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The JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY is a semiannual 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 28563)

DANCE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NEW BERN

Paige Whitley-Bauguess

Editor's note: Paige Whitley-Bauguess is Director of the Craven Historical Dancers and owner-director of Down East Dance in New Bern. She has published articles in the DANCE NOTATION JOURNAL and the INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF BALLET and has taught master classes and given lecture-demonstrations at a number of colleges and universities.

This paper represents the beginning of a research project which started when the Craven Historical Dancers were invited to perform at a baroque music festival in New York state last spring. The program, DANCE IN 18TH-CENTURY NEW BERN, included much of the information in this paper interspersed with dances known to have been danced in colonial America. Unfortunately, sources available to this author to date have shed no light on specific titles of dances which were danced in New Bern or the dance tunes, but refer to general dance types such as the minuet and reels. References to dance in the larger North Carolina colony mention rural "scampers", jigs, country dances, and eventually cotillions. It is hoped that sources containing references to specific dance titles will surface.

Despite the lack of this specific information, the many references to dance in eighteenth-century New Bern indicate substantial dance activity for a town which, for example, boasted a population of about 2500 residents in 1800 compared to Charleston, South Carolina, with a population of almost 19,000 at that time. (See also MUSIC IN ANTEBELLUM NEW BERN by Vance Harper Jones for a detailed study of music in early New Bern. Appendix II of Jones's

study includes excerpts of numerous newspaper articles relating to the other arts.)

Situated on the main thoroughfare of the colonial eastern seaboard between Charleston, Wilmington, North Carolina, and Williamsburg, Virginia, New Bern was the largest town and leading port of North Carolina from the 1760s to the 1820s. As an economic and government center during much of this time, it is not surprising then that New Bern harbored a thriving social community that was fond of dancing among other social activities.

An interesting aside is merited before continuing the discussion of dance in New Bern during those flourishing years. New Bern founder Baron deGraffenried's oldest son Christopher was a dancing master (teacher) in Williamsburg from 1720 to approximately 1737. Christopher married Mrs. Barbara Needham Tempest in Charlestown (later called Charleston) in 1714. Assemblies and balls were hosted by the deGraffenrieds in Williamsburg from as early as 1720 and by Mrs. deGraffenried as late as 1739, a typical practice for dancing masters who provided a place to dance, music, and refreshments, all of which were included in the price of a ticket. While attending the Williamsburg Council in November 1720, William Byrd wrote in his diary of attending Mr. deGraffenried's "ball, where I danced four dances and ate some plumcake" (Powers 1983, pp. 10-12).

Little information has yet surfaced about dance in New Bern prior to the arrival of Governor Tryon in 1764, although English evangelist George Whitefield wrote from Newborn [sic] on Christmas Day in 1739: "It grieves me to find that in every little town there is a settled dancing-master, but scarcely anywhere a settled minister . . . dreadful" (Ping 1979, p. 345). The question is posed, does Whitefield refer to a dancing-master in New Bern? Hopefully sources containing that information exist and can be located.

Dr. John Brickell of Edenton published THE NATURAL HISTORY OF NORTH CAROLINA in

Dublin in 1743 in which he wrote about the social and economic conditions in the colony, including this entry about dance (Ping 1979, p. 162):

> Dancing they are all fond of, especially when they can get a Fiddle or Bagpipe; at this they will continue Hours together; nay, so attach'd are they to this darling amusement, that if they can't procure Music, they will sing for themselves. The square dance, the minuet, and the reel, . . . were danced to music usually furnished by a Negro slave who "played the fiddle".

Runaway "fiddle-playing" slaves were often listed in North Carolina newspapers during the later 1700s and early 1800s. (Dance of the Negro population is not being discussed in this paper; see Lynn Fauley Emery's BLACK DANCE FROM 1619 TO TODAY [1988], an excellent study of black dance including chapters on dance in the colonies.)

In 1764 William Tryon was appointed Lt. Governor of the Province of North Carolina by King George III. When Governor Tryon arrived in New Bern, the town held a ball in his honor at the Courthouse. The December 28, 1764, issue of THE NORTH CAROLINA MAGAZINE; OR UNIVERSAL INTELLIGENCER described the event (Powell 1980, p. 33):

> In the Evening there was a very elegant Ball, in the Great Ball-Room in the Courthouse where were present his Honour the governor, and his Lady, the Mayor, Mr. Recorder, and near 100 Gentlemen and Ladies. --About Ten in the Evening the Company withdrew to the Long Room over the Ball-Room, where was spread a very elegant Collation: After Supper, the Gentlemen and Ladies returned to the Ball-Room, and concluded the Evening with all imaginable Agreeableness and Satisfaction. The Courthouse was beautifully illuminated the whole Evening.

