
“History of Seaford 1632-1939”

by

W. Wright Robinson

The earliest local references to that particular tract of land which is the site of the present town of Seaford, are in the courthouse of Georgetown, Delaware, dated as of the year 1726. These records indicate that the Hooper family at one time held the deed for all of this land and it is entirely probable that a deed or charter had been in the possession of this family for at least twenty years prior to the County records.

Granted that these records are authentic, we have evidence that a colonization of this territory had been made nearly a century previous to the Georgetown references. In 1632 Lord De-La-Warr, a pioneer colonizer [of] the state and from whom the state took its name, placed five English families in the district in which Seaford is now a part. From Church records at present in the possession of the Archbishop of London in England, the names of the heads of these five families were: Walter Gameson, Thomas Jacobs, Jeremiah McNeilly, Elijah Cannon, and John Gibbons.

Although we have evidence that early settlers did inhabit the district, one Thomas Hooper was the first landowner of the present site of Seaford of whom the county has any record, and for our narrative we shall class him as Seaford's first citizen.

At his home, the exact location of which is long since forgotten, he raised a family of three sons and four daughters; Thomas, John and Henry, Nancy, Mollie, Priscilla and Sally. Four of these children married and settled in this section and from these marriages came the nucleus for what was to be the future Seaford.

Nancy married a Mr. Douglas and settled in the village. Sally married John Tenant, a landowner who resided on or near what is now known as the Governor Ross Farm, and John followed in the footsteps of his father as a farmer. Mollie married John Wallace and by this union one son, Henry, and one daughter, Margaret, were born. Becoming a widow, Mollie later married for a second husband, Jacob Wright, of Dorchester County, Maryland. Mr. Wright had a daughter by a previous marriage, Miss Margaret Wright, who was married to her step-brother, Henry Wallace, in 1815.

In the division of land following the death of the elder Hooper, John Hooper became the possessor of the site of Seaford, and from his family sprang the long line of Hoopers that ended with the passing of Miss Mollie Hooper, the last to bear the family name in 1931.

In the family of John Hooper there was one son and three daughters: Henry, Ann, Elizabeth, and Susan. Henry settled in the village and was the father of Hicks Hooper, whose tomb is in the present M.P. Cemetery. Ann married Dr. Cottingham, Seaford's first physician,

and by this union were three sons: John, Alfred, and Charles. Elizabeth married Nathan Vickers, one of the first settlers of the village, and Susan married Zebediah Fountain, and from this marriage one boy, Zebediah, was born, who later became the father of the the wife of Lewis Wallace, another rSeaford pioneer.

From the foregoing; it can be seen that the Hooper family played a large part in the early settlement of the town of Seaford.

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Volume II, pages 1301 - 1315

By Thomas J. Scharf

HOW THE CITY GREW

1799

Seaford, called Hooper's Landing, was laid out October 29, 1799 by John Hooper, Thomas Hooper and John Tennant, as the heirs of Henry Hooper. The plat shows the dwelling house of John Hooper, near which was a spring and a wharf. Higher up and above the spring, Market and Front Streets made a triangular intersection, the apex being set for a market space. Front Street ran north and south and was parallel with Herring Creek. The streets between it and the creek running parallel with it, were named North and South. The transverse streets, running parallel with Nanticoke River and having due east and west course, all sixty feet wide, received the names of Water, East and West. Most of the lots were sixty-by sixty feet and ninety-two (92) lots were laid out. (*Figure 1*)

1813-1866

1813 Captain Solomon Boston platted an additional ten (10) lots, extending along Front and North Streets. A "second addition" was platted by James Conwell in 1814 and consisted of twenty (20) lots. The "third addition" of twenty-five (25) lots, on the river and below Market Street, at the old wharf of Henry Hooper, was platted by James Conwell in 1815. Most of the City beyond Market Street to Bradford Street developed between 1815 and 1866. According to W. Wright Robinson in his "History of Seaford...", "In 1830 th e pastor of the Methodist Protestant group, succeeded in having the old M. E. Chapel then standing at Chapel Branch, moved into Seaford and placed on a part of the Hooper burying ground. In 1896 a new brick church was built and called "Mt. Olivet Methodist Protestant Church." "In 1856 nanticoke City was platted with one hundred seventy nine (179) lots laid out by John Dale for Rev. Thomas

