

## Noble Jones.

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**D**R. NOBLE JONES was bred to the profession of physic, and lived at Lambeth, a village in the county of Surrey, seated on the south side of the river Thames, opposite Westminster, in which county his ancestors were born and resided. Being intimately acquainted with General Oglethorpe, he was induced by the general to accompany him to America on his first voyage in 1732. This friendship lasted all their lives. After General Oglethorpe's return to England to live, he sent Colonel Jones his portrait, with his Indian pupil standing by his side reading. It was lost when Savannah was captured by the English.

Dr. Noble Jones' family then consisted only of his wife and two children, a daughter and a son, Noble Wymberley. It was his first intention to accompany the General without his family, but his wife objected to being left. Having promised the General to accompany him, he concluded to bring his family, not, however, with an intention of residing permanently, but after his arrival he was pleased with the country and decided to remain. Before leaving England, Dr. Jones, by Deeds, to which the Seal of the Corporation of the Trustees of the Colony of Georgia was affixed, was appointed November 7, 1732, Conservator of the Peace, and the next day, November the 8th, 1732, Recorder in the place of Thomas Christie. How long he remained Recorder is not certain, but he still held that office in 1735, and was succeeded by Thomas Christie. He was appointed Surveyor by General Oglethorpe February 1, 1734-5, but did not give satisfaction and was discharged by the Trustees, and also suspended from the office of constable which he

had held for some time. To the last office he was soon reappointed. That he was a good surveyor is testified to by Mr. Stephens in a letter to the Trustees 31st December, 1740. Other letters endorse Mr. Stephens' opinion.

He was also appointed by General Oglethorpe "Agent for the Indians," and for Tomo-chi-chi, in particular.

During this time he was very active protecting the southern frontier. He writes to General Oglethorpe July 6, 1735, "I have been twice to the most southern parts of the Province, the first time upon an alarm with about fifty men (all volunteers except ye scout-boat) the particulars of which voyage (for fear a false account should come to your hands) I will send by next. The second time was with Captain Dunbar, who I do not doubt has informed you thereof before now."

The constables were responsible for the colonists attending to their military duties, and Jones and Fallowfield are mentioned as the two constables, "in whom the civil and military power was lodged." Each of these two controlled three wards.

On the 10th of April, 1738, Mr. Stephens writes: "The two constables Jones and Fallowfield (which was all we had) came early to town on the present occasion, from their distant Plantations and took breakfast with me, conferring on the affair they came about, which was more immediately to look into the condition of the arms. It was resolved (for experiment sake) to order the drum to beat immediately to arms, that thereby we may see how alert the people were and what number would get together on a sudden, without previous notice; it was so done and in less than an hour's time we saw eighty-odd men in the center of the town, with their proper arms well appointed, and all able men, freeholders; such as were absent, were almost every man abroad busy in planting."

When General Oglethorpe invaded Florida and laid siege

to St. Augustine, some forty volunteers under Noble Jones joined the South Carolina regiment, in which he held a lieutenant's commission. On their return, the company was disbanded in Savannah, according to the General's orders, and Noble Jones was sent by him to Charlestown to collect the pay due them. Soon after Noble Jones' arrival in the Colony, he leased from the Trustees the southern end of the Isle of Hope; later he received a grant from the Trustees, which in turn was exchanged for a royal grant, when the Crown took charge of the colony. He named his place Wormsloe and built on it a watch-house, to protect Jones' Narrows, and later he built a large tappy fort, the ruins of which are still well defined. This fort was successfully defended by his daughter Mary against a party of Indians, during her father's absence. The other two-thirds of the Isle of Hope were owned by Messrs. Fallowfield and Parker. All three acted as Magistrates at the same time "by Colonel Oglethorpe's order till the Trustees' further pleasure be known." Wormsloe is mentioned in the London Magazine of August, 1745:

"We arrived in somewhat more than two days at the *Narrows*, where there is a kind of *Manchecolas* Fort, for their defence, garrison'd from *Wormsloe*, where we soon arrived. It is the settlement of Mr. Jones, 10 miles S. E. of Savannah, and we could not help observing, as we passed, several very pretty plantations. *Wormsloe*, is one of the most agreeable spots I ever saw, and the improvements of that ingenious man are very extraordinary; he commands a company of Marines, who are quartered in huts near his house, which is a tolerable defensible place with small arms. From this house there is a vista of near three miles cut thro' the woods to Mr. *Whitefield's* orphan house, which has a very fine effect on the sight."