During the following March, Justina Dobbs wrote to Alice Marsden of her plans to host a ball, as the Tryons would be visiting (Powell 1980, p. 38):

> As I expect to : have Coll: Tryon and his Ladys Company [dure]n next week, I propose having a dance here on Thursday next as you & your sister were so good as to promiss to see me here, you will oblige me if you and your sister can be here the night before, as my stay in this Country will be short, and bring any gentlemen you please to attend you: Mr. Dobbs joines in compliments to you and Miss Peggy Marsden and I remaine
>
> Dear Miss yrs Mos affect.
> Freand
> Justina Dobbs

It was during Governor Tryon's tenure that New Bern became the first permanent capital of the colony from 1766 to 1778 and that the first governor's residential palace was built between 1767 and 1770. Three years later in 1773 North Carolina statesman and judge James Iredell referred to the opening of the Palace in a letter written from New Bern to his wife in Edenton, North Carolina (Ping 1979, p. 151):

> I think you must be entertained by Mr. Cornell's Jiggin (as you call it), a minuet, and you must recollect having seen him hop a reel at the opening of the Palace.

The Assembly met in New Bern during Tryon's tenure and up until 1778 and 1779 when it met in towns farther west to accommodate western delegates. In 1780 then Governor Abner Nash planned to move the government seat back to New Bern, but on May 12, 1780, Charleston fell to the British, which in the minds of many North Carolinians left the state (and New Bern) wide open to invasion. James Iredell

wrote the following in a letter to his wife in Edenton on May 22 concerning the fall of Charleston (Higgenbotham 1976, vol. II, p. 156):

> This unhappy affair has put an end to a grand Ball that was to have been given by the Governor tommorrow night, on occasion of his taking possession of the palace, which he did on Saturday, for his place of residence.

The Assembly met in New Bern again in November 1785 and in Fayetteville the following year, prompting New Bernian John Haywood's complaint that during the Fayetteville Assembly there were no balls thrown in honor of the members (Dill 1955, p. 249). Perhaps Haywood was accustomed to balls held during Assembly season in New Bern.

The absence of the Assembly in New Bern did not mean a lack of social dancing. James Iredell wrote to his wife from New Bern on November 25, 1779, upon finishing court sessions from November 15 to 25 (Higgenbotham 1976, vol. II, p. 128):

> But I find myself most enormously charged, tho' I have scarcely ever either breakfasted or dined at home, and never supped, for except two or three evenings that I have been dancing, I have almost always come home to a very little fire and read and wrote alternately till sometimes 12 or 1 o'clock. I have reason to be satisfied with every thing except the charges here.

On May 22, 1782, Iredell wrote of attending a wedding in New Bern (Higgenbotham 1976, vol. II, pp. 343-344):

> On Monday night Miss Betsy Nash was married at her Uncle's to Mr. James Moore, a younger son of Maurice Moore's. Tuesday there was a grand ball, at which I had the honour of being present, and the greater of being selected a Partner for Mrs. Frank Nash. . . .

During the years that the Palace was uninhabited by governors, Palace rooms were often rented out for offices, Masonic Lodge meetings, French schools, and dancing schools held by itinerant dancing masters who taught wherever a sufficient number of interested students could be mustered. According to newspaper ads, New Bern had its share of itinerant dancing masters. On July 29, 1784, John Martin placed this ad in THE NORTH CAROLINA GAZETTE, OR IMPARTIAL INTELLIGENCER AND WEEKLY GENERAL ADVERTISER, (some words are illegible in the microfilm viewed):

> The subscriber, Fencing and Dancing Master, From PARIS, acquaints --- GENTLEMEN and LADIES of New-Bern, --- he has instructed in those polite Ac[comp]lishments, in several parts of these [Unite]d States, with applause; and pro--- --- a suitable encouragement may be --- him, will open a school at the Palace. ---e terms, may be known by applicat--- the Publick's most obedient and very --- servant.

On June 4, 1791, this ad dated May 21 appeared in THE NORTH CAROLINA GAZETTE:

> A Dancing school will be opened, on Tuesday the 24th inst. at the Palace, by a French Master, where the various dances now prevailing in the polite European and American companies will be taught. . . .

The master did not include his name in the ad, but could be "spoken with at Mrs. Gill's". Lessons were offered every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 4:00 p. m., and evening classes were offered on the same days for gentlemen unable to attend during the day. The price for the quarter was six dollars. In November the dancing master advertised for evening classes again, which were to begin on the first day of December.

James Thornton passed through during the fall of

1793, placing this ad in the NORTH-CAROLINA GAZETTE on September 14:

> The Subscriber intends opening a Dancing School in the Palace on the fourth Thursday in October next. His terms will be made known on application.

T. Marshall opened a school in 1794 with his lessons being held at a new location (NORTH CAROLINA GAZETTE, April 12, 1794):

> DANCING SCHOOL
> THE Subscriber intends opening a Dancing School, on Saturday the 19th inst. at the white house between Mr. Oliver's tavern, and the Barber's shop; the School days will be Wednesdays and Saturdays, and the price four dollars per quarter. . . . The school will be opened from 8 o'clock to 10 in the evening for the young gentlemen.