Bradford, and here was located in 1857 the southern terminus of the Delaware Railroad. In 1866 Horsey's Addition to Seaford was "lad out" by James Stuart and consisted of thirty-eight (38) lots south of High Street running from Pine Street to Arcadia Street. The rapid growth of the town after the completion of the railroad made it desirable that it should possess better and more independent form of government that could be had while subordinate to the "hundred". Accordingly it was incorporated by an act of the Legislature, passed March 16, 1865, which named the cities [sic] first commissioners, and directed that a resurvey and plat of the town be made. Several amendatory acts followed and on the 19th of February 1883, an act was passed re-incorporating the town with its corporate name of the Town of Seaford.

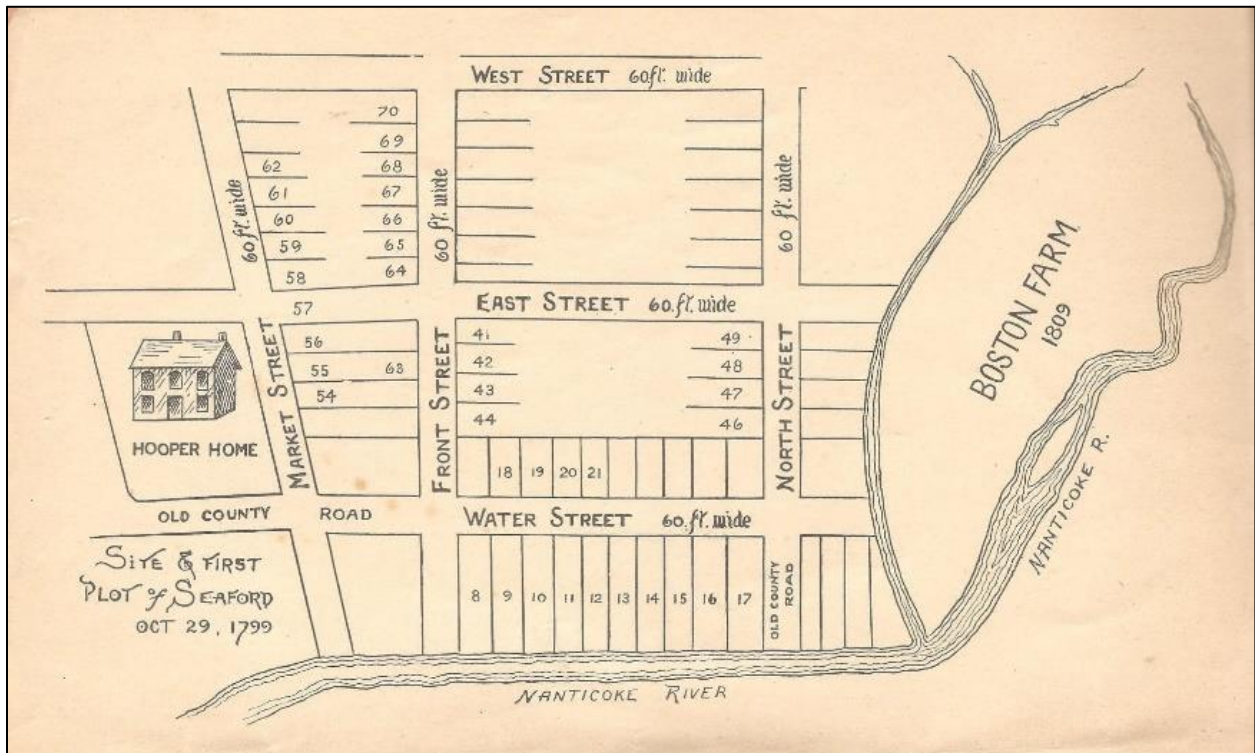


Figure 1: Reproduction of original plat of Seaford