

DECONSTRUCTING TRYON PALACE: EXPLORING THE COLONIAL REVIVAL
IN TWENTIETH CENTURY NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	7
CHAPTER TWO	22
CHAPTER THREE	76
CHAPTER FOUR.....	90
WORKS CITED	122
APPENDIX.....	129

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Tryon Palace, the reconstructed colonial governor's mansion of North Carolina. Located in New Bern, the Palace was originally designed and constructed from 1767-1770 by John Hawks for Royal Governor William Tryon. In 1798, the Palace burned after a fire accidentally started in the basement. Homes, businesses, and a highway were built on the original site of the Palace. A movement to reconstruct the Palace began in the 1930s, but did not gain real strength until the 1940s when Maude Moore Latham, a Greensboro resident and native of New Bern, established a trust fund for the reconstruction of the Palace. Based on original plans of the Palace found in New York and England, the reconstructed Palace opened to the public in 1959. Today, Tryon Palace still operates as a historic house museum.

This thesis will trace the history of the original and reconstructed Tryon Palace, examine the motives for the reconstruction in the 1940s and 1950s, discuss the impact of the Colonial Revival movement on New Bern and the restoration, and explain the significance of Tryon Palace for North Carolina. This thesis draws upon a variety of sources to suggest new perspectives on Tryon Palace. By examining the roots and context of the founding of the Palace, we will be better able to understand the messages conveyed at the Palace. This thesis argues that the reconstruction of Tryon Palace in the 1950s connected the people of New Bern and North Carolina to their colonial past while creating a shared identity that revolved around idealized notions of history that were typical of the Colonial Revival of the twentieth century.

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I am fortunate to have wonderful friends and colleagues in Jennifer Lancaster Peña, Stacey Schneider, and Clare Kersey. I did not anticipate that history would bring such fun, beautiful, and intelligent women into my life. Leah Boothe and Anne Whitley have also given me their support, even while not quite understanding my love of history and buildings.

Special thanks go to my family for their constant source of love and encouragement. I know my parents will celebrate the completion of this thesis as much as I will. I also want to thank my brother, grandparents, aunts, uncles, coworkers, and friends who kept asking, “How’s the thesis going?” Thank you for helping to motivate me.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Jeff and Debbie Barnes. Thank you for all your love, support, encouragement, and prayers.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Plan of the Town of Newbern.....	9
2. Detail of Sauthier’s Map, 1769.....	10
3. “The Elevation of The Governors House at Newbern, North Carolina”.....	13
4. First floor plans of Tryon’s Palace.....	13
5. Gertrude Sprague Carraway.....	28
6. Mrs. Maude Moore Latham.....	31
7. Restoration architect William Perry gives tour of Palace grounds to Commission members, 20 November 1953.....	33
8. West Wing, ca. 1890.....	39
9. West Wing, 1930.....	39
10. West Wing Renovation, ca. 1955.....	40
11. Restored West Wing, 2005.....	40
12. Gregor Norman-Wilcox at the Tryon Palace gates, 1958.....	45
13. May Kellenberger and Luther Hodges cut the ribbon on the gates of Tryon Palace, April 8, 1959.....	49
14. Front Elevation, Tryon Palace.....	54
15. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, January 1931.....	67
16. Aerial view, Palace restoration, January 3, 1956.....	68
17. Aerial view, restored Palace, 1959.....	69
18. Trent Marine Service advertisement.....	71
19. Coleman Motors advertisement.....	73
20. S.B. Parker Co. advertisement.....	74
21. “The Remodeled House”.....	91

22. Moses Griffin Building.....	93
23. New Bern Federal Building.....	93
24. William B. Blades House.....	95
25. Coor-Bishop House.....	95
26. Larry I. Moore House	96
27. John S. Garrett House.....	96
28. Clyde Eby House	97
29. E.F.C. Metz House.....	97
30. Mrs. William P.M. Bryan House	99
31. Dr. William L. Hand, Sr. House	99
32. Five Dollar North Carolina bill from 1775	108
33. Detail of bill.....	108
34. Governor Tryon's Library.....	112
35. Parlor at Tryon Palace.....	112

INTRODUCTION

Tryon Palace, North Carolina's reconstructed colonial governor's mansion, opened in April 1959 with great fanfare. Visitors to the newly opened house museum "were shocked into silence by the boom of 75mm howitzers" that greeted them as they arrived. Twelve marines fired a nineteen-gun salute and the forty-piece Second Marine Aircraft Wing Band played rousing songs to welcome the guests. The idea to reconstruct the Palace began in the 1920s, but visitors waited almost forty years for the completed restoration. Mrs. May Gordon Kellenberger presented North Carolina Governor Luther Hodges with a key to the Palace and officially turned over the title to the building and property to the state. At the ceremony, Governor Hodges commented on the "uncommon qualities of devotion, patriotism, and generosity" of the Latham and Kellenberger families who funded the \$3 million reconstruction. He remarked that the opening of the Palace was "the realization of a dream that has held our interest and stimulated our imagination for many years."¹

This thesis will interpret Tryon Palace, the reconstructed colonial governor's mansion, located in New Bern, North Carolina. It will trace the history of the original and reconstructed Tryon Palace, examine the motives for the reconstruction in the 1950s, discuss the impact of the Colonial Revival movement on New Bern and the restoration, and explain the significance of Tryon Palace for North Carolina.