The following year Richard Coleman came through New Bern offering the following ad which included a description of what he would teach children (NORTH-CAROLINA GAZETTE, October 24, 1795):

> RICHARD COLEMAN, Presents his most respectful compliments to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Newbern and its vicinity, and informs them that he will open a DANCING SCHOOL at the Palace in Newbern, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday next, at three o'clock each afternoon, to be continued and held three afternoons every other week, for one quarter. Those Ladies and Gentlemen who will please to honor him with the instruction of their children in this polite accomplished art, may depend on having strict attention paid to their morals, and the utmost care and assiduity to accomplish them with all the graces, not only in a ball room, but

> in their general deportment.
> His terms are six dollars for each scholar to be paid at the expiration of the quarter, and no entrance money required.
> N. B. Mr. Coleman will open an EVENING SCHOOL, from candle light till nine o'clock; on the evenings for the improvement of those young gentlemen who cannot make it convenient to attend his day school.

Coleman opened a school again in 1796, placing an ad in February, as did Mr. Loysel and Mr. Perrin, who placed ads in February, April, and later in September. In addition to opening a school together Loysel and Perrin offered private dance lessons in individual homes. Both Coleman and Loysel are known to have held dancing schools in Wilmington in later years.

As early as 1785 New Bern had a dance club, The New-Bern Dancing Assembly, which held bi-monthly dancing parties called dancing assemblies and was joined by subscription. On November 3, 1785, THE NORTH CAROLINA GAZETTE OR NEW-BERN ADVERTISER contained this notice:

> The Gentlemen who have already subscribed, to the NEW-BERN DANCING-ASSEMBLY, are requested to meet at the Coffee-House on Saturday next, at 12 o'clock.

Advertisements appeared again in 1796 on April 2, calling for subscribers still owing dues to make payment to Treasurer Edward Kean. The following December a notice on the tenth called for Gentlemen "willing to promote the Newbern Dancing Assemblies this winter" to meet at Mr. Frilick's hotel and a notice on the seventeenth announced a meeting to appoint managers. William Gaston wrote to his sister Jane in 1796 that dancing "was our usual Winter amusement" (Dill 1955, p. 235).

During his southern tour President George Washington came through New Bern, and like many

of the other southern towns he passed through (Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, and Augusta), New Bern held a dancing assembly during his short visit. Washington wrote in his diary of the itinerary in New Bern on April 21, 1791 (Hoskins 1921, p. 21):

> Dined with the Citizens at a public dinner given by them; and went to a dancing assembly in the evening - both of which was at what they call the Pallace [sic] - formerly the Government House & a good brick building but now hastening to Ruins. - The Company at both was numerouse [sic] at the latter there were abt. 70 Ladies.

It is reported that Mrs. Richard Dobbs Spaight assisted Washington as he received the guests and then danced the opening minuet with him at the New Bern assembly (Henderson 1923, p. 99). In his diary the President indicated that there were 62 ladies at the Wilmington ball on April 25, 256(!) ladies at the Charleston dancing assembly on May 4, 100 ladies at the Savannah dancing assembly on May 13, and between 60 and 70 ladies at the Augusta assembly on May 19.

In 1798 the Palace, already in disrepair as noted by Washington in 1791, was destroyed by fire. Luckily the Masonic Lodge had already purchased land at Johnson and Hancock Streets for its own meeting place, "and to answer the purpose of Dancing Assemblies & other Public Observations" (Dill 1955, p. 237). The upper floor of the Lodge was being occupied by 1804, and the ground floor, containing the ballroom and theatre, was completed in 1809.

In many letters to her sister Sally Attmore in Philadelphia, Amaryllis Sitgreaves tells of dancing in New Bern during the 1790s; several excerpts follow (original spelling and grammar have been maintained):

> [12]/[?]/[1790]
> . . . The handsomest wedding has been in New Bern since I can remember.

Mamma, Sister, Brother and I were all there.
The vessel stood at the end of the house, illuminated with a great many candles, and looked very handsome. When the two tea-tables were drawn from the side of the room the guns fired; when the bride was led down stairs to be married the guns began to fire again and continued until they were married. Then we had tea, then danced until supper, then marched up stairs two and two, the drummer and fifer playing at the door; - a very elegant set supper. . . .
As the Bride did not choose to walk a minuet, Sister and Mrs. Haslen did. Mrs. Carthy and Dr. Cutting danced together, Mr. Carthy the groom, and Miss Batchelor danced together, Mr. Kean [is this the Edward Kean who later became treasurer of the New-Bern Dancing Assembly?] and Miss Phoebe together.
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday they danced at the Old Lady's, Friday at Mr. Tom Haslens. I did not go Wednesday nor Thursday, but Friday they sent Mr. Nash and a carriage for me, so I went and passed the evening quite agreeably. Miss Haslen and Miss Batchelor sang, Mr. Haslen played on the flute until tea, then we danced. I danced with Mr. Graham that night, Tuesday night with Mr. Nash. This Mr. Graham is a gentleman from New York; - he danced so much like our dear brother Josey, and the Bride so like you that it made Mamma feel quite low spirited.
The gentlemen had a relish on board the vessel Saturday; - guns were fired all that day, - our brother Josey danced better at the wedding than any one there except Mr. Graham and Mr. Haslen. He danced with the bride at Mr. Haslen's and they cut a most noble figure. I had the honor of dancing with Mr. Howe at the wedding, Miss Sally Vail's nephew. I dined at my brother's with Mr. and Mrs. Carthy, Mrs. Haslen, Miss Haslen, Miss Batchelor, Mr. Graham and Mr. Nash. . . .
O my dear, how we all wished you to be at this

wedding.

