

John Wesley.



Mrs. Wesley of Lincolnshire, England had seven sons who were ministers of the Gospel. When General Oglethorpe visited the family in Epworth to convince the lady to send one of her sons to Georgia, she declared that she regretted that she only had her two youngest sons to give to the

cause, the others already engaged. They were clerics of the new religion of Methodism. It was catching on, but still unpopular. On the voyage over, the brothers had compassion for the savages and a strong desire to teach the Gospel to the Creeks in the region. John Wesley settled in Savannah and Charles Wesley in Frederica.

Charles Wesley found it difficult to convince the settlers at Frederica to attend church service. They had never heard of the Methodist religion and had no use for the strictness of a religion. As a result, they only allowed him residence inside a tiny hut built of palm leaves where they frequently tested his patience by removing his clothes and toothbrush. Too, there were frequent disputes amongst the colonists and Wesley found himself in the mix. A particular instance sets the stage for Wesley's mistreatment. When Mrs. Anderson's husband owned an apothecary shop. She called upon Wesley to chastise her maid, instead of chastising the maid, he tried to convince her to employ patience towards her maid. She exploded in a tirade of anger and revenge. Wesley was surrounded by rowdy opposition against prayer books, communion, and the rituals of religion. Certain settlers had the habit of making hoopla on Saturday evenings. On Sunday, during church service, these drunken individuals disrupted church service by firing guns.

The Romance of John Wesley

The Magistrate of Savannah, Thomas Causton, had a young niece, Sophie, who had come from Charleston to live with Thomas and his wife, Martha at Ockstead Plantation.*

Sophie was attracted to Rev. John Wesley and accompanied him to preach the gospel to the friendly Creek Indians. Wesley, poor and scarcely

able to support a wife, ignored her when she came to his sickbed. Insulted, after having spent so much time with him, that she did not get a proposal of marriage, she returned to Charleston where she was married two weeks later to a rather lazy fellow, Mr. Williamson. Sophie returned with her husband to Ockstead. The first Sunday, she attended church with Mr. Williamson, to show him off to Wesley. However, was refused the sacrament because she had not provided prior notice, which was the custom. The embarrassment embittered Sophie and she complained to her uncle Thomas. Causton and Sophie conjured up some twenty-two ridiculous complaints against the minister and called Wesley into court to answer charges. The trial lasted all day. Wesley, quite aware that he was losing, asked that he might return home that evening. Causton granted the request.

Later that evening, he boarded a vessel to Charleston. The unhappy John Wesley sent a note to his brother, Charles Wesley, a minister in St. Simons, that he was returning to England.**

*Thomas Causton was among the first colonists to arrive in Savannah; he was appointed to the office of Magistrate while en route. Ockstead was the first plantation built in Savannah and planted with 500 mulberry trees. He sold his first crop of leaves to the estuary for the benefit of nourishing silkworms. Ockstead overlooked Augustine Creek.

Charles Wesley, brother to John Wesley, was generally mistreated and shunned by the colonists on St. Simons who fired guns on the Sabbath, drank liquor, etc., soon followed his brother back to England.

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Sources: John Wesley Diary at Historical Society of Savannah, Savannah, Georgia;

<https://georgiapioneers.com/counties/countychatham.html>

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-Links on 8 Genealogy Websites:

"<https://georgiapioneers.com/restricted/SE/vault/W/johnwesley.pdf>">