



NEWSLETTER

BRUNSWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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REVEREND JOHN LaPIERRE

When John LaPierre wrote the Bishop of London in April of 1734, he sent the letter from "New Hanover Alias Cape Fear in North Carolina." He must have felt that he was in an alien territory, although he had spent three and a half years in the Cape Fear. He had been frustrated in his work and impoverished to such an extent that he felt he was little better than a beggar. His salary, never paid in full, was so meager in 1733 that he was "forced to work in the field to help to maintain my family" and finally LaPierre was "compelled by necessity to sell my house and land and last my moveables so that at this time I am no better than a mendicant."

John LaPierre, ordained in 1707 or 1708, came to the Carolinas as one of the earliest ministers of the Church of England. Sponsored by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, LaPierre was one of several struggling clergymen who braved the hardships of the Carolinas at the beginning of the eighteenth century. A French Huguenot, LaPierre came to South Carolina about 1708 and to North Carolina in 1729. He was assigned to the parish of St. Denis in South Carolina, preaching to "the old settlers who did not understand the English tongue . . ." He preached for so many years that eventually his congregations were wholly English. LaPierre died in 1755 after serving St. Philips and a number of other churches, moving to New Bern in 1735.

In Deed Book II, page 122, for Craven County, one can read the transaction from "William Norwood to John LaPierre, minister of the Gospel, one lot containing 1/2 acre known as No. 357 on Jones Street." Martha LaPierre, daughter of John, married Benjamin Fordham, Sr., prior to 1740. Benjamin Fordham, Sr., set aside a part of a lot, bought June 3, 1753 (No. 368), for use as a "burying ground forever." Fordham himself was buried there in 1777. In 1968 descendants of Martha and Benjamin erected a memorial to them, placing it in the cemetery on Queen Street near Norwood Street in New Bern.

It was to Fordham that John LaPierre deeded 100 acres of land in 1740 "... being a part of the 360 I had of Mr. John Fonvielle, Jr. . . ."

Although LaPierre felt that his work was not very rewarding, history has proved that he was mistaken. LaPierre was instrumental in organizing more than 20 churches; one of these at "a new colony called New River consisting of above 100 families . . ." There were many children "to be instructed," as teaching was often combined with preaching. LaPierre distributed the little leaflets and books sent to him by the Society. He worked diligently in the ministry appealing to friends at home (London) for help and encouraging his parishioners to build churches and glebehouses. Few churches were built, however, and LaPierre had to be paid by General Assembly for the "several sermons" he preached before that body. In the *Colonial Records* there are references to the work of LaPierre, giving the amounts of money paid him for his sermons. He often expressed in his letters home his feelings of frustration and neglect. LaPierre was an humble man, capable of fulfilling his responsibilities as a spiritual leader. He found, as did other clergymen, a lack of interest among many of the settlers. The letters written to England by LaPierre and others like him are filled with recitations of the trials and woes of the ministry. Many sound very much like the comments made at the present time. In 1733 LaPierre wrote the Bishop of London that any "Clergyman that has a mind to come thither . . . will find a lawless place, a scattered people, no glebe, no parsonage to receive him . . ."

More than two hundred years have passed since John LaPierre traveled from Charleston, South Carolina, to "New Hanover Alias Cape Fear," yet the minister is not forgotten. He is remembered by his numerous descendants and by the many who will read the shiny highway historical marker erected November, 1968, in the shadows of the walls of St. Philips Church ruin at Old Brunswick Town.



Unveiling the LaPierre Marker is Miss Mary Grady Koonce of Raleigh, an eleventh generation descendant.



LaPierre descendants attending the marker unveiling, on November 24, 1968, at Brunswick Town State Historic Site are shown above.

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AUGUST MEETING

TIME: August 11, 1969 at 8:00 P.M.

PLACE: Southport-Brunswick County Public Library
Southport, N. C.

