

SCEPTERED ISLE--AN UPDATE

by

Richard R. Campbell

A paper delivered to the Kit Kat Club
Columbus, Ohio

November 15, 1988

In Richard the Second, Shakespeare has John of Gaunt rhapsodize over his island.

"This royal throne of kings," he says. "This scepter'd isle, this earth of majesty, this seat of Mars; this other Eden, demi-paradise, this fortress built by Nature for herself against infection and the hand of war..."

Later, deposed and in prison, King Richard says, "Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot unlikely wonders.... Sometimes I am king; then treasons make me wish myself a beggar...."

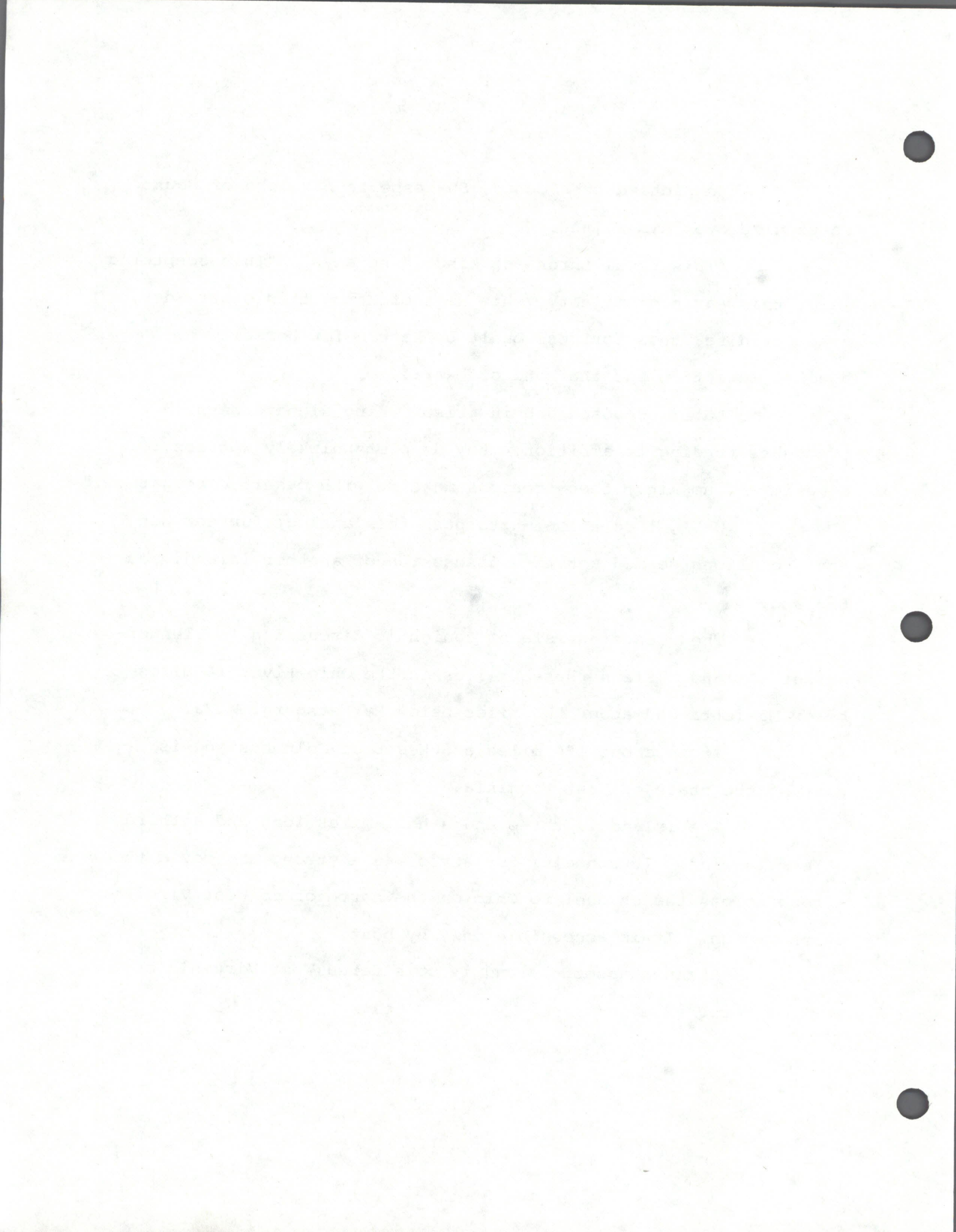
Well, I do not ^{intend} wish to push this analogy further but the quotations seemed apt to a discussion of another island, not England.

The sceptered isle of tonight's discussion is Blennerhassett Island. Blennerhassett lies in the Ohio River 14 miles below Marietta and about two miles below Parkersburg, W.Va.

It is about 100 miles southeast of Columbus and is part of the state of West Virginia.

The island is three and a half miles long and a third of a mile wide. It contains 500 acres, and a strong arm could throw a rock across the channel to Ohio on the north or to West Virginia on the south. It is accessible only by boat.

Blennerhassett Island is considered West Virginia's most historic site.



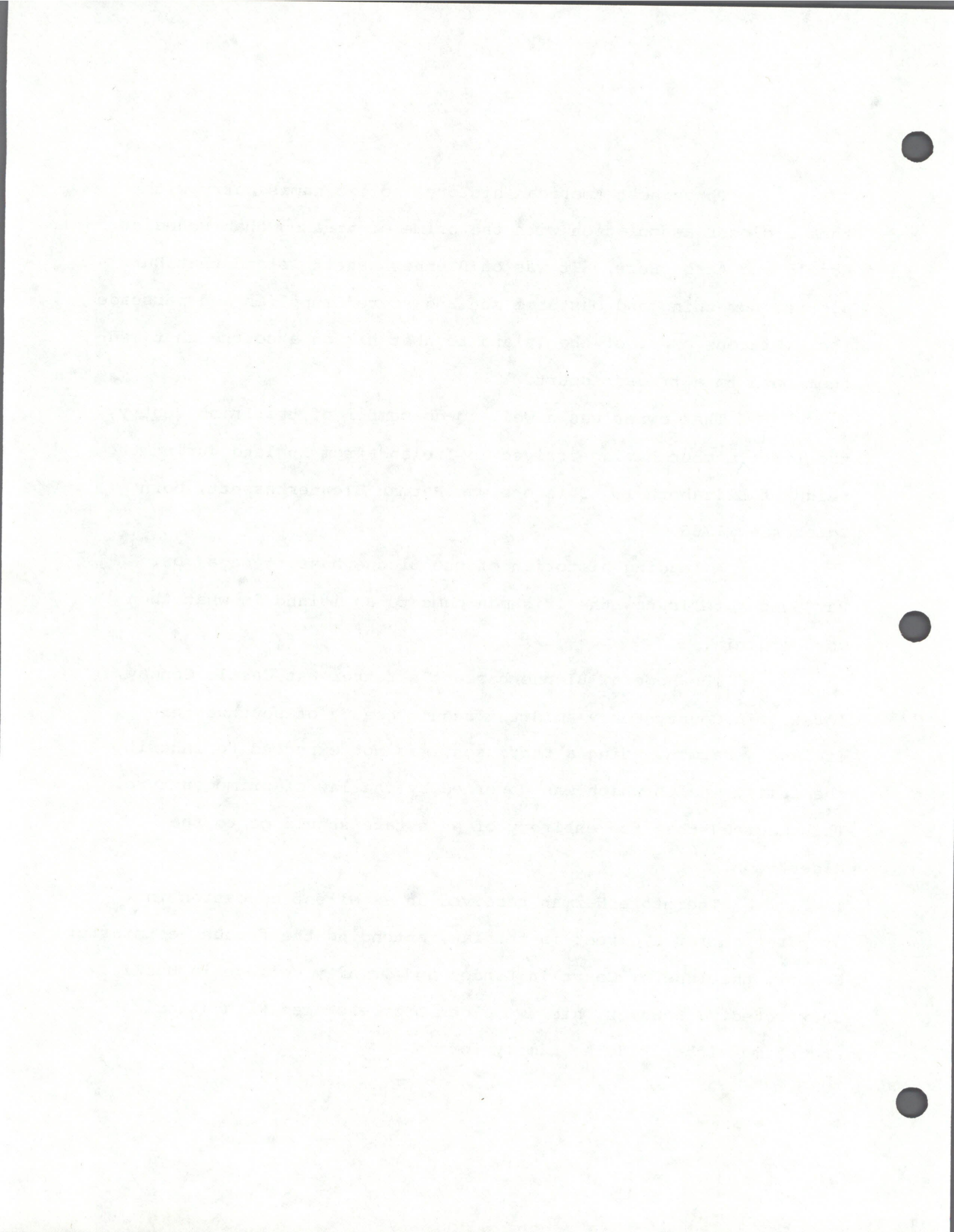
Throughout American history, no two names carry with them a closer association with the crime of treason than Benedict Arnold and Aaron Burr. It was on Blennerhassett Island that Burr plotted something and mustered men and stored supplies and persuaded the ambitious owner of the island to abet him on a course that led them both to a treason court.

