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"Through an Old Southern County,"

by Calvin Dill Wilson.

As representing the large estates and manors that were in former times common in this county and State, a good illustration is to be found in a grant that bordered upon this part of Bush River. It is known as "Webster's Forest," and was given by Lord Baltimore to one of his officers, Webster by name, who had accompanied him to America. This grant reached from the water northward five or six miles, and is now broken up into numerous estates, some half-dozen persons of the name of the original grantee owning farms.

On the northern part of this tract is the estate now in possession of the family of Captain John Webster, who distinguished himself by services in defense of the city of Baltimore in the war of 1812. For him is claimed a good part of the credit of having prevented the British from taking and sacking Baltimore, as they had done with Washington. His gallantry was rewarded by the presentation of a sword by the State of Maryland and another by the city of Baltimore. He continued in the service of the government, first in the navy and then in the revenue service until his death. His son, Captain John Adams Webster, served in the navy until his death; and a grandson of the old captain is now in the service. Daniel Webster became intimately acquainted with the Captain while they were both in Washington, and always in his letters addressed him as cousin. If there was any actual blood relationship it probably belonged to a common stock in England before the migration of the ancestors of the two families. The Maryland Websters may well be of the same stock as Daniel, if we are to judge by the big, deep voices and large strong faces of some of the men. It is told of Captain John Webster that he could be heard giving orders from his porch at almost any point on his farm, and that he was a very large and commanding looking man. He and Daniel Webster were much together in Washington, and the distinguished Massachusetts

senator paid frequent visits to the home of the Captain in Harford county.

A daughter of the Captain tells of being held on his knee by the great Daniel when she was a child, at the time of his numerous ^{visits/}to her father's house. Large packages of letters from Daniel Webster were until recently in possession of members of the family at the "Forest"; but most of them were burned a short time since by one who considered them of too private a nature to fall into the hands of strangers. A diamond brooch given by Daniel Webster to the Captain's sister, Miss Hannah, is yet among the family treasures. For this cousin, who was a stately, handsome woman, as her brother, the Captain, was an exceptionally distinguished looking man, Daniel Webster had always a great fondness and admiration. One of the younger members of the family found this fact a sesame to an interview with the great statesman, when he once called upon him in Washington. He found the senator engaged with a company of officers of high importance, and his first request for an interview was unsuccessful; but when he told the valet to go back and say that "Ben Webster of Harford county wished to see him," Daniel came out quickly with both hands extended, and his first words were, "How is Cousin Hannah?"

This Captain Webster was, through his mother, related to the Adams family, and his place is called "Mount Adams," from that fact. In the "Forest" there still stands an old house that was originally built as a fort, a place of refuge for the surrounding white people in case of an alarm from Indians. The walls are of stone, and at the foundations are five or six feet thick. This has been enlarged upon, and is an interesting old residence, probably one of the oldest in the county.