

Chapter 9. Hardships of 1737

COLONIAL GEORGIANS

By Jeannette Holland Austin

The year of 1737 brought many disasters as the fate of the fledgling colony lay in the balance.

While Oglethorpe was in England raising a regiment of redcoats, complaints mounted against Thomas Christie at the public store. Also, his personal conduct was under question because he lived in open adultery with Mr. Turner's wife.

Thomas Christie had arrived in the colony in 1733 along with his servant, Robert Johnson and was appointed to handle the affairs of the Trustees. His control over so many affairs caused him to become a well-known controversial figure, who was mostly disliked.

The first thing that he did was to establish his own estate of 200 acres in Savannah bordering on the Savannah River, known as *Twickenham*. He erected a large building, and towing paths to facilitate navigation. Also, he made improvements on a tract of cane marsh and wood land, and leased the land for 21 years. ¹

To begin the colonizing process in Georgia, 5000 acres was allotted in trust to Thomas Christie, Joseph Hughes and William Calvert. Christie was given the powerful office of Recorder and was also made a Conservator of the Peace. All of the first colonizers, magistrates and other officials, faced personal problems with settlement. These men all came from a society having class distinctions and thus expected their actions to go unquestioned. But the colonists complained bitterly against him, even writing letters to the Trustees. Christie sent Oglethorpe the journal of court proceedings, and a list of those persons who took more pains in cultivating their lands, while expressing his frustration that the Carolinians had the advantage of owning Negroes to cultivate their crops, while underselling Georgia planters. ²

One of Christie's duties was to place settlers on the huge land grants which he was given for that purpose, but, as time wore on, his unpopularity created such an enmity between the settlers that they chose to ignore him. Even so, while serving in the capacity of Chief Recorder in Savannah, he proceeded to gain the permission of the Trustees to establish an official harbour.

The Trustees decided to remove Christie from office pending a proper accounting. In June, he went to England to reside, and when that didn't work out, returned to Georgia to live on his Lot No. 19 in Savannah and await the outcome of his situation. John Pye was appointed to audit the books.

John Pye who was known to be an honest man.³ Pye described his voyage to the colony in a letter to Harmon Verelst:⁴ "After a voyage of ten weeks, I arrived safe at Savannah the 6th day of June where I am in good health and hope these lines will find you the same. As for the Colony of Georgia, I don't fear liking very well, I am in the house of a very good gentleman where I am entertained exceeding well - therefore, you nor none else need not at all doubt of my good principall and well doing and I hope to be very useful to the Trustees, therefore, I hope they will encourage me accordingly. I have but one thing which makes me uneasy and that is I articted with the Trustees for too little wages which, in the Colony, will not hardly find me in shoes and Ossenbrig Cloaths, things are so dear. Therefore, Sir, I desire you will spake to the Trustees and desire them to do me the favor as to send me some Dowlass and thin cloathing and

¹ Indenture of Lease, dated 16 February 1740, from the Trustees for Establishing the Colony of Georgia in America to Thomas Christie, freeholder, recorded 23 March 1752, Colonial Will Book J.

² Letter from Thomas Christie to James Oglethorpe, Savannah, dated December 14, 1734

³ John Pye married the sister of John Brownfield in 1739

⁴ 29 June 1737

I will outset with Mr. Causton for them and in so doing, you will oblige. Your most humble servant, John Pye, P. S. Pray send the enclosed To my mother and send me an answer."

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Thomas Jones wrote to the Trustees that John Pye "writes well and is very faithful and can be depended upon." Pye wasted no time in going over Christie's accounts, while the Trustees awaited the results of his audit. The following appeared in the Journal of the Earl of Egmont on October 10, 1739: "That Mr. Pye, one of the clerks who aided on this affair, is very faithful, and has concealed nothing which could give light to any account, and writes well; but is too heedless to be depended on."

During the suspension of Mr. Christie, Pye was commissioned to the office of Recorder. In addition to Christie, Pye investigated the complaints of malpractice lodged against Thomas Jones, who was in charge of the store and public accounts. However, during the investigation Jones continued as storekeeper, having charge of exporting the goods produced on the plantations to England, certifying weight, etc.