That owner was a well-to-do member of the Irish gentry, the first ^{family} member having arrived in Ireland from England during the reign of Elizabeth I. This one was Harman Blennerhassett, born October 6, 1765.

A leading historian of the Blennerhassett saga, Dr. Ray Swick, tells how the Irishman came to an island in what then was Virginia.

The home of Blennerhassett's father was Castle Conway, located in County Kerry amid the scenic beauty of southwestern Ireland. Harman, being a third son, was not expected to inherit the family wealth which was governed by the law of primogeniture. This decreed that the entirety of an estate should go to the eldest son.

Therefore Harman received an excellent education in preparation for a career in the law, attending the famous Westminster School, the Inns of Court in London and Trinity College in Dublin. Unexpectedly, however, his two older brothers died without heirs and Harman inherited the family fortune.



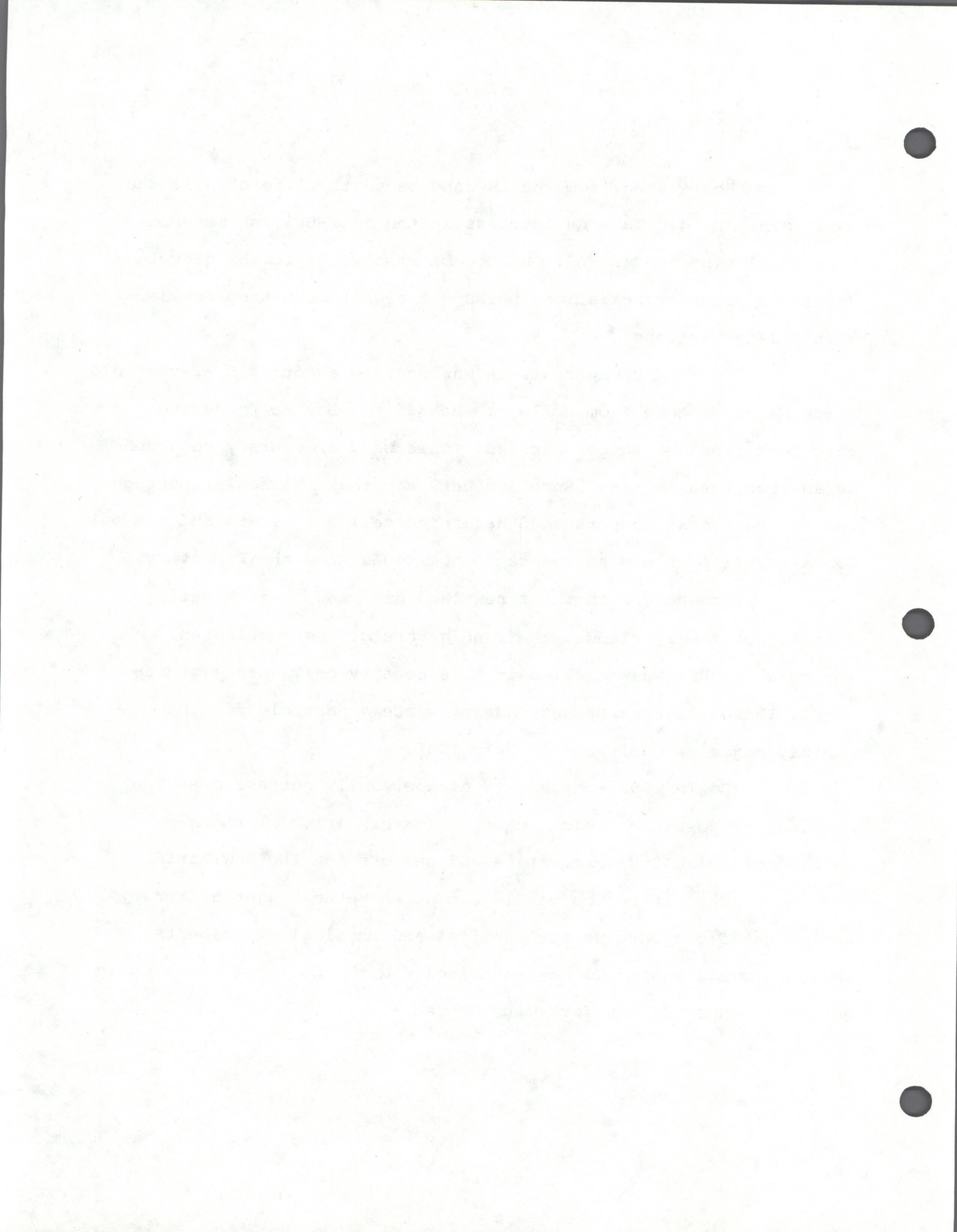
He retired from the law and began the life of a landed gentleman. He did take an interest in the anti-British movement then enveloping the island. He became an officer in the secret United Irishmen organization, perhaps a significant step in view of his later actions.

In 1794 Blennerhassett was sent to escort his 22-year-old niece Margaret home from college. He did so, but en route the pair took time out to get married. This was, of course, regarded as an incestuous match. Some accounts say that the social outrage was so great that it persuaded Harman to sell his estate and set out for a new life in a place where no one would know their history.

And no one in their new land did know their haunting secret, not their friends, their neighbors or their children. The relationship was revealed in this country only when a great-niece, Therese Blennerhassett Adams, wrote an article for the Century magazine published in July 1901.

So in 1796--whether to escape family outrage over the marriage or possible treason charges for his Irish plotting--Harman sold his 4000-acre estate and set off for the New World.

The first stop was in London where he bought a library and scientific apparatus for chemical and physical experiments. The sea voyage lasted 73 days and included the death of the captain before it ended in New York City August 1.



Once in America, the Blennerhassetts made what might be considered a bizarre decision. Instead of buying a mansion in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia or the like, they decided to cross the Appalachian mountains and settle in the west. And that is just what they did.

By November they were in Pittsburgh, where they spent the winter. They then went down the Ohio River looking for a large piece of land. They reached Marietta, liked the landscape and the people and decided to stay. Never mind that this was frontier country and that three years ^{earlier} ~~before~~ Indians had scalped the John Armstrong family near Marietta.

By 1798 the Blennerhassetts had moved onto the island that would soon bear their name and the next year Harman bought its upper half. They lived in a log blockhouse built six years earlier during an Indian war as they planned their new home.

And what a home they planned! It was to be the most beautiful private residence in the American West. You can see it reproduced in exact dimensions today if you visit Blennerhasset Island.

A section of primeval forest was cleared, docks constructed, boats bought to ferry passengers and freight, stone ordered from Virginia quarries for foundations and landings. The couple shopped and shopped, spending in a way that would finally deplete Harman's fortune.

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When the house was finished in 1800, it contained over 7000 square feet of interior floor space. It was a Mount Vernon type of house with wings and dependencies.