Although an important historic site, Tryon Palace has been largely ignored by scholars. Scholarship concerning the Palace focuses on the eighteenth century, Governor William Tryon, Governor Josiah Martin, and is overwhelmingly celebratory. The

¹ Blackwell P. Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion* (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Commission, 1978), 127-129.

twentieth century reconstruction of the Palace as a product of the American Colonial Revival movement has received inadequate attention. Recently, Thomas E. Beaman, Jr. has written several articles on the archaeology of the Palace and the Colonial Revival gardens, but has not examined the Palace or its architecture.² Other articles on the archaeology of the Palace have recently appeared in *The North Carolina Historical Review*.³

Several books on North Carolina history mention Governor Tryon and his Palace. William S. Powell's book *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (1989) provides a thorough and well-documented picture of North Carolina history.⁴ *The Regulators in North Carolina: A Documentary History* (1971) edited by William S. Powell, James K. Huhta, and Thomas J. Farnham provides numerous primary sources on the Regulators.⁵ One of the more recent books on the causes and context of the Regulator movement is Marjoleine Kars' *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (2002).⁶ *A History of New Bern and Craven County*

² Thomas E. Beaman, Jr., "Beyond the Restoration: Reconstructing A Pattern of Elite Lifestyle at Colonial Tryon Palace," *North Carolina Archaeology* 50 (2001), 47-72 and Thomas E. Beaman, Jr., "Fables of the Reconstruction: Morley Jeffers Williams and the Excavation of Tryon Palace, 1952-1962," *North Carolina Archaeology* 49 (2000), 1-22.

³ Charles Ewen, Patricia M. Samford, and Perry Mathews, "The Sauthier Maps and the Formal Gardens at Tryon Palace: Myth or Reality?" *The North Carolina Historical Review* 79, no.3 (July 2002): 327-346 and Thomas E. Beaman, Jr., "The Archaeology of Morley Jeffers Williams and the Restoration of Historic Landscapes at Stratford Hall, Mount Vernon, and Tryon Palace," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 79, no. 3 (July 2002): 347-372.

⁴ William S. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

⁵ William S. Powell, James K. Huhta, and Thomas J. Farnham, eds., *The Regulators in North Carolina: A Documentary History, 1759-1776* (Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1971).

⁶ Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

(1987) by Alan D. Watson is one of the few sources to examine the history of New Bern from its founding to the twentieth century.⁷

Only a handful of secondary sources specifically discuss Tryon Palace. Alonzo Dill's book *Governor Tryon and His Palace* (1955) provides an overview of Governor Tryon, his administration, and the construction of his Palace.⁸ Based primarily on meeting minutes, *Three Decades of Devotion* (1978) by Blackwell P. Robinson is the only monograph that details the reconstruction of the Palace.⁹ Local historian Gertrude Carraway wrote several pamphlets and articles on New Bern and Governor Tryon. Her article with Fiske Kimball, entitled "Tryon's Palace," traces the history of the original construction of the Palace by architect John Hawks. *Tryon's Palace: North Carolina's First Capitol*, documents the significance of the original Palace and examines the history of the building before the capital moved to Raleigh. Her pamphlet, *Historic Tryon Palace*, documents the history of the reconstruction and restoration efforts and was sold to tourists who visited the Palace.¹⁰ Architectural historian Peter Sandbeck's book, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina* (1988), is an important resource on buildings and landscapes in New Bern. His thorough inventory is the most significant work on the architecture of New Bern.¹¹

Several important books have been written about the Colonial Revival movement in America. *The Colonial Revival* by William Rhoads (1977) was one of the earliest and

⁷ Alan D. Watson, *A History of New Bern and Craven County* (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Commission, 1987).

⁸ Alonzo Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955).

⁹ Blackwell P. Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion* (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Commission, 1978).

¹⁰ Fiske Kimball and Gertrude S. Carraway, "Tryon's Palace," *The New York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin* 24, no. 1 (1940):13-22; Gertrude S. Carraway, *Tryon's Palace: North Carolina's First State Capitol* (Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1945); Gertrude S. Carraway, *Historic Tryon Palace* (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Restoration, 1963).

¹¹ Peter Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern and Craven County, North Carolina* (New Bern, North Carolina: Tryon Palace Commission, 1988).

most extensive monographs on Colonial Revival architecture from the 1870s to the mid 1920s.¹² Alan Axelrod edited *The Colonial Revival in America* (1985), which contains a number of important articles on the Colonial Revival movement in all aspects of American life, including Colonial Williamsburg, decorative arts, architecture, historic interiors, period rooms, and literature.¹³ Karal Ann Marling's book, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986* (1988), explores colonial imagery through the changing representations of George Washington.¹⁴ She argues that the image of Washington changed in the late nineteenth-century from an abstract moral and political figure to one more familiar and domesticated. *Creating a Dignified Past: Museums and the Colonial Revival* (1991), edited by Geoffrey L. Rossano is a collection of papers from a symposium that focused on the Colonial Revival's impact on museums and historic sites.¹⁵ Richard Guy Wilson's recent book, *The Colonial Revival House* (2004), examines the persistence of Colonial Revival architecture in America.¹⁶

Other books have prompted a more critical look at historic sites across America. Mike Wallace's book, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (1996), offers a Marxist critique that advises people to critically examine the interpretation at historic sites to determine which version of the past is saved, whose stories are told, what gets left out, and who tells the story.¹⁷ Like Wallace, James

¹² William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977).