It was during this period that a large group of disenchanted colonists, complaining of high quit rents on their lands and the denied rights to slaves, absconded to Charles Town, Savannah, where they published a pamphlet called "A True Narrative of the History of the Colony of Georgia." John Pye took sides, and in 1738 became well known as one of the malcontents by signing the controversial petition against the Trustees. Because of this he was later removed from office⁵ with Charles Watson replacing him.⁶

William Stephens was unofficially appointed secretary (later President) of the colony charged with conducting all the business of the colony. Stephens was born in the Isle of Wight, and his third son, Thomas Stephens, also received land grants in America. The father built his plantation of 500 acres⁶³ on the Vernon River where he resided with five or six servants. Most of his time was spent travelling about Georgia, taking notes of the process of cultivation, settlers, etc., and reporting to the Trustees. In this respect, he kept a Journal of the daily life in the Colony.⁷ Not long after his arrival, Stephens met with Thomas Causton and others to discuss how they were going to deal with the malcontents, which were described as a stubborn knot of ill-designing people. While at *Ocstead*, an argument occurred between Constable Fallowfield and Causton. Stephens did not know its origin, but suspected that it was because Mrs. Causton had scolded Constable John Fallowfield. Fallowfield professed to be a Quaker, but was also known to be hasty and violent in his actions, having no mercy for the afflicted. Also, he'd made it publicly known that he wished to seize Causton's plantation. ⁸ It was only the beginning of complaints against Thomas Causton. Mr. Horton of Jekyll Island, considered a gentleman by Stephens, said that he had been ill-used by Causton. These disputes added to an already existing stack of complaints against the unpopular Causton.

Stephens corresponded regularly with Harmon Verelst, one of the Trustees in London, about the silk production in Georgia who were concerned that the colonists were more interested in raising silk at Purysburg, South Carolina, rather than in Georgia. ⁹

⁵ About 1741

⁶ In March of 1741 Pye returned to England

⁷ Journal of William Stephens 1737-1740

⁸ Colonial Records of Georgia by Candler, Vol. VI

⁹ In 1741 and 1742 he reported having raised 170 bushes of corn and 20 bushes of pease, and 57 bushes of potatoes on his own plantation. He also had a hand in dispatching the German servants to the Public Garden, in land grants, exchanges, and sales of land, as well as the Savannah clergy.

Meanwhile, a period of poverty enveloped many of the colonists. Sir Francis Bathurst was one who endured multiple trials and hardships, and whose story is sad. Sir Bathurst came to Georgia in search of his fortune, only to have misfortune.¹⁰ Had he survived long enough to use slave labor, he would have been able to establish a fine country estate.¹¹ Bathurst arrived in Georgia on 3 January 1735 bringing with him a wife, 3 daughters, one son, and 5 or 6 servants. A letter from George Dunbar, Captain of the *Prince of Wales* dated 5 November 1734 gave an account of the voyage in his letter to General Oglethorpe: "Our voyage hither was detared by a profound calme which continued from Thursday til this morning when I thank God we were favored with a faire wind and likely to continue. The Indian king, Quin, and the others are well and cheerful (remembering their English benefactors), except the Prince who is cold...but was much easier last night than any since he came on board....The other passengers seemed pleased and are well except Sir Francis Bathurst, bade of an old wound on his shin, and Mrs. Floy, who is a little mended. George Dunbar"

At the outset, Francis Bathurst was delighted with the country.¹² Before arriving, he was granted 200 acres in October of 1734 and settled on a plantation called Westbrook which was bout 10 miles northwest of Savannah adjoining the plantation of Walter Augustine. He built his house on a bluff overlooking the Savannah River. Samuel Eveleigh described the dwelling as being a small clapboard house, 20 feet long and 12 feet wide, divided into two parts. One room was a bedroom and the other, a diningroom. "He invited me and I partook of part thereof. It was a large dish of catfish and perch fried, caught the evening before by his son...and cold pork. I carried with me two bottles of punch and two bottles of red wine and the former we drank after breakfast, the latter I left with him and in the last glass we drank his cousin's health, my Lord Bathurst. He has planted eight acres of corn and if the season proves good believe he will have a good produce therefrom....Others in the Bluff give a good character of the old gentleman and tell me that his wife and son work in the fields themselvesSamuel Eveleigh".¹³

Bathurst's neighbor, Walter Augustine, entertained Bathurst and found him unruly over a marriage which occurred on 1 February 1735 between Martha Bathurst and William Baker, mate and botswain of the *Prince of Wales*. At the time, Bathurst wrote a letter to James Oglethorpe dated 17 February from West Bluff:... "I am proud to tell you that I have grown more with my few hands as I am credible informed than others with their great numbers have since the Colony was first settled...my eldest daughters have married, one to Mr. Baker, the bearer hereof, who came with us as Boatsson of the ship from England, an honest and skillful man in managing of a ship and a true painstaker and a very good husband...."