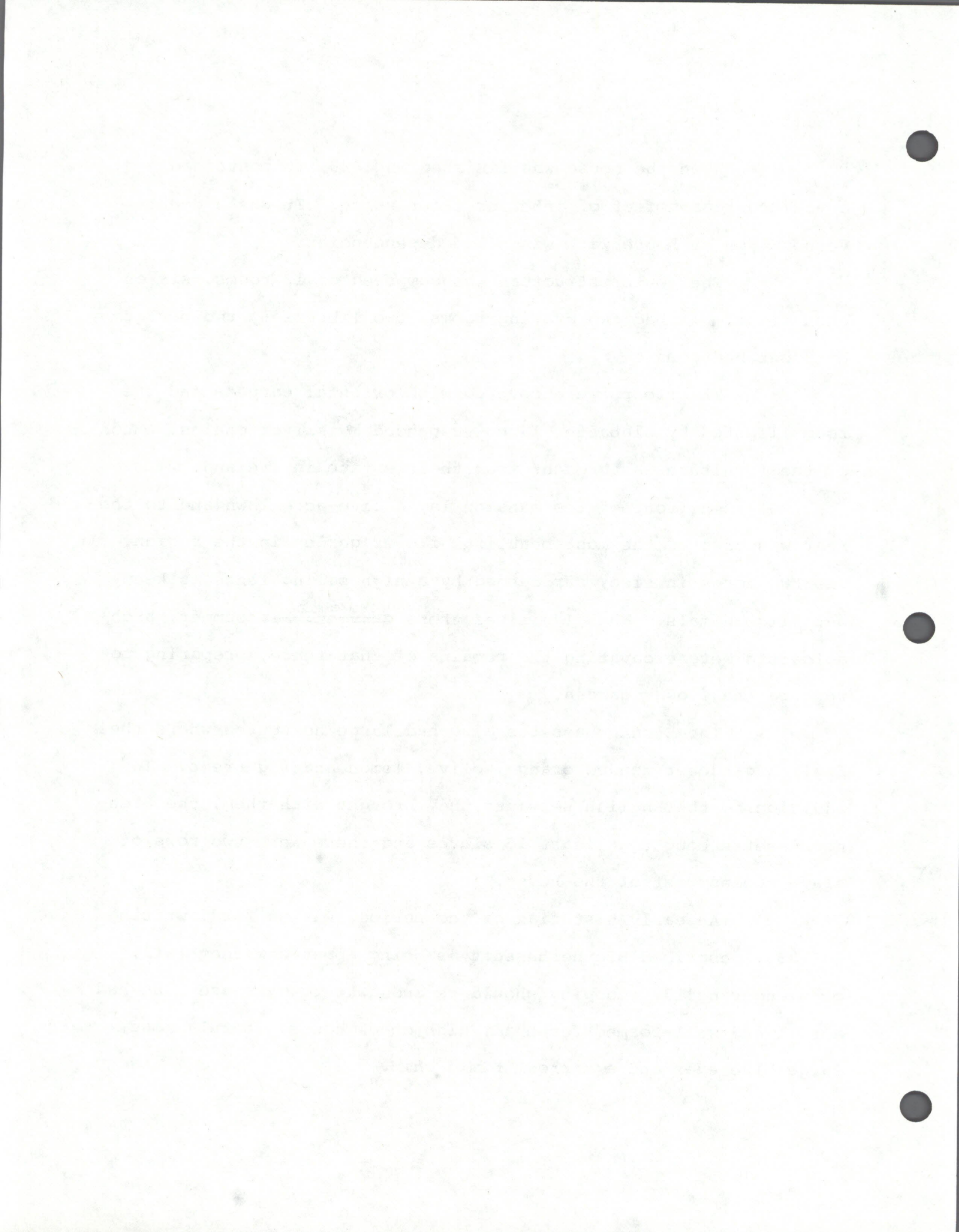
The center structure was composed of 12 rooms, six on each floor. It had two drawing rooms, two libraries, two parlors and four bedrooms.

The floors were covered with oriental carpets and the rooms lighted by alabaster lamps suspended ^{on} ~~by~~ silver chains. Much of the furniture was brought from their estate in Ireland.

In front of the mansion lay a five-acre lawn and to the rear was created the most beautiful flower garden in the region. It was two acres in size, surrounded by a high paling fence to keep out wild animals. When I visited there ~~earlier~~ ^{last} this summer, archaeologists were excavating the remains of that fence, preparing to restore the flower garden.

The Blennerhassetts also had large hothouses where their English gardener tended orange, olive, lemon and fig trees. In addition to the English servants they brought with them, the Blennerhassetts bought at least 15 slaves and there were two rows of slave cabins west of the house.

An early historian of the period, Ray Safford, writing in 1853, described Blennerhassetts as being about six feet tall, of slender build, stooping shoulders and awkward carriage. He had a full and well-formed forehead, high cheek bones, stately nose, large blue eyes and a narrow, timid chin.



Another writer says he was so near-sighted that when he went hunting a servant had to point the gun and tell him when to pull the trigger. He has been described as having every sense but common sense. He was an adept musician and played the violin and bass viol.

Writes Safford, who knew nothing of the couple's incestuous relationship:

"If his person and character deserve attention, how much more does that of his wife, one of the most remarkable women of her time and indeed of all American history.

"She was a born princess in form, features, accomplishments, manner and disposition. Her figure was of a commanding height, symmetrically proportioned, lithe and agile. Her features, moulded in the Grecian type, were perfect and fair, embellished by a complexion whose carnation hue health and the hand of nature alone had painted."

He mentions her dark blue eyes and dark brown hair and says she was always attired in exquisite taste. But, he adds, her charms were not solely external. She was also talented and trained in mind; she spoke and wrote fluently in Italian and French, was an enthusiastic Shakespeare scholar and had a taste for poetry.

Gore Vidal describes her a bit differently in the historical novel Burr.

"A delightful young wife," he writes, "so full of wit and fire that one quickly overlooked her unusually large ears, turned up nose, small slant eyes. And she has the face of an otter or some such small bright river creature."



She could ride a horse to Marietta, doing the 14 miles in two hours. She was skilled in the arts of housewifery, making with her own hands the clothing of her husband, children and herself. And she generally prepared the more delicate dishes for the table.

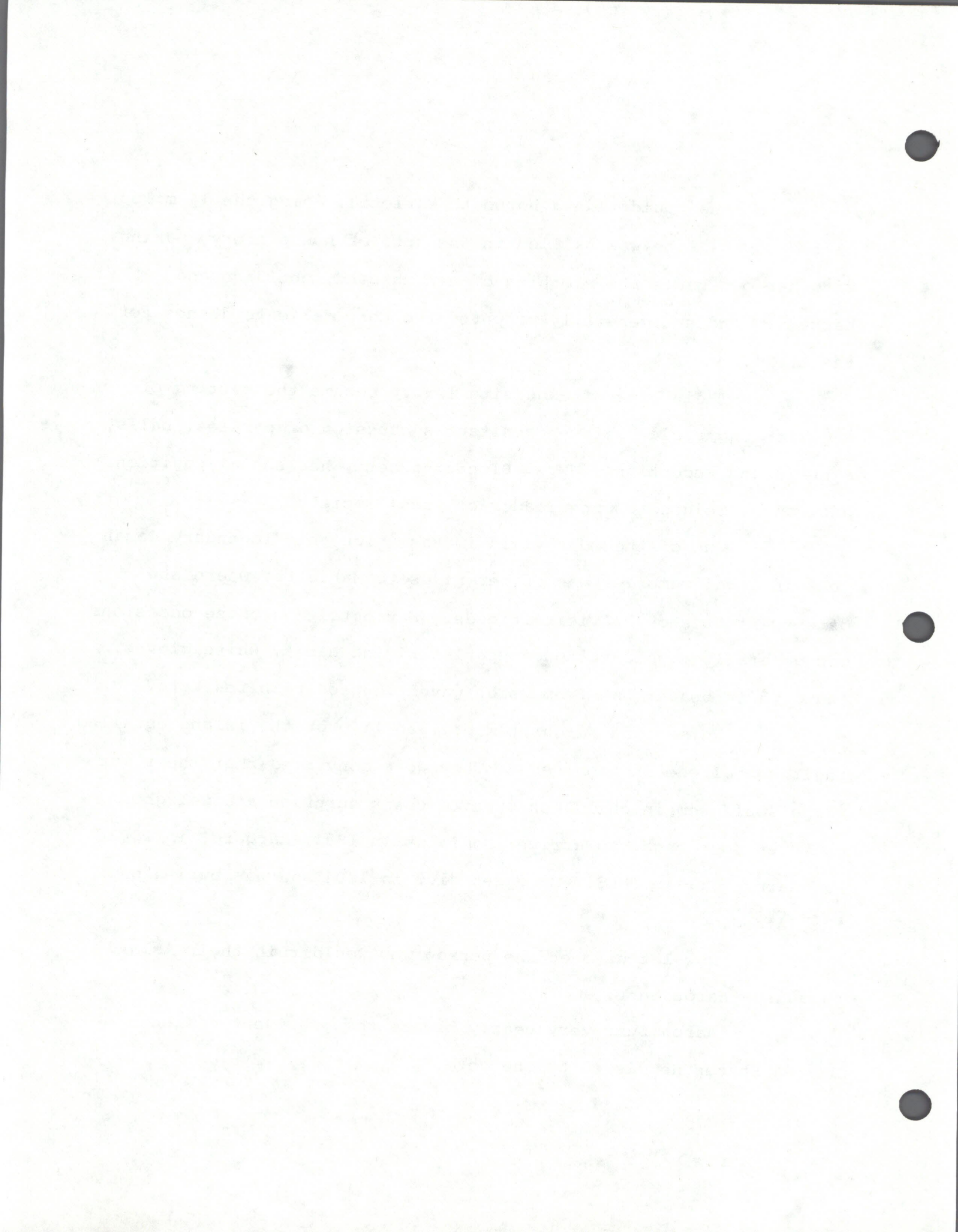
Their home of exquisite luxury became the setting of a glittering social life--a constant succession of parties, balls, dinners and receptions. Mrs. Blennerhassett, her social position unrivaled, reigned as the leader of local society.