¹³ Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985).

¹⁴ Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

¹⁵ Geoffrey L. Rossano, ed., *Creating a Dignified Past: Museums and the Colonial Revival* (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc., 1991).

¹⁶ Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004).

¹⁷ Michael Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

Loewen argues in *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (1999) that misinterpretations at historic sites and monuments keep people from understanding what happened in the past.¹⁸ He demonstrates that these places are typically celebratory, racist, sexist, elitist, and inaccurate. They are often sites where administrators ignore their own history. Loewen encourages people to examine the history of the site or marker and question the motives, funding, and intentions of the site and those involved.

Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums (1999) by Patricia West argues that one must understand the institutional politics, history, and origins of a site to fully understand its interpretation.¹⁹

This thesis will draw upon these sources to create a new way of looking at Tryon Palace. By examining the roots and context of the founding of the Palace, historians will be better able to understand the messages conveyed at the Palace. This thesis will argue that the reconstruction of Tryon Palace in the 1950s connected the people of New Bern and North Carolina to their colonial past while creating a shared identity that revolved around idealized notions of history that were typical of the Colonial Revival of the twentieth century.

Historian Charles Hosmer defines preservation as “the act of retaining all or any part of a structure, even if it is moved from its original location.” He also defines restoration as “any treatment given to a building after the decision has been made to preserve it. Under the general heading of ‘restoration’ one can find a great variety of methods, ranging all the way from preserving a structure intact to reconstruction of some

¹⁸ James Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

¹⁹ Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

historic monument that has disappeared.”²⁰ Professor of Architecture, James Marston Fitch, goes farther in his definition of the terms and calls restoration “the process of returning the artifact to the physical condition in which it would have been at some previous stage of its morphological development.” He points out that the “precise stage” of a restoration is determined “either by historical association (the way it was when Washington slept there) or aesthetic integrity.” In the case of Tryon Palace, the restoration was determined by the association with Governor Tryon as well as the desire to produce an aesthetically pleasing building. Fitch goes on to define reconstruction as “the re-creation of vanished buildings on their original site. The reconstructed building acts as the tangible, three-dimensional surrogate of the original structure, its physical form being established by archaeological, archival, and literary evidence.”²¹ For the purpose of this thesis, the terms “restoration” and “reconstruction” are used interchangeably and in the broadest definition of the terms.

²⁰ Charles B. Hosmer, *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 22.

²¹ James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 46-47.

CHAPTER ONE – GOVERNOR TRYON AND HIS PALACE

Tryon Palace was the last permanent home of English Royal Governors in North Carolina. This chapter will examine the social and political context of late eighteenth century North Carolina and trace the history of Governor Tryon and his Palace.

Appointed lieutenant governor by King George III, William Tryon arrived in Brunswick, North Carolina on October 10, 1764 to fill in for the current governor, Arthur Dobbs, who requested a twelve month leave of absence to return to England.²² Tryon brought with him his wife Margaret Wake, four year old daughter Margaret, a servant named George, Fountain Elwin, Mrs. Tryon's cousin, who served as Tryon's private secretary, and a "Master Builder . . . who is a very able Worthy man" named John Hawks.²³ Governor Dobbs decided to postpone his trip until the spring of 1765, leaving the Tryons to tour the eastern part of North Carolina during the winter of 1764-65.²⁴ Two years later Tryon traveled to the backcountry to see the remaining part of the province.²⁵ Dobbs died unexpectedly in March 1765 and Tryon took over the governorship of North Carolina.²⁶

Governor Tryon purchased Arthur Dobbs's former estate in Brunswick, once named Russellborough, which he renamed "Castle Tryon."²⁷ In June 1765, the Tryons returned to Dobbs' estate where they "began to be very busy in opening and unpacking

²² Paul David Nelson, *William Tryon and the Course of Empire: A Life in British Imperial Service* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 11.

²³ William S. Powell, ed., *The Correspondence of William Tryon and Other Selected Papers*, Vol. I, 1758-1767 (Raleigh, N.C.: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1980), 36; Tryon to Sewallis Shirley, 26 July 1765, 140.

²⁴ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 1-2.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 18.

²⁶ Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. I, xvii.

