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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY is a quarterly publication of the New Bern Historical Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the rich heritage of New Bern. Articles, letters, photographs, and memorabilia relevant to the history of New Bern and Craven County may be submitted to the editor for review. (Post Office Box 119, New Bern, North Carolina 28560)

NEW BERN IN FLAMES: THE GREAT FIRE OF 1922

Mary Osborne Conover

On December 1, 1922, New Bern was visited by catastrophe: the worst fire in the city's history occurred on that day.

The blaze devastated 35 to 40 blocks, leaving 600 buildings in ruins, 3000 people homeless and practically penniless, and causing damage in excess of \$2 million--the equivalent of \$15 million today. Miraculously, though many were overcome by smoke and a few were slightly injured, there was only one fatality.

It was shortly after 8:00 a. m. when the stentorian tones of the siren at the electric light and power plant announced to New Bernians that there was a fire. The Rowland Lumber Company on Griffith Street (now North Craven Street), largest lumber mill in the state, was in flames and could not be saved.

Said to have been caused by friction, the fire destroyed the saw mill, dry kilns, lumber shed and two million feet of lumber. The loss at the mammoth Rowland plant was estimated at \$250,000 (today's equivalent, \$1.875 million), and 60 were made jobless by the big burn that was a prelude to greater disaster.

Responding to an alarm from the black community, firemen found that fire extinguished. Then came another alarm, from not far away.

It was close to 11 o'clock when the fire that was to raze a sizable portion of New Bern originated at the Kilmarnock Street (now Craven Terrace site) home of Henry Bryan, an itinerant barber. That a terra cotta flue was at fault is conjecture, but had the proper equipment been on

hand when the firemen reached the scene, it is said they could have controlled it.

Such was fate. At the fire site, the driver of the hose wagon found there was no nozzle to attach to the hose, and it was necessary to rush back downtown to headquarters. After the nozzle had been secured, it was discovered there was no wrench to turn on the hydrant.

In the meantime, the fire had gained headway. Fanned by a 45 mile per hour wind, it spread rapidly through a section of the city where shingle roofs fed its flames. By the time enough equipment could be brought to the scene, three blocks of houses were burning out of control. The fire began to jump streets, consuming block after block.

Of four fire trucks used in combatting the blaze, two belonged to the local fire department, one came from Kinston, the other from Washington. Kinston fire fighters drove their pumper the more than 30 miles to New Bern. The equipment from Washington came on a railway car, arriving in record time from about the same distance. With help from neighboring communities, the fire's progress toward downtown New Bern was eventually checked, but not without drastic action!

To save the city, a fire break was created by dynamiting a number of houses on Queen Street and by using a railroad switch engine with heavy cable to pull down others in the path of the flames.

The fire raged for about seven hours, at one point threatening both hospitals--Saint Luke's (now Social Services on George Street) and General (on North Craven Street)--before firemen and volunteers, including officers and crew of the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter Pamlico, got it under control.

Standing erect and ghostly, chimneys and walls were all that remained of hundreds of homes. Without food, shelter, or clothing but



BRICK CHIMNEYS STAND TALL WITHOUT HOUSES AFTER 1922 FIRE. Photo from Fireman's Museum.

what they had on their backs, victims of the terrible blaze spent the night of December 1 in Cedar Grove Cemetery under the trees.

Next day, the work of reclamation began. An emergency relief committee was formed by Harry M. Jacobs, president of the Chamber of Commerce. Tents, cots, and mattresses were requested of the U. S. Army at Fort Bragg; army kitchens were set up to prepare food; and three details of Battery D, 117th Field Artillery, went on patrol duty to prevent looting.

The relief committee received donations from all over the country and continued to operate until homes had been found for most of the displaced. From the vast 500-tent city which had been erected in New Bern, some were moved into portable housing 36 miles away at Camp Glenn (Morehead City).

On Tuesday, December 5, Governor Cameron Morrison came to see the burn area with his own eyes. By then, the American Red Cross had joined in relief activities, and Rowland was negotiating purchase of Roper Lumber Company property to start rebuilding as soon as insurance adjusters completed their survey.

Meanwhile, on December 3, THE NEW BERNIAN reported that a review of prior estimates had increased the number of homes, warehouses, manufacturing plants, churches, and stores destroyed to more than a thousand. Though the fire loss figure was said still to be \$2 million, it was later revised upward to \$2.5 million--against insurance coverage estimated at \$500,000.

More than 1500 people were thrown out of work by the conflagration which swept the area generally north of Queen Street and west of George Street, encompassing a large portion of the city's black community and including the buildings of the New Bern Fair Grounds in addition to industrial and mercantile sites. Yet even the dark and enveloping cloud of so

tragic an event as the Great Fire spared New Bern's downtown, old residential section, and Riverside.

SOURCES

- Green, John B. III. A NEW BERN ALBUM. New Bern, N. C.: Tryon Palace Commission, 1985.
- THE NEW BERNIAN, New Bern, N. C. December 2, 3, and 5, 1922.
- SANBORN MAPS OF NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA. 1913 and 1914. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd.

