

Chapter 16. After the War

COLONIAL GEORGIANS by Jeannette Holland Austin

The Rev. Mr. Bolzius' efforts to settle his flock and bring new emigrants to Ebenezer were tireless. In July of 1741 a group of 61 new Saltzburghers settlers arrived, being 18 men, 25 women, 10 boys and 8 girls. Following this migration, another 50 Saltzburghers left Rotterdam to settle in Ebenezer. In December of 1743, Bolzius petitioned the Board that he expected many of his countrymen to flock to the colony after having been invited by the settlers, and anticipating new arrivals, petitioned for a large reserve of land which was located on the western branch of the Little Ogeechee River. Since no specific amount of land was specified, the Trustees were apprehensive. By 1752, however, the Saltzburghers had outgrown their boundaries and expanded northward along the Ebenezer Creek to establish the village of Bethany for 320 German Lutherans brought into the colony by Capt. DeBrahm. Other small settlements included Goshen, Abercorn and Halifax. Halifax was the only settlement outside present-day Effingham County. The Saltzburghers occupied approximately 25 square miles on the eastern side of the county.¹

Even though Ebenezer was better settled than those persons in Savannah and Frederica, mostly due to the diligence of its German ministers, certain Germans did rebel. In September of 1753 Christopher Rylander and George Heldt complained about Mr. Barker. The site of the town of Old Ebenezer had become the place where the Trustee's had their cowpen. Appointed to look after the cattle was a servant, Mr. Barker. Barker had arrived in the colony during February of 1736 with his wife and child, at that time to be a servant to Will Bradley. Accusations were made that Barker was misappropriating grain.

Already the Savannah wharf was falling into decay, and although wharfage was charged, many provisioned boats from Carolina refused to unload their goods. To avoid fees, they would not sell the same. This deprivation of fees caused the Georgia Trustees to order that all canoes coming to market with any sort of goods whatever were obliged to pay one shilling sterling; masters of all long boats and pettyaguas to pay 2 shillings 6 pence; and the masters of sloops, schooners to pay 5 shillings. Also, any craft laying at the wharf over 48 hours was to pay double wharfage.

Frederica had its advantage by having the troops stationed there, not only to protect, but to help build the town and boost its economy. In addition to merchandising and lumbering, there was a salvage operation. On 8 March 1744, Captain William Horton applied to Board in behalf of Salvors of the ship *David* of Bourdeaux, John Peter Daigans, Commander, which ship was driven ashore near the Island Sapelo and stranded. A party of Marines and soldiers of the Garrison of Frederica anchored the vessel for salvage. The Salvors were James Mackay, Thomas Hird, Constable of Frederica, and Mr. Terry.

In October of 1744 the official surveyor of Georgia lands, Joseph Avery, died, and the Georgia Council demanded that Mrs. Avery, his widow, turn over the plans and other papers which had belonged to her husband. They particularly wanted the plan which he had made of a large tract that included part of the country extending from the Ogeechee River in the south, and northward as far as the lands belonging to the Town of Savannah, and westward as far as the Town of Ebenezer. But Mrs. Avery refused to cooperate, except she did give them the survey instruments. Finally, she agreed to surrender all of the charts which the Council agreed to pay her 12 pounds for the transportation of herself and her children to Charles Towne. In January of

¹ Because of political unrest during the American Revolution, most of these colonial villages were later abandoned. Although descendants continued to reside near Ebenezer, the area has never again attained the cultural solidarity which was characterized during the first 30 years of the colony. By 1800, New Ebenezer, Abercorn, Bethany and the Mill District were essentially ghost towns. The abandonment of these sites, however, has resulted in undisturbed archeological potpourri, and there now exists approximately 239 archeological sites.