²⁷ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 7.

half the furniture we brought from England, and for want of Room we could not put up in our house at Wilmington . . . we have been pestered with scouring of Chambers White Washing of Ceilings, Plaisterers Work, and Painting the House inside and out [sic].” Governor Tryon described Russellborough as “an oblong Square Built of Wood. It measures on the out Side Faces forty five feet by thirty five feet, and is Divided into two Stories, exclusive of the Cellars the Parlour Floor is about five feet about the Surface of the Earth. Each Story has four Rooms and three light Closets. The Parlour below & the drawing Room are 20 x 15 feet each; Ceilings low. There is a Piazza Runs Round the House both Stories of ten feet Wide with a Ballustrade of four feet high, which is a great Security for my little girl. There is a good stable and Coach Houses and some other Out Houses [sic].”²⁸ In July, Tryon wrote to his uncle Sewallis Shirley that he desired to avoid “showing myself particularly partial to any particular Spot of the Country or people, [and] I have hired three other houses. One at Wilmington to be at when I hold the Land Office, which is twice a year, One at Newbern, where I hold the Genl Assembly and the Courts of Chancery, and a Small Villa within three Miles of Newbern, for the purpose of raising a little Stock and Poultry for use of the family [sic].”²⁹

Colonial North Carolina did not have a permanent capital like its neighbors Virginia and South Carolina. The colonial capital was located where the governor chose to convene the legislature, which included Edenton, Bath, New Bern, and Wilmington.³⁰ During his tour of the province, Governor Tryon decided to locate the capital permanently at New Bern. When Tryon returned to New Bern in 1765, there were

²⁸ Tryon to Sewallis Shirley, 26 July 1765, Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, Vol. 1, 138.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 141.

³⁰ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 27.

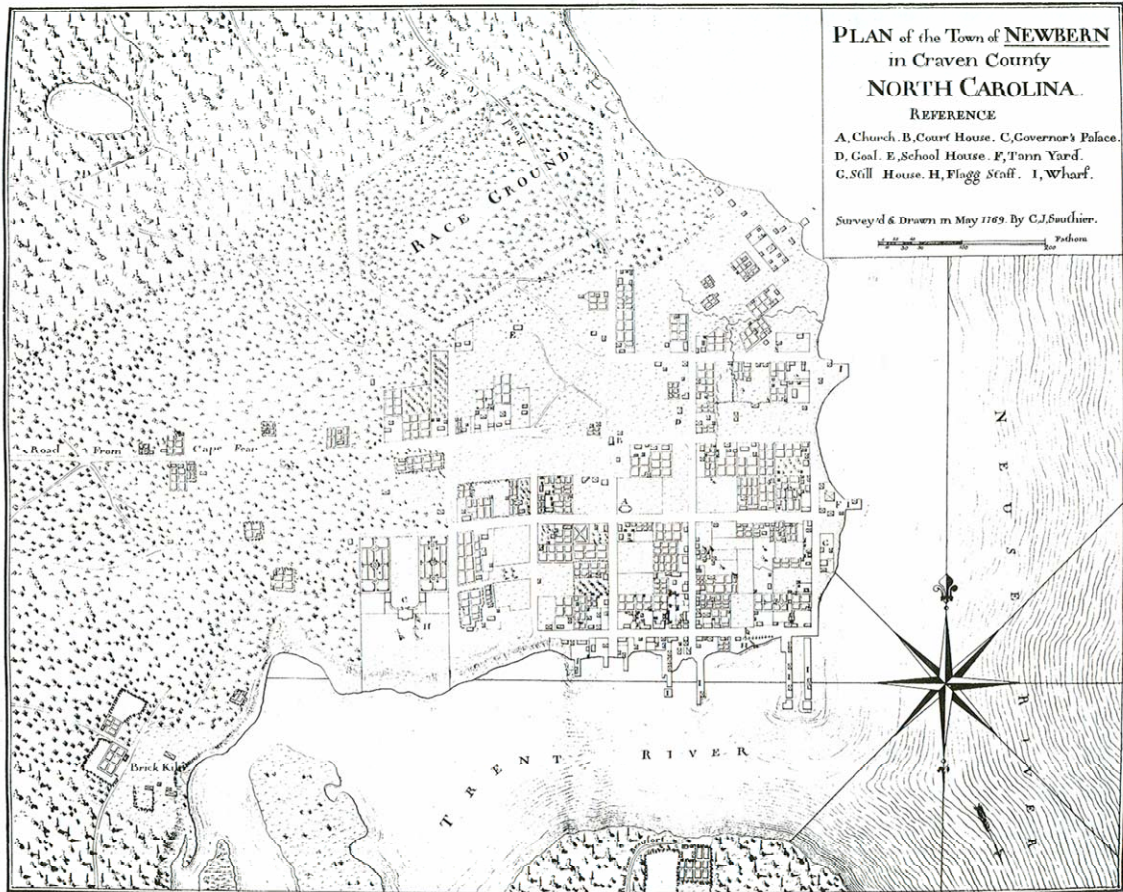


Figure 1. *Plan of the Town of Newbern*, drawn by Claude J. Sauthier in May 1769. From Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, p. 8. Original located at North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