NAMES MENTIONED IN REPORTS OF GRAFFENRIED
AND SEVERAL LETTERS FROM COLONISTS

L. S. Blades, III

In April 1989 the deGraffenried Memorial Committee will unveil a bust of New Bern's founder, Baron Christoph (also Christopher) de (also von) Graffenried (also Graffenriedt), the fifth to carry that name. The sculptor, William E. Hipp, III, of Chapel Hill, is renowned in North Carolina for various of his works, among them Senator Sam Irvin, Jr., Dean Smith, and Walter Davis, the benefactor of the UNC library. As a member of the committee, I have viewed the clay model of the intended final bronze bust. It is spectacular and will be a center of attraction when it is finally in place beside City Hall.

As part of the celebration planned, which will tie in with Tryon Palace's Gardener's Weekend and the Society's Old Homes Tour, Helmuth deGraffenried of Bern, Switzerland, is heading a group to tour the eastern United States, culminating with a visit to New Bern for the dedication of the bust. Over 80 Swiss are expected, 20 to 30 being deGraffenrieds. In trying to make these visitors feel welcome, one of the tasks was to compile a list of colonists and others associated with the baron's venture.

The names listed below have been excerpted from CHRISTOPH VON GRAFFENRIED'S ACCOUNT OF THE FOUNDING OF NEW BERN, Vincent H. Todd, editor (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1920). Note that colonists are indicated by the sign (c); others not so indicated may have also been colonists, but the record is not clear.

- (c) Hans Aeschbacher and wife, Anni Aeschbacher
 Andreas Aescher
 J. Justus Albrecht (chief miner)
 Anne (Queen of England)
- Uhli Bache (innkeeper)
 Nicolas Balts
 Colonel (John ["Jack"]) Barnwell
 Duke of Beaufort
 Colonel _____ Blankistore
 Christian Bolsiger (also Balsiger?)
 Uhli Bolsiger (also Balsiger?)
 Johann Jacob Böttschi (Clerk of Court and
 Captain of Carolina)
 Colonel _____ Boyd
 _____ Branen
 Hansli Bränen
 Maria Bränen
 William Brice
 Hans von Buchse
 Joseph Bullre and wife, Wassele Bullre (of
 Wyssenbach)
 Uhli Burger
 Christian Bürki (minister?)
- _____ Caesar (German minister?)
 Colonel _____ Cary
 Charles II (King of England)
 Martin Chartier
 Moritz Christeler
 Peter Christeler
 _____ Clark (goldsmith, counterfeiter)
- _____ Dansen
 Kilchmeyer Dreuthart
 Anna Drus
 _____ Dykenfield
- Abraham Edens (Amsterdam merchant)
 Egbert Edens (Rotterdam merchant)
 William Edwards (witness to contract)*
 Heinrich Egender (of St. Stephen's Court)

Christen Eggen
 (c) Christen Engel

Colonel _____ Fitzhugh

- (c) Samuel Jacob Gabley and wife, Margreth (also Margaret) (Pfund) Gabley (of Zweysimmen)
 Casper Gerber
 Jacob Gobli (and wife, Anna Marie Gobli?)
 Albrecht von Graffenried (non-signatory party to contract)*
- (c) Christoph von Graffenried (party to contract)*
 Schultheiss von Graffenried

Peter Habegger

_____ Haldermann

King Hancock (Indian chief)

Christian Hausmann (in Heybühl)

John Heinrich and wife, Maria Magdalena
 Heinrich

- (c) Jacob Himler and wife, Madlena Himler (of Madiswyl)

_____ Holtzmann

Samuel Hopf (non-signatory party to contract)*

Edward Hyde and wife (Governor of North Carolina)

Peter Isot (also Petter Isoth) (party to contract)*

Captain _____ Jaccard (of St. Croix)

Christen Jantz

(c) Christen Janzen

(c) Christina (Christeler) Janzen (also widow of _____ Sannen)

Johann Anthoni Järsing (non-signatory party to contract)*

Emanuel Kilchberger (non-signatory party to contract)*

- _____ Kilchmeyer
 _____ Kilchmeyer
 Hans Klasner and wife, Rufascher Klasner
 _____ Kocherthal (author)
 Andreas Krächig
 Uhli Küntzi
 (c) Benedict Kupferschmied
 Helm Kupferschmied
- John Lawson (Surveyor General of North
 Carolina)
 Uhli Lerche
 Em. (anuel) Lowe
- _____ Martge (Treasurer)
 Franz (also Frantz) Ludwig Michel (party to
 contract)*
 Captain _____ Moore
 Christian von Mühlennen (in Switzerland, in
 the Canton of Bern, Upper Simmenthal, in
 the parish of Bottigen of the Flühli)
 Salome (Ziorien) von Muhlenen
 Uhli Müller (gunsmith in Switzerland)
- _____ Nicholson (Governor of Virginia)
 _____ Norris (Vice-Admiral)
- Count Orkney
- Count Pembroke
 William Penn (Governor of Pennsylvania)
 Heinrich Perret
 Benedict Plösch (of Morigen, Nidauw
 baliwick)
 Colonel Thomas Pollock
- (c) Peter Rëütiger (same as Peter Röntiger?)
 Georg Ritter (party to contract)*
 H. J. Ritter
 R. Roach
- (c) Peter Röntiger (same as Peter Rëütiger?)
 _____ Rosier (from the falls of the

Potomac River)

- (c) Hans Ruegsegger (father)
- (c) Hans Ruegsegger (son)
- (c) Uhli Ruegsegger (son of father Hans Ruegsegger)

Sam (Core Indian chief)