One of the most vivid images which this legendary woman left in local memories was of her rides to Marietta, where she often went to shop or visit friends. Her outfit on these occasions was generally a gold-buttoned scarlet riding habit, white gloves, and a white beaver hat from which waved long ostrich feathers.

Harman and Margaret's private life on the island equalled their social one in happiness. They were convinced that their marriage would remain childless, but to their surprise and delight children soon began to arrive: Dominick in 1801, Margaret in 1802 and Harman Jr. in 1803. Margaret died in 1804 and was buried on the island.

Now let us meet the person who would ruin their island paradise--Aaron Burr.

Aaron Burr very nearly became the president of the United States. He missed by one vote.



He was nominated with Thomas Jefferson as the candidates of the Democratic-Republican Party in 1800. ^{Different states voted} ~~In February, 1801,~~ ^{they began counting electoral votes.} ~~they began counting electoral votes.~~ ^{to the electoral college.}

Jefferson and Burr ran together, much as ^{George Bush} ~~Michael Dukakis~~ and ^{Dan Quayle} ~~Lloyd Bentsen~~ ran this fall. Except that it was assumed that Jefferson was the presidential candidate and that Burr was the vice presidential candidate.

Some electors did not see it that way, however. The Federalists, the old John Adams people, liked Burr, not Jefferson. So they voted for Burr for president.

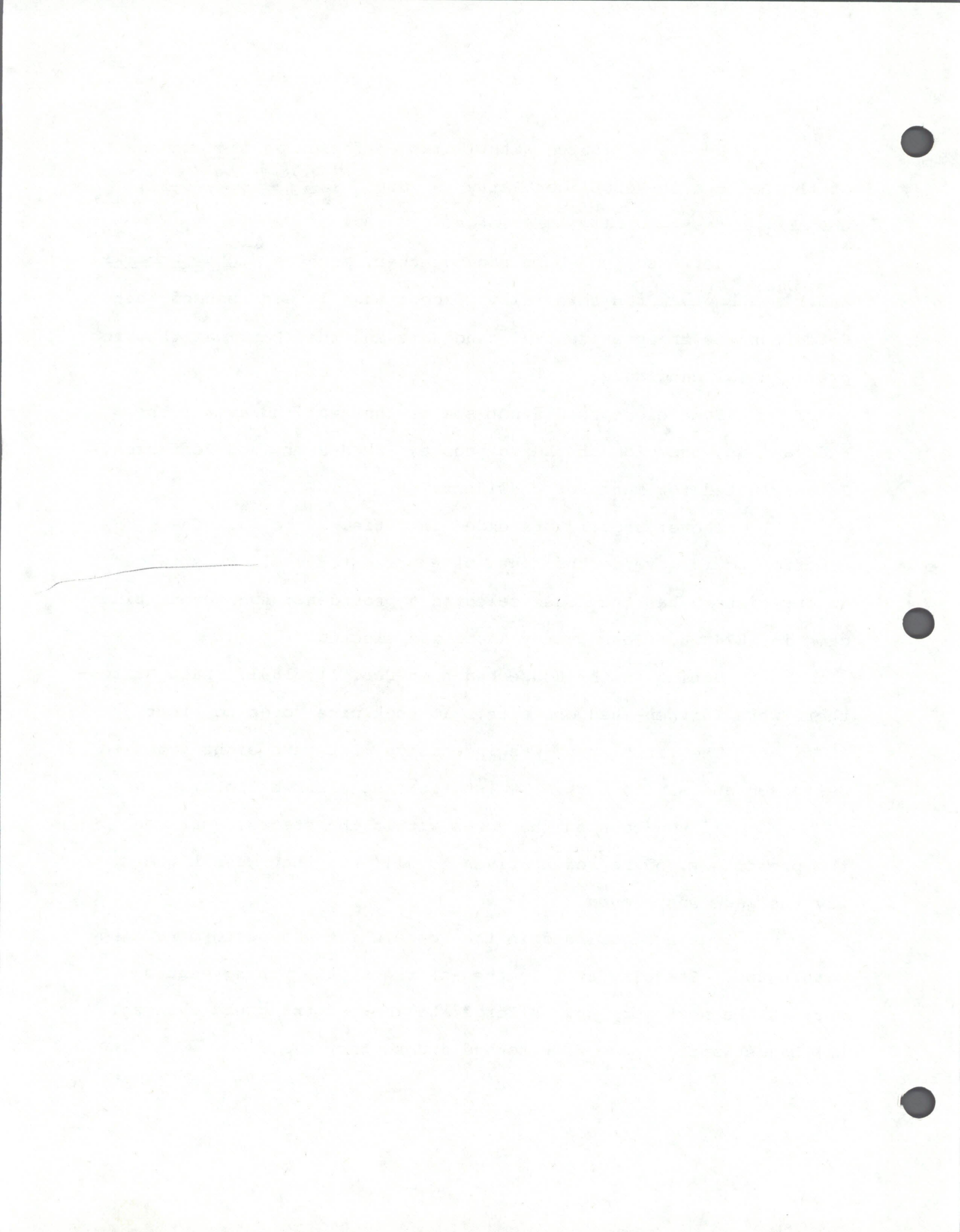
The electoral vote ended in a tie, 73 to 73. The election would move to the House of Representatives. Only twice in our history has the House selected a president; the second time came in 1824 when John Quincy Adams was elected.

Voting in the House began on Feb. 11, 1801. Each state-- there were 16 then--had one vote. It took nine votes to elect.

The first round was indecisive. It gave eight votes to Jefferson and six to Burr. Two states cast blank ballots.

If you counted the votes within the states, Burr won the presidency, 55 representatives to 51. But that wasn't the way the game was played.

Voting continued in the House while a snowstorm ravaged Washington. Starting at 1 in the afternoon, the voting went on until 8 the next morning. After 27 ballots, nothing had changed. All hands wanted to go home to bed and so they did.



By noon they were back and tried again. Again nothing changed. The Adams Federalists still wanted Burr.

It took nearly a week to break the deadlock. There may have been a deal made with Jefferson to give him the necessary votes, for on the 36th ballot, on Feb. 17, the vote came down-- 10 states for Jefferson, four for Burr and two not voting.

It was the end of upward mobility in national politics for Aaron Burr. He considered other things.

One of those things was the possibility of a new empire carved from the American West and Mexico.

But first he shot Alexander Hamilton.

Alexander Hamilton was a bastard who was born in the West Indies. He somehow came to America as a boy and became caught up in its revolution. He was a soldier but he became better known as a writer and pamphleteer. He attracted the attention of George Washington and served him in a secretarial capacity.

Somewhere in the Virgin Islands he had learned as a boy the rules of money and credit. He considered himself an aristocrat and in 1794 he told Washington that he had long since learned to hold public opinion as of no value.

~~Later~~ ^{was} he became one of the authors of the Federalist Papers, a brilliant contribution to the political literature of the world.

He ~~became~~ ^{was} the very first United States secretary of the treasury under Washington, and with Washington and Jefferson was one of the three most important Americans of the time.

