

A SUMMARY OF PUBLISHED INFORMATION UPON THE PLACE IN KENT  
COUNTY, MARYLAND KNOWN AS LU.

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Percy G. Skirven, noted Maryland historian of the first 2/5 of the 20th Century, native of Kent County, who was elected a vestryman of I. U. Parish in 1892, compiled and wrote the book entitled 'I. U., An Historic Shrine in Old Kent' that was published in 1931. There is a copy of this book in the narthex of Christ Church, I. U. that everyone should read, especially Chapter II, pages 29 to 44, Some Notes on the Place Name "I. U."

Pertinent to certain theories on the place name L. U. is the booklet 'William Usilton of Kent County, Maryland (?-1729) and Some of His Descendents', compiled and written by Ethel V. Tuttle in 1938. I received a copy of this booklet from my mother, who had been given it by William B. Usilton III of the Kent County News newspaper. This Usilton family is also reviewed in Volume 4 of 'Colonial Families of the Eastern Shore of Maryland' by Christou and Wright and published by Family Line Publications in 1998.

In Skirven's book, on pages 33 and 34, the commissioners, four men, had examined the bounds of a tract of land in 1728. They stated that this tract was called I.U. This tract of 250 acres, called 'Forrest', had been granted to Walter Meeks and surveyed in June 1675. The commissioner's statement, on page 36 of Skirven's book, calls the Tract Forrest, or *vulgarly* I. U. The original documents naming the tract can be found at the Maryland State Archives on Rowe Boulevard in Annapolis, Maryland.

In 1767, the Vestry of Chester Parish, bought the land on which the original church stood and the present church stands. The deed was for two acres of land and states that the two acres was near a place called I. U.

Tuttle's booklet on the Usilton family states that William Usilton, the first of that surname in the colony of Maryland, died intestate in 1729, when the name Usilton first appears in the county records. He was survived by his widow, Margaret Usilton, and very young children, whose names were not recorded. The only of their children subsequently appearing in Tuttle's booklet, Christou & Wright's book and county records was William Usilton, Jr., who was born in 1725 and died in 1775. His sons were James, William, John, Francis, George and probably Robert Usilton, who were born between 1746 and 1762. Two or more of these sons moved to Kentucky and then Tennessee, and only Francis apparently remained in Kent County. There is no record of any Usilton named Isaac in Kent County, Maryland in the early or mid 18th century. William Usilton, Jr., from the records cited by Tuttle, apparently lived at least the early part of his life in the area of Georgetown on the Sassafra River north of Galena and considerable distance from the Worton and I. U. area. It was Francis Usilton, who was born in 1753 and died in 1824, who bought land and lived in the area of Worton. The very prominent and highly respected Usilton family of the 19th and 20th centuries, in Kent County, had many family members in the Worton area.

Hamill Kenny in his book entitled 'The Placenames of Maryland, Their Origin and Meaning', published in 1984 by the Museum and Library of Maryland History of the

Maryland Historical Society, lists I. U. on page 125 of his book. He notes the land tract that was called I. U. by 1728. He also quotes Fred G. Usilton's 1916 'History of Kent County', which stated that I. U. could mean J. U., with the J being for John, Jim, or Jonas and the U being for Ute, Usilton, Urie or some other early resident of old Kent County. This is on page 92 of the original book by Fred Usilton and on page 67 of that book as reprinted in the first portion of the enlarged book that contained an additional 54 chapters by William B. Usilton III and that was published by Perry Publications at an unknown date in the latter 20th Century.

Henry C. Peden compiled and Family Line Publications published in 1994 and 1993, respectively, the books entitled *Inhabitants of Kent County, Maryland, 1637-1787* and *Inhabitants of Cecil County, Maryland, 1649-1774*. In the Kent County book the surnames beginning with U were: Ulrick, Underhill, Understone, Unice, Unick, Unitt, Urie, Usher, Usilton, Uslington, and Utie. In the Cecil County book those surnames beginning with U were: Ulna, Ulrich, Umberston, Umphrey, Underhill, Urin, Urinson, Urmston, and Utie. None of the persons listed with these surnames in either county had a given name beginning with I, but several had given names beginning with J.

Martenet's 1860 map of Kent County, as reprinted in Michael Bourne and Eugene Hall Johnston's 1998 book entitled *Historic Houses of Kent County*, shows I. U. Crossroads as being at the intersection of the 2002 Maryland highway routes 297 and 298, between the present Christ Church, I. U. and the village of Worton. In 1860, the map shows Joseph Usilton and Robert Usilton's heirs owning farm properties in the vicinity.

I do not believe that I. U. stands for Isaac Usilton or John, James or any other Usilton based upon the facts stated above. The original Usiltons do not appear to have been in the I. U. area in 1728. I wonder if I. U. might be the initials of another early settler or if they might be the first letters of two English, Latin, American Indian or other names for some item, place, person or something else. People have speculated upon what I. U. stands for many, many years. Hopefully more thorough, in depth research might reveal the meaning in the future.

Let us rejoice in the uniqueness of the name of this beautiful, endearing spot where Christ Church is located. This Episcopal Church has an interesting historical past and it ministers well to the local community in 9:00 A.M. weekly Sunday communion services. It has long had a reputation for welcoming all those who attend. This church has many devoted friends and relatives of former members living over a wide area of the USA. Christ Church, I. U. is a full fledged member of the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Anglican Communion.

#### Literature Cited:

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