_____ Sannen (first[?] husband of
Christina [Christeler] Janzen)

_____ Säumers

Benedict Schetele (also Schettele) (of Nider
Linog)

Peter Seeman

Benedict Simon

Heinrich Simon (of Buch)

- (c) Johannes Simon

Katherine Simon

_____ Speismann

Alexander Spotswood (Governor of Virginia)

Johannes Stern

Joseph Stern and wife, Katherine Stern (of
Riggisberg)

King Taylor (Indian chief)

Core Tom (Indian chief)

Uhli Treut

Jacob Treuthart

Peter Treuthart (brothers)

_____ Treuthart

Colonel _____ Tynt (Governor of South
Carolina)

- (c) Jacob Währe (of Zweysimmer) (Zweysimmen?)
- Monzua Währe (daughter-in-law of above)
- (c) Christen Walcker
- (c) Andreas Weinmann and wife, Anna Margreta
Weinmann (of Mentzingen)
- Hansli Wichtermann (child of Hanss
Wichtermann)
- Hanss Wichtermann
- Maria Wichtermann (child of Hanss
Wichtermann)

Edward Woods (witness to contract)*

Wray

(c) Anna Will (of Rümliigen)

Daniel Zant (of Eriswyl)

(c) Johannes Zant and wife, Anna Eva Zant

(c) Katherine Zant (daughter of above)

Captain _____ Zechender

Magistrate _____ Zergen

Benedict Zionien (Ziorien?)

Michael Ziorien

FIRST NAMES ONLY

Bartlome _____

Bäsi _____

Dichtli (Janzen?)

Dietrich _____ (blacksmith)

Hans _____

Hans _____ (at Flüh)

(c) Moritz _____ (shoemaker)

(c) Zioria (Janzen?)

*The contract referred to is that among the various parties to settle New Bern.

The following names were found on a map entitled, PLAN OF THE SWISS COLONY IN CAROLINA BEGUN IN OCTOBER, 1710, BY CHRISTOPH VON GRAFFENRIEDT AND FRANTZ LUDWIG MICHEL. The map, which locates most of the Swiss colonists, is in the Todd book cited above.

Christain Bätzle (tanner)

Heim Berger

Landschoeiber Bötschÿ
 Captain Brice (William Brice, English)
 Hans Rÿgs Egger
 _____ Haberstich
 _____ Hopf
 Samuel Huntzinger (n?)
 Christain Janssi
 Rudy Kisler
 Societet Lehen
 _____ Raubley
 Peter Reutiger
 Benedicht Kupfer Schmidt
 _____ Studi
 Gebrüder Währay (?)
 _____ Webhe (?)
 _____ Werger
 Johan Wyssmer
 Gebrüder Ziorien
 Jac. Ziorien
 Casper Zobrist
 Peter Zuleman

THE FAMILIES OF THE ATTMORE-OLIVER HOUSE

Part II: The Attmore-Oliver Family

Patricia M. Hughey

In July 1834 Isaac Taylor purchased the house and lot at 513 Broad Street from Caroline Chapman and her husband Henry P. Waring. Taylor bought the house for his daughter Mary and her husband George Sitgreaves Attmore. Mary and George had been married since February 12, 1829, and already had two children, Hannah and Sitgreaves, when Taylor presented the house to them. Undoubtedly Mary and George expected to have more children (they eventually had seven), and the eighteenth-century story and a half house was too small for them. They may have begun the enlargement soon after Taylor purchased the house for them.²⁸

Mary's father Isaac Taylor was obviously a fond parent, but he was also a shrewd businessman. He was born in Marykirk, Kincardine, Scotland, in 1762.²⁹ According to family tradition, he and his brother came to America after the Revolutionary War in their own brig, which they sold in Wilmington.³⁰ Isaac settled in New Bern, married a local girl, Hannah Justice, in 1792 and began his career as a maritime merchant. He was a Mason like Samuel Chapman and was on the building committee of the Masonic Lodge and Theatre 1801-1809. He was also an early trustee of the First Presbyterian Church.³¹ He owned several stores and warehouses and in 1791 advertised an assortment of dry goods at "Isaac Taylor's Cheap Store, in Middle Street". In 1793 he sold imported goods

from New York at his store on Craven Street.³² New Bern was a busy port in the late eighteenth century, and many merchants owned sailing vessels and dealt in trade with the Caribbean Islands. In 1799 French privateers captured Taylor's sloop RAINBOW off the Caicos Islands. Fortunately for Taylor, the British frigate SURPRIZE recaptured it, and some of the goods were salvaged and sold at Kingston, Jamaica.³³

Taylor's will, dated September 4, 1844, made provision for his six daughters, but completely left out his son Alexander because his drinking habits were considered excessive. Isaac Taylor died July 4, 1846, and his will was proven in August of that same year. He left the house on Broad Street to his daughter Mary as well as one-seventh of the slaves. He owned 75, ranging in age from Betty, an 11 month old infant, to 64 year old Bill Foy, and in value from 59 year old Sam Lane, valued at \$50, to Bill Martin, a 22 year old slave worth \$625. Most of these slaves worked Taylor's Glenburnie Plantation.³⁴

Mary Taylor Attmore was 39 years old when her father left her the house, and George S. Attmore was 48. The family now included six children, and George was a respected lawyer and real estate investor. George's parents were Sarah ("Sallie") Sitgreaves, sister of Judge John Sitgreaves, and William Attmore, a Philadelphia merchant best known for the detailed diary he kept on a business trip from Philadelphia to New Bern in 1787 in which he described the buildings, culture, and society of New Bern.³⁵

