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This issue is dedicated to the memory of
Walter Lee Griffin (1921-2002),
longtime printer of the *Journal*.

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JOURNAL OF THE NEW BERN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The *Journal of the New Bern Historical Society* is a semiannual publication of the New Bern Historical Society, a non-profit 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 or nbhistoricalsoc@coastalnet.com).

POOR LITTLE SUNSHINE, MAMA GAVE HER AWAY

Richard Lore

Upon retirement, my wife and I returned to North Carolina after years of living elsewhere. One of my most enjoyable retirement activities has involved my work as a volunteer docent at the Historical Society's house museum the Attmore-Oliver House. Visitors always enjoy learning about the old home's construction details, particularly the magnificent heart pine flooring and its fancy jib doors. They also appreciate the exquisite period furniture and Civil War artifacts gracing the old house on Broad Street in downtown New Bern. A recently added corner cupboard and a giant armoire add to the charm of the old house. Still, for me, the stories of the lives of all the people who have lived in the house since it was built in 1790 are the most appealing. One unusual story concerned a mother who had given away one of her children. Unfortunately, only fragments of this intriguing episode were available.

According to the story, one of the mothers who had lived in the house had a boy child who came down with a serious infectious disease. The doctor quarantined the sick boy on the third floor of the old home that is now the Attmore-Oliver House Museum. A neighbor woman volunteered to stay upstairs to nurse and feed the sick boy. The boy apparently made a full recovery, and his mother was so grateful to her kind neighbor that she exclaimed, "You are indeed a true friend! Whatever I can do for you for nursing my boy back to health, I will do so gladly. What can I do for you?"

According to what little fragments of the story we had available, the neighbor woman startled mother by saying

Rear view of the Attmore-Oliver House where Hannah or "Sunshine" Oliver was born. The New Bern Historical Society maintains the house as a period museum. NBHS photo.

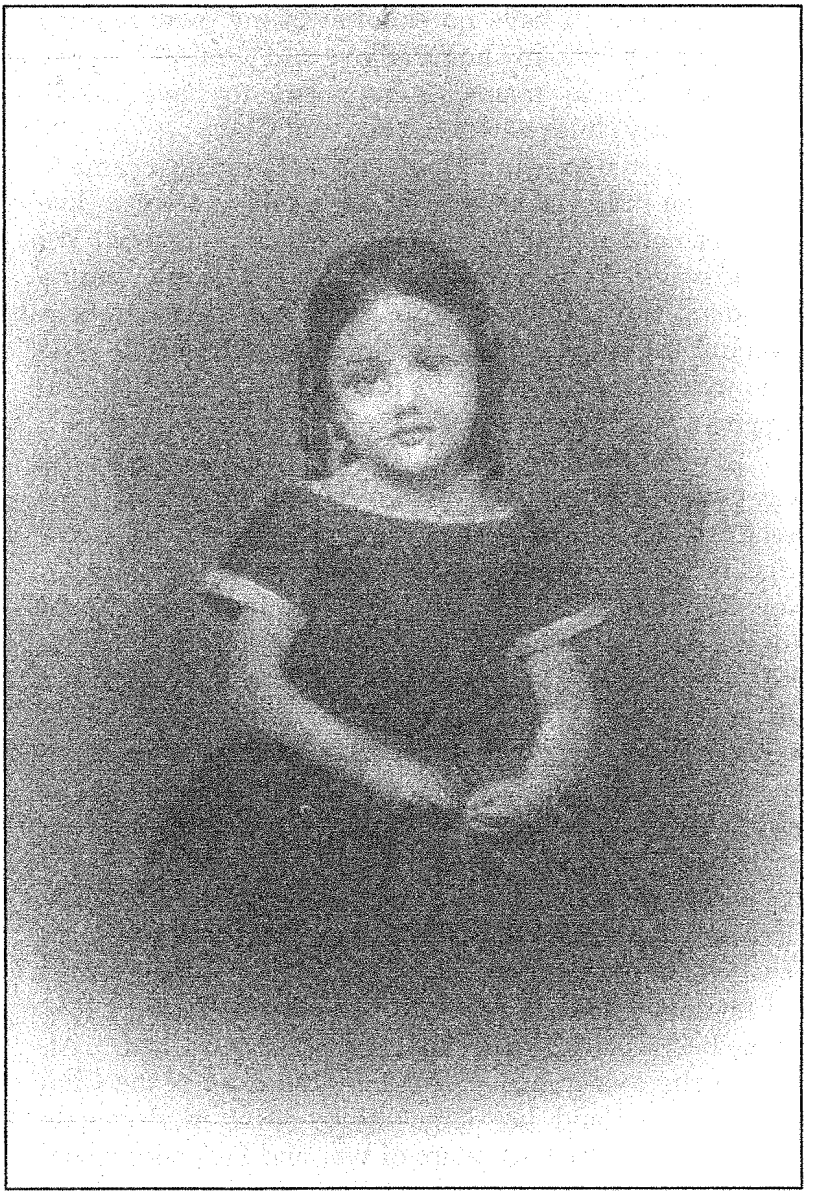
something like, "I have no children of my own; might I take one of yours to my home to love and to raise?"

Taken aback, mama is supposed to have asked, "Which of my children would you want?"

"I'm partial to your little girl there." And so it came to be that the little girl chosen by the neighbor went to live with her new mother down the street. End of story. We had no way of verifying this seemingly bizarre tale, and no one knew and names, dates, or additional details to help flesh out the story. Why did mama give up her little girl? Who was this child? And what happened to her after being given away so many years ago?

To our delight, the granddaughter of the little girl who was given away came forward recently and provided the essential details and documents to complete our knowledge of this very human—and very warm—story from New Bern's past. We are all grateful to Mrs. Margaret de Rossett McLean of Fayetteville for providing us with the complete story of her grandmother Mrs. Hannah Attmore Oliver Huske. Mrs. McLean's account of her grandmother's life so long ago in New Bern was supplemented by gifts of photographs of her grandmother as well as her grandmother's small personal Bible in which she had recorded the significant events of her life.

It seems that Hannah Taylor Attmore married William Hollister Oliver in 1854, and they had eight children, three of whom died in infancy. Hannah inherited the gracious old home we now call the Attmore-Oliver House in 1859 when her father George Sitgreaves Attmore died. Although she owned a fine home, by the close of the Civil War, Hannah and her large family were in desperate straits. After four long years of war and Federal occupation, the economy of New Bern and all of eastern North Carolina was in ruins. Moreover, Hannah had seen all three of her brothers go off to serve in the Confederate army. Sadly, only one of those boys, George,--who was only 13 when the war began—would survive and return home to New Bern.



HANNAH ATTMORE OLIVER

Sunshine as a young girl, most likely shortly after she went to live with her informally adoptive mother Martha Houghton. Family photo.

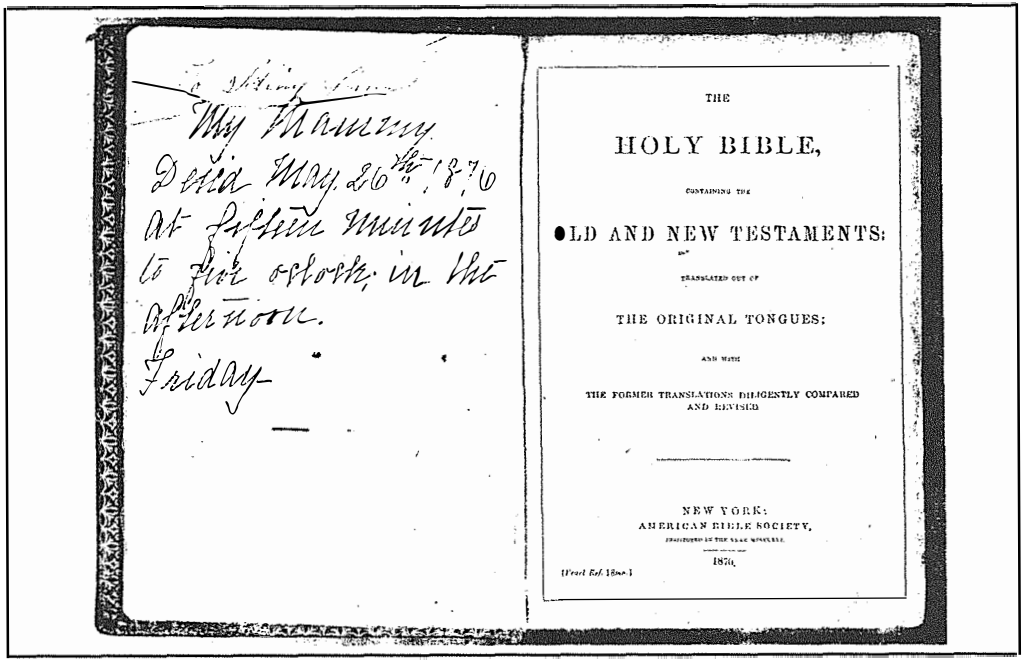
Economic deprivation coupled with the rigors of childbirth and rearing such a large family were hard on Hannah, who had what would have been called in those days a "delicate constitution." There is evidence that she also suffered from rheumatism most of her adult life.