11/21/[1791]
[about their sister's child Junius]
he is a great dancer you would bee much Siprised to See the Child howe Clever he Can dance and has Ever Sence the Summer he goes to the danceing School and Looks att the Children a danceing

2/28/[1792]
I have no news to write you only the has Been a Balls and Plays all this winter
the was a Ball Last Thirsday. . . . Sister has made her Satten up it is very handsom She wore it to the Last Ball

Clearly, dancing played a significant role in the social activities of these late eighteenth-century New Bernians. Dancing assemblies and balls were commonplace events during the winter seasons, and dancing schools were held by various itinerant dancing masters during the last two decades of the century. As early as 1785 The New Bern Dancing Assembly, a dancing club, was established, earlier than similar clubs in Wilmington and Raleigh. Beyond the scope of this paper, but equally significant, is the continuation of extensive dancing activity in New Bern during the early 1800s and the continued presence of dancing schools in the town. Further research is planned by this author which will culminate in a discussion of dancing assembly protocol and specific dances and dance steps which may have been danced in New Bern during the late 1700s.

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FURNIFOLD MCLENDEL SIMMONS

Kathleen Harris

Since the early days New Bern and eastern North Carolina have been inextricably bound up with the politics of North Carolina and, indeed, the nation. Opinions were strong and passionately held, and discussions open and often heated. In this climate politicians of influence and power were nurtured. The most notable of these was Furnifold McLendel Simmons.

Born in Jones County in 1854, the son of Furnifold Green and Mary McLendel (Jerman) Simmons, his roots, as he often stated, were in the soil of North Carolina. He grew up on his father's plantation in Jones County, and his early education was administered by a family tutor. Later he attended private schools at Comfort and Pleasant Hill. At the age of 14 he entered Wake Forest College, where he stayed for one year, then changed to Trinity College, which later became Duke University. He graduated in 1873 with a B. A. degree.

In 1874 he married Miss Eliza Hill Humphrey. Three children were born to this marriage: Mary, who married Louis Mahler of Raleigh, James Humphrey of Pollocksville, and Eliza, who married Graham Andrews, all now deceased. Eliza Simmons died in 1883, and Furnifold Simmons married Miss Belle Gibbs in 1886. They had two daughters: Ella, who married Wade Meadows, and Isabelle, who married Dr. Joseph Patterson.

Simmons never attended law school but applied himself diligently to studying law books and consulting attorneys when he needed help. He took the required examination and was admitted to the bar in 1875, three months before he reached the age of 21.

He practiced law in Jones County for two years, then moved his practice to New Bern.

He earned a reputation as an able and diligent attorney, because he gave each case his full attention and unstinting effort. It was altogether customary for him to stay up all night in preparation for a trial, and he once spoke for four hours before a jury. He practiced law in New Bern for a few years, moved for a while to Goldsboro, then returned to New Bern, which he said he "liked better" and where he formed a partnership with Mathias Manly and Clement Manly.

The political scene in eastern North Carolina in those chaotic times following the Civil War and Reconstruction was filled with discord and confusion. There was a great need for men who could bring order out of the chaos. Furnifold Simmons had earned the respect of those who knew his reputation as an attorney, and he had exhibited an interest in and an aptitude for politics. In 1886 he became a candidate for the Second District seat in the U. S. Congress and won the election. In his memoirs he states that he "didn't play a very important part in this first position, but was conscientious". Even that early in his career he obtained post offices for both James City and New Bern.

He ran for this office again in 1888 but was defeated by Henry Cheatham. In 1890 he announced himself a candidate for the office again. Into the fray rode the Farmers Alliance, a strong organization in North Carolina. They offered Simmons their unqualified support if he would accede to all their demands. He refused, and, rather than split the Democratic Party, withdrew from the race.

He then put his considerable talent to work to organize the Democratic Party, went as a delegate to the state Democratic convention in 1892, and was appointed chairman of the N. C. Democratic Convention. He worked to clear away the discord within the party, and by 1898 newspapers were beginning to mention his name as a candidate for U. S. Senate. He accepted the challenge, defeated Marion Butler,

FURNIFOLD MCLENDEL SIMMONS (1854-1940)
Photo courtesy of the family. Reproduction by Conway.

the Republican candidate, and thus began a career as U. S. Senator, a career which lasted over a quarter of a century, from 1901 to 1930.