The presence of so many children probably made the Attmore house a lively place. Mary's maiden sisters and her mother, who lived on Craven Street, would have visited often, as well as her brother Alexander, who became a physician, and her married sister Louisa Taylor Clark. Her other sister, Janet, married widower William Hollister in 1829 and lived about a

block away at 613 Broad Street.³⁶

According to the 1850 census, the Attmore family was prospering. George S. Attmore is listed as a 52 year old lawyer with an estate worth \$10,000. Mary is also listed along with their seven children: Hannah, Sitgreaves, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Mary, and George. They all lived to adulthood except Mary, who died in 1856 at the age of 15.³⁷

Mary Taylor Attmore was only 45 years old when she died February 29, 1852.³⁸ Her youngest child was merely five years of age. Though it must have been difficult, her husband and children remained in the house. On April 20, 1854, the oldest daughter Hannah Taylor Attmore married William Hollister Oliver, the son of Samuel Oliver and Elizabeth Gettig.³⁹

George S. Attmore died December 15, 1859, and Hannah inherited the house. Hannah and William H. Oliver had eight children, three of whom died in infancy.⁴⁰ The other five were George Attmore Oliver, Elizabeth Gettig Oliver, Mary Taylor Oliver, Hannah Attmore Oliver, and Martha Harvey Oliver. In the 1860 census William H. Oliver's personal estate was valued at \$20,000. At this time William and Hannah had three young children at home. Hannah's brothers Isaac and George still lived with her as well as her 17 year old sister Rebecca Christine Attmore.⁴¹

William H. Oliver was a merchant and active Mason. He was considered a leader in his community and had varied interests. He was always concerned with agricultural affairs, supporting the formation of an agricultural society in 1859 and acting as secretary of the planning committee for agricultural fairs held in 1859 and 1860. He was also a fire warden and a member of the executive committee of the Newbern Mutual Fire Insurance Company. In addition, he involved himself in educational concerns by acting as one of the trustees of the

Moses Griffin estate, managing funds which were intended for the schooling of indigent children.⁴²

The outbreak of the Civil War curtailed many normal activities, and the Attmores and Olivers were soon caught up in the unfolding drama. All of Hannah's brothers enlisted in the Confederate army, and her husband William served as a quartermaster.

Hannah's oldest brother Sitgreaves Attmore was born on May 2, 1831. Prior to the war he was active in the Masonic Lodge, serving as junior deacon from 1853-1856. He was also on the committee formed to organize a celebration for the completion of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad in 1858. His brother-in-law William H. Oliver was on the same committee charged with the unenviable task of chairing the entertainment subcommittee.⁴³ Sitgreaves Attmore enlisted as a private in an artillery unit known as the "Washington Grays" (officially Company F, Tenth North Carolina Troops). This battery participated in the Battle of Fort Fisher, December 24-25, 1864, and the entire unit was captured when the fort fell on January 15, 1865. Attmore was sent to a prisoner of war camp at Elmira, New York. He was paroled and exchanged on February 28, 1865, but was apparently quite ill since he was admitted to a hospital in Richmond, Virginia, four days later. He was captured again at the hospital on April 3, 1865. The Federals sent him to another hospital at Point Lookout, Maryland, on May 12, 1865, and he died there of chronic diarrhea on May 22, 1865.⁴⁴

Hannah's middle brother Isaac Taylor Attmore was born November 22, 1838. He enlisted in Company I, Second Regiment North Carolina Troops (also known as the "Beaufort Rifles" or the "Beauregard Rifles") nine days after North Carolina seceded on May 29, 1861. This unit became part of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia,

Second Army Corps, Rodes' Division, Ramseur's Brigade, and saw action in many major battles including Gettysburg. Isaac T. Attmore was promoted to sergeant in June 1863. He was killed at Spotsylvania Court House on May 12, 1864.⁴⁵

The youngest brother, George Sitgreaves Attmore, was born in 1847. His family probably tried to keep him out of the army because of his age, but like so many young men of the era he enlisted anyway in 1864. He served in Company A, Tenth Regiment North Carolina Troops (also known as "Manly's Battery"). This unit fought at Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, the Wilderness, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. George S. Attmore was wounded in May 1864, possibly at Spotsylvania, where his brother Isaac was killed. He was also at Appomattox Court House, where Manly's Battery burned their guns and carriages and left for North Carolina without signing the surrender. He was, however, paroled at Greensboro May 9, 1865.⁴⁶

Federal troops occupied New Bern from 1862 to 1865, and many families went to High Point to wait out the occupation. Hannah T. Oliver's maiden aunts Phebe, Catharine, and Frances Taylor were allowed to stay in their house on Craven Street and had their property restored to them after they signed President Lincoln's Amnesty Proclamation. The Attmore-Oliver home may have been used as a hospital during the occupation because medical supplies were found during an archaeological investigation in 1962.⁴⁷

Reconstruction was probably difficult for the Olivers but they did not lose their home, and William H. Oliver continued working as a commission merchant. He was one of the leading Democrats in Craven County, often protesting what he considered negligence and corruption in the Republican party.⁴⁸

