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A Journey Through Time

The **TMS** Chronicle

Columnist Linda Reno is a historian and genealogist specializing in Southern Maryland history. Mrs. Reno is a member of the St. Mary's County Historical Society, St. Mary's County Genealogical Society, Charles County Genealogical Society, Maryland Historical Society and the Maryland Genealogical Society. She has authored many books and articles on local history. We hope you will enjoy these articles and welcome your comments and suggestions for future subjects.

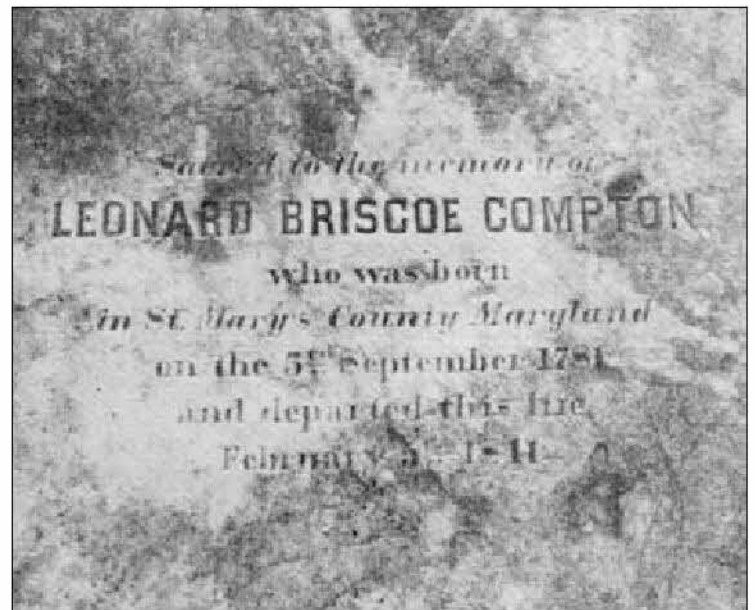
By Linda Reno
Contributing Writer

John Compton and Elizabeth Briscoe married in St. Mary's County February 12, 1771 and had six children. By 1790, the family moved to Jefferson County, KY where Elizabeth died in 1790 and John in 1803. Shortly thereafter four of their sons moved

Leonard wrote his will in 1840 devising the bulk of his estate, valued at \$184,640 to Fauchon and two of their four surviving children. His brother John and several nieces and nephews contested the will. The case would eventually land in the Louisiana Supreme Court where several bequests were contested:

"I do give and bequeath to my two children, Scipio and Loretta, who have been duly acknowledged by me, my plantation on bayou Robert, on which, I, at present, reside; with all the improvements, containing about 515 acres; all the slaves on said plantation, (whom he names); and it is my will and desire that the said plantation and property be kept as it now stands; and I do further give and bequeath to each of my said children the sum of \$10,000, it being my intention to give them, and that they shall have one-fourth in value of my estate, &c."

"I give and bequeath to the free woman of color, Fauchon, all my household and



Tombstone of Leonard Briscoe Compton, Sept. 3, 1781-Feb. 5, 1841

to the territory of Louisiana and settled in Rapides Parish, where they began to accumulate property. Within a few years, they had become very wealthy plantation and slave owners. One of these sons was Leonard Briscoe Compton.

In 1819, Leonard bought 32 slaves, one of whom was Fauchon Morris (daughter of Dr. Ennemond Meullon of Maine by one of his slave women). Leonard took Fauchon as his concubine prior to 1824 and they had four children—Philip, Scipio, Elizabeth, and Laurette. In 1825 Leonard manumitted Fauchon and she lived free thereafter.

If the law allowed it, Leonard may have married Fauchon. He made no effort to disguise their relationship, openly acknowledged their children, paid for the education of their son in Ohio, and in an attempt to circumvent the law, transferred property to others for them. It was said that he "always showed them [the children] the affection of a father."

kitchen furniture of all descriptions whatever; also one saddle horse, and my carriage, pair of horses, two patent gold watches, stock of cattle, &c." (she had received land via a previously "disguised" deed).

After much testimony the court overrode Leonard's will, stating that "Fauchon, being a concubine, is not entitled to the tracts of land given to her by Leonard." The land devised to the children, however, stood as Leonard had acknowledged them as his, but the \$10,000 bequest did not. The remainder of the estate was granted to the "White Comptons."

In 1843 Scipio used part of his inheritance to purchase a slave woman named Susan whom he would later marry and then manumit.

Leonard Briscoe was buried on his plantation "Lodi" but after it was sold, his remains were removed to the Compton Cemetery on the plantation owned by his brother John.