daughter of

Mr. Clagett is preparing a book on the Clagett family, in which most of the following material, which was delivered as an address before the Columbia Historical Society on January 19, 1965, will again appear, much of it in greatly expanded form.

¹ Capt. Thomas Clagett was a younger son of Col. Edward Clagett, of St. Leonard's Parish, Eastcheap, London, and his wife Margaret, daughter of Col. Sir Thomas Adams, 1st Bart., of London and of "Sprowston Hall," Norfolk, a royalist of some note during



Portrait from Brice McAdoo Clagett
Darius Clagett (1792–1860), a portrait in the possession of the Clagett family

Richard Keene II of "St. Richard's Manor," St. Mary's County, and of Calvert County, and his wife, Mary Gorsuch.² John's oldest brother Thomas Clagett III inherited "Weston," and except for a brief period in the late nineteenth century the elder branch of the family has lived there ever since. Henry Contee Bowie Clagett, Jr., the present owner, is in the ninth generation of the family to own "Weston" and the eighth generation to live there.

According to Walter Worthington Bowie's book, "The Bowies and Their Kindred," John Clagett settled in his youth near Piscataway, in the southwestern part of Prince Georges County. I have found no evidence for this, although several of his sons did live in that vicinity. By his father's will, which was proved on March 27, 1733, John received a one-half interest in 570 acres of a tract called "Clagett's Purchase," in what is now Montgomery County. This tract extended for more than a mile and a half along the Georgetown turnpike (now Wisconsin avenue), from near Bethesda church southwards almost to its intersection with the Old Georgetown road.³ "Clagett's Purchase" thus included part of the downtown business section of Bethesda, most of the northern residential part of that town, and the sites of the present Glenbrook Country Club, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Naval Medical Center. A reference to "Clagett's Spring, on the Frederick Road, Montgomery County," is found in an advertisement placed by Thaddeus White of that place on November 20, 1812, seeking stolen cattle.

In 1741 John Clagett and his brother Charles,⁴ who had inherited the civil wars, sometime M.P., high sheriff and lord mayor of London, and one of the commissioners of the City of London who met Charles II at The Hague in 1660 and invited him to return to the throne. The Clagetts were an armigerous family deriving their name from Claygate, a small village in the parish of Shipbourne, Kent, and were established by about 1500 at West Malling in the same county. The name is properly pronounced "Clay'get."

² Mary Gorsuch was granddaughter of the Rev. John Gorsuch, D.D., rector of Walkerne, Hertfordshire, an aggressive royalist who was smothered to death by the Puritans in a haymow about 1647. His widow, Anne, thereupon fled to Lancaster County, Virginia, with her children. She was Anne Lovelace, sister of Richard Lovelace, the cavalier poet ("Stone walls do not a prison make"), and of Col. Francis Lovelace, governor of New York from 1668 to 1673. Anne's parents were Sir William Lovelace (1584-1627), of Woolwich, Kent, an incorporator of the second Virginia Company in 1609, and his wife, Anne Barne, granddaughter of the Most Reverend Edwin Sandys (1519-1588), Queen Elizabeth's Archbishop of York.

³ See Boyd's "History of Montgomery County, Maryland" (1879), and Mrs. L. J. Hienton's map of Prince Georges County showing the locations of early land grants.

⁴ Charles Clagett, a member of the jury of sixteen that condemned the land for Georgetown in 1752, married Jane Young and had two sons, the elder being Charles Clagett jr. of "Thorpland," Prince Georges County. The younger, James Clagett (c. 1752-1833), lived in Montgomery County and in Georgetown, was one of the first members of the corporation and common council of Georgetown in 1791, and was active in land

the other half of "Clagett's Purchase," divided by agreement their 586 acres "on Rock Creek" into equal shares. John settled on his portion of the tract and lived there as a farmer for the rest of his life, with the exception of whatever sojourns he may have spent in Georgetown. He augmented his inheritance by the purchase of several other tracts adjoining "Clagett's Purchase," at his death owning portions of "Laybrinth" and "Pritchell's Purchase." He was one of the early settlers of the Rock Creek area. At one time he was inspector of Gordon's tobacco warehouse, near the mouth of Rock Creek. From 1750 to 1753 he served as commissioner of the peace for Prince Georges County.

John Clagett married in Rock Creek Parish, on July 10, 1739, Sarah Magruder, daughter of Capt. Alexander Magruder and his wife Anne Wade. This branch of the Magruders lived at "Locust Grove," not far from "Clagett's Purchase" on what is now Beall's Mill Road. The old house at "Locust Grove" is still standing, though its appearance has not been helped by the construction of a huge IBM plant in its front yard two or three years ago. Sarah Magruder was the sister of Major Samuel Wade Magruder (1728-1792), soldier in the French and Indian War, and major in the Revolution. Sarah's paternal grandmother was Sarah Beall, and though there is some dispute about this it seems fairly clear that she was a daughter of Col. Ninean Beall, patentee of "The Rock of Dumbarton" and many other tracts in Prince Georges County and what is now the District of Columbia. Sarah (Magruder) Clagett was therefore a great-niece of Col. George Beall, one of the two proprietors whose land was taken for the laying out of Georgetown.⁵

John Clagett had a hand in the foundation of that town. On June 8, 1751, the Maryland legislature appointed seven commissioners for Frederick County to pick out the best site for a town near the mouth

transactions there. He lived between the college and the river, in a house where a school was later kept, and was assessed on two Georgetown houses and lots between 1793 and 1797. In 1804 he and Francis Deakins, for acting as bail for Leonard Harbaugh, received a mortgage on a number of lots in Washington City. On January 1, 1811, his mother, Jane Clagett, of Washington County, District of Columbia, conveyed him all her right under the will of Peter Young in 20 negroes. He held mortgages on several hundred acres of Charles R. Belt's residence, "Chevy Chase," in the District. James Clagett's funeral was held in Rock Creek Parish on February 26, 1833.