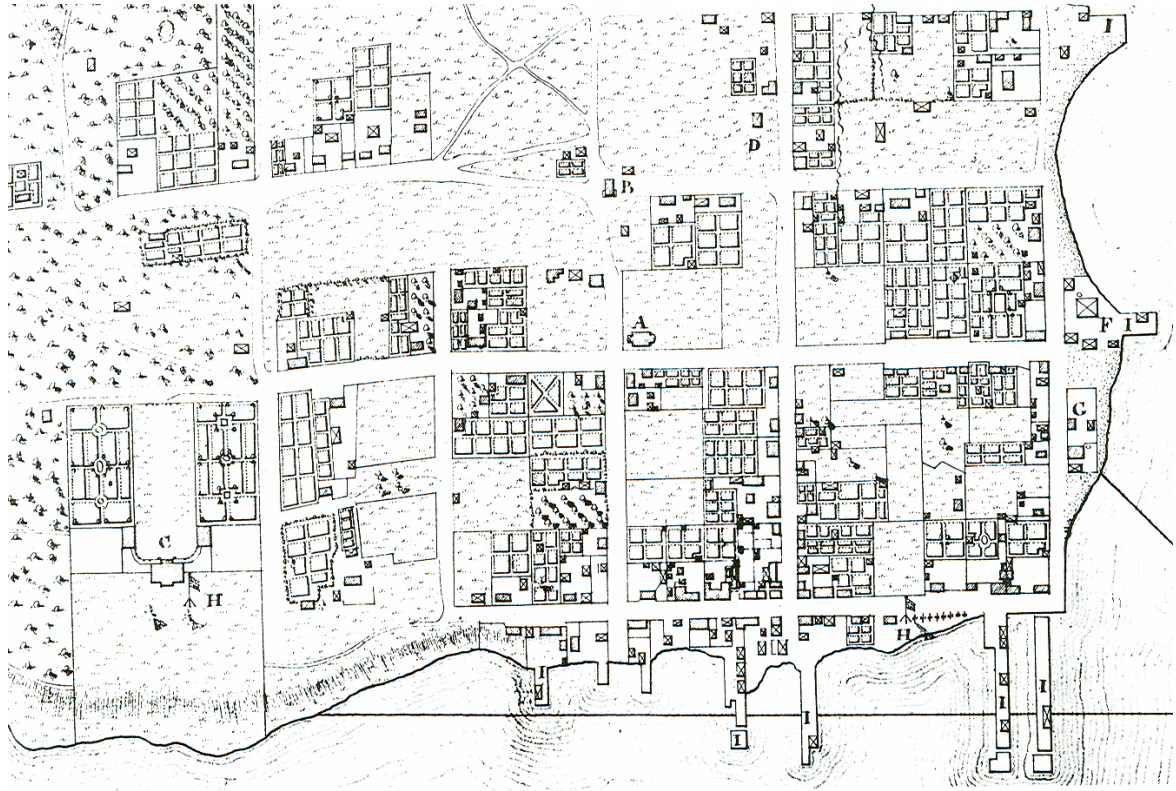


Figure 2. Detail of Sauthier's Map, 1769. Shows the layout of the town and the public buildings.

PLAN of the Town of NEWBERN
in Craven County
NORTH CAROLINA.

REFERENCE

A, Church. B, Court House. C, Governor's Palace.
D, Goal. E, School House. F, Tann Yard.
G, Still House. H, Flagg Staff. I, Wharf.

Survey'd & Drawn in May 1769. By C. J. Sauthier.

Key to Sauthier's Map

approximately 500 inhabitants and one hundred houses in the town.³¹ At that time, North Carolina was divided into twenty-seven counties, twenty-one of which were in the east.

In keeping with a century long tradition, the counties of the Albemarle region each sent five representatives to the colonial Assembly, while other counties were allowed only two. The eastern part of the province dominated the Assembly in number by a factor of three, even though the population of the backcountry was rapidly growing and would soon out populate the east.³² In 1730, the population of North Carolina numbered around 30,000 whites and 6,000 blacks clustered mainly along the eastern coast, but by 1775, more than 265,000 people were scattered across the province.³³ The Albemarle counties used their dominance in the Assembly to ensure their political control over North Carolina. This political inequality often created resentment among residents of the Carolina backcountry.

Governor Tryon's decision to locate the capital in New Bern did not please the backcountry.³⁴ Beginning in 1761, some members of the Assembly argued that their meetings should be held in a more central location in North Carolina. Year after year they continued to express their discontent with an eastern capital.³⁵ Despite their opposition, in 1766 the Assembly passed "A Bill for erecting a Convenient Building Within the Town of Newbern, for the Residence of the Governor or Commander in Chief [sic]" and appropriated £5,000 toward constructing public buildings in New Bern and

³¹ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 14.

³² *Ibid*, 22.

³³ Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 105.

³⁴ The capital remained in New Bern from 1765-1778.