On top of all of her difficulties during the immediate Post-Civil War period, Hannah's only surviving son George Oliver came down with a serious infectious disease. George was ordered quarantined by the doctor. He was isolated on the third floor of the family home. Hannah could barely climb stairs and a neighbor woman came to her rescue, "I will stay upstairs and feed and nurse young George back to good health."

Which child of Hannah's did the neighbor lady pick to be her own? Like her mother, her name was also Hannah, but she was always called by her nickname, "Sunshine." The nickname fit because little Hannah was clearly the most charming and vivacious of Hannah senior's children. So it came to pass that little Sunshine went off to live with the neighbor lady and enjoyed a loving and affluent home. To be sure, Sunshine often visited her biological mother. On some of these visits, her siblings would sometimes feel a tinge of jealousy because Sunshine had grand clothes and expensive toys.

In her personal Bible, Sunshine recorded the significant events in her life including the dates of her marriage and the birth dates of each of her children. Only two other facts are recorded. One was the date and time of day of the death of her "Mama" and the other was the date and time of day that her "Mammy" died. Mama was her biological mother, and Mammy was her adoptive mother. Note that there is no evidence that Sunshine was ever formally adopted. Rather, she just went down the street to live with this other nice woman.

Mrs. McLean was not quite sure of the name of her grandmother's adoptive mother. She remembered her name as something like "Houghton." Knowing her date of death from Sunshine's Bible record, it was an easy matter



The page in Sunshine's Bible where she records the date and time of death of her "Mammy." A second page records the date and time of death of her "Mama."

to determine if any woman buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery in New Bern had died on that day. It turns out that Mrs. McLean's memory was most accurate. The only woman who died in New Bern on May 26, 1876, was Martha A. Houghton. She was only 47 years old at the time of her death. Sunshine's biological mother Hannah died five years later in 1881 at age 52. Hence, both of Sunshine's mothers were of the same age, both probably were lifelong friends, and both died at a relatively young age.

Little Sunshine was born in 1860 and lived a long and full life. She had a large family and hordes of grandchildren who adored their "Grandma Shiny." Sunshine died at age 83 in 1943. Mary Oliver, Sunshine's sister never married. Mary owned and lived in the old house in grand style until her death in 1951. Shortly after their Aunt Mary's death, Sunshine's four sons sold the old house to the New Bern Historical Society. The house was lovingly restored shortly thereafter and has been cared for by the Society for almost 50 years now.

Sunshine's adoption by the neighbor down the street sounds bizarre to modern ears. It was, however, a relatively common occurrence in years past. Parents frequently died early or became disabled or impoverished, and the children would be farmed out to relatives, friends, or neighbors down the road. Hannah Oliver did what was best for her child, and in so doing, most certainly enriched the life of her dear friend and neighbor as well. Martha or "Mammy" willingly took on the joyous responsibility to raise Sunshine. As a result, Sunshine had the benefit of two loving mothers.

The Historical Society's house museum is located on Pollock Street only a block or so east of Tryon Palace. The gracious and impressive Attmore-Oliver House has never looked better. On the exterior, new paint, window shutters, and roof shingles complement the formal Greek Revival style of the house with its four massive chimneys and double-decked rear porch. Equally impressive is the loving care given to the interior of the house. With fresh

Sunshine as a young woman. She married in 1890 when she was 30 years old and had a large family of her own. Family photo.

Sunshine or "Shiny" as she was called by her grandchildren, just prior to her death in 1943 at age 83. Still pretty! Family photo.

paint, new interior window treatments, and a number of key pieces of furniture added over the last several years, the house is a rewarding place to visit. Drop by at 510 Pollock Street most any afternoon from 1-4, Tuesday-Saturday, and a volunteer docent will be glad to take you on a tour of the old house. Special tours for small groups can be arranged by calling the Historical Society office at 252-638-8558. There is no charge for tours, but donations are gladly accepted.

GEORGE ATTMORE SPARROW

Joy W. Sparrow

George Attmore Sparrow, oldest son of Thomas Sparrow III and Ann Maria Blackwell, was born in Beaufort, North Carolina, on July 14, 1845. His father Thomas III (October 2, 1819-January 14, 1884) was a distinguished lawyer having graduated from Princeton College as valedictorian of his class in 1842. George's mother Ann Maria Blackwell (January 2, 1822-March 6, 1906) was the oldest daughter of John and Ann Selby Blackwell. John Blackwell (June 10, 1797-January 16, 1869) was a prominent citizen of New Bern. The Blackwells were from New York and were direct descendants of Col. Jacob Blackwell, who assisted in establishing American independence while serving in the Provincial Congress 1775-1777. John and Ann Selby Blackwell moved to Arcola, Illinois, in 1857 where they lived until their death.

George's grandfather Thomas Sparrow II (April 19, 1783-September 30, 1852) was born at Smith's Creek, Craven County, North Carolina, and the son of Thomas Sparrow I (1751-1822) and his wife Rhesa Delamar Sparrow. As an adult Thomas II lived in New Bern where he was a prosperous shipbuilder and shipyard owner. The three-story house he built at 220 East Front Street still stands today overlooking the Neuse and Trent rivers. Thomas Sparrow II married Jane Jennett Sparrow (October 3, 1788-May 24, 1856), daughter of Paul and Ann Jennett Sparrow.

The five sisters and one brother of George A. Sparrow were Annie Blackwell, who married William Foreman first and Dr. R. H. Lewis second; Jane Jennette, who married Oliver Jarvis; Margaret Justice, who married C. M. Payne; Elizabeth, who married H. A. McCord; Caroline, who mar-

ried Frank Dalton; and John Blackwell, who married Fannie Payne.

George A. Sparrow's childhood days were spent at the family home in Washington, North Carolina, and with his grandfathers Thomas Sparrow II and John Blackwell at New Bern. His father Thomas Sparrow III was elected to the House of Commons in 1858.

In 1859 the Sparrows moved to Arcola, Illinois, to join the Blackwells, who had settled there in 1857. Thomas Sparrow III was setting up his business in North Carolina when trouble broke out between the North and South. He brought his family home at the first opportunity and enrolled George at Hillsborough Military Academy where he stayed for a short time before running away and joining the Confederate Army. His father Thomas III was Captain of the Washington Grays. George served with the Confederate forces until the end of the war.

After the war ended George farmed and studied law under his father's supervision. He practiced law for 16 years, serving as a Solicitor for eight years. In 1874 he married Susan Selby Brown, daughter of Sylvester T. and Elizabeth Bonner Brown. Elizabeth's paternal ancestors played an important role in the Revolution, among them being Captain George Hubbard and General Thomas Holiday. Her maternal grandfather was James Bonner, the founder of the town of Washington, North Carolina, and her maternal great grandfather was Richard Bonner, prominent citizen of Beaufort County.

George A. and Susan Brown Sparrow had 11 children. The following were born in Washington, North Carolina: Thomas Sparrow, August 31, 1875; Sylvester Brown, September 23, 1877; George Brown, October 23, 1878; Annie Mariah, November 10, 1880; Annie Foreman, January 19, 1882; Elizabeth Bonner, about 1883; and Minnie Shepherd, November 6, 1887. George Attmore Jr. and Hubert McCord, twin sons, were born at Franklin, North Carolina on February 7, 1891. Born in the manse of Union Presbyterian Church, Gastonia, North Carolina, were Elizabeth

Bonner, January 23, 1894, and Evans Crabtree, April 7, 1896.

The first George was drowned at age 11 in the Pamlico River; the first Annie and first Elizabeth died in infancy in Washington, hence the use of these names for later children.

George A. Sparrow felt the call to become a minister in the late 1880s and was licensed by Albemarle Presbytery in 1890. With his wife and children he left his comfortable home in Washington, North Carolina, and served his first pastorate at Franklin, North Carolina, where he stayed for approximately two years. His next pastorate was in Rutherfordton, North Carolina, where he served from 1892-93. In 1893 he was called to the pastorate of Olney and Union Presbyterian Churches, Gastonia, North Carolina. He served as minister at Olney Presbyterian Church 1893-1921 and at Union Presbyterian Church 1893-1922.

Susan Brown Sparrow died April 19, 1908, and is buried in Union Presbyterian Church cemetery. The Reverend Sparrow married Elizabeth Bryan Ewing of Washington, D. C., in 1910. Elizabeth was the daughter of the Reverend Daniel B. Ewing, D. D., and Frances Todd Barbour. She was a well-known landscape and nature artist and head of the art department at Flora MacDonald College, Red Springs, North Carolina, for a number of years.