⁵ Samuel Wade Magruder married his cousin Lucy, daughter of Col. George Beall. Among his children was Patrick Magruder, sometime of Georgetown, who represented Southern Maryland in the 9th Congress (1805-07) and was clerk of the House of Representatives and Librarian of Congress from 1807 to 1815, holding these posts when the British fired the Capitol. Col. George Beall Magruder, another son of Samuel Wade, commanded a regiment at the Battle of Bladensburg. Lloyd Magruder, yet another son, was the grandfather of John Holmes Magruder, founder of Magruder's, the well-known Washington grocery stores.

of Rock Creek; to negotiate its purchase from the owners, and if they proved unwilling, to issue a warrant for a jury to assess and condemn the land; to lay out lots, set the price thereof and sell them, and to manage the affairs of the new settlement (46 Maryland Archives, page 630). One of these seven commissioners was John Clagett, called in the statute "John Clagett of Rock Creek" to distinguish him from his uncle and cousins of the same name. Three of the other commissioners were cousins of his wife: Samuel Magruder, Josias Beall, and Capt. Henry Wright Crabb.

The story of the establishment of Georgetown by these men is much too well known to require repetition here. They completed their survey on February 28, 1752, and found land belonging to Col. George Beall and George Gordon to be "most convenient." The jury of sixteen that condemned the property and determined a price included John Clagett's brother Charles, their nephew Thomas Clagett IV of "Weston", five Magruders and two Bealls, as well as Capt. William Williams, whose daughter Martha would marry John Clagett's son Walter.

The commissioners, with successors for the original incumbents as these retired or died, governed Georgetown for almost forty years, until a form of municipal self-government was established in 1789. John Clagett served as commissioner for 21 years until 1772, when he resigned, being succeeded by Thomas Richardson—whose successor in 1782 was Benjamin Stoddert, later first Secretary of the Navy. Among the many duties of the commissioners was arranging for the construction of a wharf, the first in the District of Columbia, at the foot of Water street (now Wisconsin avenue). This work was contracted out, and on its completion in 1762 all the commissioners approved it except for John Clagett, who asserted that the work had not been done in accordance with the contract. The commissioners thereupon retained John Orme and Archibald Allen, "esteemed good workmen to view the same whose opinion was to be agreed to." They decided the work was sufficient.

When Georgetown was incorporated in 1789, the first aldermen included John Clagett's cousins-in-law Thomas Beall of Georgetown (who became the second mayor) and Brooke Beall. Among the members of the corporation and common council in 1791 were Charles Magruder and John Clagett's nephew James Clagett, son of his brother Charles.

John Clagett was one of the original lotholders of Georgetown. On March 24, 1752, less than a month after the survey, he bought for one

pound ten shillings lot number 3, on the north side of Bridge (the present M) street between 30th and 31st. Clagett forfeited this lot, however, for failure to erect a substantial building thereon within the period required by the act of Assembly. About 1765 the then owners built on the lot the building now known as the Old Stone House.

John Clagett's ownership was, however, only the beginning of a long association of Clagetts with the north side of M street in the block between 30th and 31st. Besides John's son and grandson who, as we shall see, lived there, in 1784 John's cousin Richard Keene Clagett bought a house and lot on the same block. His heirs sold this property in 1801 to Nathan Loughborough, who proceeded to build there the fine brick house recently restored by the Junior League (the present 3037-3041 M street).

In 1756 John Clagett and Andrew Heugh bought, for four pounds, lot number 71 in Georgetown. This lot lay at the northeast corner of Water street (Wisconsin avenue) and Wapping (K) street, on the waterfront immediately adjoining the spot where the aforementioned controversial dock was subsequently built.

John Clagett was a member of the Anglican Church and a parishioner of St. Paul's Church, Prince George's Parish, Rock Creek. That parish then included all of the present District of Columbia and Montgomery County. Clagett was a vestryman of the parish in 1741-44, and again in 1748-51. In 1764 he gave two acres of land within the parish, part of his farm "Clagett's Purchase," to the church for the establishment of a public school. The text of his deed to the Reverend Alexander Williamson, rector of Rock Creek, was published in the Records of this Society, volume 9, page 82. Eberlein and Hubbard, in their "Historic Houses of Georgetown and Washington City," page 170, assert that "this early foundation is looked upon as the beginning of the District's public school system." However, the southernmost part of "Clagett's Purchase" was more than a mile north of the District line; so the land in question could not have been in the District. It is probably correct to say that the school was the first in the Washington metropolitan area.

John Clagett made his will in Montgomery County on May 17, 1788; it was proved November 17, 1790 (Montgomery County wills, Liber B, folio 428). He died in the fall of 1790, aged either about 77 or about 83. He was probably buried on his farm, and now rests somewhere under the busy streets of Bethesda. The time of his wife's death is unknown.