³⁵ Dill, *Governor Tryon*, 110.

authorized the Governor to purchase twelve lots for the site.³⁶ The bill appropriated an additional £10,000 for the following year.³⁷

Once funds were secured, master builder John Hawks began construction of Tryon Palace in 1767. Tryon reported that “Mr. Hawks has contracted to finish the Whole in Three years from the laying the first Brick which I guess will be in May next.”³⁸ Designed as a home for the royal governor, the Palace also functioned as a meeting place for the Council and an office for the provincial secretary. A lack of skilled workers in the area sent Hawks to find artisans to work on the Palace. A letter written from Tryon to the Earl of Shelburne in January 1767 notes that Mr. Hawks “goes soon to Philadelphia to hire able Workmen, as this Province affords none capable of such an Undertaking.”³⁹ Though Tryon assured the Earl of Shelburne that the Palace would be finished “in the plainest Manner,” a visitor from Rhode Island noted “the Governors House will exceed for Magnificence & architecture any edifice on the continent.”⁴⁰ Don Francisco de Miranda, a traveler from Venezuela, commented that the Palace was the “finest building of all and one which really deserves the attention of an educated traveler.”⁴¹

³⁶ William L. Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, Volume VII 1765-1768 (Raleigh, N.C.: P.M. Hale, 1886-1890), 304.

³⁷ “An estimate of monies Emittid and Raised . . . from 1748-1766, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 1, 449.

³⁸ Tryon to the Earl of Shelburne, 31 January 1767, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 1, 412.

³⁹ Saunders, *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, Volume VII, 430-431.

⁴⁰ Tryon to the Earl of Shelburne, 23 February 1767, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 1, 432; Dill, *Governor Tryon*, 114.

⁴¹ John S. Ezell, ed., *The New Democracy in America: Travels of Francisco de Miranda in the United States, 1783-84*, trans. Judson P. Wood (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 6-7.

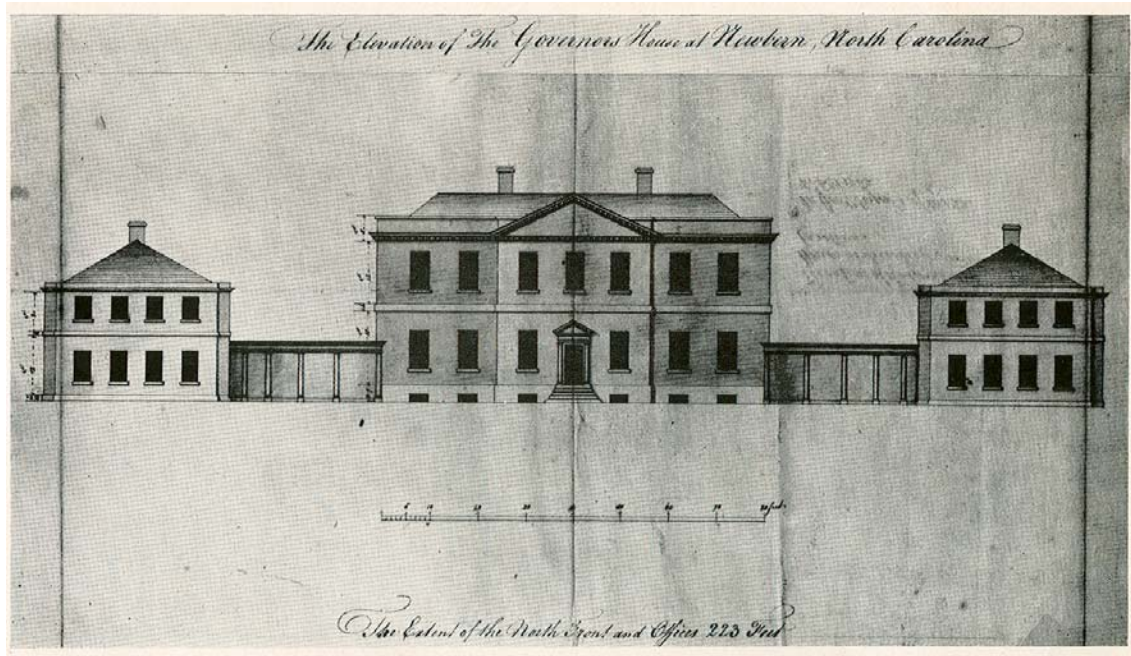


Figure 3. "The Elevation of The Governors House at Newbern, North Carolina," ca. 1767, by John Hawks. From Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, p. 159. Original located at North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

