

Friday—I sort er misfergit
 De wus' t'ing mek dat day,
 De rattlesnake, dat skeeter,
 An' de nigger, some folks say.
 You ain't doubt my ferocity,
 My bredderin' ob de blest;
 I tell yer, de Lawd bin weary
 Dat day when He stop fer res'.

Now come de las' work ob de week—
 Lawd! He turn man f'om dus',
 An' when de day bin far expense
 He mek up somet'ing wus.
 Now, I ain't gwine to specify,—
 De Lawd know' what is best,—
 But since He put dat woman hyar,
 No man ain't had no res'.

CURIOUS COLONIAL SIGNATURES



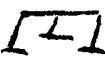



















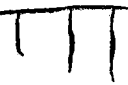



HOW SOME AMERICAN ANCESTORS MADE THEIR MARKS

BY ELIZA FRANCES ANDREWS

IN these days it seems so natural for everybody to read and write that we are disposed to smile when we look over the records of our older States and find that our colonial forefathers and foremothers could not, for the most part, even write their own names. If the requirements of the law necessitated a signature at any time, the writing of the name was generally left to the county clerk, who spelled it after a fashion of his own, and the signer, with no fear of the schoolmaster before his eyes, boldly and unabashed added his mark.

Naturally, a person's mark was a matter

of importance in those days, when nearly everybody used one, and a surprising variety of characters were employed for the purpose, as will be seen by reference to the examples here given. These were all copied from the records of Essex County, Virginia, which date back to the year 1656, a period not much further removed from the days of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith than we are to-day from the events of the great Civil War. Among them will be found some of the most aristocratic names in old Virginia,—Ball, Talbot, Gresham, Garnett, &c.,—good old family stocks that have

Andrew  Harrison	Charles  Gresham	Ephraim Maguffey 
Thomas ^{sign}  Bartlett	John  Webb	Ruth Loyde 
Henry Brown  H	Margrett Booker  CF	John + Garnett
Cassandrey Goulding  C	Elinor Parker  E	John ^{his}  Ball
Matthew  Collins	Thos  Tinsley	Arthur Hodges ^{mark} 
Mary  Saks	Jesse Disto  A	Ann Hodges 
Wm. Roberts  R	Carroll  Dum	Eliza  Sty
Judith Dyke 	Ellenor Woody 	Edward Coffey 
William Taylor 	George Pearson 	Martin  Rowland

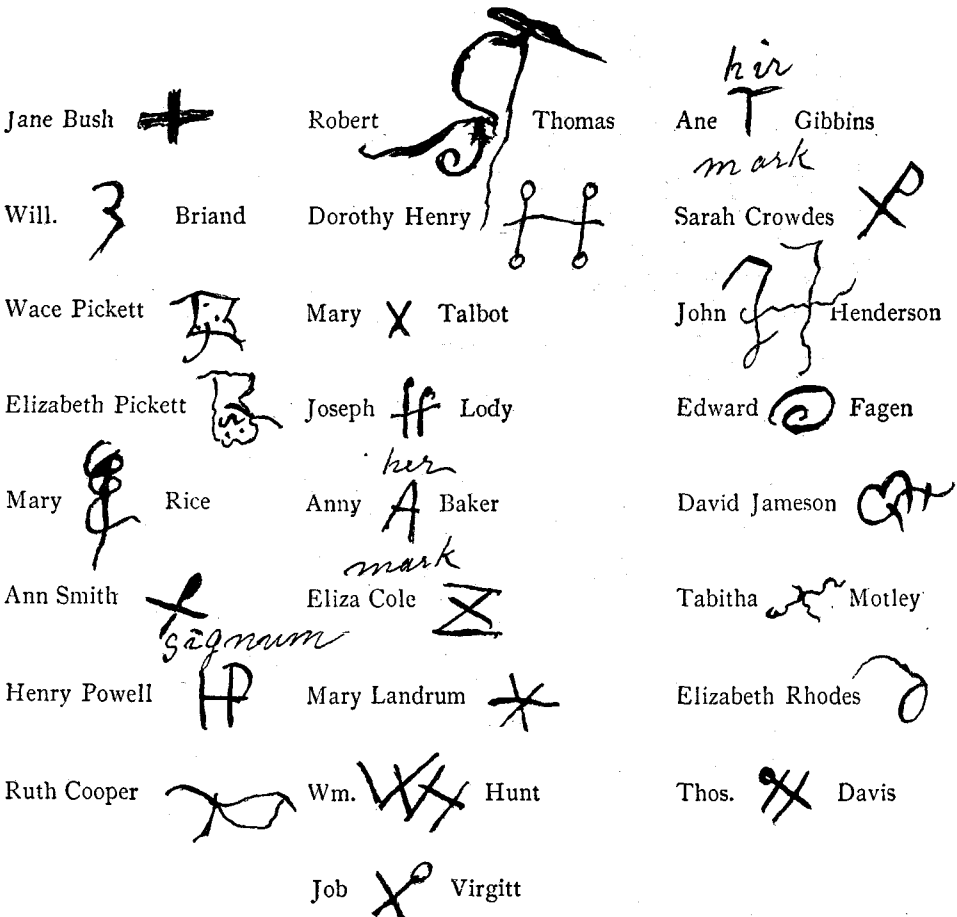
"made their mark" in more ways than one.