PROGRAM: "Old Brunswick, Russelborough and the Moore Family"
presented by guest speaker, Mr. C. B. Berry

OLD BRUNSWICK, RUSSELBOROUGH AND THE MOORE FAMILY
by C. B. Berry

I believe this is the third time that I have participated in a program for our society since becoming a member some seven or eight years ago, so I hope you will forgive me if you've heard some of the things I have to say before.

In May, 1967, the issue of our Newsletter carried the photograph of a model of Russelborough which adjoined Brunswick Town and was the home of Colonial Governors Arthur Dobbs and William Tryon. The model was built by George Demmy, Archaeologist, from a description and a knowledge of the period. Some weeks ago, the State Port Pilot here ran a photograph of Russelborough and I was very excited to see this. It shows a columned mansion far more elegant than Mr. Demmy's model would indicate it to be.

There is a discrepancy in a description of the house which was contained in Governor Tryon's records and the painting or drawing that ran in the newspaper. The description says: "There is a Plaza runs around the House both stories of ten feet wide with a Balustrade of four feet high, which is a great security for my little Girl." The photo shows the Plaza on the first floor only. Of course, it is possible that Governor Tryon did to Russelborough what Harry Truman did to the White House, by adding a porch on the second floor after the drawing had been made. I have often wondered where the State Port Pilot found the photo and if the name of the artist is known. Perhaps some of you have this information.

When thinking of Old Brunswick and Russelborough, the name of the Moore family invariably comes to mind since they were the founders and were involved in so much of the life and activities in this section. James Moore born 1640, died 1706, was a Colonial Governor of South Carolina from 1700 to 1703. He had come with the earliest settlers to Charles Towne in 1669 and was prominent in the leadership of the colony until his death. He was a member of the governing council in 1677, 1682 and 1683; a deputy in 1681. He was in the assembly in 1698 and mentioned as a gentleman of good estate, served as Secretary of the Province and Sir John Colleton's deputy. In 1699 to 1700 he was Receiver General and Chief Justice of the colony. While governor, he moved against St. Augustine, Florida, with a large force of Indians and a few white men and, a year later, made a devastating attack against the Spanish Friars and Apalachee Indians in Southern Georgia.

Governor James Moore married Margaret Berringer, step-daughter of Sir John Yeamans who also served as governor of South Carolina. They made their home in Berkeley County and he was a member of Goose Creek Church. They had ten children and all of the sons were educated in England. It was some of these sons who settled old Brunswick Town and the Cape Fear area.

Colonel John Barnwell, known as "Tuscarora Jack" had gone into North Carolina in a war with the Tuscarora Indians. He had concluded a treaty with them in the New Bern area and had returned to South Carolina in July of 1712. Later that same year, the Tuscaroras went on the rampage again and slaughtered many of the New Bern residents. Help was summoned again from South Carolina, and Governor Moore's eldest son, James Moore, Jr., led an expedition of some 40 whites and 800 Indians against the Tuscaroras who had fortified themselves on the Taw River, and were well provided with arms. Col. Moore laid seige on the fort and killed about 200 of the enemy and captured 800 who were brought back to South Carolina and sold into slavery.

Colonel James Moore's brother, Maurice, was with him when the troops crossed the Cape Fear River near the site of what was later to become Brunswick Town, in 1712. This expedition caused other brothers to become interested in the Cape Fear area. Brother Nathaniel and brother Roger also became interested and later settled there. They are reported to have brought 1200 slaves with them. Maurice Moore obtained patents for more than 7,000 acres of land in the Cape Fear region when it was first opened up and eventually increased his holdings to around 25,000 acres. Roger is reported to have obtained land there prior to 1725 and by 1731 he, too, had accumulated around 25,000 acres. So powerful were the connections and influence of the Moores, that they became known as the "Family". Newly arrived settlers often complained that they could not find lands to settle on that were not claimed by a member of the Moore family. This led to a quarrel between Governor Burrington and the Moores and he referred to them as "that pestiverous Moore family". In a letter to his colonial office in 1731, the governor wrote: "About twenty men are settled on the Cape Fear from South Carolina ...among them are three brothers of a noted family whose name is Moore. These people were always troublesome where they came from and will doubtless be so here."