Simmons was a tireless worker during his tenure in the Senate. He advocated the construction of the Panama Canal, and, as a member of a committee to investigate waterways in other countries, he gained much knowledge of such work. Two results of that expertise were the Inland Waterway, the 12-foot channel from the Neuse River to Beaufort and on to Wilmington, and construction of the Cape Lookout breakwater. His interest in good roads began in 1904 and continued throughout his career. He also earned a reputation as a tax expert and finance authority, and the Simmons-Underwood Tariff Act was a feather in his cap. He also served with distinction as Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee during World War I.

Ever a man with firm convictions, he chose a path in 1928 which was to lead to his defeat at the polls. He felt that he could not in good conscience support Al Smith as the Democratic candidate for president. He stood alone, never wavered, and lost to Josiah William Bailey in the 1930 primary.

Furnifold Simmons held many titles during his career. He was "The Senator", "Author of the Conservative Wing", and "A Napoleon in Politics". The following statement is found in the July 7, 1928, issue of COLLIERS magazine:

> He has always had an extraordinary talent for organization and the knack of attracting men to him. His machine has functioned longer and more perfectly than that of any other politician now living . . . one other quality of great importance: he never made money out of politics. . . . [He] is probably poorer now than when he started.

Some have called it "The Simmons Machine". Perhaps, but perhaps the "machine" was a ship, a craft which Furnifold Simmons steered through some

mighty troubled waters. Practices and purposes which seem extreme and unthinkable today were products of the times, an era which seemed to bring forth extremists. Furnifold Simmons was a product of the times, and he served his nation, his state, and his party with a purposefulness which those times deemed appropriate.

Senator Simmons loved his home in New Bern at the corner of East Front and New Streets. A historical marker now designates the location. The Senator spent his final years with his daughter Ella, Mrs. Wade Meadows. He is buried at Cedar Grove Cemetary, as are both his wives.

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CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Mary Baker

When John and Charles Wesley went to Georgia with Governor Oglethorpe in 1735, New Bern was an emerging town. The Tuscarora War was over, and the community was settling down, looking toward an expanding future. Craven County population for 1720 was about 550, and that of 1745 was over 4800. Although these figures are for the county, they reflect population and growth of New Bern as well.

It was in 1738 that John Wesley had his Aldersgate experience when he felt his heart "strangely warmed". In 1739, not quite two years later, George Whitefield came to New Bern to preach on Christmas Day. He returned in 1764 and 1765. An account of his first visit said that "most of his congregation was moved to tears".

In 1760 the Reverend James Reed, the Anglican clergyman at Christ Church, wrote (as quoted from Watson):

> [A] great number of dissenters of all denominations [have] come and settled amongst us from New Eng[lan]d, Particularly, Anabaptists, Methodist, Quakers and Presbyterians, the anabaptists are obstinate, illiterate & grossly ignorant[.] [T]he Methodists . . . [are] ienorant, censorious & uncharitable, the Quakers, Rigid, but the Presbyterians are pretty moderate except here & there a bigot or rigid Calvinist. As for papists, I cannot learn there are above 9 or 10 in the whole County.

While Mr. Reed's words may seem a bit strong for a man of the cloth, we must remember that he was

Anglican and New Bern's first clergyman. As such he served Christ Church and the New Bern area well from his arrival in 1753 until his death in 1777.

At the Methodist conference meeting at Bristol, England, in 1768 John Wesley presented the matter of sending preachers to America. No action was taken. One year later at the next Methodist conference Joseph Pilmore and Richard Boardman volunteered to go to America to extend the work of the Methodists. The Reverend James Miller, Pastor of Centenary Church 1970-1973, writes in his A HISTORY OF CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH that at the conference an offering of 70 pounds was taken, 20 pounds of which was to pay the passage of Mr. Pilmore and Mr. Boardman. He notes that "It cost British Methodism only $100 to establish its spiritual presence in the New World". Mr. Miller continues:

> John Wesley was well pleased with the appointment of Pilmore and Boardman as his first missionaries to America. He declared that "Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore were men well reported of by all, and we believe, fully qualified for the work".

After arriving in New Jersey Mr. Pilmore went as far south as Savannah, Georgia. Again quoting from Miller:

> In December 1772, Pilmore journeyed into North Carolina. As he traveled there he became aware of unparalleled opportunities open to the Christian Evangelist in these places. He did not find a minister in the first five counties through which he passed. He visited Edenton, New Bern, and Wilmington, with an excellent but brief ministry in each of these places.

By this time in North Carolina history, Governor William Tryon had chosen New Bern as the colonial capital. Construction of Tryon Palace was begun in

1767 and completed in 1771. Josiah Martin had taken over as royal governor in 1771. The population of New Bern in 1765 was estimated to be 5000, making it the largest town in the state. Wilmington was its only rival.

According to Miller's history Dr. Frederick E. Maser's DRAMATIC STORY OF AMERICAN METHODISM speaks of the importance of Joseph Pilmore's southern journey for Methodism in America.

> "First he gave the Methodist people in America a sense of oneness with all Mathodists everywhere . . . and he carried Methodism into areas which it had not hitherto penetrated."
>
> Had it not been for the travels of Pilmore, and later Asbury, Methodist Societies might have become independent churches rather than a part of the great Methodist connectional system.