1745 Mrs. Avery relinquished all the surveys. Thomas Ellis was employed to complete the surveying of the dividing lines between several lots in Vernonburgh, and three 50-acre tracts in Acton.²

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In June of 1746, some new problems arose in the colony when Great Britain did not ship the usual supplies in time to dispense goods to colonists. This caused the storekeepers to have to deliver goods on credit. Storekeepers, Harris and Habersham, who supplied residents, now denied credit in general, even to the Trustees. As these merchants could no longer afford to offer credit, few persons in the colony had cash in specie wherewith to go to market. Also, all storekeepers demanded that the Board draw Bills of Exchange between the Trustees in their favour, for what money is owing to them on account. The Board thought this a sinister scheme contrived by Harris and Habersham to contrive a monopoly. There was no rice in the public stores or private stores, and credit was growing more precarious. So they it was decided to purchase rice in Carolina. Patrick Graham volunteered to go to Carolina with 50 pounds to purchase enough rice to appease colonists. However, these supplies provided only short relief and the inhabitants soon complained about not having rice and Indian corn. Hugh Brian came to the rescue. He offered to supply the colony with 40 barrels of rice and a proportionate quantity of corn.

A school was opened in Savannah. John Dobell was a well-liked teacher of the free school created by the Trustees in Savannah, but by 1746 he wrote them asking to be released as schoolmaster. Before they had time to respond, he resigned from all of the positions which he held in the colony. His resignation came as a complete surprise to the President and Assistants, and they punished him by withdrawing a grant of land of 500 acres between the two Ogeechee Rivers, which had been made to him.³ It took over a year to get a replacement for Dobell, and thereafter various persons served unsuccessfully, only to be released.

Later, in 1749 the Trustees appointed Edward Holt as schoolmaster at Savannah with a salary of twenty pounds annually, but he was an old man who failed to make a good impression on staff members. Mr. Zouberbuhler, the minister at Savannah, wrote the Trustees that Holt was not fit to be clerk because his wife enjoyed tattling too much. The Magistrates heard of his harshness with students and were compelled to investigate. Holt infuriated the Magistrates by not coming into court, and sent an officer to arrest him. He was insolent and insulting to the court, claiming that they had no jurisdiction over him, and this resulted in his confinement. The jail seemed to humble him, and he confessed his faults to the Magistrates, assuring them of his assuring future good intentions.

A few months later Holt was found to be unruly again, and that most of his students abandoned his school to attend another school which had been started in Savannah. The Trustees decided to release Holt and instructed the magistrates to send him back to England. As the period of the Trustee's Charter came to an end, the colony did not have a duly appointed schoolmaster to teach the children.

In 1748 a peace treaty was signed between Great Britain and Spain. As the Spanish would no longer fight, Oglethorpe left his regiment in the defense of the colony for one more year. Now, the garrison would be disbanded.

A Meeting of the Trustees on 21 December 1748, Trustees present: Earl of Shaftesbury, President, Mr. Chandler, Mr. Vernon, Lord Tyrconnel, General Oglethorpe, Sir William Heathcote, Mr. Smith, Dr. Wilson, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Tuffnel. The Trustees were informed that the Secretary of War had ordered General Oglethorpe's Regiment to be disbanded. All troops stationed in the province were to leave, and three Independent Companies were to be formed therefrom which would be stationed in South Carolina. The General confirmed that he had received the order. The Secretary of War then wrote a letter to John Potter, who was the Secretary to his Grace the Duke of Bedford as Secretary of State. However, in January of 1749 the

² 3 February 1745

³ 3 December 1743

Trustees were surprised to learn that the secretary's letter had been published in the *Hague French Gazette*.
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His Majesty now took steps to preserve its possession against Spain by ordering detachments of soldiers from three independent Companies in South Carolina to be stationed in proper places in Georgia. Soldiers from Oglethorpe's regiment having families were encourage to remain Georgia and cultivate their lands, and a subsistence of 2,000 pounds was appropriated.

At the disbanding of Oglethorpe's Regiment, Colonel Heron was directed to produce an inventory of all the boats and vessels belonging to his Majesty or the Trustees. Heron requested a loan of two boats in which to transport the troops to Charles Towne.