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After leaving the government in 1795, Hamilton became active in Federalist affairs in New York state, in opposition to the Jefferson and Burr faction. He wrote and lawyered.

And when Vice President Burr, cold-shouldered out of office by Jefferson, ran for governor of New York in 1804, Hamilton spoke out against him. He apparently used words too strong.

Burr challenged him to a duel.

How this came about is still something of a mystery. Hamilton abhorred dueling, particularly since a few years earlier his young son Philip had been shot and killed in a duel. Hamilton never recovered from his loss.

And Burr had always been friendly, except for political differences, with Hamilton.

But they met, in what was called in those days an interview.

On July 11, 1804, Hamilton made out his will, wrote two^o farewell letters to his wife and rowed across the Hudson River to New Jersey. With him was his second and a doctor.

Burr and his second were waiting at this secluded spot near Wehawken. It was not far from where Hamilton's son had fallen.

Preliminaries over, both parties fired. Burr remained erect but Hamilton raised himself convulsively, staggered and pitched headlong to the ground.

Afterwards there was considerable disagreement between the seconds as to whether Hamilton fired first or whether in fact he fired into the air as he had declared his intention in a pre-duel statement.

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At any rate, Hamilton was rowed back to New York, where he lingered for 31 hours before he died of the bullet through his liver.

A popular frenzy arose against Burr and some citizens shouted this verse:

Oh Burr, oh Burr, what hast thou done?
 Thou has shot dead great Hamilton.
 You hid behind a bunch of thistle
 And shot him dead with a great hoss pistol.

After the duel Burr was politically ruined and he ~~decided~~ decided to go west, ^{after his term as vice president expired.} One of the places he went was Blennerhassett Island. In May, 1805, he stopped at the island on his way to the south or southwest. It was the beginning of the end for this miniature Eden.

Historians still argue the true motives of Burr's activities in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. For many years most believed he treasonously sought to separate the western states and territories from the Union.

Today many believe he sought to lead a military expedition ^{against Spain} into northern Mexico, now Texas, where he intended to establish a new nation with himself as its head.

Nobody knows just what he told Harman and Margaret Blennerhassett, but they became his chief financial backers and allowed their island to become his headquarters.

Aaron Burr was, by all accounts, a charming man and one with an aristocratic background. His father was the second president of Princeton College and his maternal grandfather was the noted New England preacher Jonathan Edwards.

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Burr sought admission to Princeton at age 13, asking not merely admission but entrance into the junior class. He pointed out that he had studied at home. He was admitted, but only as a sophomore.

He was a young colonel in the Revolutionary Army. He had recently been vice president of the United States. No wonder Harman and Margaret were attracted to him. And besides, might not Harman get posted as ambassador from the new nation to London --where ~~ever~~ ever the new nation might be?

In the fall of the same year, 1805, Burr again visited the island but Blennerhassett wasn't home. He was, in fact, in Baltimore, seeing about a buyer for the place. He told people he wanted to go south and raise cotton.

A correspondence began between Burr and Blennerhassett. Burr said Harman's talent was deserving of a higher sphere than being employed in the rude and unconscious herd. He said that with the increasing demands of the growing Blennerhassett family, Harman could make better plans elsewhere than in the unpolished Ohio River neighborhood.

Blennerhassett was pleased at being so readily understood by a man who didn't even know him. He would, he wrote back, be happy to be associated with Burr in any enterprise. He offered to cooperate with Burr "in any contemplated measure in which you may embark."

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In May 1806 Burr suggested that it would be nice for his daughter and her three-year-old child to visit Blennerhassett Island to escape Philadelphia's heat. Harman extended the invitation and, that August, Burr's daughter and grandson arrived, along with her husband. He was John Alston, a rich planter who later became governor of South Carolina.

All this attention addled Blennerhassett. He provided Burr with the \$5000 necessary to get title to some land in the Southwest and pledged financial support he was in no position to give. Supplies were ordered and construction of 14 troop-carrying boats was begun a few miles away on the Muskingum River. Kilns were built on the island to dry corn for emergency rations.

A series of articles began appearing in the Marietta weekly newspaper, advocating secession of the West. Signed The Querist, they were widely attributed to Blennerhassett.

Fifty barrels of pork were purchased from Blennerhassett's partner in a retail business. Two thousand dollars worth of flour, whisky and bacon were paid for by Blennerhassett.

For three weeks in 1806, Burr made his headquarters on the island, assembling equipment and enlisting recruits. Each member of the expedition agreed to furnish his own rifle and expected to receive rations on the trip and 100 acres of land on the Washita River in Louisiana. Burr had purchased 40,000 acres of land called the Bastrop Grant after a former owner, Baron Bastrop.

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The Blennerhassetts gave a ball in his honor and Burr charmed the ladies with his gallantry and commanded the admiration of the men with his confidential intimations of conquest of Mexico. But whisperings about his motives were circulating. Was it a Mexican empire wrested from Spain he wanted to head or a Western United States? His conversations were models of ambiguity.

The story goes that at the ball Burr asked a young visitor from Pennsylvania for a dance. The lady drew herself up, looked into the eyes of the man who missed becoming president by one vote and said, "I do not dance with traitors."

Burr went on to recruit in Chillicothe, Cincinnati and Lexington, Ky. Soon flashes of suspicion and rumbles of anger at his quasi-military activity swelled into a storm of indignation. Bad things began to happen, to Burr and to the Blennerhassetts.

An erstwhile confederate of Burr, General James Wilkinson, U.S. Army commander in the West, chickened out. He wrote to President Jefferson, warning him that Burr was about to fight Spain to seize Mexico.

The district attorney in Lexington, Kentucky--a Federalist who had given himself the middle name of Hamilton--tried to indict Burr there on charges of treason. Before a crowded courtroom, he finally had to admit he lacked the witnesses.

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Nevertheless, the talk went on, from Natchez to Mobile, from Memphis to Saint Joe. Burr was to lead out of the Union Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, four territories on the Ohio and Mississippi, along with part of Georgia and ^{the} Carolina^s. He would join them with Spanish territory west of the Mississippi into one great empire.

Jefferson, late in 1806, finally acted. He issued two proclamations. One denounced the activity against Spain, ordering cessation of such doings, warning against such things as collecting arms and military stores, deceiving and seducing honest and well-meaning citizens and so on and so on. On Nov. 27, the president directed the arrest of all those involved in any such conspiracy.

He did not name Burr, but everyone knew whom Jefferson meant. And the nation believed, says Nathan Schachner in a biography of Burr, that the proclamation was brought on by a treasonable plot against the United States itself. From that moment on, he says, all the forces of the nation, all the thoughts of patriotic men, turned in revulsion against the man Burr.

A messenger of Jefferson's went to Chillicothe, then the capital of Ohio, to meet with Governor Tiffin. Whatever he told the governor was sent along to the Legislature. It passed an "Act to prevent certain acts hostile to the peace and tranquility of the United States within the jurisdiction of the state of Ohio."

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SCRIPPS
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The governor then issued orders to arrest the flotilla being constructed on the Muskingum River and called out 300 militiamen to invade and capture Blennerhassett Island. On December 9, 15 boats and 200 barrels of provisions were seized, but no arrests were made.

Meanwhile, the militia of Wood County, Virginia, described as a disorganized mob of volunteers inflamed in equal portions of patriotism and the prospect of plunder, prepared to attack the island.

Harman got word that they were going to arrest him, so he fled, traveling by boat to join Burr in the south. The next day Margaret went to Marietta to get one of the boats ordered by Harman to follow her husband. But Ohio militia had seized the boats.

She returned to the island to find the Wood County militia already there and already drunk. Two of Burr's volunteers who by chance happened to land at the island and were quickly arrested by the militia described the scene thusly:

"On our arrival at the house we found it filled with militia; another party of them were engaged in making fires around the house, of rails dragged from the fences.

"At this time Mrs. Blennerhassett was from home. When she returned, about an hour after, she remonstrated against this outrage on the property, but without effect. The officers declared that while they were on the island the property absolutely belonged to them.

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"They were constantly issuing the whiskey and meat which had been laid up for the use of the family. The large room they occupied on the first floor presented a continued scene of riot and drunkenness. The furniture appeared ruined by the bayonets and one of the men fired his gun against the ceiling; the ball made a large hole which completely spoiled the beauty of the room."