When the Spaniards invaded Georgia in 1742, Noble Jones

was in command of a company of scouts, with General Oglethorpe's regiment on St. Simons, prepared to resist the Spanish army which had landed there. It was through his vigilance that General Oglethorpe was able to surprise and thoroughly defeat them at Bloody Marsh. Captain McCall gives the following account of this affair: "Capt. Noble Jones, with a detachment of regulars and Indians, being out on a scouting party, fell in with a small detachment of the enemies' advance, who were surprised and made prisoners, not deeming themselves so far in front of the main army. From these prisoners information was received that the whole Spanish army was advancing: this was immediately communicated by an Indian runner to the General, who detached Capt. Dunbar, with a company of grenadiers, to join the Regulars and Indians, with orders to harass the enemy on their advance. These detachments having formed a junction, observed at a distance the Spanish army on the march; and taking a favorable position near a marsh formed an ambuscade. The enemy fortunately halted within a hundred paces of this position, stacked their arms and made fires, and were preparing their kettles for cooking, when a horse observed some of the party in ambuscade and, frightened at the uniform of Regulars, began to snort and gave the alarm. The Spaniards ran to their arms but were shot down in great numbers by Oglethorpe's detachment, who continued invisible to the enemy, and after repeated attempts to form, in which some of their principal officers fell, they fled with the utmost precipitation, leaving their camp equipage on the field, and never halted until they got under cover of the guns of their battery and ships."

The first official notice of the appointment of Noble Jones as a captain is on the 26th of March, 1742-3. *Egmont's Journal* has this reference: "Noble Jones made a Captain by General Oglethorpe," but he fulfilled the duties of a captain and was

called so before that date. After his return from the Spanish campaign, he seems to have devoted himself to his scout-boat duties (Captain of which he had been named by General Oglethorpe), and to the improvement of Wormsloe. He raised mulberry trees and silk-worms and the colony in a measure depended upon him for worm-seed.

He and Capt. Demetree cruised together with their scout-boats to intercept unlawful trading at Tybee.

On December 22, 1739, "with boat well armed he captured a schooner in *Ossybow Sound*, and carried her around to Tybee."

Meanwhile he did not neglect his military duties in Savannah, and when, in 1749, Mary Musgrave, now Mary Bosomworth, assumed the title of Independent Empress, and putting herself at the head of a large body of warriors, set out for Savannah to demand from the President and Council a formal acknowledgment of her assumed rights, the militia was ready to receive her. President Stephens put the town in the best state of defense possible, and received the Indians boldly. Jones' History of Georgia says, "The Militia was ordered under arms, and as the Indians entered the town Capt. Noble Jones, at the head of a troop of horse, stopped them and demanded whether their visit was of a friendly or of a hostile character. Receiving no reply, he commanded them to ground their arms, declaring that his instructions were not to suffer an armed Indian to set foot in the town, and that he was determined to enforce these orders at every hazard. The Indians reluctantly submitted. Later, at their solicitation, their arms were returned to them, but strict orders were issued not to allow them any ammunition.

When at last an amicable adjustment of existing difficulties had been effected, Mary, drunk with liquor, rushed into the Assembly, and told the President that the Indians were her people, and that he had no business with them. Mary had been

arrested and locked up and had just been released. The President calmly threatened to confine her again. Turning to Malatche in a great rage she repeated to him with some ill-natured comments what the President had said. Malatche thereupon sprang from his seat, laid hold of his arms, and called upon the rest to follow his example, and dared any man to touch the Queen. In a moment the whole house was filled with tumult and uproar. Every Indian having a tomahawk in his hand the President expected nothing but instant death. During the confusion Captain Noble Jones, who commanded the guard with wonderful courage, interposed and ordered the Indians immediately to surrender their arms. This they reluctantly did. Mary was conveyed to a private room, where a guard was placed over her, and all further communications with the Indians were denied her during her stay in Savannah."

About this time the expediency of subordinating Georgia to South Carolina was in certain high quarters seriously discussed and gave the Trustees much concern. Before they could communicate with President Stephens, Captain Demetree landed at Causton's Bluff with boats, which having brought the last of Oglethorpe's disbanded regiment to Charlestown, on their way to England, were returning to Frederica in his charge. He had a small detachment of ten or twelve men, and said that he was on his way to Frederica to assume command at that point, and that he took orders only from the Governor of South Carolina, and that the Trustees were cognizant of the fact. "As he failed to report to the President and his assistants, and disclose to them either his orders or intentions, they were at a loss to understand his extraordinary conduct, and ordered Capt. Noble Jones to wait upon him and demand an explanation of and an apology for his discourtesy. Capt. Demetree's reply to Capt. Jones was that he was acting under instructions from his G

Duke of Bedford, communicated with the consent of the Council, and that he was to receive his orders from, and report to the Governor of South Carolina. He reluctantly appeared before the Council in answer to their summons." "After Captain Demetree had made ample apology to Council he was appointed to assume command of the military force stationed at Frederica. The annexation of Georgia to South Carolina was accomplished at this time by stationing soldiers from three independent South Carolina Companies, in proper places in Georgia, 'to preserve the possession of the Province.'" On July 13, 1750, the Trustees recommended to Common Council that Noble Jones be appointed an Assistant in and for the Province of Georgia and the appointment under seal was made to him July 16, 1750.