The house was still full of life in 1880

when 11 people lived there. Along with William H. and Hannah T. Oliver and their five children, Hannah's sisters Rebecca Attmore and Sarah Attmore Primrose, Sarah's son Robert, and Emily Grimes, the family's maid, resided there. Hannah suffered greatly from rheumatism and died February 25, 1881. In her will, she left all her real estate to her daughters, Elizabeth ("Bettie"), Mary, Hannah, and Martha. She left her son George a personal estate equal to one-fourth of the property left to her daughters.⁴⁹

Three of the Oliver sisters married. William H. Oliver remained a widower and continued living in the house with his grown children George and Mary and his sister-in-law Rebecca C. Attmore. Sometime after 1880, Oliver began selling insurance on a full-time basis. According to an 1888 advertisement he sold life, fire, marine, and accident insurance and proclaimed that "cotton gins and country risks" would be taken.⁵⁰ Oliver died at the age of 79 on October 21, 1908. His obituary described him as "a man respected and loved by all for his integrity and steadfastness".⁵¹

Mary Taylor Oliver eventually became sole owner of the house. Born in 1859, she lived all her life in the Attmore-Oliver house; her lifetime spanned the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. She died in 1951, at the age of 91. In her will, dated October 17, 1945, she left the house to her nephews Benjamin, William, Joseph and John Huske, and Henry B. Constable. In 1954 the four Huske brothers owned the house and sold it to the New Bern Historical Society Foundation for \$30,000.⁵²

Though it now serves as the headquarters of the New Bern Historical Society, it is important to remember that for 160 years the house at 513 Broad Street was the home of several different people but only two families: The Chapmans and

the Taylor-Attmore-Oliver line. Much can be learned from studying the experiences of these inhabitants who lived through some of the most significant moments in American history.

NOTES

²⁸Craven County Deeds, 1730-1870; Carrie L. Broughton, MARRIAGE AND DEATH NOTICES IN THE RALEIGH REGISTER AND NORTH CAROLINA STATE GAZETTE 1826-1845 (Raleigh: Bulletin of the North Carolina State Library, 1947; reprint ed., Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1968), p. 52.

²⁹Historical Records Survey of North Carolina, 1939, comp., CEDAR GROVE CEMETERY TO 1939 (n. p., 1939), p. 61.

³⁰Mary Bryan Hollister Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina Manuscript Collection, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina.

³¹Carraway, YEARS OF LIGHT, pp. 64-65; Reverend L. C. Vass, HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NEW BERN NORTH CAROLINA (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1886), pp. 126-127.

³²Fouts, ABSTRACTS 1791-1798, Vol. 2, pp. 11 and 23.

³³Mary Bryan Hollister Collection.

³⁴Craven County Record of Wills, Vol. D; Mary Bryan Hollister Collection.

³⁵Lida T. Rodman, ed., "Journal of a Tour to North Carolina by William Attmore, 1787", THE

JAMES SPRUNT HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS 17 (1922):
5-20.

³⁶Mary Bryan Hollister Collection.

³⁷United States, Bureau of the Census, 1850
CRAVEN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA; Historical
Records Survey, CEDAR GROVE CEMETERY, p. 2.

³⁸Historical Records Survey, CEDAR GROVE
CEMETERY, p. 2.

³⁹Craven County Marriage Bond Abstracts,
Vol. 2. The bondsman was Cicero Primrose.

⁴⁰Historical Records Survey, CEDAR GROVE
CEMETERY, pp. 2 and 47.

⁴¹United States, Bureau of the Census, 1860
CRAVEN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA.

⁴²Carraway, YEARS OF LIGHT, p. 227; Alan D.
Watson, A HISTORY OF NEW BERN AND CRAVEN COUNTY
(New Bern: Tryon Palace Commission, 1987), pp.
250-251; NEW BERN DAILY PROGRESS, Dec. 15, 1859;
Craven County 1860 Census.

⁴³Carraway, YEARS OF LIGHT, pp. 136-137,
227; William H. Oliver, "Completion of the
Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad from
Goldsboro to Newbern, N. C., April 29, 1858",
April 29, 1901, New Bern Historical Society
Collection; J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina
Manuscript Collection, East Carolina University,
Greenville, North Carolina.

⁴⁴Louis H. Manarin, comp., NORTH CAROLINA
TROOPS 1861-1865, A ROSTER, Vol. 1. (Raleigh:
State Department of Archives and History, 1966),
pp. 158-159.

⁴⁵Manarin, comp., NORTH CAROLINA TROOPS

1861-1865, A ROSTER, Vol. 3 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1971), pp. 461-462.

⁴⁶Manarin, comp., NORTH CAROLINA TROOPS, Vol. 1, pp. 40-42.

⁴⁷Tony P. Wrenn and Janet Seapker, THE NOMINATIONS OF NEW BERN SITES TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (n. p., n. d.), entry for Chapman-Attmore-Oliver House.

⁴⁸Watson, A HISTORY OF NEW BERN, pp. 472-474.

⁴⁹United States, Bureau of the Census, 1880 CRAVEN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA; Craven County Record of Wills, Vol. E.

⁵⁰James W. Waters, THE NEW BERNE N. C. SCRAP BOOK AND ADVERTISER 1887-1888 (New Bern: N. S. Richardson and Son, 1889), in the New Bern Historical Society Collection.

⁵¹NEW BERN DAILY JOURNAL, Oct. 22, 1908.

⁵²Craven County Record of Wills, Vol. L.