Now that we have the family identified, we will endeavor to tell you a little about some of the descendants. One of Maurice and Roger's brothers was named John Moore. John Moore married Justina Smith, the sixth child of 2nd Landgrave Thomas Smith and, for a time at least, lived on a plantation called Pleasant Oaks on the Cape Fear River. They had a daughter whose name was either Rebecca or Justina who married John Davis. There is some confusion in the records and I cannot be sure but it is reported that one of the daughters married John Davis.

John Davis and his wife had a daughter named Justina Davis who was born in 1747. In 1762, at the age of 15, Justina married Governor Arthur Dobbs who was then 78 years of age, and they made their home at Russelborough. An interesting account of this marriage is contained in the book THE LOWER CAPE FEAR IN COLONIAL DAYS by Lawrence Lee, published in 1965, of which, I am sure, many of you are familiar. Nevertheless I will read the account on pages 198 and 199 of that book

If you read much about the Moore families, it is probable that sooner or later you will learn that old Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877) was descended from the Moores. We know that Rachel Moore married William Allston and made their home on a plantation down on the Waccamaw River, known today as Brookgreen Gardens. Rachel and William became the parents of Washington Allston, the famous artist. William Allston died while Washington was still a youth and Rachel remarried to Henry Collins Flagg, Surgeon General in the Continental Army of the Revolution. A son of this second marriage was Henry Collins Flagg who became Mayor of New Haven, Connecticut. They had a daughter named Cettie Moore Flagg who married Abraham Evan Gwynne. Their daughter, Alice Claypoole Gwynne married Cornelius Vanderbilt, Sr. the famous old Commodore and financier. Incidentally, some of these Vanderbilts descendants still own some of the old rice plantation property on the Waccamaw River in Georgetown County. If you would like to read a fascinating story about the Vanderbilts -- about the great fight over the old Commodore's millions, see the American Heritage Magazine for April, 1966.

But what I'm leading up to is that the Vanderbilts were not really descendants of old Governor James Moore, the father of Roger and Nathaniel. Yet, several published genealogical records indicate that Rachel Moore was a descendant of the governor but there is no evidence to support such a claim. I cannot understand why the Vanderbilts have not used some of their money to get their ancestry straightened out.

I was all thrilled to find a painting of Rachel Moore in the Old Salem Museum here in North Carolina and obtained a print of it to put in my Moore record. Then, I read a very detailed article by Mabel L. Webber, onetime editor of the South Carolina Historical Magazine, which exploded the myth of any connection of Rachel Moore with Governor Moore of South Carolina. Nevertheless, the photo did come in handy to use in my Allston sketch which shows Rachel Moore as the mother of Washington Allston.

I'm afraid that, as I ramble on, some of you might regard me like the old farmer who stood on the steps of the town hall during the progress of a political meeting.

"Do you know who's talking there now?" demanded a stranger, briskly, pausing for a moment beside the farmer. "Or are you just going in?"

"No, sir; I've just come out," said the farmer decidedly. "Congressman Smiffkins is talking in there." "What about?" asked the stranger. "Well," continued the countryman, passing a knotted hand across his forehead, "he didn't say".

It is revealing, however, to know what became of some of the descendants of our pioneers. They often appear lost because of changes in names and locations. I recall an article in a newspaper a few years ago about the old Gause families, which said that the family had died out and not a single member walked the face of the earth today. Yet, at least two members of our society were descendants at the time.