George A. Sparrow's sudden death occurred on July 24, 1922, within two weeks after his 77th birthday. He was spending a few days at Montreat, North Carolina, and as he sat on the veranda at the Chapman home he passed away. He is buried in Union Presbyterian Church cemetery.

Elizabeth Bryan Ewing Sparrow died on January 22, 1934, and is buried in Union Presbyterian Church cemetery, Gastonia, North Carolina.

SOURCES

Blackwell family records.
Minutes of the Synod of North Carolina for 1922.
Sparrow family records.

Washington N.C.
Feb 13th 1858

Dear Father

It snowed very hard yesterday and the examination was put off until monday. I had a great deal of fun in the snow yesterday snowballing the men down town Mr Pritchard and Dr Cott mallowed me in the snow two or three times, The Trustees went up to the Academy to hear the boys speak their dialogs Thursday afternoon, and the boys went up there friday morning but it snowed so hard that the Filly put it off until monday night I was very much disappointed because I could not go a gunning on account of the rain.

Your affectionate son
George. Attmore Sparrow

Photocopy of letter from George Attmore Sparrow written in Washington, N. C. on February 13, 1858.

Washington, N. C.
Feb. 13th, 1858

Dear Father

It snowed very hard yesterday and the examination was put of until Monday. I had a great deal of fun in the snow yesterday snowballing the men down town. Mr. Whitehurst and Dr. Cott wallowed me in the snow two or three times. The Trustees went up to the Academy to hear the boys speak their dialogues. Thursday afternoon, and we boys went up there Friday morning but it snowed so hard that Mr. Wiley put it of until Monday night. I was very much disappointed because I could not go a gunning on account of the rain.

Your affectionate son

George Attmore Sparrow

O Kaw, Illinois
April 2d, 1860

My Dear Father

We had an election at Sunday School and we had quite an exciting time Mr. Hickock was elected Superintendent by twenty five votes. Mr. Wright was the opposition he received Twenty votes and Mr. Hickock Forty-nine. I was elected Librarian. I received Twenty-Five votes and S. A. Wright (a son of the old gentleman) received Twenty two. Cousin Billy has been up at Tuscola at Court all this week and he says it was a very busy week for him. That case of yours against John Webber has not reached this court. Mr. McRan and Aunt Fanny were here last night as usual. I believe I did not mention anything about my reading in my other. I have finished the first volume of "Irvings" life of Washington and I am half through the Second. I like it better than any-thing I have ever read. I am coming on nice my garden I have got several things up already Maggy is sitting down on a stool holding Johny he is a great big boy now and he gets nocked around a great deal now he seldom ever cries at all Ma takes him a visiting and all about. Ma says she is getting old she has had the rhermatism in her shoulder for the last two or three days. Caddie is sitting down on the floor she says she wants to send it to Pa and Henry Brown. We live on Game most of the time now. Tell Ed Geer and Carney Bryan that if they want to learn how to shoot they better come to Illinois. I am going out hunting this afternoon to kill some ducks for dinner to morrow Ma has learned to eat ducks first rate

Very Truly Your Son

Father

George A Sparrow

O Kaw Ill.
April 30th 1860
Mon. 8 A. M.

My Dear Father

I received your letter of the 22d and was very glad to hear something from you and the New Berne folks. It is raining and cloudy to day and I shall not be able to work on the garden and so I will try and make my letter more agreeable. The Strawberries you said you had orded have not arrived nor the Barrel of Potatoes that Gentelman was going to send so fast. Mr Flint was to harrow the ground this morning but I think it very doubtful whether he does it or not. You must try to be out here by the fourth of July as I understand they are to have great doings here. Liza went to Bourboun yesterday and Ma spent the day over to Grandma's. There was no Preaching yesterday it was Mr. Rorks Sunday and I understand Dr. Henry told him he ought not to Preach. It is very evident something was to say for he never mised a Sunday before. Ma is having one of her loving fits over Johny he is the fatest and the best boy I ever saw he will lay in the cradle by the hour and never cry. When you come out you must bring some flowers with you. Tell Aunt Caddie that Grandma is making great calculations on her visit this summer. She has got a room prepared for her and she is talking about it all the time. My Garden is a long way ahead of Grandmas. I have got most of my things up and she has not got any.

Your affectionate Son
George A. Sparrow

Hillsboro M. A.
Oct. 3, 1862

Dear Father,

Your letter of the 29 Sept. was received this morning and was very gladly welcomed by me. I was very sorry to learn of the death of Mr. Vanamridge and Dr. Dixion. They were both of them very nice gentlemen and the latter will be a great loss to the people of Wilmington. He was an esteemed and eminent man in his profession. Major Gordon left this morning for Maryland to try if possible to recover the body of Col. Tew. His loss is a sad one to our state both as Principle of this school and as a talented and accomplished officer. He was shot through the head by a Minnie ball. His family is here. I am glad that you have at last discovered my carpet bag of clothes. I wish you would send them to me by express. It will not cost you much. Who brought them out of Washington? Mother will find her new home a very pleasant one. I expect at any rate it is a much nicer one. Do you know wether she intends keeping it any length of time. I hope she may for she has got one of the nicest neighbors in the world in Mrs. Fannie Bryan. While I was coming from Graham on Monday last I saw Capt. Samuel Waters. He is now Capt. of a company and has charge of the Yankee prison at Salisbury. He has been offered a position on General Lee's staff as Major but was on his way to Richmond to try and get a furlough to recover from the effects of his wound and if successful to accept the position. Tom Blackwell passed through here a few days since wounded in the leg. He was wounded in the battle of Sharpsburgh. You say you have been over to Tarboro. While you were there did you get those two toothbrushes that Hall(?) promised you? If you did I wish you would send me one by the carpet bag. I am glad that there is some chance for your promotion. I think it ought to have been done a long time since, for I don't

think there is a man in service that is more deserving of promotion than you are and I sincerely hope that General French will do so. Father don't you think you are very imprudent in going to Wilmington among the yellow fever. I wish you would not do it any more for you might take it. Were you not very sorry to hear of Gen. Branch's death. It will be a sad blow to his family but he lived long enough to redeem his character and make for himself a name. He is spoken of in the papers as having acted very brave in every engagement. Love to all the boys. Write very soon.

Your Affectionate Son,
Geo. A. Sparrow

Camp Holmes Landing
July 31st, 1863

My Dear Father

The stationery and stamps that you sent me were received, and I am very much obliged to you for it. If I had waited a few days it would have saved you that much, as I am supplied with paper now "for the war". I feel pretty tired and worn out to day after my labor yesterday helping to unload a schooner that went ashore at the inlet. She was loaded with assorted cargo goods of every description. She came direct from New York, and the cargo was marked Port Royal South Carolina, and still the Captain of her say's he was bound for this inlet, and that his cargo was for the Government and he was a Government agent. The camp is full of cheeses, lemons, corned beef, and all sorts of eatables, we use lemonade now in lieu of water. I would like to have gotten a cheese and some things to send you, but I could not get them without "pressing" them and that it would not do. I send you a dozen and a half lemons, a box of colts pistol caps, and a small comb. The lemons you can use to make lemonade, and the caps will do for your pistol. They are very nice ones. Our mess is provided with a great many little niceities that were given to us, such as mustard, concentrated milk, coffee, nice beef, and the like. The schooner is now safely moored two or three miles up the sound. I was very much surprised to hear of the death of Uncle Henry he was my favourite of all the family. I shall miss him very much. I have seen Yankee papers of the 17th. I suppose you have later. All the boys send their respects. Should any letters come for me please drop them in the office, it will save you trouble. Write me.

Your Affectionate Son
Geo. A. Sparrow

WELFARE IN THE EARLY YEARS

Mary Brigham

From our perspective at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we tend to assume that social services are a relatively new idea. Not so. The early settlers of New Bern and Craven County had many of the same problems we have—what to do with the poor and indigent, what to do with the orphan, what to do with those who have contagious diseases.

Let us consider the indigent first. A good definition comes from Dr. Watson's article "Public Poor Relief in Colonial North Carolina." Someone classed as indigent was "aged, widowed, orphaned, insane, sick or disabled," someone who had need. Precedents for dealing with such people come from established theory and practice found in Anglican parishes in English county courts and provincial assemblies. The settlers had brought with them the practices and customs of Elizabethan England. Poor relief was always to be supplemented with help from families, friends, and neighbors. In this country the non-Anglicans, Moravians, and Quakers tried to keep their poor from being "chargeable to the public." They tried to handle needs within the church community.

People were very careful to make a distinction between those they considered the "worthy" poor and those who were rogues and vagabonds, i. e., those who refused to apply themselves to some occupation but were perfectly capable of doing so.