John and Sarah (Magruder) Clagett had thirteen children, with the lopsided ratio of two daughters⁶ to eleven sons. The births of all but the two youngest children are recorded in the Rock Creek parish records. Of the sons, only the two youngest—Walter and Zadock—were primarily identified with the District of Columbia. Of the others, two died young; three—Thomas, William and Nathaniel—settled at Piscataway⁷; John at Hagerstown, and Hezekiah first at Hagerstown and then at Baltimore. Alexander, a Revolutionary officer and foreman of the first grand jury of Montgomery County in 1777, lived in Hagerstown, where he was sheriff of Washington County, and finally in Baltimore. Horatio Clagett served as a Continental officer throughout the Revolution, ending as brevet major, and was an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland. His wartime experiences with the British could not have created much animosity on his part, for shortly after peace was declared he settled in London and lived there until his death in 1815. He was a merchant and underwriter, the European partner of the family's mercantile firm, Thomas Clagett & Company, headed by his eldest brother, Thomas Clagett of Piscataway. The London branch of this firm, notwithstanding various changes in corporate form and ownership, is still in existence, today being known as Clagett, Brachi & Company Limited, tobacco merchants, 61–62 Crutched Friars, London. This firm pos-

⁶ Ann Clagett, the younger daughter, married Alexander Chesley, farmer near Bethesda. They settled at Georgetown prior to 1810. Mrs. Chesley owned a house on P street which she left to her grandson, John Francis Chesley, who lived there for a time. Her children Sarah, wife of George Harry, and Zadock Clagett Chesley lived in Georgetown. A grandson of Ann was the Rev. Daniel Francis Sprigg (1824–1908), sometime rector of Grace Church, Alexandria, and for more than forty years editor of the "Southern Churchman." Ann's granddaughter Susan Guigir Harry married her cousin Judge Thomas William Clagett, eldest son of the sixth Thomas Clagett of "Weston." Among their children were Susan Guigir Harry (Clagett) Pettengill (1843–1890), first woman editor of a daily newspaper in the United States, and William Horace Clagett (1838–1901), known as the "silver-tongued orator of the West," who as a congressman from Montana Territory introduced in 1871 the bill establishing Yellowstone National Park and initiating the national park system.

⁷ Thomas Clagett (1741–1792) "of Piscataway," so called to identify him among the various Thomas Clagetts in Prince Georges County, who by this time were becoming almost innumerable, was prominent in the American Revolution. He was clerk of the committee of observation for Prince Georges County, 1775; justice of the peace and judge of the Orphans Court in 1777 and subsequent years (in which capacity he administered the oath of fidelity to the new government in 1778); agent for purchasing provisions for the Continental Army, 1778, and member of the House of Delegates, 1780. He was a vestryman of St. John's, Broad Creek, and in 1784 was one of the sellers of lots to buy a house for the George Town Academy. William Clagett (1748–1789), his brother, was also a purchasing agent for the Army. Nathaniel Clagett (1751–1810), the third of the brothers who settled at Piscataway, was a bachelor and is chiefly noteworthy for his will, in which he left most of his substantial property to "a yellow girl named Fanny who the Testator verily believes to be his daughter."

sesses the only entry in any telephone book in the British Isles under the name "Clagett," the family apparently having become extinct there.

Zadock Clagett, youngest son of John, was born about 1767 and died young on July 12, 1796. Almost nothing is known of his short life. He married Jane Contee Harrison, widow of Capt. William Murdock of Georgetown, a Continental officer, and daughter of John and Catherine (Contee) Harrison of Georgetown. Zadock Clagett owned parts of lots 7 and 8 in Georgetown, on the west side of Congress (31st) street between N and M. His widow survived him for many years, and in 1832 was still living at her 31st street property. She also owned land on the west side of River road, at Tenleytown. Zadock and Jane Clagett had two daughters, one of whom, Jane Harrison Clagett, married John Smith Compton of Charles County, one of the founders of Christ Church, Georgetown, in 1817.⁸

2. WALTER CLAGETT

Walter Clagett, tenth son and eleventh child of John and Sarah, was born, presumably at "Clagett's Purchase," Montgomery County, on November 12, 1763, and was baptised in Rock Creek parish. He served at an early age in the American Revolution, appearing on John Murdock's returns, dated July 15, 1780, as a private of the Lower Battalion of Montgomery County militia.

He married, prior to 1785, his third cousin, Martha Williams, daughter of Capt. William and Barbara (Owen) Williams, of Montgomery County, and granddaughter of Thomas and Eleanor (Prather) Williams, of "The Three Sisters," near Lanham, Prince Georges. The Williams family owned the land on which the town of Rockville now stands. Capt. William Williams, Martha's father, had lived there. The town was laid out by her brother William Prather Williams in 1784 under the name of Williamsburg. Walter Clagett was an original

⁸ Their son, Dr. Ruel Keith Compton (1828-1899), was named after his father's friend, the first rector of Christ Church, Georgetown. Having graduated in medicine at Georgetown, he was a physician and planter of "The Oaks," near Pomonkey, Charles County. During the War Between the States he smuggled medicine and supplies to the Confederacy. Discovered and pursued by Federal troops, he lived in hiding in the forest for some time; finally, shortly after Appomattox, he rode to a bluecoat camp and, after a huzzah for Jefferson Davis, surrendered. He was taken prisoner to Washington, and while being driven through the streets under guard was mistaken for John Wilkes Booth and stoned by a mob. He was held in prison in Washington for some six months under barbarous conditions, the prisoners (many of whom sickened and died) devouring rats and leather belts to augment their meagre diet. Among Dr. Compton's living great-grandchildren are Philip Roger Stansbury, presently of 1403 31st street, who married his cousin, Daviette Clagett Hill; and the Rev. Roland Manning Jones, rector of Christ Church, Accokeek.

proprietor, holding one improved lot. Another of Martha's brothers, Elisha Owen Williams, married Harriet, daughter of Col. Brooke Beall and his wife, Margaret Johns. Harriet's inheritance from her father was the western half of the block bordered by Q, R, 30th and 31st streets, across the street from "Dumbarton Oaks" and "Tudor Place." There Harriet built her residence, on the present site of the Hurt Home for the Blind. Elisha and Harriet's son, Brooke Williams, lived there and was the father of Harriet Beall Williams, who in 1839, at the age of sixteen, caused a well-known sensation by marrying the elderly Russian minister, Alexander de Bodisco.

