

Chapter 20. Wrightsboro

THE COLONIAL GEORGIANS

The idea of Quaker settlements for Georgia began in 1743, with John Phillips, Esquire, who was elected as a Trustee to go to England on 13 March to propose two Acts at Queens Square, Westminster: "Monday 19th December 1743, That it be referred to Sir John Phillips, etc. to be prepared a new Act for establishing the tenure of lands in Georgia and reducing Quit Rents thereof."¹

The founder of Brandon, a village which later became known as Wrightsboro was Edmund Grey, a pretending Quaker from Virginia. He had made the journey with a number of followers. The site was located on Little River. Grey was compelled by Governor Reynolds to abandon his little town, and he settled another area lying between the Altamaha and St. John's rivers which became a popular refuge for criminals and debtors

Quaker, Joseph Mattock was granted 40,000 acres of land for a town by the name of Wrightsboro, which was named in honor of Governor Sir James Wright. Mattock was about seventy years of age, and was the chief magistrate of the settlement. William Bartram described him as being hearty, active, and public spirited.² February 1, 1768. Joseph Maddox, whose ancestors were from Chester, was born about 1720 in the Brandywine Valley on the Pennsylvania near the Delaware border. In the 1750s, Joseph led a colony of Quakers to settle on the Eno River in Orange County, North Carolina. After local problems with the British officials, the colony relocated in the 1760s to Wrightsborough.

In 1767, Jonathan Sell and Joseph Maddox, both members of the Cane Creek Meeting in North Carolina, applied for land grants in the territory of Georgia. 12,000 acres were reserved for the Quakers provided at least 10 families settled on the land by 40 families were in the first group, led by Joseph Maddock and Jonathan Sell. In fact so many settlers arrived in that first year that on December 6, 1768 Joseph Maddock, along with Jonathan Sell and Thomas Watson, asked for an additional grant. The text of the grant reads as follows: "At a Council held in the Council Chamber at Savannah on Tuesday, the 7th February, 1769, Present His Excellency James Wright, Esquire In Council : Upon reading a Petition of Joseph Maddock and Jonathan Sell two of the People called Quakers on the behalf of themselves and the rest of the Friends lately come to settle in this Province from North Carolina Setting forth (among other things) that sometime Since there was a reserve of Lands ordered to be made for forty families of their People it being then supposed not more than that Number would Settle in the Province but that there were already about Seventy Families come in and actually Settled And praying that a larger Extent of Land might be allotted and reserved for them for a further Term they expecting a considerable Number of their Friends might yet joint them _ And also praying that their several Lands might be laid out; and Grant for the same passed; and a Road from their Settlement run; agreeable to the encouragement formerly given them, on the faith whereof they were come into the Province It is Resolved that the Land on both Sides Germany's Creek to the Head thereof and from thence to continue this same Course 'till it intersects the Indian Line (not taken up by the People already come) be reserved for the same purpose for twelve Months next ensuing; that a Road be run from their Settlement; their Lands Surveyed in the several Tracts and proportions following and Grants for the same passed and perfected to their respective persons herein after named that is to say : Thomas Watson, 500 acres, Joseph Maddock, 300 acres, Deborah Stubbs, 300 acres, Thomas Jackson, 250 acres, John Stubbs, 100 acres, Jonathan Sell, 300 acres, Joseph Mooney, 550 acres, Ann Stubbs (widow), 150 acres, John Jones, 200 acres, Francis Jones, 250 acres, Isaac Low, 250 acres, James Hart, 250 acres, Thomas Hart, 200 acres, Richard Jones, 150 acres, Daniel McCarty, 400 acres, Samuel Oliver, 250 acres, Richard Moore, 100 acres, Thomas Omaley, 200 acres,

¹ Colonial Records of Georgia by Candler.

² Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, etc., pp. 35-36

Thomas Linn, 250 acres, Robert McClen, 300 acres, James Morrow 350 acres, Peter Perkins, 500 acres, John Oliver, 250 acres, Henry Ashfield, 350 acres, Richard Moore, 100 acres, William Elam, 250 acres, Abolam Jackson, 200 acres, John Slater, 400 acres, Joseph Hollingsworth, 100 acres, John Whitsit, 200 acres, John Whitsit, Jr., 250 acres, Stephen Day, 200 acres, James Emmett, 200 acres, Hugh Tinnen, 200 acres, Cornelius Cochran, 300 acres, Isaac Vernon, 350 acres, John Sidwell, 300 acres, Amos Vernon, 200 acres, George Morrow, 300 acres, Oliver Matthews, 250 acres, John Perry, 250 acres.

The New Garden Meetings held in Guilford County, North Carolina in 1751, and Tom's Creek Meetings held in Surry County, North Carolina in 1772, produced some of the families which removed to Wrightsboro. Friends began migrating from Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Virginia. All Quakers were given individual land grants of 100 acres. The Wrightsboro Monthly Meeting (originally spelled Wrightsborough, after Governor James Wright) was affiliated with the Western Quarterly Meeting until 1787. In 1788 it became part of the New Garden Quarterly Meeting and from 1792 until the Wrightsboro meeting was abandoned it was affiliated with the Bush River, South Carolina Quarterly Meeting.

Several townsmen from Savannah moved into the village and joined the religion.

The town was located in Columbia County (now McDuffie County) near Thomson. Like all the small villages, only a bare outlines of the once thriving town of Wrightsboro can now be seen. The old Quaker Meeting House burned down, but the small Methodist church that replaced it probably looks very much like the original meeting house. Some of the original pews from the old Quaker Meeting House remained after the fire and are located in the Methodist Church.

After the American Revolution, the town began to die. On 13 April 1787 Major William Brown and his wife, Anne, of Richmond County, sold to Daniel Williams and John Stubbs, Jr. for 15 pounds, as Trustees for the Society of People, known as Quakers, an absolute purchase and freehold of 43 acres in the Township of Wrightsboro, on the water of Upton Creek, containing the house known as "Quaker Meeting House", including a spring, which land had been confiscated from Sir James Wright and then conveyed by the Commissioners to William Brown on 22 November 1783.³

On 21 March 1793 Robert Flournoy relinquished all his rights and claims to 43 acres known as "Quaker Meeting House Tract", which was part of 1200 acres originally granted to Sir James Wright, later granted to Daniel Williams and John Stubbs, Jr. as Trustees for Quaker Meeting House by William Brown, deceased, on 13 April 1787.⁴

³ Columbia County Deeds

⁴ ibid