¹⁰ Sir Francis Bathurst, Baronet, was christened 1675 in Lechlade, England, where he married about 1713 to Frances Peacock. Sir Francis was a son of Edward Bathurst, 1635-1688 of Lechlade, England, and Edward was the son of Edward of Edmund Bathurst born 1615 at Lechlade, Gloucestershire, who married in 1634 Anne Morris, the daughter of Thomas Morris of Great Coxwell, Berkshire, England. Edward or Edmund was the son of Robert Bathurst born 1563 Lechlade, died 1623 and married Elizabeth Waller of Beaconsfeid, Buckingham, England.

¹¹ In 1741 and 1742 Bathurst reported having raised 170 bushes of corn and 20 bushes of pease, and 57 bushels of potatoes on his own plantation. He also had a hand in dispatching the German servants to the Public Garden, in land grants, exchanges and sales of land, as well as the Savannah clergy.

¹² 30 May 1735.

¹³ A letter dated May 30, 1735, from Samuel Eveleigh to James Oglethorpe, Palace Yard, Westminster

William Baker's first enterprise in the colony was to be in partnership with Mr. Jenys in Savannah in 1734. They sold rum to Indian traders, and charged a duty for it. Also, they owned the sloop *Charming Molly* which was used to sail to the store of a relative, John Baker, in South Carolina. For a number of years, William Baker petitioned the Trustees for the right to a Barony.

Despite the excellent business ventures of Baker, Bathurst thought that his daughter was struggling, but Augustine assured him that his daughter was very well off.

Bathurst had only cleared 5 acres when one of his servants died from dropsy. The other indentured servants suffered from heat prostration and could not tolerate the coastal climate. Bathurst blamed Augustine for his own personal ruin.¹⁴ Augustine offered Bathurst his advice, which Bathurst refused to follow.

The following year, Thomas Causton visited Lady and Sir Bathurst and helped hoe the corn because he had lost all of his servants except one, who was very ill. Local Indians were pillaging the plantation, destroying crops.

His two daughters had since married.¹⁵

Finally, A letter from Thomas Causton, dated July 7, 1735, reporting to the Georgia Trustees conditions in the colony.

In the meanwhile Lady Frances Bathurst lay ill. Sir Francis asked Mr. Causton to provide some medicine from the store, but all that he sent was one bottle of Madeira wine. In April, Robert, his son, wrote to another sister in London that their mother had died on the 2nd.

Sir Francis was devastated. He heard of a wealthy widow lady who resided in Savannah, Mrs. Pember. Bathurst hurried to Savannah. On 18 July 1736 Rev. John Wesley married the couple. But his haste availed him nothing, for Mary had debts, and these encumbrances now became the burden of Sir Frances.

Another tragedy struck when his youngest daughter, Mary, accidentally drowned in the river at the plantation on 23 September 1736.

And by November, Sir Francis succumbed. With failed crops, parents dead, and lurking creditors, Robert found conditions unbearable. For now, he was responsible for the debts of his step-mother. Robert endeavored to sell household goods and servants, but Thomas Causton claimed all the property belonged to the Trustees in payment of debts.

Another unfortunate choice was made when their daughter, Elizabeth Bathurst, married Francis Piercy on 9 February 1735, a gardener in the Colony. Piercy scandalized the family by running away to England when he was caught in the act of fraudulently secreting Robert Bathurst's goods, but apparently later died. Then, another daughter, Mary Bathurst, drowned on her father's plantation in 1739, she was the last daughter.

Robert Bathurst described the family's sad state of affairs in a letter to Lord Bathurst, dated Charles Town, 12 November 1737: "I humbly acknowledge myself in a fault for not writing to Your Lordship before. But being in Georgia, I was sure that all my letters would have stopped, especially by reason that I am obliged to let Your Lordship know of the ill treatment our family has received in that colony. For when my dear mother lay on her deathbed, we had no boat to go down to Savannah to get necessities for her, and I wrote to my sister to go to Mr. Causton to get something for my mother, but he would let her having nothing but one bottle of Madeira wine...After my mother's death my father was persuaded to marry again to an old gentle-woman of kin to the Duke of Chandois and was told she had a great deal of money and such other falsities. But on the contrary she brought us much in debt, which after my father's death I and my brother-in-law Piercy were obliged to pay....After my mother's death we very often wanted necessities, and, when my dear father lay upon his deathbed, we sent to Mr.