In North Carolina the Anglican parish had the primary responsibility. Usually the poor continued to live independent lives in their own homes. If they needed to be cared for elsewhere, they were cared for in community

households. The householder would be paid a certain amount for the care. The Colonial attitude was that being poor was enough of a problem; no need to exclude the poor people from society or to incarcerate them. Things changed however. In 1786 Richard Dobbs Spaight, John Wright Stanly, John Hawks, Spyers Singleton, and Abner Neal were managers of a lottery, the proceeds of which were to complete a "Poor House" in New Bern. Peter Sandbeck in his book *The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina* has a picture of what he terms the "Craven County Home." He states that there has been a poor house on this site just west of the hospital since 1820. I quote from his book:

> Following West's death, the county organized the Wardens of the Poor House and set about having the first structures built. In 1820, Stephen B. Forbes, clerk to the Wardens of the Poor House, advertised in the *Carolina Centinel* for bids from builders to construct three houses for the poor, to be located on this site:
>
> "Two Houses, 60 x 15 feet, two stories in height of 8 feet pitch, with two chimneys each, and divided into four apartments on each floor. One House, 32 x 18 feet, two stories, 8 feet pitch, to be raised six feet with brickwork, and have one chimney—to be built of quartered plank and weather-boarding."

Mr. Sandbeck notes that none of these houses has survived. The house pictured in his book is a two-room structure and dates to the 1906-1909 period. The evidence suggests that at least some of the poor were not able to remain in their homes or did not have a house and were not cared for in the homes of others.

We know that at the end of the Revolution charity was taken from the parish and put into the hands of civil authorities. One of the reasons was that the Anglican Church, now the Episcopal Church, was no longer state-

supported. This is borne out by the fact that it was in 1786 that Spaight, Stanly, and others introduced their legislation for the Poor House in New Bern.

In 1817 legislation was passed that permitted the Craven County Court to maintain a "poorhouse/workhouse for the indigent, disorderly, gamblers and proprietors of houses of ill repute." Notice how they were no longer concerned with merely the indigent. In 1842 the poor tax was 35% of the county levy; in 1853 it was 53% for the grand total of $4,088.85.

Never think that once the county took over the poor, no one else involved himself or herself. The New Bern Female Charitable Society arose in 1812. These churchwomen concerned themselves with the welfare of poor women and girls. They tried to provide work for poor widows or poor females. In 1837 the Female Benevolent Society was formed, and in 1854 it was chartered by the state. In 1878 this Society cared for 35 families; it spent $230 for 460 loads of wood, $59 for food, and $50 for medical aid. Subsidies ranged from fifty-six cents to one dollar weekly, plus wood in cold weather. After the Civil War the Freedmen's Bureau provided emergency rations and medical supplies to both whites and blacks in New Bern. The County Commissioners appealed to northern charities and churches for help.

We have not yet mentioned veterans, and we have had men injured or disabled in fighting since our colony began. It was obvious that these people deserved some help. The colony granted pensions to such men and to the families of men who had died. Those who received pensions had to obtain yearly certification. According to records few remained on the bounty for long. Another provision to help these people was that they could petition for tax exemption on the basis of age or mental and physical disability.

During the early days of the colony the knowledge of some diseases being communicable and deadly was still in the future. However, enough was known that vessels with

smallpox aboard were quarantined in the harbor until there were no more outbreaks. Since this might take a while, Craven County, from 1758 to 1774, bought supplies for such vessels and had them ferried out.

Lastly, we must consider the plight of the orphan. During these years, being orphaned meant losing a father. The father was expected to provide for his family, and the loss of a father often proved a severe economic hardship and one that the county had to deal with.

An orphan with sufficient estate was placed under guardianship until he/she reached adulthood. The guardian was often a male relative who would act in the capacity of father, seeing to the education, managing the property, and, in the case of females, seeing to a good marriage. The guardian could take the income from any property during his years as guardian, but must eventually turn over an estate commensurate with what had been left to the orphan initially.

The county placed orphans with no estates in apprenticeships with the idea that they would grow up in a family and be able to earn their living when they became adults. Such apprenticeships were reviewed quarterly. Boys were to receive one or two year's schooling. The guidelines were that they were to be able to read, write, and cipher to the rule of three [algebra]. Girls were to be taught to read the Bible.

There was a wide range of trades for apprenticeship, at least 44. However, most boys were apprenticed to a master who would teach the "art and mystery of farming." Next came carpentry, followed by tailor, joiner, mariner, wheelwright, fisherman, silversmith, ditcher, and barber. For girls the list was not as long. Most girls learned "the art and mystery of housewifery." After all, girls were expected to marry. There were a few more, such as spinning and weaving.

On the surface this might seem a cold and cruel world, and it certainly could be. However, these people were just as concerned about their neighbors and friends as people

today. They used the resources they had to make life better for those in need. We must always remember that their resources were few; yet they did the best they could with what they had.

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BEFORE THERE WAS TABERNA

Ron McCausland

The Colonial Times

We can guess what was here before Taberna; certainly the snakes, the deer, bear and bobcat. But what of the people who were here? Who were they and what was the land used for before Taberna? We know that long ago Indians roamed the area. Many tribes were found here when the first European settlers appeared. There was even a tribal village known as Chattoke located at the joining of the Trent and Neuse Rivers at the site of downtown New Bern. Through the years that have passed since the time of the Indians some interesting and important North Carolinians have owned and lived in the lovely area now called Taberna. Those individuals and their accomplishments are the subject of this article.

At the time the first settlers arrived most of the native Carolinians in this area were living in small tribes. Some of the names seen in the literature are the Bay River, Coree and Neusiok. The largest tribe in the area was the Tuscarora whose main villages were located farther to the west and north. As the most powerful tribe, they more or less ruled over the lesser tribes. These Indians would have an impact on the area of Taberna shortly after Christoph von Graffenried founded the village of New Bern (Wetmore 1975).

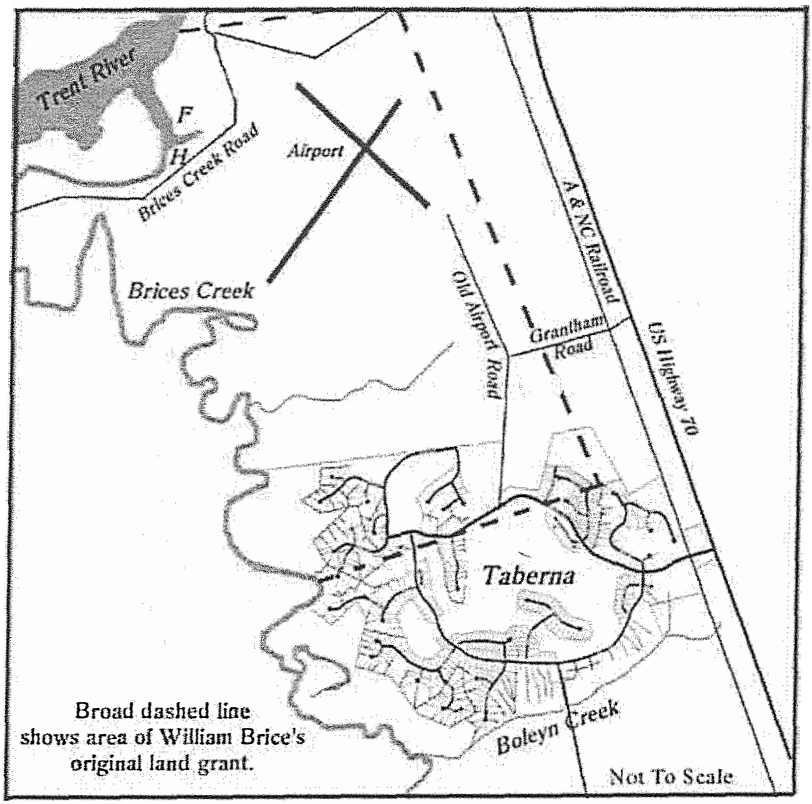
Before Graffenried arrived in 1710-11 with his Palatine and Swiss settlers there were already white settlers living here. The first to occupy the land now called Taberna was Col. William Brice for whom Brices Creek was named. He came from Virginia, probably to own more land and pay

less rent. Although the Lords Proprietors granted land to settlers at modest prices and in fee simple, that is the settler actually held title to it, the settler, by that deed, had to pay a yearly quit-rent to the Proprietors. Around 1700 the quit-rents were cheaper here in North Carolina because it had yet to be populated and the Proprietors were anxious to attract settlers.

Arriving in North Carolina in 1702, Col. Brice was awarded a "head grant" of 50 free acres for each person that he brought into the colony. He was given 450 acres for himself, his wife Ann and seven others that came with him. This land was located on what is now called Bath Creek that runs into the Pamlico River near Washington. A history of that section names him as one of the earliest settlers there (Whitley 2001 and Paschal 1955).

Most of the earliest pioneers to settle in NC arrived from the northern colonies rather than coming directly from Europe by boat. The approach to North Carolina from the ocean was quite treacherous with the outer banks and other hazards that had to be learned and overcome. The pioneers settled first in the northern parts of eastern Carolina and gradually migrated south.