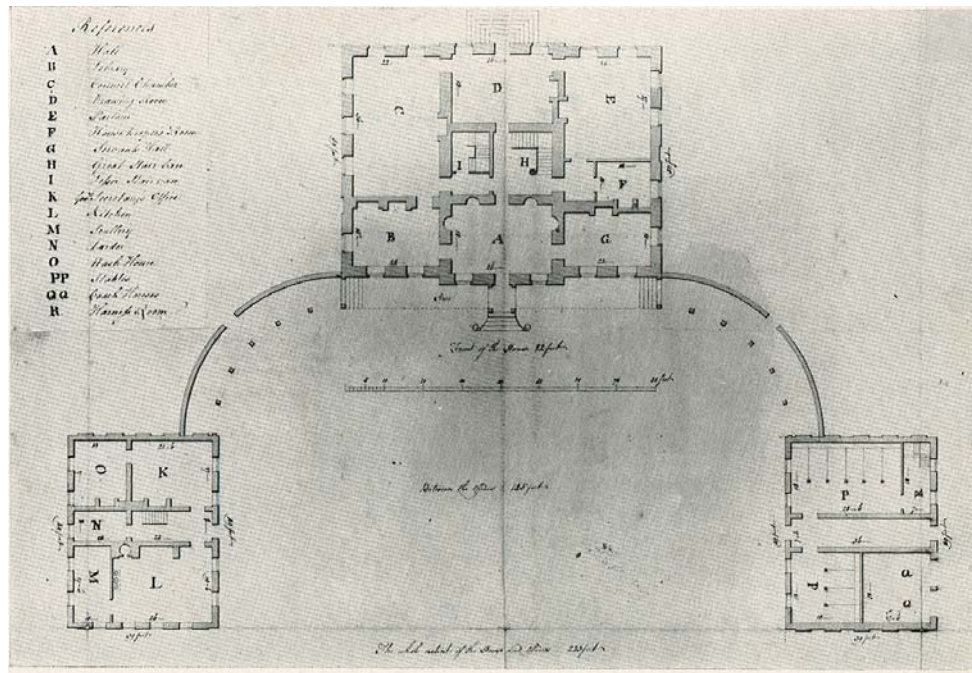


Figure 4. First floor plans of Tryon's Palace, John Hawks. From Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, p. 160. Original located at North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

Hawks continued his work and Governor Tryon attempted to furnish the Palace. Tryon wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough in January 1769 that the Palace was “covered in & roofed. The Plumbers work was executed by an able Hand sent purposely over from London . . . The Frames & Window Sashes are fix’t up, and the joyners now at work on the inside of the house . . . four of the principal Chimney pieces are arrived also from London, with the Hinges, Locks & other Articles necessary for the finishing this much admired Structure.”⁴² In the summer of 1770, Governor Tryon moved into the Palace but noted that construction would not be completed until the following Christmas.⁴³ Tryon appealed to the Crown to furnish the interior in a manner fitting a palace. He wrote, “As prosperous and successful as this Work has been carry’d on . . . there is something still wanting to make the whole complete and of a Piece. It is, My Lord, Furniture and Plate, suitable to the simplicity and unornamented Beauty of the Building: what Furniture I have here, has been so abused, that it would disgrace even the upper story of the Edifice: I therefore beg leave to apply to His Majesty’s Munificence for these necessary interior conveniences and Ornaments [sic].” Tryon believed that the if the King complied with his request, that it would “be a convincing Mark of His Royal approbation of their Public conduct and remain with the Edifice, as a Testimony of His Majestys unbounded Generosity, and correspondent to the splendor of his time [sic].”⁴⁴ The Earl wrote back that “though His Majesty is desirous of shewing His Grace and Favour to the Colony of North Carolina, by gratifying His Subjects there in every just and reasonable request . . .

⁴² Tryon to the Earl of Hillsborough, 12 January 1769, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 1, 289.

⁴³ Tryon to the Earl of Hillsborough, 7 June 1770, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 1, 468.

⁴⁴ Tryon to the Earl of Hillsborough, 12 January 1769, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 2, 289, 292.

the King does not think fit to comply with their desire in this respect as it could not be done without establishing a Precedent [sic].”⁴⁵ Tryon was therefore forced to furnish the Palace on his own.

In order to pay for the governor’s residence, already called Tryon Palace, poll taxes were charged and a tax was levied on imported alcohol.⁴⁶ The construction of the Palace created a considerable debt, one that many people of North Carolina did not want to redeem. The new taxes only served to anger many residents who already felt overtaxed.⁴⁷ The backcountry strongly opposed the cost, demonstrating the growing sectionalism in North Carolina. One Mecklenburg County resident stated in 1768 that “not one in twenty of the four most populous counties will ever see this famous house when built.”⁴⁸ Orange County Sheriff Tyree Harris reported he heard William Butler, a leader of the Regulators, claim “we are determined not to pay the Tax for the next three years, for the Edifice or Governor’s House - We want no such House, nor will we pay for it.”⁴⁹

The division between the east and west was called the War of Regulation because those in the backcountry wanted to regulate their own affairs, rather than be governed from afar. Residents of the backcountry saw the construction of the Palace as a wasteful extravagance. Small independent farmers of the west did not have the same financial security as the organized wealthy planters and merchants of the east. The taxes, particularly the poll taxes, hit the small farmer hard. The residents of western North

⁴⁵ Earl of Hillsborough to Tryon, 24 March 1769, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 2, 316.

⁴⁶ “An estimate of monies Emitted and Raised . . . from 1748-1766,” in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 1, 445, 449.

⁴⁷ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 153.

⁴⁸ Powell, *Four Centuries*, 148.

⁴⁹ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 153.