Walter Clagett, as his father's residuary heir, inherited John Clagett's portion of "Clagett's Purchase," comprising about 271 acres, and portions of the adjoining tracts of "Pritchell's Purchase" and "Laybrinth." He probably lived at "Clagett's Purchase" as a farmer for most of his short life. He owned 10 slaves at the time of the 1790 Census.

On April 12, 1796, William Deakins jr. of Georgetown conveyed to Walter Clagett, for 231 pounds, part of lot 5 in Georgetown and its improvements, extending 35 feet west from the boundary of lot 4, and running 119 feet north and south. This land was on the north side of Bridge (M) street between 30th and 31st, towards the western end of the block, a few doors west of the property formerly owned by John Clagett. Walter lived on this land, either in the "improvements" already present when he bought it or in a house built by himself. His establishment has long since disappeared; the site is presently occupied by Chez Odette restaurant, 3063 M street.

On October 3, 1800, Charles D. Green and David English of George Town, Montgomery County, Maryland, conveyed to Walter Clagett of the same, for 50 pounds, a small parcel of land west of "Walter Clagett's lot on which he now dwells" in Georgetown, separated from that lot by an alley. (In 1813 Walter's representatives, Martha, William W. and Darius Clagett, all of Georgetown, entered into an arbitration regarding the east boundary of the Clagett lot on Bridge street; W. Smith, as arbitrator, settled the dispute.) Grace Dunlop Ecker mentions Walter Clagett's house in "Portrait of Old George Town" (page 86).

Although there seems to be no definite record of Walter's occupation after his removal to Georgetown, it seems highly probable to me that he was the Georgetown representative of the firm of Thomas Clagett & Co., in which his brothers Thomas Clagett of Piscataway and Major Horatio Clagett of London were partners. The Clagetts were responsible for one of the most explosive events in the early history of George-

town. On May 2, 1791, the "Termagent," a ship owned by the "Messrs Clagett," anchored in the stream off Georgetown, caught fire and burned. The cargo consisted largely of gunpowder. Sally S. Mackall, in her "Early Days of Washington," (page 23), describes the result: "As the flames progressed and reached the powder a terrific explosion took place which shook all the houses in the town. Cinders and pieces of the ship flew in every direction. . . ."

In 1792 the Reverend Thomas John Claggett,⁹ Walter's second cousin, became first Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of Maryland, which included what is now the District of Columbia. His consecration in Trinity Church, New York, was the first to take place in this country. Bishop Claggett was also Chaplain of the United States Senate.

Walter Claggett died in 1803, aged 39 or possibly 40. His will was the eleventh ever proved in the District of Columbia. Unfortunately the document is no longer extant, having been burned with many of the early records during the British occupation of Washington in 1814. The administration papers, which survive, show disbursements of \$9, the United States carriage tax on coaches; the federal tax on the deceased's land and slaves, which are not enumerated, and a tax on his "pew in Georgetown Church." I am not clear as to whether this meant St. John's Episcopal Church, which was then in the process of organisation, or the Presbyterian Church on M street, where the Episcopalian families of Georgetown had been holding services prior to being able to build their own church. I have written St. John's Church several times inquiring whether their records would clear this up, but apparently no one there at present is interested in such matters.

Walter's widow Martha continued to live at the house on M street until her death on September 10, 1830, at the age of 70. She was buried at "Seat Pleasant," the farm (site of the present town of that name) of her oldest brother, Major Thomas Owen Williams, a substantial planter, owner of many lands in Prince Georges, Montgomery and Washington counties as well as in the District, and holder of 38 slaves in 1790. (He married his cousin Mary Claggett Berry, of "Marlborough Plains.") In 1961 I searched for the Williams graveyard, and in a back yard off Addison road found Martha's tombstone and those of her brothers Thomas Owen Williams and William Prather Williams (the founder of Rockville), all in a dilapidated and broken con-

⁹ The Bishop added a second "g" to his name, allegedly as the result of research when he was in England for his ordination. His research appears to have been defective, however. While in documents written by others many different spellings appear, the ancestors of the settler in Maryland had, with surprising uniformity, spelt the name "Clagett" for several generations.

dition. Martha's estate was settled by her son, Darius Clagett, on April 11, 1831, in the District of Columbia.

Walter and Martha (Williams) Clagett had five children: two daughters and three sons. Sarah Clagett married her cousin Jeremiah Berry, a large planter in western Prince Georges County.¹⁰ Martha Eleanor Clagett married Henry Addison (1798–1870), of Georgetown, merchant, postmaster of Georgetown in 1861–65, collector of customs, 1849–43, and mayor of the town from 1845 to 1857 and again from 1861 to 1867. He was her first cousin once removed, being the grandson of Thomas Clagett of Piscataway, eldest brother of Walter. Henry and Martha Addison lived in a brick house at the southeast corner of Dumbarton and Montgomery streets, now Dumbarton and 28th. When my parents and I moved in 1951 to a house a block and a half away (1343 27th street, where I still live), the old Addison place was still standing, though in a dilapidated condition. It was then in use as a Black Muslim mosque, probably the first such institution in the District. The house has since been demolished.¹¹

William Williams Clagett, eldest son of Walter, was born in 1785. He lived in Georgetown and was involved in a number of land transactions there. He had a two-storey brick house and lot on Beall (O) street, and probably lived there. In 1822 he was living in Georgetown and was a clerk in the fourth auditor's office of the Navy Department. Subsequently he moved to Washington.