On April the 8th, 1751, the Trustees recommended to the Common Council, his appointment as Register of the Province, and the appointment followed on May 24, 1751.

About the middle of May of this year, news came from Augusta that there was fear of an Indian invasion. "Accordingly the Magazine was examined, officers were appointed, and ordered to muster and discipline the militia, a troop of horse was ordered to be raised, composed of such inhabitants as were possessed of three hundred acres of land. Noble Jones was appointed Colonel, and his son, Noble Wymberly Jones, who had been a lieutenant in Oglethorpe's regiment was appointed to command the Troopers."

The alarm was exaggerated but it served to bring out the militia, which consisted of 220 men, infantry and cavalry, and they paraded (on the 16th of April, 1751, under the then Colonel Noble Jones) "behaved well, and made a pretty appearance. He was appointed "to accompany Mr. Robinson in his journey into the state of the Colony." According to Mr. Haber-

sham he was a stiff churchman and took a great deal of voluntary trouble, in building the church, and in all church matters aiding greatly his friend Rev. Mr. Zouberbuhler.

In the last year of the Trustee's government of the Colony he was Captain of the Marines and Scout-boat at Warrington, Assistant to the President, Register of the Province, Commissioner to treat with the Indians, Member of the Council to report on the state of the Colony, and Colonel of the regiment.

The Trustees surrendered the Colony to the British Government the 23d of June, 1752, and Benjamin Martyn was appointed agent of the Colony in England. Upon the death of President Parker, who had succeeded President Stephens (the first President of the Colony appointed in April, 1741), Patrick Graham became President. His assistants were James H. sham, Noble Jones, Pickering Robinson, and Francis H. they reported to the Lords Commissioners for trade and plantations, who on the 6th of August, 1754, appointed Captain Reynolds Governor of the Province, and Noble Jones was confirmed as Member of Councils. On the 27th of November, 1754, Gov. Reynolds, with the advice of the board, appointed Noble Jones and Wm. Spencer, Esqrs., Judges to hold the appellate court of oyer and terminer, and on December 12, 1754, Noble Jones and Jonathan Byran were appointed as Judges to hold the first general court in the Province.

On March 29, 1757, "Noble Jones, of His Majesty's Council was appointed one of the New Commission of Peace." This appointment was made before the Lords of Trade had been removed from Gov. Reynolds, who on Wednesday, 15th of December, 1756, "acquainted the Board that he had thought proper to suspend Noble Jones, Esq., from all his offices, for reasons which he would lay before the King." Gov. Reynolds "removed Noble Jones from the Board and Bench to gratify Mr. Simpson's

and positively affirmed to promote the establishment of his titles to the Indian lands with a view to share the same." Gov. Reynolds was summoned to England to answer his conduct in Georgia. He embarked in a merchant ship in February, 1757, resigning the government into the hands of Lieutenant-Governor Henry Ellis, who became Governor on the 17th of May, 1758. Noble Jones was reappointed by an order of the English Council to Governor Ellis, in 1759, with his former precedence as Councillor, and as Senior Justice of the General Court.

Under Gov. Ellis, he was one of His Majesty's Council, Chief Justice of the General Court, Colonel of the Regiment, and Treasurer of the Province, having been appointed to this office by Gov. Ellis on the 16th day of February, 1760. . . . His salary but commission of five per cent, which on the year's tax amounted to about sixty-five pounds, and may be increased to eighty pounds." Gov. Ellis resigned his office on account of ill health, and handed over the government to Lieutenant-Governor James Wright, who was appointed Governor on the 20th of March, 1761. In the following year he was one of the Lords of the Board of Trade, Governor Wright suspended Noble Jones' services as Chief Justice of the Colony, after Mr. Simpson's death and before Mr. Anthony Stokes' arrival.

SAV., GA., 28 Sept., 1769.

James:—I take the liberty to acquaint your Lordships that Noble Jones, Esq., Senior Judge of the Courts here, has every respect done and performed the office and duty of Chief Justice from 20th of October, 1768, when Mr. Simpson died, to the arrival of Mr. Stokes on the first of this instant, and altho' Mr. Jones was not bred to the law, yet I think his Justice was only administered during that time and

“with integrity, and I have not heard any complaint or fault found with his conduct. I therefore submit to your Lordships whether it may not be reasonable that Mr. Jones shall receive the salary from the death of Mr. Simpson to the appointment of Mr. Stokes, and half of it from the appointment of Mr. Stokes until his arrival here. I have given Mr. Jones two certificates of his having done his duty and have the honor to be My Lords, Your Lordships most obliged and obedient servant.