¹⁴ Letter of Walter Augustine to Mr. Westbrook in Georgia, dated 6 February 1734/5

¹⁵ A letter from Thomas Causton dated 7 July 1735 reporting the conditions in the colony to the Georgia Trustees

Causton, but he'd let us having nothing....My Lord, my father died the 19 December 1736, and on the 21st Causton sent and took from me a maidservant whom I had by my mother-in-law...." ¹⁶

COLONIAL GEORGIANS
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To avoid paying his father's debts, Robert ran away to Charles Towne¹⁷ where he mostly lived on salt beef and rice. When he first arrived a group of unhappy runaway Georgians tried to frighten him away.

The Bathurst plantation was reported as being deserted in November of 1737, as was the adjoining plantation of Walter Augustine, where there had been six in the family, and a sawmill. The last Bathurst, Robert, met his unfortunate fate when he was killed by Negroes on 9 September 1739.

Conditions in the colony worsened with dismal reports of desertions. Darien reported that their once population of 250 persons had now dwindled to only 53, with 11 trust servants. Frederica had fifty houses, and 120 persons, who were deserting daily. Joseph's Town, a settlement located 4 miles below Ebenezer on River, where some Scots had settled with thirty servants, was now abandoned. The plantation *Landiloe*, which was a mile below Robert Williams' plantation where he had forty servants, was also abandoned.

Others reported abandoned or in ruins was Mr. Cooksey's settlement; Capt. Watkins' plantation; Irene where John Wesley built a house for the Indian School; three families who had settled five miles southeast of Thunderbolt; Hampstead where the Germans settled in 1733; 10 families who had settled four miles southward of the Island of Skidaway; twelve families who had settled on Tybee Island in 1734; 10 families had now left Ft. Arguile; *Hermitage* plantation settled by Hugh Anderson with seventeen in the family and servants; Count Zinzendorf's settlement of Germans; at Augusta a group of Indian traders; and on the west side of Savannah, all the Jews were gone except three or four.

Patrick Tailfer's plantation was settled, but suffered hardships. Jacob Mathews' plantation, formerly *Musgroves*, called *The Cow Pen*, once having ten servants, now only had two or three to look after his cattle. Mr. Houston's plantation, located twelve miles south of Savannah, now only had one servant. Thomas Causton's *Ocstead* on Augustine Creek, had only a few servants left. William Stephen's plantation located on the Vernon River, however, had 5 or 6 servants who had cleared 7 or 8 acres

Highgate which once had 20 was now in ruins, having only two families remaining. Hope Island, on the mouth of the Vernon River had settlements of Jo. Fallowfield, Hen. Parker and Noble Jones, with considerable hogs and some cattle.

On 20 November 40 men servants arrived in Georgia and were sent to Dairen. There were placed in the care of Lt. Jo. Moore Mackintosh. He was authorized to offer each freeholder to take one each of those servants upon their giving security and paying 8 pounds sterling in twelve months' time. The remainder were to be employed in sawing and cutting timber for the Trust on the wild lands near Darien for the use of the public good. Others were to be employed at public work, two women, one girl and one boy. Seven Scottish servants in Mr. Bradley's care were employed in the cultivation of 300 acres for religious uses at Frederica. The residue of all servants were offered to Frederica residents at the cost of 8 pounds per head. One woman was sent to Mr. John Brown, and one woman was sent to the widow Vanderplank; two men servants went to Archibald Macbane and one woman to Grace Bedford, the widow of Nathaniel Polhill.

Few ships were being sent from Carolina to the Savannah market. Temporary relief came when a sloop laden with provisions arrived from New York, Capt. Lubois, Master, but the greater part of the cargo was consigned to a well-off Jew, Henriquez Nunis. The other part of the cargo went to Mr. Causton's stores, with the ship's Master disposing of garden-roots, cabbages, fowls, butter and beer to the inhabitants.

¹⁶ General Oglethorpe's Georgia, Colonial Letters 1733-1737

¹⁷ The only surviving heir, Robert Bathurst, born ca 1718, christened 25 March 1719. Wife, Patty

Thomas Causton was still in control of dispensing goods from the Trustee's stores and various individuals continually complained against his mismanagement. For one, Mr. Bradley charged that Causton was jealous of him, and refused to deliver money and stores which he had a right to from the trustees. But Causton countered by flagrantly attempting to prosecute him instead.