Pilmore had arrived in New Bern on Christmas Eve, 1772, just as George Whitefield had in 1739, 33 years previously. Methodism being a part of the Anglican church at the time, Pilmore took communion at Christ Church on Christmas Day. Then he engaged the courthouse, which was the largest building in town and used for a variety of activities, and sent a person about town to inform the inhabitants that he would preach at six o'clock that evening. Pilmore states (as quoted by Miller):

> At the time appointed I went to the Courthouse and had the genteelest congregation I have seen since I left Philadelphia. Several of them invited me to their houses, and behaved with the utmost politeness and civility. Mr. William Wood took me home with him, and I had everything my heart could desire.

On Wednesday, December 30, Pilmore entered into his journal (as quoted by Watson):

> In all my travels through the world, I have met with none like the people of Newbern! Instead of going to Balls and Assemblies as people of fashion in general do, especially at this season of the year, they came driving in their Coaches to hear the word of the Lord, and wait upon God in his ordinances! And their behavior to me at the last was such I cannot pass over in silence without the greatest ingratitude. The morning I was to leave the Town two Gentlemen waited on me, and delivered me a Letter, in which several small Bills of North Carolina money were inclosed, which the Gentleman [sic] had subscribed among themselves, and sent me as a token of their love and respect.

From this time on a few Methodists met together and worshiped God. There was no pastor and no house of worship. There were visits from the circuit riders from time to time, but that was all.

Mr. Miller's history picks up the story:

> Not until 1802 was a regular organization formed and a church building erected. A lot was secured on Hancock street . . . [now on or adjacent to the O. Marks parking lot], and a very plain building erected, which was called Andrew's Chapel. A preacher was sent each year from the North Carolina Conference. This was the second church building erected in New Bern, only one, the Episcopal Church, antedating it. . . .
>
> Between 1785 and 1812 Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat of the Methodist Church preached in New Bern at different times. Francis Asbury was in the city 14 times. During his 1796 visit, he wrote in his Journal in December, "This is a growing place. Our Society here of white and colored members, consists of 100. Should piety, health, and trade attend New Bern, it will be a very capital place in half a century from this".

OLD CENTENARY METHODIST CHURCH, CIRCA 1900
Centenary file photo.

> Six years later, in 1802, when he visited New Bern, he found his expectations had become a reality: "I concluded each meeting with prayer. We were crowded every night. I judged it needful to make some temporal and spiritual arrangements for the society in New Bern--that a traveling preacher should attend every Sabbath is one. New Bern is a trading and growing town; there is [sic] seven hundred or a thousand houses already built, and the number is yearly increasing by less or more additions. . . .

The Methodists of New Bern were said to be the most numerous denomination in 1818, "having a large chapel regularly supplied with able and evangelical preachers". They actively promoted Bible societies and the Sunday School movement. The Methodists, along with the Baptists, spearheaded the temperance effort in the county. They were said to be "a staid sober group, avoiding pediment and spire and abominating organs and bells".

The Reverend Christopher Thomas of St. Andrew's Chapel led a revival before his death in 1829. In the early 1840s the Reverend John Edwards led another revival. The result was that a larger church was needed. Accordingly, a lot was purchased on New Street, roughly across from the Academy. In 1843-1844 a new church was built. Mr. Miller reports that the name, Centenary Methodist Church, probably came from the fact that the religious reawakening of the church in New Bern was about 100 years after the Aldersgate experience of John Wesley in 1738. The new church was much larger than St. Andrew's Chapel and had a steeple and a bell. Unfortunately this church no longer stands, though there are photographs of both the interior and the exterior.

In 1858 Centenary was host to the annual conference. The completion of the railroad to New Bern made it easier for people to get here, and the story is told that so many people came to the conference that the town's facilities were strained to the limit.

The DAILY PROGRESS for June 16, 1860, reported that there were more than 600 youngsters attending Sunday School in New Bern. The Methodist Church claimed 300, the Episcopal Church 125, the Presbyterian Church 100, while the Baptist Church had 90. Population of New Bern was around 5500, about half white, half black. Of the black number almost 700 were free blacks.

As were other churches in town, the New Street building was used as a hospital during the Civil War. Immediately following the war, the Reverend Charles Deems, a former pastor of Centenary and then Presiding Elder of the New Bern District, reorganized the church, appointing a new pastor and directing him to appoint a Sunday School superintendent and Sunday School teachers.

The church continued to grow in fits and starts. By the turn of the century the need for Sunday School space and a better program of religious education required a larger church building. The congregation also wanted a more central location. Mr. Miller writes that the church owned property at the corner of New and Middle Streets, and it was decided to buy the lot next to it on Middle Street and build a church there. The new church was completed in 1904 and dedicated in 1905, the largest church building in a wide section of eastern North Carolina. Architects were Charles Granville Jones of New York City and Herbert Woodley Simpson of New Bern.