Some of you doubtless were acquainted with Mr. Louis T. Moore of Wilmington who died in 1961. He was a partner in the Davis-Moore Paint Company, served as Associate Editor of the Wilmington Evening Dispatch early in this century, was Manager of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the New Hanover County Historical Commission-- to name a few of his many public activities. He also was the author of a book entitled STORIES, OLD AND NEW of the Cape Fear. It might be of interest to show you how he descended from the pioneers:

He was one of nine children born in New Hanover County and his parents were Roger Moore, III (July 19, 1938 - April 21, 1900) and his wife, Eugenia Berry.

Roger Moore, III was a son of Roger Moore, Jr. (1807-1846) and his wife, Ann Sophia Toomer. Roger Moore, Jr. was a son of Roger Moore who was born December 13, 1798, in New Hanover County, and his wife, Anna D. Halling.

This Roger Moore was a son of John Baptista Moore who was born September 17, 1748 and his wife, Martha Jones of New Hanover County. John Baptista Moore was a son of George Moore (1715-1778), a member of the North Carolina Assembly in 1745 and from 1754 to 1762, who married Mary Ashe, daughter of John Baptista Ashe and his wife, Elizabeth Swann. George Moore and his wife made their home at Moorefields, a plantation about fifteen miles North of Wilmington. George Moore was a son of King Roger Moore and his first wife, Mary Rayner. And, of course, this King Roger Moore is the original settler who made his home at Orton Plantation and is one of the brothers that constituted the "family" that was mentioned before. So here, we have the whole spread from Colonial Times until the present.

Some of you probably wonder where all of this information comes from. Well, among other places, it comes from the descendants themselves. One of my best sources of information has been Mrs. William A. Kettler, 255 East Weaver Street, New Lebanon, Ohio, who descends from William Hill, who, of course, was prominent in old Brunswick Town. William Hill married Margaret Moore, daughter of old Nathaniel Moore (one of the "family") and founder of Brunswick Town. The Hills had four sons and their descendants are numerous. One of these descendants, Mrs. Douglas Hancock Marshall of 4123 Beresford Road, Charlotte, N. C., very kindly furnished me photostats of the family data contained in the Southwell bible. This data shows that William Hill and Margaret Moore were married at Orton, Brunswick County, N. C. on the 29th. of September 1757. I have this record with me if some of you would like to see it.... Another descendant is Thomas Hill Duffy of Richmond, Virginia. You may recall that Mr. Duffy presented some portraits of the Hills to the society a few years ago and some of these photos ran in our Newsletter. I have a considerable file of correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. Duffy.

One of my favorite characters in Brunswick County history is old General Benjamin Smith, born 1757, died 1826. I have spoken about him before so will not go into much detail here. He too was a descendant of Landgrave Thomas Smith as well as a descendant of the Moore family. Written accounts would lead one to believe he could "turn the air blue" with some of his conversation. Wheeler's history says he was by nature ardent, sudden and quick in quarrel, that his life was checkered by difficulties. He engaged in several duels. One of these duels, which I told you about once before, occurred on the state line at the Boundary House near Calabash. General Smith had said some unkind things about Alfred Moore, the U. S. Supreme Court Justice, and the Judge's son, Maurice, challenged the General to a duel. Incidentally, they were cousins. As they prepared to fight the duel, it is reported that Maurice or one of his seconds, made a remark that the General was harboring some type of armor under his shirt. With that, the general stripped his shirt off to his bare waist to prove he had no type of armor on. This was in 1804. They fired at each other and missed. Then they paced forward and fired again. This time, blood spurted from the General's chest and he fell to the ground. He was transported by sea to Smithville which, of course, is where we are tonight, and recovered to fight other duels and to become Governor of North Carolina in 1810.

General Smith was a son of Thomas Smith who was known as "Banker Smith of Broad Street" in Charleston, and his wife, Sarah Moore who was the daughter of King Roger Moore and his second wife, Catherine Rhett who was the daughter of William Rhett, the conqueror of the pirate Stede Bonnet.

I could go on and on about some of the other descendants of the "family" but perhaps this is enough for one time.