Thomas Christie expressed his views of the ongoing Causton-Wesley affair by refusing to wear his gown at court, saying he would quit his office. However, he was told that should he decided to quit, he would never hold another office. So he put on his robes and went out to hear an open debate occurring between John Wesley and Thomas Causton. During heated moments, Wesley appeared calmer, more temperate. After the first heat, Causton counselled Wesley that he should overlook a great many things. But Wesley knew that a reconciliation was not possible, as he would not concede his strict religious decorum. As the squabble continued unsettled, Messrs. Watson and Coates presented Secretary Stephens with a large sheet of paper, containing a multitude of grievances against Causton. But Stephens wrote in his Journal: "I could not discover anything remarkably culpable".¹⁸

The ongoing grudge and embarrassment caused Sophie's uncle, Thomas Causton, and her husband to bring suit against him for defamation of character. Williamson was no fool; he knew that Sophie was the only heir of Thomas Causton and would inherit *Ocstead*, so he decided to remain steadfast in harassing Wesley. Indeed it might be argued that Wesley was jealous of Sophie's new husband. Indeed! Indeed! Wesley wrote in his journal that "he (Williamson) was not remarkable for handsomeness, greatness, wit, knowledge, sense, and least of all for religion. "Ironically, his assessment of Williamson was acutely accurate. For more than twenty years after Causton's death, Williamson sought to own *Ocstead*, while irresponsibly allowing the flourishing plantation to fall into disarray.

The defamation of character suit brought by Sophie's uncle, Thomas Causton and her husband against John Wesley was ready to be tried before the grand jury on Monday, 22 November. Mr. Causton addressed the grand jury with a long and earnest charge "to beware of spiritual tyranny, and to oppose the new, illegal authority which was usurped over their consciences."

Mrs. Williamson's affidavit was read for the ears of all to hear, and a paper, which appeared to be a contrived assortment of trivial complaints, was presented to the grand jury. "That John Wesley, clerk, had broken the laws of the realm, contrary to the peace of our sovereign lord, the King, his crown and dignity: 1. By speaking and writing to Mrs. Williamson against her husband's consent; 2. By repelling her from the holy communion; 3. By not declaring his adherence to the Church of England; 4. By dividing the morning service on Sunday; 5. By refusing to baptize Mr. Parker's child otherwise than by dipping, except the parents would certify it was weak and not able to bear it; 6. By expelling William Gough from the holy communion; 7. By refusing to read the burial service over the body of Nathaniel Polhill; 8. By calling himself Ordinary of Savannah; 9. By refusing to receive William Anglionby as a godfather, only because he was not a communicant; 10. By refusing Jacob Matthews for the same reason, and baptizing an Indian trader's child with only two sponsors."

Several delays occurred within the court system, and when another affidavit was read from Mr. Causton stating that he had been abused in his own house, when Wesley called him a liar, villain, and so on. The suit went unsettled for four miserable months, while Wesley struggled to regain himself. The whole town was divided on the matter, and few persons were attending church services.

Even with the laws of the church on his side, Wesley had a feeble defense against the power Chief Magistrate, Thomas Causton. And the people of Savannah were certainly not sympathetic to spiritual matters. He wrestled with indecision. Already he'd lost his hope of christianizing the poor savage Indians, as well as the respect of ordinary citizens. What did a man

¹⁸ *ibid*

have without his reputation? He could await the trial and endure further divestment and scandal. It might even mean some time spent in jail since Causton loved to wield his authority against personal adversaries. Wesley decided that he could take no more. The following afternoon he told Mr. Causton that he'd decided to leave for England immediately, and advertised his intentions by posting a notice in the great square. But Causton was determined to stop him and sent 10 magistrates to inform Wesley that he must not leave the province because of the unsettled court case; also that he had answered the allegations against him. Williamson insisted that Wesley post bond to answer his action for defamation of character. The bond was set at 50 pounds. Wesley refused to cooperate. The magistrates published an order for officers and sentinels to keep alert and prevent Wesley from leaving the colony.

But Wesley packed his meager belongings and early one morning without telling anyone, enlisted several servant boys to row him to Skidoway Island where he planned to sail to Pursyburg, and then to go by foot to Port Royal. He wrote in his Journal: "Fri. December 2...Being now only a prisoner at large in a place where I knew by experience every day would give fresh opportunity to procure evidence of words I never said and actions I never did, I saw clearly the hour was come for leaving this place, and as soon as evening prayers were over, about eight o'clock, the tide then serving, I shook off the dust of my feet and left Georgia, after having preached the Gospel there (not as I ought but I was able) one year and nearly 9 months."