A newcomer driving around downtown New Bern and coming upon the church for the first time is bound to stop and stare. The architectural style is unlike any building around it. Peter Sandbeck says that the building combines both "Romanesque and Chateauesque styles in an exuberant and picturesque manner". He defines "Romanesque" as

> a late nineteenth century revival of pre-Gothic architecture featuring heavy, rock faced stone or brick walls and round-headed door and window openings.

CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 1992
Photo by Conway.

While he does not define "chateauesque", the dictionary reveals that chateau comes from a word which means "castle".

There is something of a castle appearance about the structure, especially the two towers which flank the entrance. Built of "buff-colored pressed brick, with granite and limestone trim", the church seems firmly rooted to the earth. The roof of red slate in various shapes, now round, now hipped, and "crowned by ornamental galvanized iron cresting and finials" adds to the exuberance. The main entrance, angled to the corner, is reached by semicircular steps leading up to a porch "composed of a semi-circular arcade of five round-headed arches supported by heavy stone columns of Romanesque design". The semicircular theme introduced outside continues inside into the narthex and pew arrangement and is restated in the chancel.

In 1936 shortly before a centennial session of the North Carolina Conference was to convene in New Bern, a fire broke out causing major smoke and water damage to the interior. A group of nuns from St. Paul's Catholic Church nearby was seen praying that the wonderful German-made stained glass windows might be preserved. They were, and the church was restored in time for the conference.

The John A. Russell Educational Building was completed in 1957. It was named in honor of the pastor who led the congregation through the building program.

There was a major renovation of the church in 1965 under the direction of Stephens and Cardelli, New Bern architects. At that time the dark woodwork was painted white, and the old Sunday School assembly hall was converted into a beautiful chapel.

Centenary Methodist Church became Centenary United Methodist Church when the national organization merged with the Evengelical and United Brethren Church in 1968.

The bell which had hung in the steeple at the New Street building had been sold when that property was sold. The old bell has been returned to

the congregation and was placed on the New Street lawn during the celebration of the church's bicentennial in 1972.

Last spring when neighboring Presbyterians were refurbishing the interior of their church, Centenary invited the Presbyterian congregation over, and Union Services were conducted for seven weeks in May and June, utilizing ministerial and music staffs from both denominations. Many who worshiped at the combined services remember the experience as a highlight of local ecumenism.

In any church over 200 years old traditions have played an important part. One that is well appreciated by the community is the live nativity scene presented on three evenings during the season of Advent. Another is performances of Handel's MESSIAH. This began in 1977 with one performance and has grown to a multi-performance presentation with members of the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra and singers from many churches taking part. If Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Pilmore could return for another Christmas visit, one wonders what they would say. Inasmuch as these traditions are ways of reaching people with the story of the good news, surely they would approve.

SOURCES

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BARBOUR BOAT WORKS, INC.

Kathleen Harris

Boat building is as natural to eastern North Carolina as the wide rivers which flow down to the sea. Generations of men who earned their livelihood on the water have sought out those who could create seaworthy, dependable boats. There is a mystique, a fascination about this industry that captures the imagination of even the most landlocked landlubber.

One of those who became a captive to the age old craftmanship of boat building was Herbert William Barbour. As a child in Swansboro, he sat by the hour watching as local builders skillfully fashioned the boats which plied the waters of Bogue Sound and the White Oak River.

This consuming interest led Mr. Barbour to become a master carpenter and shipwright. He worked for the Meadows Company shipyard on East Front Street until it closed in 1931. In 1932 he ventured out on his own to start his company: Barbour Boat Works. He was joined in 1933 by R. R. Rivenbark, who became president of the company in 1957 upon the death of Mr. Barbour.

Starting with a rented 50-foot lot on the Trent River, Barbour Boat Works was in business in the midst of a depression which would have discouraged many from such an undertaking. In March 1933 the company hauled up its first boat and began work on a 28-foot cruiser. Success did not come overnight. From a work force of three or four people came the small wooden boats, outboards, runabouts, sea skiffs, and special boats up to 40 feet long. Great pride was exhibited, and there was a constant effort to build a better boat. From this came the slogan, "Barbour Builds Better Boats". These boats received

national acclaim, and at the peak of operation assembly lines were capable of turning out a boat every hour.

Then came World War II. The shipyard expanded from 50 feet to an entire block, from 40 to 1286 employees, and turned to military production. During this period the company built eight mine sweepers in the 136-foot class, four harbor net tenders in the 190-foot class, and two 186-foot salvage ships, all wooden and all for British Lend Lease. Mr. Rivenbark speaks in glowing terms of the spirit and loyalty of the employees during this era. There was an urgency which impelled workers to put forth their best efforts.

Following the war years Barbour concentrated on repair work but also constructed a number of commercial fishing craft. In 1954 the yard built a craft which aroused much interest: the 47-foot "Porpoise", a special craft for the Marineland Studios in Florida.

Also produced during these years were three 116-foot double-ended ferries for the State of North Carolina, six 65-foot steel tugboats for the U. S. Coast Guard, an 82-foot pipeline dredge for the State of North Carolina, a 93-foot private yacht, and various other barges and tugboats. In 1969 Barbour built a 155-foot seagoing tender for a major oil company, and in 1972 a 230-foot tanker, the largest built in North Carolina since World War II.