Bibliography available on request.

MOVING DAY IN NEW BERN

Audrey Mellevoid

There were no boxes to be packed and labeled "china--place in dining room". Cartons and furniture were not being carried to moving vans. In fact, no moving vans had arrived for the occasion. But this was, indeed, moving day. The date was September 29, 1981, and movers were picking up a house and office and moving them to new locations. The buildings were precious, for they were treasures of New Bern and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1978 the Board of Directors of the Historic New Bern Foundation made an offer to purchase the eighteenth-century Coor-Cook (Ben Jones) House and Law Office from Craven County. The two buildings were located at that time on Craven Street adjacent to the County Courthouse where the Coor-Cook House was headquarters for several county departments, and the smaller building had been used as the county's election office. It was the fear of the Foundation that the county would tear down these two historic buildings in order to make way for parking areas or court house expansion. Plans were already under way for a new county jail and sheriff's office.

When the possible demolition of these two architectural gems was brought to the attention of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, its director forthwith sent a letter to the Craven County Commissioners stressing the significance of preserving the two structures. In a letter dated February 1, 1979, Dr. Larry Tise verbally

caressed the two edifices: "A good example of the New Bern version of Federal Architecture, the Stevenson-Jones [Coor-Cook] House is specifically mentioned in the National Register nomination as characteristic of the restrained, elegant and, above all, sophisticated domestic structures built in New Bern during the last two decades of the eighteenth century. The small one story Greek Revival law office is typical of those built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by New Bern businessmen and lawyers who wanted an attractive office close to their residences." The letter further encouraged the county commissioners to seriously consider preservation of these properties.

After some time county officials announced that the buildings would be offered for sale to the highest bidder. The highest and only bidder was the New Bern Preservation Foundation. The price: \$500 apiece, a mere nothing as compared with the estimated costs of moving the two structures. The buildings were purchased in May 1981 and were to be moved within 180 days.

With moving day fast approaching there were still many obstacles to overcome. Once Collins House Moving had been contacted and a contract for \$20,000 executed with the New Bern Preservation Foundation, Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company was requested to move all their facilities along the route proposed by the moving company. The estimated cost for this was \$2500.

Although the house and office faced Craven Street, the proposed route was to move both buildings off the back of the property to the Centenary United Methodist Church parking lot, then through the parking lot at Sumrell, Sugg & Carmichael, Attorneys, onto Broad Street, thereby avoiding the intersection of Broad and Craven. Once on Broad Street, the two buildings would be taken west to Hancock Street and north on that street to their new location at the

corner of Hancock and Johnson Streets.

The City of New Bern was contacted and officials estimated their costs for moving electrical lines to be approximately \$3000. A bond in the amount of \$5000 was necessary to indemnify the city against any losses, and insurance coverage for motor vehicle liability as well as general liability was in force.

When the state Department of Transportation was called upon to remove traffic lights along Broad Street, their estimated charges were \$1000. After they had removed and re-erected the span wires, signal heads, and overhead signs on U. S. Highway 17 (Broad Street) at the intersections of Middle and Hancock Streets, their fee actually amounted to only \$243.

The Utilities, Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments were all notified of the proposed move, and their combined estimated expenses totaled about \$3000.

Finally a hold harmless document was executed by the law firm of Sumrell, Sugg & Carmichael, and the Foundation was then permitted to proceed with the move.

September 29, 1981, arrived. This was moving day for the Coor-Cook House and its accompanying law office. The early morning power outage virtually paralyzed county offices as well as a number of businesses from East Front Street to Hancock Street and between Pollock and Queen Streets. The Public Works Department had notified businesses in advance that there would be an outage lasting from two to four hours, a slight inconvenience considering the monumental task. Slowly the buildings were gently eased through the streets of New Bern to the site where a new foundation already had been constructed for the gracious Federal house.

The Coor-Cook House (known in recent years as the Ben Jones House for its longtime twentieth-century occupant), a side hall house,

was begun in the 1790's. The fine interior woodwork was not completed, however, until 1822. The law office was built around 1850. Approximately 190 years after the first nail had been driven into the house it was still theoretically "under construction" by those people who cared enough to salvage and preserve this captivating residence.

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BROAD STREET CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Mary Baker

[The Reverend C. Frank Speight first suggested this article and introduced me to the work of Paul Ellis, longtime church member. Mr. Ellis early saw the need for preserving a record of the church's past and took on the task. We honor his work and his memory. M. B.]

For over sixty years Broad Street Christian Church has stood at the corner of Broad and Bern Streets, a solid-looking, handsome building. The name "Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" may be confusing to some people. Perhaps a word of explanation is appropriate.

In 1804 Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian minister of the Cane Ridge Church in Bourbon County, Kentucky, rejected the idea of predestination and broke away from the church. Subsequently, he and some of his followers founded a church they called the "Christian Church". In 1811 another Presbyterian minister Thomas Campbell, his son Alexander Campbell, and other like-minded individuals began meeting together independent of the church. They called their group "Disciples of Christ". In 1832 these two groups merged to become the "Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)". "Christian Church" identifies the membership as being part of the church universal founded by Jesus Christ. "Disciples of Christ" identifies the members as a distinctive body within the church universal. The denomination has become the largest founded on American soil.

History of the local congregation also goes back to the nineteenth century. It was in the



VIEW OF BROAD STREET CHRISTIAN CHURCH SHOWS COLUMNS. Photo by Tom Thompson.