Mrs. Blennerhassett got a boat from a man in nearby Belpre and left to join Harman. She was never to see her island again.

Burr was arrested by the military in January 1807 far south on the Mississippi River. He was traveling with nine boats and 60 men, many of them little more than boys out of school and none carrying a weapon. The men were quickly released; Burr was transported on horseback to Richmond.

Blennerhassett was arrested at Lexington, Kentucky, where he was confronted with \$10,000 worth of Burr's bills besides the conspiracy charge. He was led off to Richmond, where he was to spend 53 days in a hot and smelly prison. Burr arranged for his own counsel to represent Blennerhassett, who had no more money.

The nation was, to put it mildly, interested in the upcoming trial. The population of Richmond, 5000, doubled almost overnight. The taverns were full to bursting, nearly every private house in town took in guests and still the clamor for beds and accommodations was unabated. The taverns emptied all day to the courtroom and rang all night with loud talk and calls for liquor.

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is followed by a detailed account of the various projects and the results achieved. The report concludes with a summary of the work done and the plans for the future.

The second part of the report deals with the financial aspects of the work. It gives a detailed account of the income and expenditure for the year and shows how the work has been financed. It also gives a list of the donors and the amounts received from each.

The third part of the report deals with the personnel of the organization. It gives a list of the staff and their duties and also a list of the volunteers who have helped in the work. It also gives a list of the names of the people who have been trained by the organization.

The fourth part of the report deals with the work done in the various fields of activity. It gives a detailed account of the work done in each field and the results achieved. It also gives a list of the people who have been trained in each field.

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Heavy wagers were made on the outcome. The greatest show America had ever offered for the entertainment of its populace was beginning--the spectacle of a once highly-placed man, bankrupt in fortune, pitting his strength against the mighty government of the United States in a dramatic battle for his life. For if Burr and Blennerhassett lost, they would be hanged.

Thomas Jefferson directed the attack upon Burr from Washington. He hated Burr and he hated Chief Justice John Marshall who was to preside. He hated Marshall more when the chief delivered an opinion during the trial skirmishes that the president of the United States was not an exception to the power of subpoena. Jefferson turned over some of the requested papers. President Richard Nixon certainly pondered this precedent many administrations later.

Burr had good lawyers and Justice Marshall was friendly. The trial began August 3 and ended September 1. Essentially it hinged upon the constitutional definition of treason. Marshall finally ruled, after the evidence was in, that there had been no overt act of levying war upon the United States, something that had to be proved by at least two witnesses. And furthermore, said the chief, if there was treason, Aaron Burr was a long way off.

The jury quickly found the defendant not guilty and Blennerhassett went free on Burr's coattails. A second indictment, a misdemeanor charge, was never pursued. The two men soon went their separate ways.

The trial made Blennerhassett Island a place to see.

Historian Swick says it has been a major tourist attraction since the mid-1880's and that the Blennerhassetts are folk heroes along that stretch of the Ohio River.

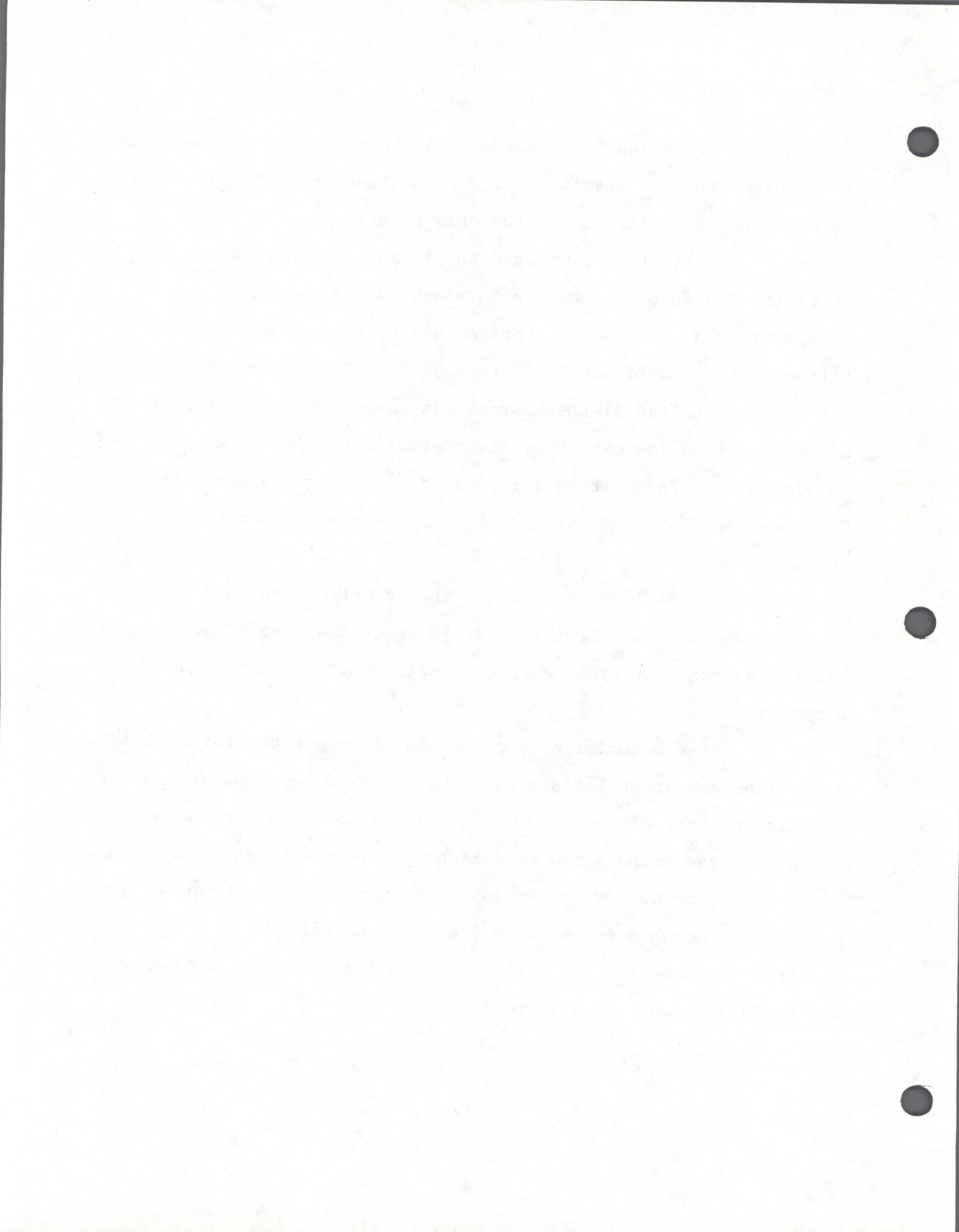
Walt Whitman visited the island and in 1849 praised it as the "Queen of the Waters." Baseball teams such as the Cincinnati Reds, Pittsburgh Pirates and Brooklyn Dodgers have played there. Gentleman Jim Corbett fought there *in the 1890's*.

In 1980 Blennerhassett was opened to the public as a historic recreation park. Hourly sternwheeler boat rides are available from Parkersburg for \$6 a round trip on summer days. The ride takes about 20 minutes and arrivals are welcomed by costumed docents.

The island is owned by the DuPont Company and leased to the state of West Virginia. It is under the control of the Blennerhassett Historical Park Commission which is restoring the property.

The exterior of the mansion is completed, faithful as historians and archeologists can make it. The two dependencies are in place and one of them, a kitchen, is filled with furnishings of the period including a few said to have belonged to the Blennerhassetts.

Completion of the inside of the house has been delayed by what the docents refer to as the West Virginia money situation. No matching funds for the work have been available for two years and no date is set for its completion.



Visitors can travel the length of the island on horse-drawn wagons or they may rent bicycles. Several craft shops offer their wares and a snack shop and restrooms are available. The island was home to Indians as long ~~ago~~ as 12,000 years^{ago} and an extensive collection of artifacts has been discovered.