Col. Brice was typical of many who moved on. In 1708 he was granted what was described as a 'grand grant' of 1280 acres on the east side of what is now called Brices Creek, beginning at the Trent River and extending southward into the land now known as Taberna. A heavy dashed line shows the approximate location on the accompanying map. In 1713 an additional grant of 520 acres extended his holdings to Boleyn Creek, the southern border of Taberna. His home was near the mouth of the creek shown with the letter H on the map. He was listed as blacksmith and merchant, the latter indicating that he was engaged in trade. Since he was able to afford to buy and to maintain such a large grant, he had to have some cash crop associated with his trade. He no doubt used the numerous pines of the area to produce tar and pitch, which was in great demand for use on sailing ships, and he probably



MAP OF TABERNA DRAWN BY RON McCAUSLAND.

distilled turpentine as well. These were to be the primary cash crops for eastern Carolinians for many years to come. At this time the Indians would often work for the settlers as laborers or as providers of food getting paid in trinkets and small household items. To work his almost 2000 acres Col. Brice would have hired them. It is also known that he had Indian slaves. Indian tribes raided other tribes taking slaves whom they traded locally and many were exported to other colonies for cash and trade goods. There is a record of a note given by William Brice that obliged him to deliver to his creditor "one Indian aged between 20 and 35" or to forfeit 14 pounds money. Many traders throughout the colony took great advantage of the Indians in their trades deceiving them and often using alcohol to literally steal the furs they brought to trade. These deceptive practices were the beginning of the Indian's grievances against the settlers.

When Graffenried arrived, his plan was to have most of the settlers live on farms surrounding what was to be New Bern and have the tradesmen such as carpenters, blacksmiths, merchants, etc., live within the town. Most of the settlers were each given 250 acres of land and these holdings were located on the north and south sides of the Trent River extending as far as Mill Creek. The settlers would not allow the Indians to hunt on or near the plantations, often abusing and beating them if they tried. In general the Indians were treated harshly, and that only added to the hate that was building.

In the fall of 1711 the Tuscarora Indians captured Graffenried and his partner John Lawson while they were away from New Bern on an exploration up the Neuse River. As they were about to be freed, Lawson became engaged in a confrontation with one of the chiefs and he was promptly executed. Graffenried was spared as he gave concessions to them regarding hunting rights and a promise to see that the Indians received trading goods at fair prices. On September 22 while Graffenried was still a prisoner, the Indians attacked settlers in the New Bern area

and areas north to Bath in a very coordinated effort by the Tuscarora and the lesser tribes. They killed over 130 people, took others captive and destroyed crops, cattle, barns and homes. About 70 of those killed were Swiss and Palatines of the New Bern area. Many people of the area fled to William Brice and his plantation for safety, leadership and guidance. Brice garrisoned the people on his land. The location of the fort is shown on the map at letter F. A short while later Brice led them on an offensive against the Bay River tribe. They captured the chief of the tribe and burned him to death in retribution.

Brice continued to be a leader in the area advocating armed resistance to the Indians in contrast to Graffenried who wished to make peace with them. Brice was also the leader of a group of settlers that drew up a list of twenty complaints against Graffenried in order to have him arrested. The complaints probably should have been more properly made against Governor Thomas Cary, who had not followed through on the English Proprietors' promise to provision Graffenried's immigrants. The arrest never happened. From Graffenried's manuscript relating his adventures in America he wrote,

> . . . a man called Brice, who was commander of that seditious gang which gave me much trouble . . . . Brice would have been glad to take me by surprise and to arrest me." (Graffenried 1920)

Whatever Graffenried's feelings were regarding William Brice, in the end force was the answer to stopping the Indian attacks and opening up the area to further colonial expansion.

William Brice had earned the respect of the people in the New Bern area. He appeared as a member of the board of appraisers for the estates of Swiss and German orphans left homeless by the Indian attacks. He was also elected a member of the House of Commons, the lower body of the General Assembly of North Carolina (Saunders 1993).

Thomas Cary had been elected governor by the General Assembly in 1708 but did not have the support of the Proprietors. When the latter appointed Edward Hyde the new governor in 1711, Cary led an uprising against him but eventually was overthrown in his attempts. Afterward, it was found that Cary had misrepresented himself. He had claimed to have the authority of the Proprietors and had taken money for land grants and rents. Minutes of the General Assembly record that a Mr. Emil Low had feloniously detained the land office, its books and records, so that a true account could not be made. Therefore, everyone who believed they had been given land grants was required to give an account to one of the local land commissioners. William Brice was appointed a land commissioner for Craven precinct (Saunders 1993).

In 1715 a law was enacted declaring the Church of England to be the only church in North Carolina, and the colony was divided into parishes each with a minister and 12 vestrymen. William Brice was appointed a vestryman in the Craven precinct (Saunders 1993).

Obviously, the first owner of Taberna land was a forceful and decisive individual respected by the local people. Col. William Brice was pioneer, Indian fighter, legislator, churchman, merchant, and land baron. He died in 1719 and left his estate to his wife Ann, daughter Elizabeth and sons William Jr. and Francis. The family graveyard was near the old fort.

Loyalists and Patriots

The land that Col. Brice owned on the east side of Brices Creek was divided between sons William and Francis. Francis inherited the northern portion nearest the Trent River and William the southern portion that included Taberna.

Francis moved to the Wilmington area and as early as 1723 began to sell his portion. He sold a part to Col. William Wilson, a part to Richard Spaight, and a part to his

nephew Francis, son of his brother William. Richard Spaight married William Wilson's daughter Elizabeth. Their son Richard Dobbs Spaight inherited all of this land. When he returned from being educated in Europe in 1778, his plantation, called Claremont, was the most valuable in Craven County. Richard Dobbs Spaight was a successful politician and congressman and was the first North Carolina born Governor. He was killed in a duel with John Stanly in 1802.

Francis retained the rights to a small piece of land where the family burial ground and Col. William Brice's fort was located near the mouth of Brices Creek. It is not known if he was buried there. The current owner of the land Ms. Hughrena MacDonald is not aware of any evidence of the graveyard or the fort.

The Brice family retained a degree of station within New Bern and the province of North Carolina after Col. Brice's death. Daughter Elizabeth married John Fonville a member of the Provincial Assembly. He was appointed commodities inspector, which like many county posts, was filled by the ruling elite. The Governor's Council appointed both William and Francis Brice as Justices of the Peace. In the mid-1700s the Justices of the Peace held positions similar to County Commissioners today and they also held local court in their precinct. The jurisdiction of the court was quite extensive, hearing civil and criminal cases, probating wills, appointing public officials and levying taxes. The justices were in most cases members of the upper class and helped the Governor and Council retain an English aristocratic control down to the local level at a time of newcomers emigrating into the province from many European countries. William was also elected a member of the Assembly and during his terms was a sponsor of a bill to build the Anglican (Episcopal) Church in New Bern. He is noted as merchant and planter. (Saunders 1993)

William inherited the southern portion of the original grants including Taberna where he lived out his life. He

called this land the Rich Land Plantation. Colonial records show that he engaged in the manufacture of distilled turpentine. An inventory of his estate shows that he also had two tar kilns for making tar and that he raised cattle. When he died in 1753 he partitioned his estate among his four sons William, Francis, John Acton and Rigdon. Note that in the middle 1700s there was a scarcity of money in the province. This caused many problems for the settlers particularly in the payment of debts and quit rents. In 1764 merchant Samuel Cornell in New Bern advertised in the paper that he had slaves and European goods for sale "for ready money or country produce." Wealth was measured more in terms of land and slaves. In addition to the land that William Brice owned it is interesting to see what a member of the upper class owned in 1753. From an inventory of his estate he had

> 7 Negro men, 3 women and 13 boys and girls, 51 head of cattle, 18 sheep, 20 Hoggs, 5 horses, 3 guns, 7 fether beds, 2 desks, 4 Tables, 2 Chests, 8 Chairs, a persil of old pewter, a percil of Chaney and Delf Wair, 1 Looking Glass, a persil of Old Books, 8 Iron pots, 1 bell mettle Scillit, 3 Brass Candle Stick, 1 pair Iron Doggs, 1 pair tongs, hand mill, 2 Chest, 2 Tarkills Ready Sett, 5 Spinning Wheels, 1 Hanger, 1 Cross cut Saw, 1 Grindstone. (Grimes 1967)

Sons John Acton and Rigdon inherited the land we now call Taberna. There is no evidence that either of them farmed or lived on the Taberna lands. John Acton deeded his interest in the land to brother Rigdon in early 1767. Later that year Rigdon sold the northern part of Taberna to Dr. Alexander Gaston. No two neighbors could have been further removed from one another politically.

Rigdon Brice was a merchant in the town of New Bern and served part time as clerk of the Governor's Council. He was also employed by the Council for "copying and engrossing" laws and decisions that were passed by the

provincial government (Saunders 1993). Through business deals he accumulated large debts and in 1771 was taken to court to force payment of them. The court ruled that the sheriff should sell Rigdon's lands and that the proceeds be applied to the debts. At the sheriff's sale Dr. Alexander Gaston purchased the southern part of Taberna bringing his holdings of Taberna land to about three quarters of the whole.