1840's when John B. Gaylord, a coachmaker and preacher, held worship services and home prayer meetings which were the beginnings of the Christian Church in New Bern.

During the 1850's William R. Fulcher and Thomas H. Bowen began preaching in New Bern on the second floor of a downtown building. The exact building has not been identified, but evidence indicates it was on or near the present site of the Dunn Building at the corner of Pollock and Craven Streets.

From 1866 to 1875 Dr. J. L. Walse, a practicing physician in New Bern, preached, and published **THE MESSIANIC BANNER**, a Biblical monthly newspaper. Mr. N. S. Richardson, proof-reader for the paper, joined Dr. Walse's followers one day after proofing the paper and converted to the Christian Church. Mr. Richardson realized the need for a permanent place of worship and immediately began to seek money for a church building. In 1871 alone he raised a total of \$181.87 and deposited the money with R. H. Rondtree & Co. Bank.

Fourteen years later, on November 8, 1885, a lot was purchased on Hancock Street between Pollock and Broad. The lot cost \$225 and measured 101 by 47 feet. Four years later the building was erected, and on December 1, 1889, the new church was dedicated. It was a wooden structure painted white, Gothic-Revival in style, with a tall steeple.

The charter membership of 157 quickly grew to nearly 500 people. The new church seated 450 comfortably, but with the increase in membership, the congregation, often crowded for worship, considered moving to a new location as there was no room to expand where they were. They remained on Hancock Street, however, until 1918, when fate, in the form of a fire, burned the church to the ground. The building had been insured for only \$1000, and again there was a need to raise money. Setting out at once with

the project, they had \$7800 in hand by 1920 and purchased the property on Broad Street. In February 1921 construction began. The ground floor was roofed over and used temporarily for worship until the completed new church was dedicated on April 18, 1926. The only debt on the building was \$20,000 which had been borrowed from the Board for Church Expansion.

The monumental neoclassical structure, made of buff-colored brick and limestone, features a shallow pediment supported by stuccoed columns on the façade. The inside is lighted naturally by windows in a low-domed cupola centered over the nave, and the two sides opposite the pulpit contain seating galleries.

It would be easy to say at this point that Broad Street Christian Church has lived happily ever after. However, this is a real church and to some extent it has reflected the life of its own community, reaching a low point in the late sixties and early seventies. Membership had dwindled, and once more the congregation questioned its future course. The remaining members considered moving but chose instead to remain and rebuild, reaffirming their commitment to the area. Today the 450 members contribute significantly to their local programs and support missions as well.

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HISTORICAL PROFILE: MADAM MOORE

Charlotte and Jack Breytspraak

Editor's note: The following article was originally published in the NEWSLETTER of the New Bern Historical Society, September-October 1987.

If, after crossing the Trent River Bridge in the direction of Morehead City, you turn at the first light rather than continuing on to Route 70, you will shortly come to Madam Moore's Lane. A brief drive will bring you to Clermont, the site of Madam Moore's home. It will also bring you to a brick enclosure which houses the graves of Madam Moore and Richard Dobbs Spaight along with other members of that illustrious family. Spaight you say, the first native born governor of North Carolina? Yes! And at this point, those with an appetite for the salacious are in for a disappointment; no titillating tidbits from this trip. For Madam Moore wasn't a "madam" at all; she was a Madam. But we are getting ahead of our story. Read on.

Madam Mary Vail Jones Willson Moore was born in 1705. She came to North Carolina from Southold, Long Island. Her mother was a Lillington and through her she was related to some of the most prominent families in the colony including a governor, a deputy governor and the surveyor-general. Her first marriage was to the Honorable Frederick Jones of Chowan County (Hayes Plantation). There were three children of this marriage: a daughter, Mary, and two sons, Harding and Frederick.

Her second marriage was to Colonel William Willson, who built Clermont. Their daughter,

Elizabeth, became the wife of Richard Spaight, the mother of Governor Richard Dobbs Spaight, and the grandmother of Governor Richard Dobbs Spaight, II. Her third and last marriage was to Roger Moore of Orton Plantation near Wilmington. Known as "King" Roger Moore, Madam Moore's last husband was recognized throughout the colonies for his wealth, integrity, and influence. And it was through this marriage, together with her own illustrious heritage, that she became known as "Madam", a complimentary title given to married ladies of high station.

Madam Moore was one of the social leaders of New Bern. She was a well-known member of Christ Episcopal Church and is said to have owned a stall there "twice as large" as any other. When she came to town from Clermont, she traveled in an elegantly equipped barge rowed by six liveried oarsmen.

Clermont Plantation consisted of 2500 acres stretching from the Neuse River to the confluence of the Trent River and Rice's Creek, where the plantation house was located. Through the kind offices of Ms. Hugerina McDonald, Clermont's present owner, we were shown the foundations of the original manor house as well as the extraordinary view from the plantation's old dock where one can still see the ballast stones unloaded by the cargo ships on the days when they took on freight.