Walter Clagett jr., born in 1787, kept a store on Pennsylvania avenue near Jesse Brown's Hotel, between 6th and 7th streets west. He was living in 1832, when he mortgaged his property to his younger brother Darius.

3. DARIUS CLAGETT

Darius Clagett, youngest son of Walter and Martha (Williams) Clagett, was born on February 14, 1792, in Montgomery County, probably at "Clagett's Purchase," but perhaps at Georgetown, which was still part of that jurisdiction. He served in the War of 1812 as a private in Capt. William G. Ridgely's troop, 2d regiment of cavalry (Tayloe's),

¹⁰ Their son was William Jeremiah Berry (1811–1867), owner of the fine estates "Chelsea," "Mattaponi" and "Bowieville," near Marlboro; he also maintained a residence in Washington. He married his cousin Sarah Eliza Clagett of "Weston." Among their descendants are Henry Contee Bowie Clagett, present owner of "Weston", and Judge Charles Clagett Marbury, presently of the Court of Appeals of Maryland. Another descendant, Dr. William Berry Marbury (1885–1957), a successful surgeon, lived and practiced for many years on Q street, Washington, just across the bridge from Georgetown.

¹¹ Henry and Martha Addison's great-grandson was Henry Addison Bowie (1884–1958), well-known automobile dealer and sportsman of Washington, and vestryman of All Saints Church, Chevy Chase.

District of Columbia militia, being on active duty from July 15 to July 26, 1813. His name also appears on an undated muster roll of the Georgetown Hussars of District of Columbia militia, commanded by Lieutenant John C. Williams; his service on that occasion lasted from June 21 to June 30, 1814. So far as appears he was not on active duty on August 24, 1814, the date of the Battle of Bladensburg and the British occupation of Washington.

The diary of Mrs. William Thornton, wife of the architect of the Capitol, which was published in volume 19 of the Records of this Society, shows that on August 30, 1814, one "Mr. Claggett" called "and wished Dr. Thornton to assist him in trying to take some steps to release Dr. Beanes of Marlboro'—who is taken prisoner. Dr. Thornton went to see Genl Mason and Col. Monroe—they promised to attend to it." Dr. Beanes was connected in several ways with the family of Darius' uncle, William Claggett of Piscataway. The "Mr. Claggett" of the diary was almost certainly either Darius or one of his brothers. A better-known attempt to rescue Dr. Beanes took place two weeks later, when Darius' Georgetown neighbour Francis Scott Key spent a memorable night with the British fleet off Baltimore on Beanes' behalf.¹²

Darius Claggett probably lived in his mother's house, on the site of the present 3063 M street, until 1811 or so. On September 27, 1815, Darius Claggett of Georgetown bought from Robert Getty and William Marbury, for the large sum of \$11,000, a described part of lots 18 and 19 in Thomas Beall of George's Addition to Georgetown, together with the house and buildings thereon. A study of the deed and maps demonstrates that the house he thus acquired was the fine large double brick house still standing at 3007 and 3009 M street. The house immediately adjoining on the east, at 3001 and 3003, had until 1803 been the Georgetown residence of Governor Thomas Sim Lee of Maryland. These adjacent Lee and Claggett houses form one of the most impressive and characteristic groups of buildings of early Georgetown. A photograph of 3009 appeared in the Washington "Star" of September 23, 1933, with the statement that it was thought to have

¹² The "star-spangled banner" that flew on that occasion was an unusually large flag—42 feet by 30—specially commissioned, to show defiance, when the British attack on Baltimore was imminent. The flagmaker, Mrs. Mary Pickersgill of Pratt street, Baltimore, finding that her tiny house was too small to lay out such a flag, asked and received permission from Capt. Eli Claggett to use the large malt room of his nearby brewery for that purpose. Capt. Eli Claggett (1781-1848), of "Mount Orange," near Baltimore, was a son of Alexander Claggett, one of the ubiquitous sons of John and Sarah (Magruder) Claggett. He was wounded at the Battle of North Point on September 12, 1814. The following night his brother Lieutenant Levi Claggett was the only commissioned officer to be killed at the Battle of Fort McHenry.

been built before 1811. Plainly both 3007 and 3009 were in place by 1815, when Darius Clagett paid so large a price for them. In a mortgage dated March 24, 1837, Darius refers to them as the three-storey brick houses built by Andrew Ross and Robert Getty. Today the ground floors of the houses are occupied, respectively, by the Washington Gallery of Art and Harold's Delicatessen—a characteristic Georgetown juxtaposition. Part of the upstairs of 3007 is a section of the France restaurant.

At a date unknown, but prior to May 17, 1831, Darius acquired the present 3001 M street, the eastern half of the double brick house on the corner of 30th and M, previously owned by Governor Lee. On that date Darius mortgaged for \$8000 to the Bank of the United States the lot on the northwest corner of Bridge (M) and Washington (30th) streets with the three-storey brick house thereon, fronting about 21 feet on Bridge Street, and running back on Washington street to an alley dividing it from the property sold (presumably by Darius) to Orange H. Dibble on May 18, 1830. Darius may have owned No. 3003 as well—giving him possession of the whole great sweep of houses—but since his deed for the corner property appears not to have been recorded the issue is in doubt.

Davis, Dorsey and Hall ("Georgetown Houses of the Federal Period," page 119) print a picture of the corner houses, 3001 and 3003, and say of them: "the two brick houses . . . are the finest examples of late pre-revolutionary buildings in the town. The interior trim still extant on the second floor is excellent, and the houses carry the characteristic water table mentioned above, oddly enough, between the first and second stories. Uniquely one of the window openings . . . is topped by a flat arch." No. 3001 is today the principal portion of the France restaurant.