Both pleasure and commercial boat building prospered at Barbour until the advent of fiberglass. Not wishing to make the change to fiberglass and feeling incapable of competing with large companies which had entered the field, Barbour concentrated on boat repair and the building of custom boats. At the present time the company employs from 45 to 75 people.

In the show window two beautiful all-wooden boats are displayed, and Mr. Rivenbark says that many passers-by come to a halt, gazing in admiration at these classic examples of a craftsmanship which will never lose its fascination.

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BOOK REVIEW

THROWED AWAY--FAILURES OF PROGRESS IN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA, by Linda Flowers. (Knoxville, Tenn.: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990. Resource notes and commentary, illustrations, and index. 241 pp. $20.00.)

A casual glance at titles published under the heading "Eastern North Carolina" will leave the impression that the coastline, its inhabitants, its geography and its creatures are all pervading. What of the farmer, his crops, his family, his home and social environment? Does the inhabitant of the land and the basic agricultural nature of counties in the coastal plain not elicit some recognition? I searched vainly for nearly a decade for publications which would enable me to understand better the area in which I live. From the subtitle this book appeared to provide some answers, and indeed it does.

In THROWED AWAY Linda Flowers, a native of Faison, a rural community not far from Goldsboro, attempts to describe and analyze the life of small farmers and the cultural environment of tiny communities east of the Piedmont. Born in 1944, daughter and granddaughter of tenant farmers, Linda grew up in times of enormous change. Farms were being mechanized, industries were relocating to the "South", transportation and communications were extended and travel made more accessible. "Faison" could be any one of the inumerable small and practically unrecognized communities that dot the maps of nearly every county close to the coast. I drove through Faison recently and failed to distinguish it from Turkey or Calypso, or even Warsaw, all located in Duplin County.

The book begins as an autobiographical sketch

and progresses through the author's childhood, early educational years, leaving home for college, and eventually a return to the place of her birth. So much changed in the years that she was away, it could well be termed revolutionary. Whether these changes have been positive or negative is the question posed, and the author attempts to provide at least a partial answer.

The life of a tenant farmer in the middle years of the twentieth century had changed little since post-Civil War Reconstruction. Whether black or white, tenants had a master-servant relationship with landowners which differed little from a feudal system long abandoned in Europe. The interdependence of tenant and landowner by sharecropping/rental was even more intimate than an employer/employee relationship. In the poorer seasons it was expected that the landowner would see to the needs of the tenant and his family, and repayment at harvest time would adjust any accounts between them. Living together on the land also brought a community of interest, and whether overseer or field hand, working and sharing many other aspects of life together was imperative. The mode of tenant life rarely offered real opportunities for change, and both culturally and economically those tenants caught in the system were often bound to a sparse existence for generations.

Linda Flowers, however, was an exception and attended UNC at Greensboro and later Universities of Ohio and Rochester. More recently she has held the Chair of English at North Carolina Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount. The majority of her compatriots in Faison were not as lucky, or as talented presumably, and took part first hand in the transition from an agriculturally dominated existence to a mill/factory economy.

Textile mills and manufacturing firms began to move south in the late 1950s and by the 1960s the transition was in full force. Instead of living off, and on, the land, inhabitants of these small communities were paid a wage by an employer they hardly

knew or cared about. Employers, in turn, cared little about them. Plants opened and later closed with devastating effect on families and communities. A way of life had been changed forever, and there was no return. Factory workers had bought cars to take them from the soil of home to a distant place, even if only a few miles away. These amenities and others had to be paid for in cold hard cash, and the soil could not provide money for such novelties. When a plant closing or layoff occurred, new jobs had to be found. The dilemma faced by the displaced, and in some cases abandoned, is still a problem. Those who had been culturally disposed to a small and intimate community now faced the world sometimes hostile, alone, or at least as only a part of a small family and not a whole interdependent community.

Statistics covering this enormous upheaval are scattered throughout the text, (not, fortunately, in lengthy tables), and very little thought is required to fully grasp their significance. While other areas, notably the northern states, acquired industrialization at a somewhat leisurely pace over several decades, the same process took little more than one decade in the South. Small wonder then that outsiders have criticized the South for a lack of progress. "Progress" was thrust upon the South by those same outsiders, and not in a very orderly manner.

THROWED AWAY is Linda Flowers's contribution to the study of cultural change in eastern North Carolina. It is not a subject to which a great deal of time has been dedicated, but it should be. In this short book the author has done a genuine service, and it is hoped that we will see more of her studies in the future. Presentation of her wealth of material could, however, have been somewhat more dramatic. Too, it might have been more inclusive; we are not given any hint of the role played by several of the social concerns. Religion, crime, sexual mores, alcohol--all these play a part in the drama of life, but are not mentioned. Such an omission could certainly be corrected in another volume. In brief,

the book seems to search for a compromise, as a tale well told which in the end turns toward the academic. This approach makes the book unlikely to prove very popular with a large audience.

Jim Gunn