Curiosity led us to reach out beyond New Bern, justified we thought, by the fact that the honorific title Madam ties to her marriage to Roger Moore of Orton Plantation. Located adjacent to Brunswick, the original Cape Fear settlement, and just down river from Wilmington, Orton is a two hour drive from New Bern. We thought this a formidable distance for courtship. Probable explanations to this puzzle were suggested by Mrs. Pembroke Nash of Tarboro. First, Brunswick, a city of major importance, would have been the kind of place someone of

Madam Moore's position would have visited. Second, she would certainly have gone there to visit her Lillington, Dobbs, and Nash relatives who lived there at the time. And, in those days, long visits, a reality factor conducive to courtship, were the rule due to the difficulty of travel.

One of the interesting sidelights of the excursion to Orton is the fact that the present owners of Orton Plantation, the Sprunt family, are direct descendants of Madam Moore. Not through Roger Moore however, but through Madam Moore's first husband, Frederick Jones. There is an often repeated story that Madam Moore married three times, "once for love, once for money, and once for ambition". Thus the present owners of Orton Plantation have proven, once again, the old adage that love will out in the end.

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BOOK REVIEW

THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE OF NEW BERN AND CRAVEN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA by Peter B. Sandbeck. (New Bern, N. C.: The Tryon Palace Commission, 1988. Bibliography, glossary, index. 611 p. \$30.00.)

A reviewer approaching this volume is somewhat intimidated by the massive proportions. Measuring 9 by 11½ inches and nearly two inches thick, it weight almost five pounds! Hardly the kind of book you can curl up with in your favorite easy chair, in fact a sturdy desk or book stand is more appropriate.

Peter Sandbeck began his research for this book in 1980 and resided in New Bern for the next five years. I first met him about 1984, in his "office" under the eaves on the third floor of the Attmore-Oliver House. Here, surrounded by old curled-up photographs and musty yellowing manuscripts, this impressive publication was born. Painstaking research and scholarly compilation have resulted in a "bible" of New Bern and Craven County architecture which will stand for many years to come. In writing of the wood and brick, and the builders and owners, the author has given us an incredible record of what we now call New Bern's proud historical and architectural heritage.

With text, photographs, floor plans, and maps we are given great detail on individual structures, accompanied by a broad view of historical events that generated particular styles and types of homes and buildings. Political and economic events that influenced owners and builders to create structures which

met the needs of the era are told in lucid and understandable prose, a skill that few scholars seem to possess. Beginning in Colonial times, 1690 when settlement had barely begun, Peter leads us through the mysterious maze of land grants, subdivisions, additions, house moves, deeds, titles, wills, and families into the 1940's.

The book consists of four parts. Part I, about a quarter of the book, is concerned with historical and architectural development. Part II, almost half the book, catalogs the buildings in New Bern's historic downtown district. Each structure is meticulously described, and where ownership can be traced a summary of the transfers by will, deed, and other means is included. Most descriptions are accompanied by one or more photographs, some of interiors; fireplaces, staircases, and other unique architectural details are also illustrated. Many have either an original or redrawn floor plan. A number of homes, public buildings, and commercial structures which have received little recognition for their historic associations or architectural qualities are included. Reference to this section is made easy with a street by street listing in the table of contents. Structures outside the historic district are also listed. The newly declared historic districts of Ghent and Riverside cover several pages as do the major cemeteries. I am sure this book will be cited frequently by historians in books and presentations for many, many years to come.

Craven County is similarly served in Parts III and IV, the remaining quarter of the volume. Obscure buildings seldom seen by the public are included, some examples being the Ernul Railroad Depot, the Bank of Vanceboro, and the Jasper Post Office. Plantation homes occupied and unoccupied have not escaped the eye of the industrious author. Some have deteriorated to

the point where rescue and rehabilitation seem almost impossible, a shame of which those concerned with preservation cannot be proud.

The remaining 50 pages cover the author's notes, a bibliography, a glossary of architectural terms, and the index. The notes and bibliography are comprehensive and will be extremely useful to budding historians. I cannot recall seeing any past references to many of the documents cited. The glossary covers several pages and contains many rarely used terms such as "trabeated" (a post and lintel construction form) and "triglyphs" (vertically grooved decorative blocks), however it does not mention simpler and more frequently used terms such as "timber framing".

For the reviewer to make adverse comment on a book that has been prepared with uncommon devotion and which has been so long and eagerly awaited might seem out of place. There are however some observations that are imperative from my point of view. Firstly, the complete lack of color photographs. Surely it would have been possible within a reasonable budget to enhance the dust jacket with color. Such a step would undoubtedly improve the appearance greatly and enhance sales appeal. A limited number of color photos, at least illustrating major categories or styles, would probably have added to the cost; but I feel sure it could be recouped with only a slight increase in price. Most desirable of all would be some of the interiors in color to give a more informed sense of the decor and style apparent in many of the lovingly restored and well cared for residences.

On the subject of photographs, we can note that a large number have been duplicated, particularly between Parts I and II. This may have been the author's good intention, but it does not seem to be a necessity. Even some of the text, while not an exact duplicate, is similar in several cases. I feel strongly that

a reliable editor and a first class designer could have limited these redundancies and made an already very readable book even more appealing. Certainly it would play to a wider audience, beyond the immediate area of New Bern and Craven County. I might add that I had a similar comment to make about the editing of Alan Watson's history of New Bern and Craven County.

The responsibility for editing and design of a book rests primarily with the publisher, and Peter Sandbeck's devotion and contribution to our greater enjoyment of New Bern and Craven County history and architecture is not diminished in any way. This wonderful volume is worth every penny of the \$30.00 price tag, in fact a considerably greater sum.

Jim Gunn