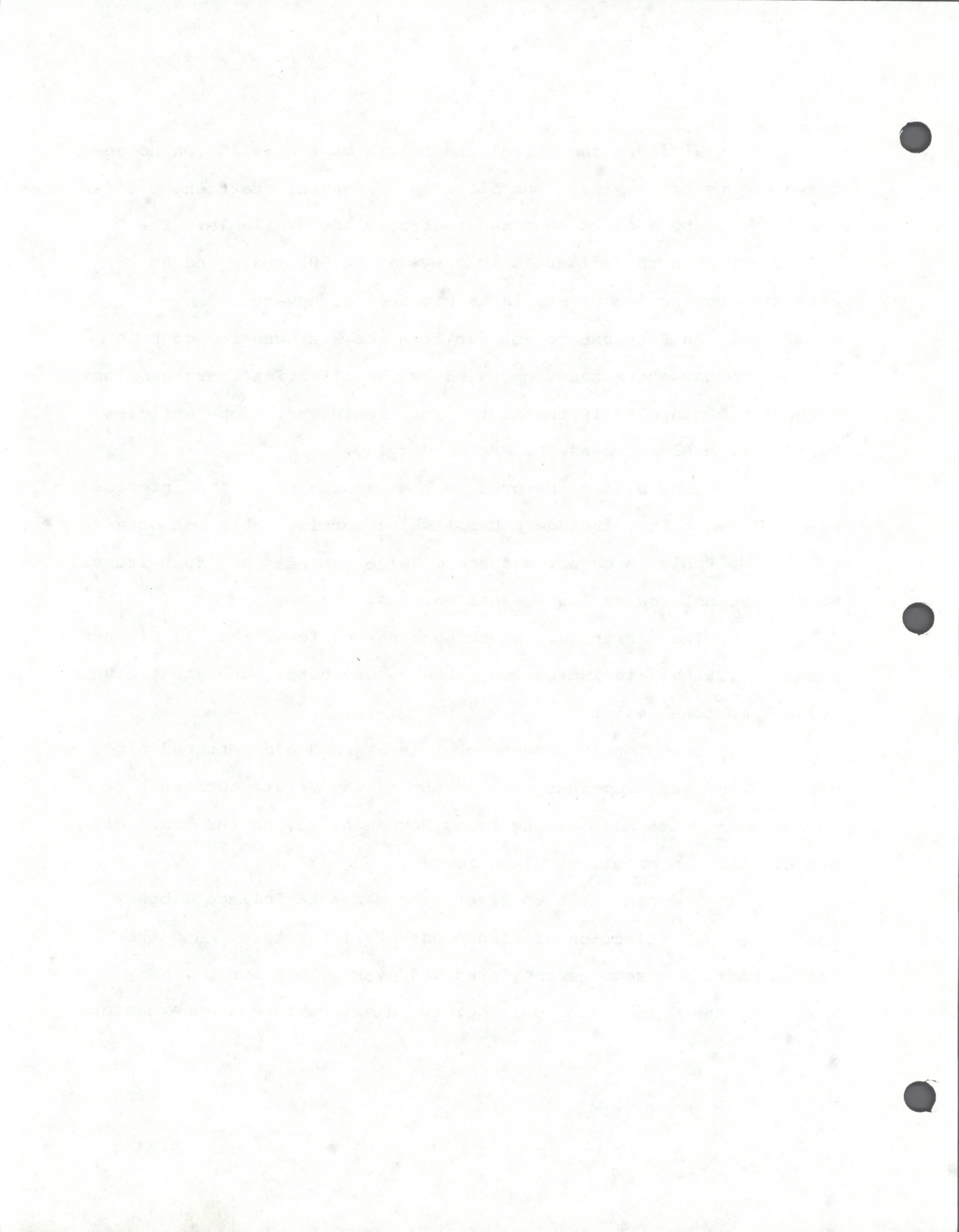
In Parkersburg not far from the sternwheeler dock is the Blennerhassett Museum, operated by the historical park commission. A short videotape tells the history of the island. Some articles owned by the Blennerhassetts are on display.

They will be removed to the mansion once its interior is completed. They include a Hepplewhite serving table, an octagonal lamp table, a corner washstand, wine cabinet and such items as spectacles, scales, purses and bottles.

The Parkersburg phone book has no fewer than 13 Blennerhassett listings, including two schools, one hotel, one yacht club and a tombstone dealer.

The Blennerhassett Hotel is a grand old restored place dating from 1889, somewhat reminiscent of the Great Southern here in Columbus. Its main dining room, Harman's, is, on the basis of one sitting, an excellent place to eat.

A dozen miles up river, the Marietta College library has a special collection of Blennerhassett literature. And the Campus Martius Museum nearby, presided over by our own Dr. Gary Ness and the Ohio Historical Society, displays some Blennerhassett relics.



The executive director of the Blennerhassett Historical Park Commission is James Todd. He says the total investment so far in restoration of the island is four or five million dollars, with about two-and-a-half million of that coming from the original appropriation by the state of West Virginia.

"We need another \$500,000 to finish the museum," he told me, "and about the same amount to finish the mansion, not including furniture."

The commission, he added, already has quite a start on collecting the furniture.

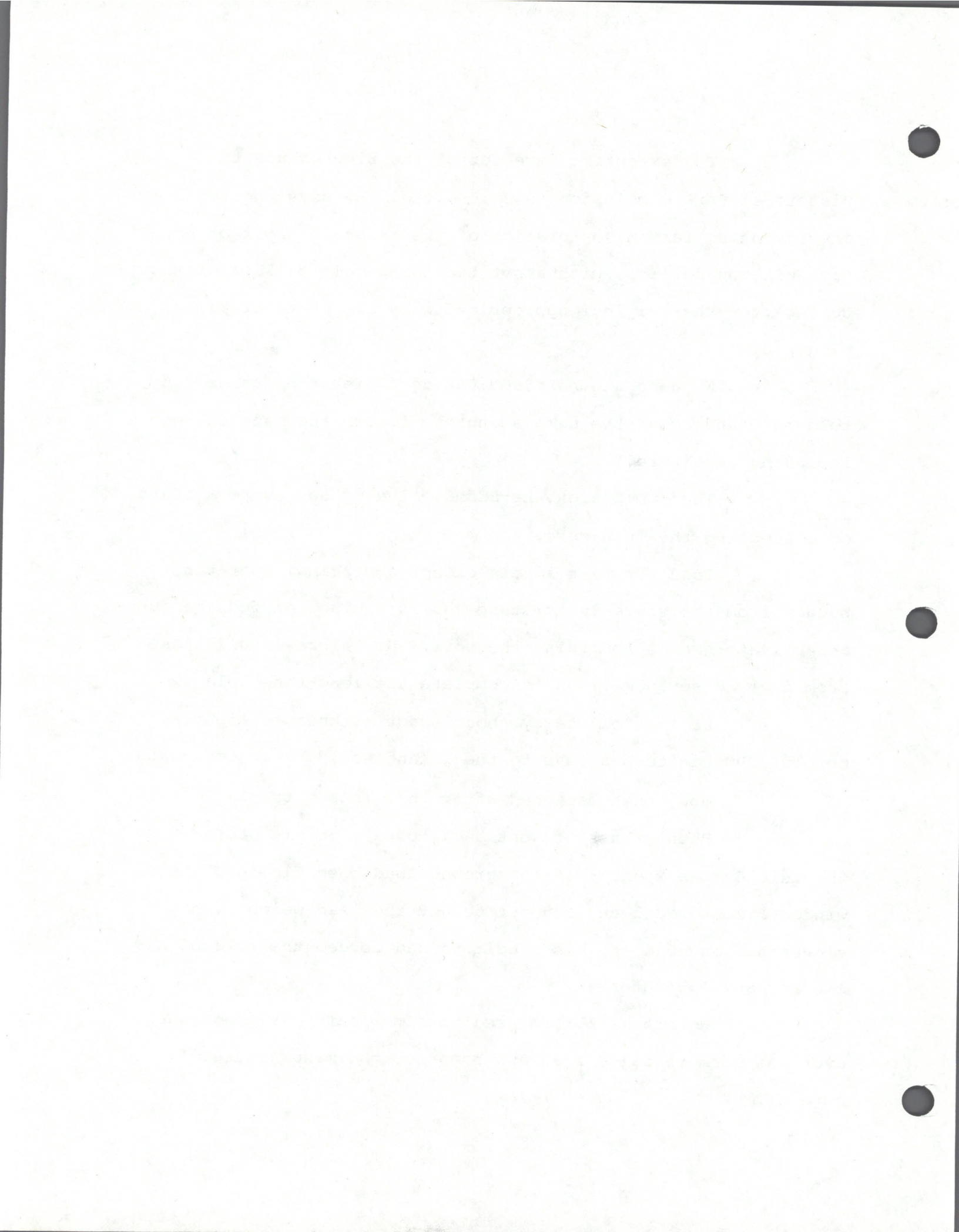
Todd foresees little except a marginal operating budget from the state legislature and is hoping for federal funds and private grants to finish the work. He thinks it will take from five to seven million to complete the long-range plan.