Stephens was disappointed that Wesley was not intercepted and was surprised that Wesley took with him such persons as Mr. Gough and Mr. Campell, who were known to be idle, pert and impudent persons. Gough left a wife and child behind. "Notwithstanding all the Precaution that was taken, it was known this Morning, that Mr. Wesley went off last Night, and with him Mr. Coates, a Constable, Gough a Tything-man, and one Campell a Barber."

On 22 December, Wesley sailed for England, and was never to return. History would forever note the Wesley brothers unhappy sojourn in Georgia.

As the news of the treatment of the minister, John Wesley, reached the ears of some malcontents in Darien, who were already upset about the tenure of land ownership, Capt. Hugh Mackay advanced his argument in favor of change, getting Mr. Brownfield to agree that much prejudice went against Wesley and Bradley. Mackay's report frightened some of the servants at Inverness, and three ran away.

Town officials dwindled as Constable Vanderplank who had been ill a long time, lying in a dangerous and decaying state, died on 11 December 1737. Coates had run away and Fallowfield was not to be relied on, and Jones, the surveyor, was very seldom in town. Vanderplank was buried that evening, in a soldier-like manner, with about forty men under Arms, attending him to the grave, firing three volleys, and several minute guns firing from the fort throughout his interment. Ironically, Thomas Causton read the funeral service.

In the meanwhile, Fallowfield who owned a new plantation in the country suffered great losses as his house burned to the ground, a handsome, well framed hut, very commodious. Also consumed in flames was with all his stores, goods, linens and bedding. As no one knew exactly what caused this accident, the townsfolk had something new to wrangle over. Mrs. Fallowfield said that the house broke into flames as she was walking out to meet her husband who was coming from town with more stores and provisions. As she went outside, shut the door. A little fire was present in the chimney, and somehow some sparks must have set the house in flames.

A replacement was needed for the Wesleys. Reverend George Whitefield was licensed¹⁹ to do ecclesiastical work in Georgia as a Deacon of the Church of England and when he landed on 8 May of 1738, he was named as minister of the parishes at Savannah and Frederica, until successors to the Wesley could be chosen. Whitefield was very young, twenty-two years old, had studied at Oxford University, and had already been in the Diaconate for about two years. If age was a problem, as soon as he presented his first sermon, he was quickly accepted. His words carried charismatic charm as well as eloquence. Not long after his arrival, he wrote: "We have an

¹⁹ December 1737.

excellent Christian School, and near a hundred constantly attend at evening prayers. The people receive me gladly as yet, and seem to be most kindly affected toward me... I visit from house to house, catechize, read prayers twice and expound the two lessons every day; read to a houseful of people three times a week; expound the two lessons at five in the morning; read prayers and preach twice and expound the catechism to servants, etc. at seven in the evening, every Sunday."

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In October,²⁰ Reverend William Norris arrived in Georgia, having been appointed as the official Anglican minister to preach at Savannah. He preached his first sermon on 22 October, but it drew a little criticism from Secretary Williams Stephens who made the comparison that Rev. Whitefield was a man of eloquence in the pulpit, and that although Norris was punctual in catechizing the children, baptizing infants and visiting the sick, he did not assume enough confidence.

When Whitefield returned from England²¹, this time having the priesthood, Norris found himself replaced. It became Norris' unhappy lot to become the minister the flock at Frederica, where no house was ever built for him.

Norris, known to have a sour temper, quarreled with Oglethorpe, and was accused of neglecting his duty. William Stephens must have favored "high church" rituals, as took Norris' side, feeling that Norris deserved to be treated with respect and attention. But one day Rev. Whitefield caught Norris playing cards and punished him by forbidding him the sacrament.²²

From his first parish in Savannah, Norris only had a small flock of parishioners who attended his services. As the Wesleys discovered, and now Norris, the improbable spiritual awakening of the colony and missionary opportunities fell to the wayside, as he unwittingly became embroiled in public scandal. He had a German maid, Elizabeth Penner. The following year Elizabeth was found to be pregnant. Elizabeth started the rumor that it was her master who was responsible. Norris hastily dispatched Elizabeth to Savannah to avoid further scandal, but it was no use. Townspeople would no longer allow Rev. Norris to perform nuptial rites, and he suffered greatly. Elizabeth finally recanted her accusation, but his reputation was so severely damaged that he was no longer credible.

²⁰ 1738

²¹ 1739

²² 1740