John Mackintosh in Darien, agreed to supply the disbanded soldiers who settled southward of the Medway River and brought in his accounts, showing seventeen soldiers with wives and children, making thirty-seven heads. They made inquiry and found that these families had settled and cultivated their lands, having sufficient crop for their families support.⁴

Some of the soldiers from the regiment who remained and received land grants of 50 acres each were: 16 December 1749. James Finlay and Daniel Martyn, late soldiers in Oglethorpe's Regt apply for 50 acres each adj. south to John Ring's land of Acton;⁵ Thomas Cross who married the widow of John Clark Taylor, deceased, she and her two sons by the said Clark being also deceased, petitioned the Board for Lot No. 2 in Frederick Tything Darby Ward which had been granted to Clark;⁶ James Finlay and Daniel Martyn late soldiers in Gen. Oglethorpe's regiment had 50 acres each granted them, adj. south to John Rinck's land of Acton on 16 December 1749, now unfit for their use, and desire 50 acres each, bounding south by lands granted Noble Wimberly Jones, east by this township lands, and other sides vacant;⁷ Peter Grant, 17 years in colony, had 50 acres, but now wanted 250 acres adj. West to the 50 acres now in his possession. Granted 50 acres.⁸

Without the money of several hundred soldiers, the shopkeepers and tradesmen fell into distress. After the garrison left the fort, and the original townspeople abandoned the site for lack of trade and economy, William Bartram, Quaker and naturalist, described conditions in Frederica, writing in his famous "Travels of William Bartram": "The fortress was regular and beautiful, constructed chiefly with brick, and was the largest, most regular, and perhaps most costly of any in North America, of British construction: it is now in ruins, Yet occupied by a small garrison; the ruins also of the town only remain; peach trees, figs, pomegranates, and other shrubs grow out of the ruinous walls of former spacious and expensive buildings, not only in the town, but at a distance in various parts of the island; yet there are a few neat houses in good repair, and inhabited: it seems now recovering again, owing to the public and liberal spirit and exertions of J. Spalding, Esq., who is the President of the island, and engaging in very extensive mercantile concerns."

In 1755 Frederica was described by a visitor as having houses without inhabitants, barracks without soldiers, guns without carriages, and streets overgrown with weeds. Only a handful of townspeople remained, even up to a fire in 1758, but after that the town fell into ruin, and was forgotten. The last few residents moved away. As William Bartram noted, although the

⁴ 16 November 1750

⁵ Colonial Records of Georgia by Candler, Vol. VI

⁶ 12 October 1749

⁷ 12 May 1752

⁸ 6 December 1753

town was in ruins, there were still merchants who remained to trade and use docking facilities. COLONIAL GEORGIANS by Jeannette Holland Austin
Many residents remained until about 1758.

Apparently some tradesmen still resided in Frederica as late as 1768, such as Donald Mackay⁹, an indentured servant who had arrived in Georgia from Scotland in 1737, and having not been granted acreage until 1754 when he received 500 acres on the southside of the Newport River, he had brought himself to the status of a merchant in Frederica, in partnership with James Spalding.

Many residents had already quit Frederica by 1741, viz: Jacob Faulcon; David Fellows returned to London in 1743; John Wakefield; Samuel Perkins; George Spencer (died 1742); Thomas Louch (left 1743); and William Allen, a baker.

Embrousseus Detzler was executed in 1758; George Dunbar moved to Darien; Anne Harris, widow, Merchant, removed to her plantation *Bethany* in 1752, on the Newport River; John McIntosh, Jr. still had a plantation near Frederica where he died May of 1792; Thomas Marriott was last seen in Frederica in 1748; James Mackay, a resident until 1755, removed to his plantation *Strathey Hall* in Chatham County where he died; William Horton had a lot in Frederica, but established his plantation on Jekyll Island; John Calwell's widow, petitioned for land after 1746 on the north side of the Sapelo River; and Philip Delegal died in 1769, with his wife going to live on their plantation on Philip's Bluff, South Carolina.

The town's final demise began with a fire which just about burned every building. After that, nature reclaimed the ruins with overgrowing vines and thistles. The town is now a National Preserve, and excavations of the homes of its first citizens attempt to restore the past.

⁹ Last Will and Testament of Donald Mackay, dated 29 January 1768, probated 4 March 1768, Codicil 30 January 1768, pp. 253-256, Will Book A, Colonial Wills