By 1771 there was found in the province the rumblings of the movement towards independence from British rule. The Stamp Act of 1764-65 had caused the local shipping industry losses in trade and protests of taxation without representation. Then in 1768 came the formation of the Regulators in the western part of the province, protesting the location of the seat of government so far to the east and protesting the taxes added to build the palace of Governor Tryon. Rigdon was an avid Tory and supporter of British Crown rule. The court case against him may be due to bad business deals, but it is a bit suspicious that the buyer of the land was Dr. Alexander Gaston an avid supporter of the cause of American liberty. As independence movements grew through the middle 1770s, many Loyalist merchants in New Bern lost their businesses and were driven from the town and province. In 1777 confiscation acts were passed allowing the taking of property belonging to those loyal to the Crown. Among the wealthy merchants dispossessed was Alexander McAuslin (no known relation to the author). By this time Rigdon had left New Bern along with then Governor Josiah Martin. Rigdon returned to New Bern in late 1777. From Colonial records of this date he was found to be

> a person suspected of holding principles inimical to the liberties of America, and (being required to) take an oath of allegiance to the State, who, refusing so to do, was committed to jail, and afterwards gave bond and security to depart the State agreeable to law. (Clark 1993)

Rigdon Brice went to New York where he became a Deputy Muster Master recruiting for the Loyalists cause and keeping records of those serving the Crown. He continued in this capacity in Georgia, Charleston and Wilmington. He evacuated Wilmington with the British army in 1781 losing much of his personal property. There are on record letters written by Rigdon to his superior Edward Winslow begging for additions to his pay that he finds impossible to live on. He finished out the war serving in Florida. In 1783 he left for London and joined many other Loyalists seeking restitution for their losses in their service to the Crown. Rigdon applied for 1000 pounds money lost in service and was awarded a mere 39.12 (DeMond 1979).

The buyer of the Taberna lands from Rigdon Brice was Dr. Alexander Gaston noted in the deeds as a "chirgeon" (surgeon). He had been born in France, immigrated to Scotland where he was educated in the field of medicine, then immigrated to Ireland and finally to America. He settled in New Bern as early as 1764 and married in 1775 Margaret Sharpe, a native of England and a devout Catholic. Alexander Gaston was one of the foremost advocates of liberty. He was a member of the group that seized the cannon from the Governor's palace after Gov. Josiah Martin had left. Distinguished for his patriotic service, he was appointed a judge of the court of the district of New Bern. In August 1781 a detachment of British soldiers and Tories left Wilmington to suppress the patriotism of New Bern. Alexander Gaston was warned of their coming and proceeded to take refuge at his plantation on the Taberna lands. As he was in a rowboat crossing the Trent River, the Tories arrived at the wharf and began to shoot at him. His rower jumped overboard for safety leaving him alone in the boat. His wife hearing the shots ran to the wharf and fell to her knees pleading with them to spare her husband's life. One of the Tories leaned over her and shot her husband to death. Margaret Gaston, 26 years old at the time wore black the rest of her life (Powell 1991). Besides his widow he left two children Jane and William.

After her husband's death Margaret Gaston operated the (Taberna) plantation and must have been fairly successful at it. In the 1790 U. S. Census she is listed as having 30 slaves which was a fairly large number for plantation owners in eastern Carolina at that time. Misfortune was to visit Margaret again when she lost her New Bern home in the fire of 1794. The home stood where the Bank of New Bern was built near the corner of Craven and Pollock Streets. Two fires that year destroyed a large part of the residential and business sections of Craven Street. Margaret Gaston was able to keep the family going and to keep her son William in school. He was to become the first student at Georgetown College, a newly formed Roman Catholic school in the Washington, D. C., area. After a year there he returned home to study at the New Bern Academy where he was valedictorian in 1794. He went on to graduate from Princeton at the head of his class at age 18. William Gaston was to become one of North Carolina's most notable citizens.

William Gaston

After graduating first in his class from Princeton in 1796, William returned to New Bern to study law under Francis Xavier Martin and was admitted to the bar in 1798 at age 20. His sister Jane had married John Louis Taylor, also a lawyer, who was appointed a judge of the state superior court in the same year. To devote proper time to his duties as judge, Taylor turned a large part of his law practice over to the young William Gaston. Gaston proved more than adequate to handle the practice, excelling in land dispute cases and in criminal law cases, receiving high praise for his intellect and abilities in the courtroom. Two years later Gaston was elected a member of the State Senate from Craven County where he was seated on several committees and was the chairman of three of them. This began a long political career in which he was returned to the State Assembly several times and was elected to the

WILLIAM JOSEPH GASTON
1778-1844

Photo from Peele: *Lives of Distinguished North Carolinians.*

U. S. House of Representatives for the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Congress.

During this time Gaston married first in 1803 Susan Hay who lived only eight months after the marriage. He married second in 1805 to Hannah McClure, and they had a son and two daughters. Left a widower again, Gaston married a third time in 1816 to Eliza Ann Worthington. In 1818 Gaston purchased a home located at the corner of Craven and New streets now known as the Coor-Gaston House. This house was built by builder James Coor in 1767 as his personal residence and stayed in the Coor family until Gaston bought it. The elegant Georgian townhouse has been restored and is pictured here. Eliza lived only one year after moving to this house leaving two infant daughters and leaving Gaston a widower for the third time. He never remarried after her death.

During his terms in the U. S. Congress Gaston gained a national reputation through the eloquence of his speeches supporting the Bank of the United States and opposing a loan bill which would have given President Madison $25 million for the conquest of Canada. When his second term was over, he returned to his law practice in New Bern and did not return to national politics although he was considered for several national posts. He appeared to prefer his law practice and staying near his home in New Bern. His law office has been restored and moved to Craven Street just behind City Hall.

Although he was proud of his (Taberna) plantation, he did not devote much time to it. There is a story about him showing off his plantation to a neighboring farmer. Gaston proudly pointed out to the neighbor the neatly laid out ditches dug to drain the land. This farmer admitted that they were very nice, however they were impractical as they ran in the wrong direction (Schauinger 1949).

Gaston had his son Alexander oversee the plantation for a time. Alexander was, like his father, a lawyer. However, he had married Eliza Jones described as a highly educated, beautiful, accomplished young lady who be-

The Coor-Gaston House (ca. 1770) on Craven Street was purchased by William Gaston in 1818 for his residence. Photo by McCausland.

came an admirable manager of the plantation, selling the crops, laying in the supplies and by water-craft visiting New Bern on business when necessary. So where the men of the Gaston family did not take care of the (Taberna) plantation, the women did.

In November of 1830 William Gaston purchased from Nathaniel Smith 170 acres adjacent to his inherited (Taberna) holdings. This brought his plantation to about 1000 acres, and it had about the same boundaries that Taberna has today.

During his years as a state and federal congressman his primary interests were the judiciary and the banking system. As a state senator he served on both the judiciary and banking committees, at times serving as chairman. He was instrumental in 1818 in framing the act that created the State Supreme Court and continued to defend its existence throughout his terms. Reflecting his interest in the banking system, he was appointed president of the Bank of New Bern one of the first two banking institutions chartered by the state. Ten-dollar bills that the bank issued during his administration were known as "Bill Gastons" (Powell 1991).

Active in many aspects for the improvement of the state of North Carolina, Gaston was named a Trustee of the University of North Carolina and was chairman of the Board of Trustees of the New Bern Academy. He introduced the bill to charter the N. C. Central Railroad and vigorously supported the dredging of the Okracoke Inlet to encourage shipping into eastern North Carolina.

In 1833 Gaston was elected to the State Supreme Court by a large majority of the General Assembly. He achieved this position even though the laws of the time required office holders to believe in "the Truth of the Protestant Religion." Raised by his French mother, a devout Roman Catholic, William was also deeply religious and Roman Catholic. His appointment to the court was achieved by arguing that no one could accurately define the "Truths."