JAMES WRIGHT.”

“The Right Hon. Lords of Trade.”

On the 10th of July, 1771, Governor Wright availed himself of a leave of absence, and three days afterwards Mr. James Habersham took the usual oaths of office, and entered upon the discharge of the gubernatorial duties.

In a long letter to the Earl of Hillsborough Governor Habersham relates that the Assembly had, against royal orders, elected Noble Wymberley Jones three times Speaker in succession, and that they refused to leave this fact out of their minutes, on the subsequent election of Archibald Bulloch, and that he had dissolved the Assembly. Noble Wymberley Jones was the son of Noble Jones, and as ardent a patriot as Noble Jones was a thorough royalist. His opposition to the Crown and his upholding of the cause of liberty seems to have embittered Mr. Habersham, who, not able to punish the son, brought his spleen to bear upon the father. He writes to the Earl of Hillsborough April 30, 1772:

“My Lord, it is very painful to me to say or even insinuate a disrespectful word of anyone, and every person who knows me will acknowledge that it is contrary to my disposition to dip my pen in gall, but I cannot help considering Mr. Jones’ conduct for some time past in opposing public business as very ungrateful and unworthy of a good man, as his family have reaped

more advantages from government than any I know in this Province. He was several years First Lieutenant and Surgeon in a company of Rangers paid by the Crown, and in these capacities met with great indulgence. His father is the King’s Treasurer, and if I am not mistaken reaps very considerable emoluments from it by his accounts having never been clearly stated and examined by any Assembly that I know of: and such an inquiry may not be agreeable. Gov. Wright, in his speech to the Assembly in October, 1770, recommended our Finances and Publick Accounts be examined into; but that Assembly was dissolved in February following and no step taken therein, and many people suspect that this very necessary examination operates with some to retard and impede business. I certainly meant to recommend this inquiry to the late Assembly in the strongest terms, and as we have now no Assembly, I shall require the Treasurer to lay before me, in Council, a clear account of the produce of our funds, also the certificates that have been issued for different services, and of every account, that may be necessary to possess me with a state of the Treasury, and after that is done I shall pursue such measures, as may seem necessary for the service of His Majesty and the Province, and may be advised to by Council, of which I shall inform your Lordship.”

That the Treasurer’s accounts were examined and approved of at times by the deputy auditor and general and the Governor is shown by a treasury account, signed Noble Jones, Treasurer, February 26, 1767.

Audited by Gray Elliott, Dt. Aud. Gen., 6th February, and approved by James Wright, 10th of February.

On further deliberation, Mr. Habersham either found out that the accounts had been audited, or that an investigation was unnecessary, as there is no record of one having taken place—and as Noble Jones continued Treasurer until the day of his

death, which occurred three years afterwards, it would seem reasonable to suppose that Mr. Habersham's fears were groundless. During Governor Wright's administration he took part in all important matters appertaining to Georgia, and his fidelity and absolute devotion to the Crown were unswerving.

In a card appearing in the "*Georgia Gazette*" September 7, 1774, his name appears with James Habersham, Josiah Tatnall, and ninety-three others, criticising the meeting of the 10th of August at Tondee's Tavern in Savannah, and protesting that the resolutions there adopted should not be accepted as reflecting the sentiments of the people of Georgia."

He performed his judicial duties up to the last. "Upon the assembling of the General Court 10th of October, 1775, ten of the jurors summoned refused to be sworn. Others "behaved insolently" and the conduct of business was practically obstructed. Mr. Noble Jones, one of the associate justices, was then "lying extremely ill." He died on the 2d of November following at Wormsloe, and was buried near the fort, on the place he loved so well. His remains were removed from Wormsloe to the colonial burying-ground in Savannah, and later to Bonaventure Cemetery, near Savannah. His death was hastened by the dissensions among the colonists; he could not sympathize with the idea of separation from, or independence of, the mother country, and he saw nothing but storms and troubles ahead for his beloved Georgia. During a long life, during which he held nearly every office in the Province, if he was found fault with he never failed, upon investigation of the charges against him, to rise higher in the public esteem. Notwithstanding Noble Wymberley Jones' zealous patriotism, he was a devoted son, and, though then first elected a member of the Continental Congress, remained with his father at Wormsloe until his father's death.

On his tombstone in Bonaventure Cemetery is inscribed the following:

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NOBLE JONES, OF WORMSLOE, ESQ.

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Senior Judge of the General Court and Acting Chief Justice of  
the Province of Georgia.

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For twenty-one years Member and Sometimes President of His  
Majesty's Council.

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Colonel of the first Georgia Regiment.

Died November 2, 1775. Aged, 73—

W. J. DERENNE.