Darius Clagett was a dry-goods merchant, carrying on an extensive business first in Georgetown and later in Washington. His first known location was in his houses at 3007-09 M street; like many early merchants, he probably had his store on the ground floor and lived upstairs. He appears to have rented these buildings before buying them, for, as shown by the following advertisement, he had his store there as early as 1812:

Wholesale and Retail Store. Two Doors Above the Union Tavern. We have this day received the largest, best, & well selected assortment of FALL GOODS, Bought on the most advantageous terms by the package—and will be sold by the piece on retail lower than they have been sold in Georgetown for some years. CLAGETT & RIGGS. N.B. Those who buy to sell again

can be supplied at the Baltimore and Philadelphia prices. C. & R. (Georgetown "Federal Republican," October 16, 1812.)

The Union Tavern was on the northeast corner of 30th and M.

Darius Clagett was one of the founders of Christ Church, Georgetown, where many years later his great-grandson Judge Brice Clagett was a vestryman and the latter's son Brice McAdoo Clagett a choir-boy. On November 10, 1817, a meeting was held at the house of Thomas Corcoran "for the purpose of organizing a new congregation, and devising a plan for building an additional Protestant Episcopal Church." Before the end of the year the original articles of agreement were drawn up. Appended thereto is a list of the 26 original pew-holders and subscribers. Among them were Darius Clagett, his brother William W. Clagett, and his cousins Jeremiah Williams, John Smith Compton, Ninian Magruder and Otho Magruder Linthicum, as well as Francis Scott Key. The Reverend Ruel Keith, assisting Walter Dulany Addison at St. John's, became the first rector. In April 1818, William W. Clagett was one of a committee of six to "secure subscriptions, purchase a lot, and contract for a church edifice."

Of these original members of Christ Church Parish, Richard P. Jackson says in his "Chronicles of Georgetown, D.C." (1878), page 188:

Their descendants, to the third and fourth generation, are still represented among us, and their attachment and love to the house their fathers built, has been conspicuous in their liberality and zealous efforts in the enlargement and completion of our present beautiful church edifice.

The *National Intelligencer* of January 27, 1818, reported that "a few days ago" Darius Clagett of Georgetown married Ann Louise Thompson, daughter of Jonah Thompson, of Alexandria. She died on November 20, 1819 ("National Intelligencer"). This brief and childless marriage was entirely forgotten by his descendants for several generations until a study of the old newspapers unearthed it.

Darius was still living in his M street house when on March 4, 1823, he married (2), at Baltimore, Providence Dorsey Brice, daughter of John and Sarah (Lane) Brice, of that city. The wedding was reported in the "National Intelligencer," which specifies that the event took place in the evening and that the ceremony was performed by the Reverend Mr. Soule. Mrs. Clagett was a granddaughter of Capt. John Brice III of Annapolis, lawyer, Revolutionary official and mayor of Annapolis, and his wife Mary Clare Maccubbin, daughter of Nicholas and Mary Clare (Carroll) Maccubbin, of Annapolis, and niece of Charles Carroll "The Barrister," author of the Maryland Declaration

of Rights, whose house "Mount Clare" is still standing in Baltimore. John Brice II, chief justice of the Provincial Court of Maryland, was engaged at the time of his death in 1766 in building the "Brice House," Annapolis, for his younger son Col. James Brice of the Revolution, acting governor in 1792. Providence Dorsey (Brice) Clagett's mother, Sarah, was a daughter of Capt. Richard Harrison Lane and his wife, Providence Dorsey. Capt. Lane forsook his inherited "Hornisham" plantation, on Lyons Creek in upper Calvert County, to become a sea-captain sailing from Baltimore. Thus Mrs. Clagett's close relatives were in the Maryland metropolis; more distantly, her connections were legion through Anne Arundel, Howard and Calvert counties and on the Eastern Shore.

As the city of Washington grew, Darius must have decided that it presented greater business opportunities than the more static, and still quite separate, Georgetown. By 1834 (and probably by 1827, since he had moved his residence to Washington by then) he was operating the firm of Darius Clagett & Co., dry goods, at the northeast corner of 11th and Pennsylvania avenue. The description of this business in the 1834 city directory is "dry good and fancy store." His partner in this business was Thornton B. Washington.

In 1837 Clagett acquired a large part of the block bounded by 8th, 9th, D and C streets, C street being then known as Market Square or Market Space. The block touches Pennsylvania avenue at its southwest corner, and at that corner Mr. Clagett built a substantial building and opened a dry goods store under the name of Clagett & May, later Clagett, Newton, May & Co. The address was 2 Central Market Square. An article by Washington Topham, "Centre Market and Vicinity," in Volume 26 of the Records of this Society, page 55, states:

For over a hundred years the northwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 9th Street has been occupied as an apothecary or drug store. . . . For a period almost as long the opposite or northeast corner has been continuously occupied by dry goods and clothing firms. The dry goods firm of C. E. Washington was here in the early 30s, and when the property was destroyed by fire May 29, 1837, Darius Clagett erected a new building on the corner, 25 by 75 feet, in January, 1838, which was said to be at that time the largest and handsomest store on Pennsylvania Avenue. Seaton Perry followed at this location and later Parker & Bridget who are the occupants today.

This article has the date of Darius' opening a bit wrong; the "National Intelligencer" of November 3, 1837, noted the opening of Darius Clagett's store just erected on the northeast corner of 9th and Pennsylvania, "the largest and handsomest store on Pennsylvania Avenue."

(See also Bryan's "A History of the National Capital," volume 2, page 196.)