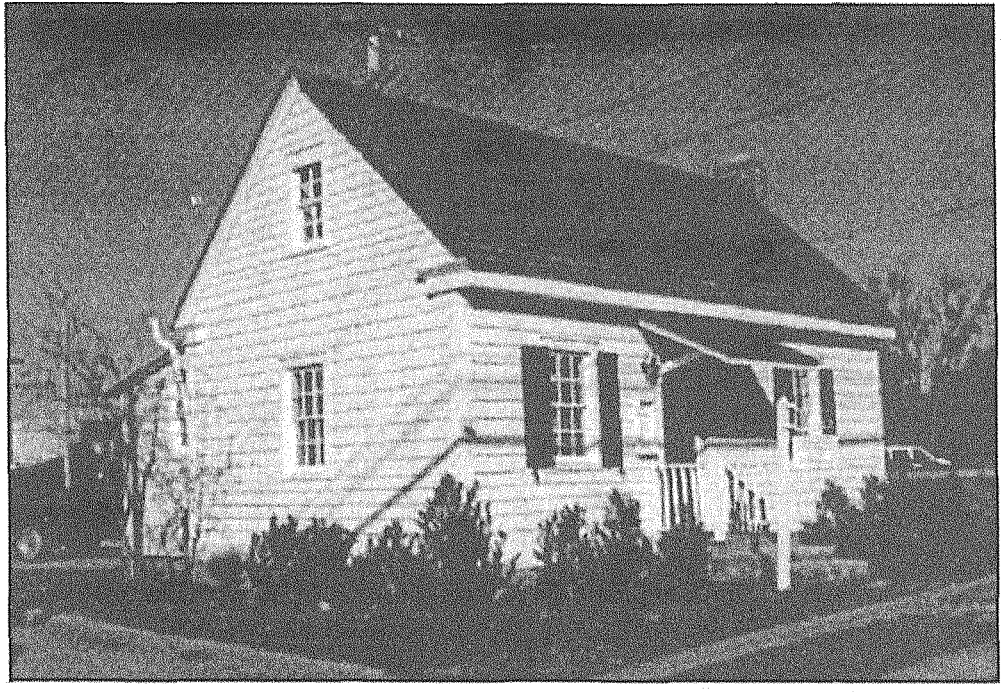
The first Roman Catholic mass recorded in North

Carolina was celebrated at the Gaston home in 1821. At that time Gaston started a fund to build a Roman Catholic Church in New Bern, but it was not until 1824 that any priest was appointed to North Carolina. There were so few Roman Catholics residing here that the church could not keep a full-time priest in the state, as they did not have enough money. North Carolina almost lost her most famous son, as William considered moving north so that his children could receive proper instruction in the Catholic faith. He decided instead to send his children to boarding schools in the north for their education. Priests would travel through the state and when they stopped in New Bern they were housed with the Gastons and often preached in their home. Finally in 1839 the New Bern Catholics resolved to build a church and the contract to build was signed in Gaston's law office the following year. Gaston was one of the largest financial supporters of the building. The church, St. Paul's, was completed in 1841 making it the oldest Roman Catholic Church in the state.

New Bern sent Judge Gaston to the State Constitutional Convention of 1835. He and several others tried to remove the religious test for state office holders. Gaston's address on the proposed amendment took two days. They failed in their attempts and were only able to amend the statute by substituting the word "Christian" for "Protestant. For his defense of religious liberty he was acclaimed "The Father of Religious Liberty in North Carolina."

With his appointment to the State Supreme Court, Gaston had much more leisure time. One of his favorite pastimes was to go to his (Taberna) plantation to ride horseback and take long walks with his two youngest daughters. This plantation must have been a successful venture for Gaston. The 1840 U. S. Census lists122 slaves on his plantation. It is known that he shipped cotton to his son-in-law for resale and in deeds of the area there is mention of a road to Gaston's mill.

The degree of esteem that William Gaston achieved in his lifetime cannot be overstated. His intellect and his



William Gaston's Law Office (ca. 1800) was moved from the backyard of Gaston's home and rebuilt here on Craven Street about 1949. Photo by McCausland.

abilities as a lawyer, judge, statesman, orator, and humanitarian were then and are now praised. He was in his lifetime often sought after as a speaker at commencements and other public events. He was granted honorary degrees of Doctor of Laws by the universities of Pennsylvania, Columbia, and Harvard. He was given many other honorary memberships and awards by literary, scholastic, and philosophical societies.

His commencement address in 1832 at the University of North Carolina is ranked with the greatest speeches of the nineteenth century. A portion of the address that follows shows the intellect of the man and the insight that he had. Remember that at the time he had 122 slaves on his plantation and over 30 at his home in New Bern.

> "On you too, will devolve the duty Which has been too long neglected but which cannot, with impunity, be neglected much longer of providing for the mitigation and, (is it too much to hope for in North Carolina) for the ultimate extirpation of the worst evil that afflicts the Southern part of our Confederacy. Full well do you know to what I refer, for on this subject there is with all of us a morbid sensitiveness which gives warning to even an approach to it . . . . Disguise the truth as we may and throw the blame where we will, it is slavery which, more than any other cause, keeps us back in the career of improvement. It stifles industry and suppresses enterprise; it is fatal to economy and prudence; it discourages skill, impairs our strength as a community, and poisons morals at the fountain head." (Schauinger 1949)

During the sessions of the Supreme Court in Raleigh, Gaston stayed at the home of his niece Mrs. James F. Taylor. At his office nearby Gaston wrote in 1840 the words for what became in 1927 the official state song "The Old North State." The melody is thought to have come from a group of Swiss bell ringers who visited Raleigh.

William Gaston wrote his will in December 1843 and left his (Taberna) plantation to his two youngest daughters Elizabeth and Catherine with whom he had spent many times riding and walking this land. He died in Raleigh on January 23, 1844, and was buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery in New Bern. Gaston County, the towns of Gaston and Gastonia and Lake Gaston are named for this most accomplished native North Carolinian.

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BOOK REVIEW

Society in Early North Carolina History: A Documentary History, edited by Alan D. Watson. (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2000. Paperback, 359 pp. $20.00.)

Many readers of this journal know that if you want to look up an obscure name or event from New Bern's past, the first place to look is in Alan D. Watson's earlier book entitled *A History of New Bern and Craven County*. This 1987 book by Watson can get a bit dry at times with all those names and endless local elections, but no other single source offers such a comprehensive account of New Bern. Moreover, his sections on New Bern during the colonial period and New Bern's plight during the Civil War are among the most comprehensive accounts available of those critical times.

Alan Watson's new book, *Society in Early North Carolina*, is equally valuable but for radically different reasons. To be sure, there are huge numbers of dry facts, even large numbers of legal tracts and laws in this book, but they are presented in such a unique way that they actually make for compelling, even entertaining, reading. Let me clarify this apparent contradiction with several examples.

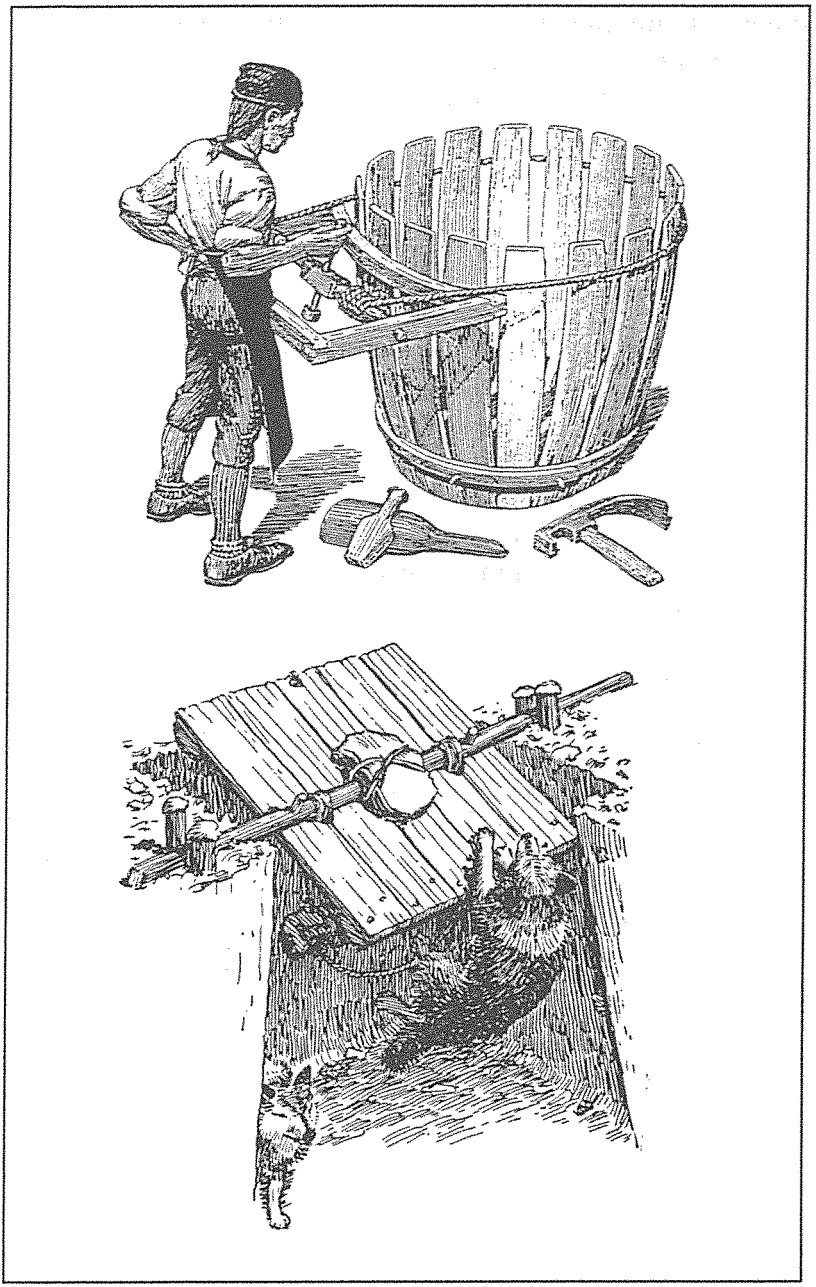
We all know that physical punishments—sometimes very cruel and painful—were much more common during our early history. Why? Watson notes in boldface that

> **Given the flimsiness of jails, or their absence, and the need for labor in early America, lawbreakers were usually subjected to fines or some form of corporal punishment rather than prolonged confinement.**

Watson then presents detailed court records that vividly make his point. One poor soul by the name of Thomas Gray stole 20 shillings worth of wool and other items and received 30 lashes on his bare back at the public whipping post. In addition, he was required to pay 50 pounds sterling to insure his good behavior for a year and a day. In a similar case Elijah Stanton stole some lard, bacon, and cloth. He was also fined 50 pounds but instead of receiving a lashing, he was branded on the hand with the letter T (for thief).