He is a bit cagey about exact attendance figures, but 100,000 visitors a year to the island would be a good guess.

Now, what happened after the treason trial?

Blennerhassett went back to salvage his property on the island. He found that the grounds had been flooded, the window frames had been torn out to get the lead weights, his slaves had escaped and his creditors had forced the sale of his library and laboratory.

Robert Miller, a creditor from Kentucky, had taken over the farm to raise flax and hemp for the manufacture of cordage.



With the scant remains of his fortune, Blennerhassett purchased 1000 acres of land on the Mississippi River near what is now Port Gibson, Mississippi, for raising cotton. The new home was named La Cache, the Hiding Place.

At first cotton brought a high price and while Blennerhassett devoted his time to music, science and literature, his wife superintended both her own household affairs and the business of the plantation. Two more children were born, a daughter who died in infancy and a son named Joseph Lewis.

Son Dominick attended an academy at Germantown, Pa., and Harman Jr. went to Ohio University in Athens. He did not do well and was sent home in 1818.

A newspaper of March 6, 1811, reported that two Negroes came to the mansion on Blennerhassett Island, chilled ~~from~~^{by} their attempt to save a companion from drowning in the river. Their candle accidentally ignited the hemp crop of the previous season and the mansion burned to the ground.

After Blennerhassett had been at La Cache for 12 years, the cotton market collapsed in the wake of the embargoes of the War of 1812. He was forced to sell the plantation and his 22 slaves. He looked for work in New York City and Montreal, to no avail. Finally, in 1822, after 25 years in America, he went to England to apply for an inheritance from his great-grandfather. He struck out.

His son Dominick enlisted in the army and Harman Jr. studied law but both were said to be little better than imbeciles, thanks no doubt to their consanguinity.

Harman and Margaret finally went to live with his sister at Bath, then on the isle of Jersey and later on the isle of Guernsey. It was on Guernsey that Harman had a stroke and died February 2, 1831, in his sixty-sixth year.

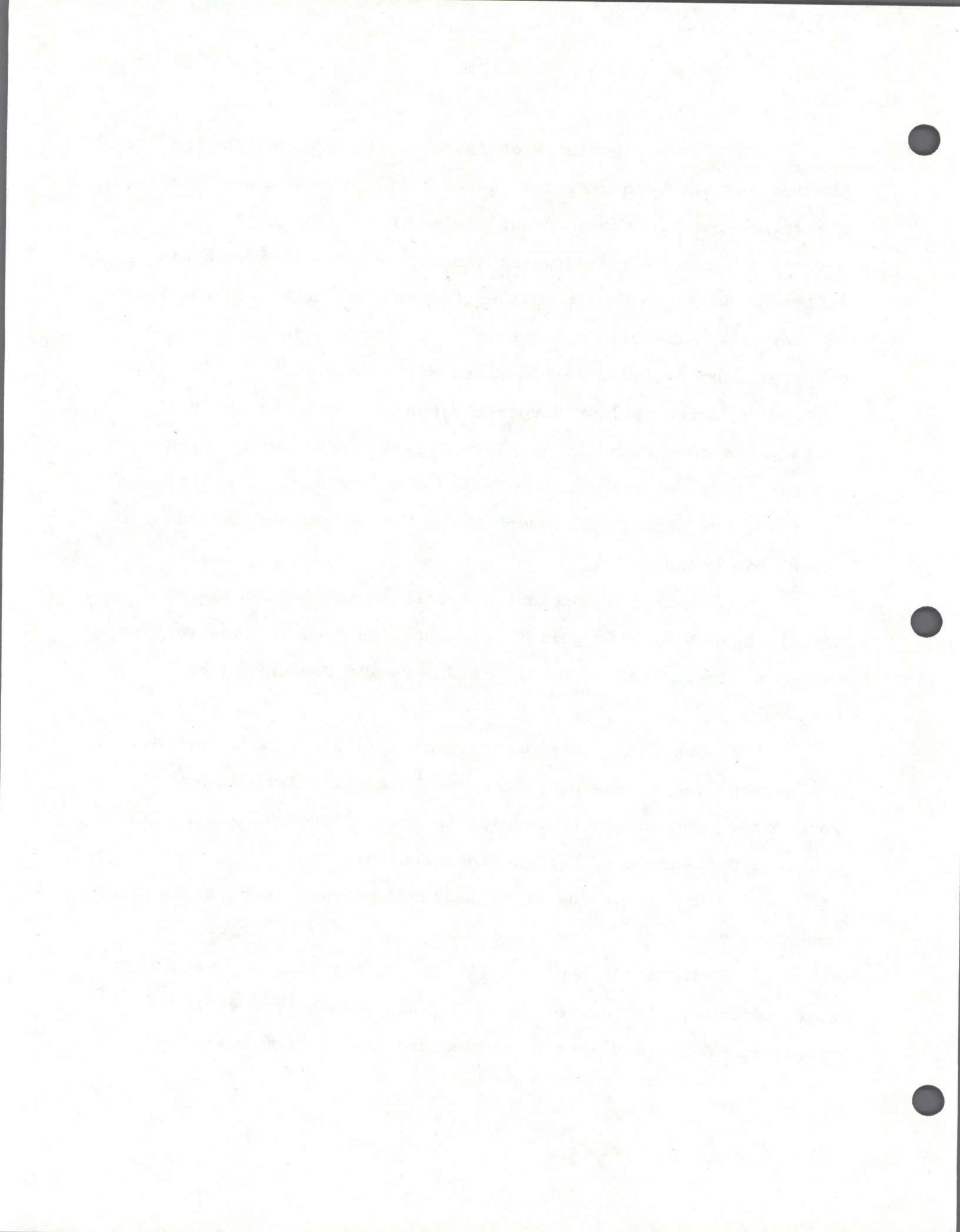
History lost Margaret Blennerhassett for about 10 years. She reappeared in New York City in 1840, petitioning Congress to repay her for her losses when the drunken militiamen destroyed her property. Joseph Lewis Blennerhassett turned up to assist his mother.

Henry Clay presented a bill in the Senate to grant her \$10,000. With this relief in sight, she died in June 1842 in New York City. She was buried in St. Paul's Churchyard on Broadway.

Son Dominick apparently died in a St. Louis gutter. Son Harman died in the poorhouse on Blackwell's Island, New York City. Son Joseph Lewis died in Troy, Missouri, about 1863, the last descendant of Harman Blennerhassett.

How about the other featured players in this great drama?

Alexander Hamilton, killed by Burr in the duel, died with no money. It was necessary for his friends and admirers to pay his debts and save his widow and family from poverty.



And poor Burr. He knocked about Europe for years, begging room and board from the friends of friends. He had no money and at times borrowed from chambermaids. Finally he returned to New York City to practice law.

Then fate struck. His only grandchild died in South Carolina, the boy for whom Burr had collected toys, coins, medals and trophies ^{even} while he starved in Europe. The 11-year-old was one of the two great loves of Burr's life.

The other was his daughter Theo, who seems to have been stricken by cancer in 1811. Her husband was then governor of South Carolina. It was decided that Theo would come north to see her father. She sailed from Charleston on December 30, 1812, on the vessel Patriot. A night or so later a terrific gale came up and the Patriot was never heard from again.

Many years later, Burr married the wealthiest woman in New York, a former prostitute, Eliza Jumel. The bride was 58, Burr was 77. The marriage lasted a year or so, until she filed suit for divorce, charging infidelity. Burr soon suffered a stroke, then another, and died on September 14, 1836, the day his divorce became final. He is buried in the Princeton College cemetery.

And so, to quote again from King Richard the Second:

"For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings."

The first part of the report deals with the general situation in the country. It is followed by a detailed analysis of the economic situation, which shows a steady decline in the last few years. The main reasons for this are the lack of investment and the high level of inflation. The report also discusses the social and political situation, and concludes with some recommendations for the future.

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