The simple cross mark (X) was comparatively rare, and, when used, was often embellished with flourishes and other variations. Sarah Crowdes and John Webb, for instance, convert theirs into the well-known religious emblem displayed on the pyx-cloth in Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches. Ann Smith turns one leg of hers into a drumstick; William Taylor adorns his with a knob at each end; Martin Rowland makes his into something like a whirligig. Sometimes there is a rude attempt at a monogram, as in the case of Andrew Harrison, Thomas Bartlett, Robert Thomas, William Hunt, and Henry Powell. Dorothy Henry has a wonderful H, with "rings on its fingers and bells on its toes," and Henry Brown, a broad, fat one. George Pearson has a double initial, but the G has somehow managed to get on its head, and land on the wrong side of the P, as if it had turned a somersault clear over its companion.

Nobody seems to have been at all con-

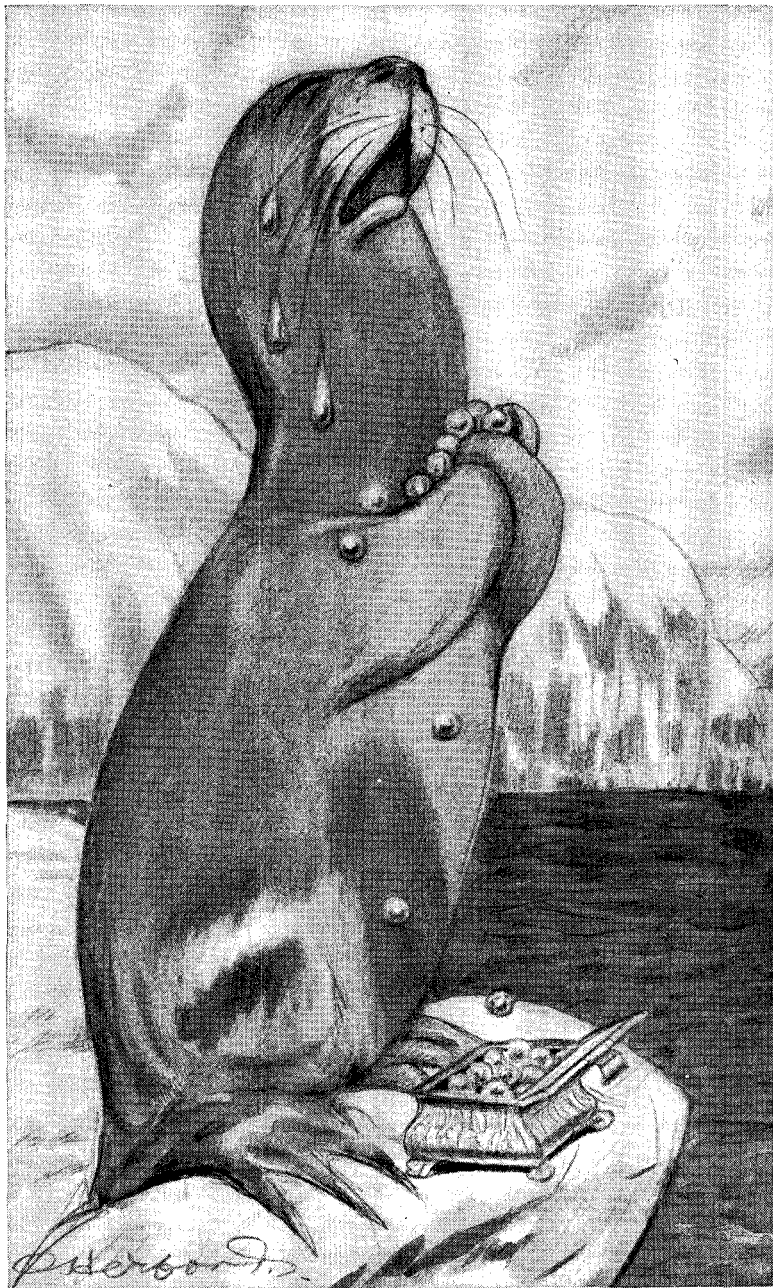
cerned about which way the letters faced, and no doubt they had just as much meaning for the signers one way as another. Why "Margrett" Booker and Carroll Dum should choose A for their signature, or Thomas Tinsley a C, Ane Gibbins a T, Charles Gresham a figure 8, Mary Rice a coil of rope, and Elinor Parker a Semitic letter, must be left for the ingenuity of the reader to determine. There is no uniformity in placing the mark. Sometimes it is accompanied by the explanatory words, "his mark" or "her mark," or by the single word "sign," in plain English; sometimes it is dignified with the more ambitious Latin affix, "signum," as if it felt quite proud of itself: but more often it is set down without any ado, as if too much a matter of course to call for note or comment.

The frequency with which the "sign manual" appears in the old records proves that it was no disgrace in those days for a man not to know how to write, and as for the "females," I suspect the disgrace would have counted the other way.



LIMERICKS

TEXT AND PICTURE BY OLIVER HERFORD



VII—THE FEMININE SEAL

SAID a lacrymose Labrador seal,
 When asked why she wept with such zeal,
 "My tears are not lost,
 In this antarctic frost:
 To magnificent pearls they congeal."

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