Much of the property purchased by Darius Clagett on this block continued in the Clagett family for many decades. The deeds do not clearly reveal just how much of the block Darius owned, but he had at least 50 feet of frontage on C street and 75 feet on 9th, running from the corner of the two. Part of the block was sold by his son John Brice Clagett in 1874; a large lot abutting on C street and Pennsylvania avenue was in the estate of Darius' daughter-in-law Adele Clare Clagett (Mrs. Willam Henry Clagett) in 1917.

Darius was also proprietor of Clagett & Dodson, on the second storey of the corner building at 9th and Pennsylvania. By 1853 Clagett & Dodson, described as "carpet warerooms" (city directory), had moved to Louisiana avenue near the corner of 9th street. By that year, also, John Brice Clagett was operating a branch of Clagett, Newton, May & Co. on C street between 4½ and 6th streets, northwest. In 1847 Darius Clagett, J. B. Dodson and Richard B. Nally were trading as D. Clagett & Co.

The following appears at page 26 of Mrs. Sarah E. Vedder's "Reminiscences of the District of Columbia" (1909):

Long shawls had not come into use at that time. I have a plaid long shawl, one of the first brought to the city, over 47 years ago, and sold by Mr. Darius Clagett, corner Pennsylvania avenue and 9th street. There were six brought from Scotland, and were called "Shepherd's hand." "Shepherd's hand," the shawl was called, I presume because it was twice as long as wide and enveloped one from head to foot. Just think of the first-class store in Washington City ordering six shawls! You can imagine the size of the city in 1846! Mr. Clagett's store had as great a reputation as A. T. Stewart's in New York. It was the first store. Riley kept the next first-class store, corner Pennsylvania avenue and Eighth.

And Sally S. Mackall writes, "Early Days of Washington" (1899), page 270:

In those early days Messrs. Thomas I. Davis, Elisha Riggs, Francis Dodge, Darius Claggett, Alexander Ray, Edward Magruder Linthicum, William W. Corcoran and George Peabody were merchants of Georgetown who accumulated wealth.

Darius was also active in the purchase and sale of real estate, as is witnessed by the great frequency with which his name appears in the deed books over a period of many years. From time to time he owned many different lots in Georgetown and in various parts of Washington. He also held a number of slaves.

Darius Clagett is on record as third vice president of the Washington Horticultural Society in 1857, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Rockville & Washington Turnpike Road Company until his death. In 1845 he became one of the trustees to build a temple or temperance hall for the Freemans Vigilant Total Abstinence Society of the District of Columbia; the building was completed by 1849. In 1856 he was one of the seven trustees to erect a church of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Washington County. He was "long remembered as one of the prosperous merchants of the early national capital" ("Personal Sketches of Eminent and Representative Men of Virginia and the District of Columbia," by the Hon. William H. Henry and Ainsworth R. Spofard).

By 1827, when his son William Henry was born in his new house, Darius had left Georgetown and was living on the southwest corner of 10th and F streets; he was still there in 1846. During his residence in Washington City he was associated with old Trinity Episcopal Church, 3d and C streets N.W. (no longer extant), where his daughter Mary Ann was married in 1846.

By 1853 Darius "resides in the country" (city directory). He had bought land in the extreme northern part of the District of Columbia and had either built a house there or restored and expanded an old one. This country place he called "Pomona." On February 3, 1843, Charles H. Carroll of Livingston County, New York, executor of the estate of Charles Carroll formerly of "Bellevue," Georgetown, sold to Darius Clagett for \$2432 parts of "Cluin Course," "The Second Addition to Hazard," and "The Girls Portion," 100 acres in all, on Rock Creek, Washington County, D.C. On March 8, 1847, Darius and his son John bought from Basil Loveless (who had acquired them from Charles H. Carroll) additional portions of the same three tracts, described as running from Rock Creek to the Rockville-Washington Turnpike; John Brice Clagett released his half to his father in 1850. This second purchase was of 205½ acres, and cost the Clagetts \$2400. The "Pomona" tract, therefore, amounted to 305½ acres in all.

This establishment is described as follows in John Clagett Proctor's "Washington and Environs," page 348:

Clagett's place, here referred to, was a large tract of land, belonging at this time [1864] to the heirs of Darius Clagett, who was in the dry goods business at the northeast corner of Ninth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue at least as early as 1843. The Clagett property extended from the north corner stone of the District south for quite a distance and within both lines of the East and West highways, particularly the latter.

The move to the country took place before early 1849, when the

Clagetts' daughter Eliza went to boarding school in Baltimore. In 1849-51 Mrs. Clagett wrote a great many letters, and Darius himself a few, to Eliza, all dated "Pomona." The principal buildings were in the present Rock Creek Park, on the east side of the Creek just south of the present Kalmia Road. There was another house somewhat further south, across the creek; the two settlements were connected by a ford (Providence Dorsey Clagett to Eliza Brice Clagett, October 22, 1850). Both locations are shown on maps of the 1860's, labeled "D. Clagett's heirs." Darius Clagett engaged in farming and maintained a plentiful livestock, including a herd of cattle.

At "Pomona" the family were near neighbours of Francis Preston Blair at "Silver Spring"; they often refer to Mr. Blair in their correspondence, and an autographed picture of him, obviously given them by him, has come down to me. "Pomona" marked the closest penetration of Confederate troops to the United States Capitol during the War Between the States, during Early's raid into the District of Columbia. The Washington Star of July 11, 1864 (2d edition), gives the report:

Messengers just in report lively skirmishing going on this morning in the vicinity of Fort Massachusetts (near Clagett's place), some four miles out.