Ear cropping was a common punishment. So much so that Watson records the case of Neill Blue, a seven-year-old boy who had his ear bitten off by a dog. Neill's father obtained a legal statement attesting to the fact that the disfigurement was not the result of punishment. Similarly, one John Marr had it recorded in the minutes of Wake County Court in 1773 that he had lost his right ear in a fight with one Wagstaff Cannady. I love to read original material of this sort to experience the variety of now-forgotten given names of our ancestors. Did anyone ever know a man named Wagstaff? If so, I don't think you would want to fight him.

In the chapter on the importance of taverns during the colonial period, we learn that they were closely regulated and subject to a host of laws associated with their operation. Detailed charges for all services including food, drink, and lodging were established in great detail by the county courts. In the minutes of the Rowan County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, August 1774, we learn that "breakfast or Supper with hott meat and Small beer drink" would cost 8 shillings but if coffee were included, the price increased to one pound. "Stabling each horse 24 hours with plenty of hay or Fodder and if of Common woods hay" cost 8 shillings but if it was "English grass such as Timothy or Clover," the price increased to one pound. The pricing regulations go on and on. The list of prices for alcohol-based drinks is endless. "Boiled Cyder per Quart" was 8 shillings whereas "Cyder Royal per Quart" was one



Upper: Assembling a barrel. Now a lost art, the cooper's trade was valuable in New Bern. Lower: The wolf trap could catch several wolves without resetting. Drawings from the book.

pound, 4 shillings, but "Clarett per Bottle" was a whopping 7 pounds, 6 shillings.

We modern folks long for the good old days when human affairs were simple and life was uncomplicated. Alas, the lesson that emerges from these lengthy laws and regulations in Alan Watson's fascinating new book is that it is a serious mistake to think of the colonial era as one wherein humans enjoyed the so-called "simple life." Indeed, modern anthropologists note that the "simple life" for humans never existed. Even humans living in so-called primitive hunter-gather societies must acquire and apply many thousands of critical facts about their environment to survive.

Early in his chapter on immigration, Watson included a totally unrealistic piece on the sterling virtues of North Carolina written by John Lawson in his attempt to lure immigrants to North Carolina:

> . . . our summer is not so hot as in other places to the Eastward in the same latitude; neither are we ever visited by Earthquakes, as many places in *Italy* and other Summer-countries are. Our Northerly Winds, in Summer cool the Air, and free us from pestilental Fevers, which *Spain, Barbary*, and the neighboring Countries in *Europe, etc* are visited withal.

Then, in an excerpt from von Graffenried's accounting of the founding of New Bern, we get information on Lawson's motive for attracting immigrants to North Carolina. Lawson sold the immigrant Swiss and German group his own land at a dear price and later von Graffenried had to pay the native Indians for this same land. The small founding colony

> . . . were soon compelled to give their clothes and whatever they possessed to the neighboring settlers for food. The misery and wretchedness were almost indescribable . . . almost all were sick, yes, even in ex-

tremity, and the well were all very feeble.

In the same chapter Watson presents a vivid picture of the huge Scottish immigration to North Carolina throughout the eighteenth century by providing the names and circumstances of some of these early Scots who populated North Carolina. For example,

> John McBeath, aged 37, By Trade a Farmer and Shoe maker, Married, hath 5 children from 13 years to 9 months old. Resided last in Mault in the Parish of Kildonnan in the County of Sutherland, upon the estate of Sutherland. Intends to go to Wilmington, in North Carolina; left his own country because Crops failed, he lost his Cattle, the Rent of his Possession was raised, and bread had been long dear; he could get no Employment at home, whereby he could support himself and Family, being unable to buy Bread at the prices the Factors. . . . he was encouraged to emigrate by the Accounts received from his own and his Wife's Friends already in America, assuring him that he would procure comfortable subsistence in that country for his Wife and Children . . . .

Many Scots and other immigrants arrived as indentured servants. Watson cites some of the numerous legal acts governing servants and slaves as well as a telling sample of court cases that provide a perspective on how harsh life could be for servants.

> And it is Hereby Enacted that all Christian Servants Imported or to be Imported into this Government above Sixteen Years of Age without indentures shall serve Five Years. And all under the Age of Sixteen Years at the time of this Importation shall serve till they be Two and Twenty Years of Age.

Penalties for sexual activities by female indentured

servants strike the modern ear as being unduly harsh. For example,

> XII. And be it Further Enacted that if any Woman Servant shall be gotten with Child in this Country & bring it forth in the time of her Servitude she shall serve Two Years to her Master or Owner for her Offence over & above what punishment she shall be & is Lyable unto for her Fornification.

Article XIV of the same tract states that,

> . . . where any White woman whether Bond or Free shall have a Bastard child by a Negro, Mulatto, or Indyan over and above the Two years service to her Master or Owner she shall immediately upon the Expiration of her time to her present Master or Owner pay down to the Church Wardens of the Parish wherein such shall be born for the use of said Parish the sum of Six pounds Current Money of this Province or be by them sold for two years to the use aforesaid.

Article XV puts the icing on the cake by authorizing the church wardens to take the out-of-wedlock children referred to in Article XIV and bind them out as servants until they are 31 years old with the proceeds to be, "applied for & toward the use of the Parish." A novel way of raising money indeed!

The chapter on immigration also contains some vivid descriptions of natural disasters. Samuel Johnston states in a letter written in 1771 of his alarm,

> . . . with an amazing quantity of Trees and Rubbish coming out of the mouth of Roanoke the wind being about South west the whole Bay and Sound opposite Edenton was soon covered with loggs fence Rails Scantling and parts of broken houses. . . .

Thanks to the construction of a series of large dams on the Roanoke within the last 50 years, fearsome floods of this sort on the largest river in North Carolina are now unlikely.

In contrast, a letter written by Thomas Howe two years earlier in 1769 describes a hurricane-devastated New Bern which could be repeated.

> Beginning with Mr. John Smith whose Store full of Goods was undermined with the washing of the Waves and tumbled down and broke to Pieces and scattered along Shore. The Cellars of the House where he lived being well stored with Wine, Rum, Sugar etc., were undermined and destroyed and all it contained either stove to Pieces or floated away by the violence of the Wind and Current. . . . Mr. Davis's House a mere Wreck, his Printing Office broke to Pieces, his Papers destroyed and Types buried in the Sands His Desk Stove and what Money he had with all his private Papers entirely lost.

This letter was written to Royal Governor William Tryon. I doubt that the Governor shed any tears about the losses of James Davis, the Colony's first printer. The two men intensely disliked each other.

The book provides a sweeping perspective of life in colonial North Carolina that could only be achieved by reading several dozen good histories on the subject. Curiously, I believe Watson's samples of colonial social history will prompt readers to read more on the topic once they get a taste of how interesting the subject can be. To help readers select additional material, Watson includes a source bibliography and a complete index.

Finally, this book is just plain fun to read with an interesting discovery on about every page. Francisco de Miranda's late eighteenth century visit to New Bern was apparently cut short by

. . . the happenstance of a swarm of bedbugs coming forth to greet me in bed when I lay down for a moment after dinner. . . . this insect is so abundant here that all the houses are generally contaminated. . . . I was obliged to sleep on the floor in the middle of the room. . . . They are of such extraordinary size that a single one is the equivalent of three or four of those found in Europe. . . .

I have a New Bern friend who hates squirrels, particularly New Bern squirrels. He calls them "tree rats." Turns out that these playful creatures were classified as vermin and a bounty offered for their extermination. According to the 1743 records of Saint Paul's Parish, one master hunter by the name of Jacob Butler was paid bounties for killing eight wolves, two wild cats and 459 squirrels! Imagine how much Brunswick stew could be made with all those squirrels.

Richard Lore