In a letter to her daughter Eliza, dated at "Pomona," February 24, 1857, Mrs. Clagett wrote:

Father is pleased with his overseer, and the buildings are in progress, there is to be a portico from the big parlor, as soon as practicable, and I shall fix the library as soon after you leave at Easter, as I can.

Darius Clagett died on October 1, 1860, at the age of 68. The *National Intelligencer* reported on October 2, under *Deaths*:

Suddenly, on Monday, October 1st, of paralysis, Darius Clagett, in the 69th year of his age.

His friends are invited to attend his funeral from his late residence, Pomona, at 2 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. Pallbearers will meet carriages at Nairn's Drug store at 12 o'clock, corner of Pennsylvania avenue and 9th street.

He was buried in his lot at Rock Creek Cemetery, where several of his children, his wife (who died June 1, 1861), and others of the family are also buried under a handsome shaft. "Pomona" passed to his eldest son, John Brice Clagett, who lived there until his death in 1888; sometime thereafter the house was burned, and the land sold.

After his removal to the country, Darius was associated with Rock Creek (St. Paul's) Parish, as his grandfather John Clagett had been.

Darius' grandchildren were baptised there from 1848 to 1853, and his wife often speaks in her letters of attending the church. Mrs. Clagett was confirmed at Rock Creek Church in 1850, but Mr. Clagett seems always to have declined to undergo that sacrament.

Darius and Providence Dorsey (Brice) Clagett had thirteen children, of whom five died in childhood. Charles Carroll Clagett (1829–1882) went to California and died there unmarried. Maurice Clagett (1833–1900) served in the Confederate Army, being a private in Company H, First Virginia Infantry. He also never married, and spent his later years in the Confederate Home at Richmond. Elbert Clagett (1835–1905) was of Washington, but after his death his widow and two children settled at Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Eliza Brice Clagett (1836–1899), one of only two daughters of Darius who survived, married in 1861 Col. Ethan Allen of New York, a successful lawyer and an author of some note. She died of a heart attack at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, during the first act of "Lohengrin." Her obituary says she was "widely known in the social life of New York, where she had lived for thirty years."

John Brice Clagett (1824–1888), eldest son of Darius, succeeded his father in the mercantile business and at "Pomona." He married, in turn, two daughters of William Hunter and Sarah (Duckworth) Gunnell, of Washington. He left a number of descendants, some in this area. A son was Major John Rozier Clagett (1852–1902), West Pointer, professional soldier in the Indian wars and in the Philippines. His son, Brigadier General Henry Black Clagett (1884–1952), also a West Pointer, was one of the founders and early pilots of the Air Corps, led the first transcontinental flight in 1919, and in 1941 was commanding general of the Far East Air Command in Manila under General MacArthur.

Mary Ann Clagett (1825–1897), of Darius, married Smith Thompson, son of Gilbert Livingston Thompson of New York and grandson of Daniel Danforth Tompkins, Governor of New York and Vice President under Monroe. The Thompsons lived in Montgomery County and in Washington, and have a number of descendants in this area.

Dorsey Clagett (1843–1899), youngest child of Darius, unlike his Confederate brother Maurice joined the Union Army; for the Clagetts it was, quite literally, a brothers' war. He served as a lieutenant in the First Maryland Cavalry and fought in innumerable engagements throughout the war. He became a broker in Washington, served for many years as collector of customs of the port of Georgetown, and was register of wills of the District of Columbia during President Cleveland's first term. Active in Democratic politics, he was secretary

of the executive committee at Cleveland's inaugural ball in 1885. Mr. Clagett married Leah Ann Kendig. With their only child, a lovely girl named Eliza who died at the age of fifteen, they are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, Georgetown.

William Henry Clagett (1827-1892), third child and second son of Darius, was educated by private tutors and at a school kept by one McLeod. He went to sea at the age of 16 and for the next four or five years was a sailor (a hereditary vocation in his mother's mother's family), making a trip around the world to China on the barque *Pioneer* in 1844-45. In the latter year, though only 18 years old, he became second mate of the *Columbia*, bound for Europe. The present author has a number of letters written by him at sea and in China, mostly addressed to his great-uncle, Capt. Thomas A. C. L. Lane, of Baltimore.

Returning to Washington in 1848, William H. Clagett embarked on a long and successful business career, first as a dry-goods merchant and later as a real estate and stock broker. Active in civic affairs and Democratic politics, he was one of the founders and president of the Columbia Railroad Company, which introduced streetcars to Washington; a director of the Citizens' National Bank, member of the third D.C. Territorial Legislature, and for some years chairman of the Board of Assessors of the District. He lived at 1006 16th street, N.W. At his death the *Washington Post* (October 23, 1892) called him "one of the best-known residents of Washington." Other sketches of his life are found in the *Washington Star* for October 22, 1892; Henry and Spofard's "Personal Sketches of Eminent and Representative Men of Virginia and the District of Columbia," and the "Encyclopedia of American Biography," vol. iv, pages 109-10 (1918).

In 1859 William H. Clagett married Mary Adele, daughter of William and Margaret A. Clare, of Washington (formerly of Tuscaloosa, Alabama), and sister of Major William Clare jr., of the Confederate Army, who in 1865 was assistant inspector general on the staff of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston. Mr. and Mrs. Clagett had six children who lived to maturity. The sons were Howard Clare Clagett (1858-1893), at the time of his death a promising young assistant United States attorney here; William H. Clagett, Jr. (1874-1933), actor and journalist; and Maurice Joseph Clagett (1861-1913), a patent lawyer, who lived at Linden, Montgomery County. The last-named was father of Judge Brice Clagett (1889-1951), of "Beall's Pleasure," near Landover, Prince Georges County, and of Georgetown, who at the time of his death was a judge of the Municipal Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. He was the father of the author of this sketch.