Carolina continued to feel helpless while the coastal region dominated politics. From 1765-1771, all members of the Council lived in the east because they were expected to meet regularly with the governor. Eastern politicians continued their domination of the Assembly. In 1770, the western counties accounted for more than a third of the free white population in North Carolina, but had only fifteen representatives in the eighty-one member Assembly.⁵⁰

Dissent continued to spread and the Regulator movement reached its peak in 1768 when payment was due for a special tax to build the governor's Palace. Residents were upset that officials often took "too high fees." They complained that sheriffs "now grew more and more insulting, taking unusual Distresses for Levies: taking Double, Treble, or four times the value" when repossessing property to pay taxes.⁵¹ In Orange County, the Regulators issued a statement with their intentions to "pay no more taxes until they were satisfied that such assessments were according to law and lawfully applied" and "to pay no fees greater than provided by law." After the sheriff seized a Regulator's property and sold it to pay taxes, the Regulators rode into town, took back the property, and fired several shots at a wealthy politician's home. The sheriff arrested two leaders of the Regulators, which prompted a mob of 700 to travel to Hillsborough to free the prisoners.⁵² In response, Governor Tryon issued a proclamation demanding that the Regulators disband, called for people to pay their poll taxes, warned public officials against taking illegal fees, and stated that people would be charged with extortion if they disobeyed. To prevent any further violence, Tryon led 1,500 militiamen to Hillsborough

⁵⁰ Powell, *Four Centuries*, 148-149.

⁵¹ "Regulator's Advertisement, no. 11," 21 May 1768, in Powell, et. al, *The Regulators in North Carolina*, 118.

⁵² Powell, *Four Centuries*, 153.

against 3,700 Regulators that gathered to hear an extortion case. The Regulators were determined to make changes in the way they were treated and governed. To help ease the tension, Governor Tryon dissolved the old Assembly in 1769 and called for new elections. In the western counties, every member elected was a Regulator. However, before any of the Regulators' issues could be resolved, Tryon dissolved the Assembly.⁵³

The violence peaked in 1771 at the Battle of Alamance when 2,000 Regulators marched towards New Bern to overtake the Assembly. Tryon managed to raise almost 1,500 men against the opposing forces. The two sides met near Great Alamance Creek, west of Hillsborough. On May 16, 1771, the Regulators requested an audience with Governor Tryon. He refused to meet with them while armed and gave them an hour to put down their weapons. The Regulators refused to comply and Tryon sent word that unless they disbanded he would fire on them. The Regulators responded with "Fire and be damned." After the two hour battle, nine members of the militia were killed and sixty-one wounded. It is not known how many Regulators were killed. Tryon captured fourteen Regulators who were promptly convicted of treason and sentenced to death. Six Regulators were hanged while the others were pardoned by the King at Governor Tryon's request.⁵⁴

Soon after the Battle of Alamance in 1771, Tryon moved to a new post in New York. Josiah Martin began his appointment as governor on August 12, 1771.⁵⁵ In 1774, a delegation of representatives from North Carolina participated in the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, which greatly angered Governor Martin. After Martin dissolved the Assembly over a dispute regarding the courts, members of the Council

⁵³ Powell, *Four Centuries*, 156.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 157-159; Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 201-205.

⁵⁵ Powell, *Four Centuries*, 167.

called for a provincial congress, independent of the Royal government. They met in the Palace on August 25, 1774 without Governor Martin. According to Gertrude Carraway, this marked “the first popular assembly anywhere in America, called by the people and held in the presence of the king’s officers, in direct disobedience to British authority.”⁵⁶ Greatly upset over the defiance of the Assembly and Council, in March 1775 Governor Martin applied for arms and ammunition to equip Loyalists in North Carolina. Rumors quickly spread that the governor could use them against the people, arm the slaves, and encourage a revolt. On April 19, the fighting of the Revolution began at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. Fearing for their safety, Martin sent his family to New York and on May 31, 1775, he took refuge at Fort Johnston located in Brunswick Country, near Southport. He continued his Loyalist activities from the fort and managed to escape an attack by fleeing to a ship off the coast of Wilmington on July 15, 1775.⁵⁷

During the Revolution, the Assembly decided New Bern was no longer an appropriate place for the capital. The town was not centrally located and was vulnerable to sea attacks. However, the Assembly could not decide on a location for a new capital, and from 1777 to 1794, the Assembly moved from town to town, with seven different towns hosting the legislature. Finally, in 1791, the Assembly decided to place the capital in Wake County, naming the proposed town “Raleigh” after Sir Walter Raleigh.⁵⁸ Construction on a new state house began in 1792 and was occupied by the legislature in 1794.

⁵⁶ Gertrude Carraway, “Tryon’s Palace: North Carolina’s First Capitol,” [http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/nc/ncsites/Tryon.htm], January 2005.

⁵⁷ Powell, *Four Centuries*, 176.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 212.

After the Assembly abandoned Tryon Palace as the capital, rooms in the Palace were rented for various purposes. Governor Caswell used the Palace intermittently as his residence from 1777-1779.⁵⁹ On April 7, 1777, the first General Assembly of the state met at Tryon Palace. Caswell's successor, Abner Nash held his inauguration at the Palace in 1780 but only remained in New Bern through part of the summer.⁶⁰ Tryon's once grand palace quickly fell to ruin. During the War, lead from the roof and the iron palisades were stripped for use by the army.⁶¹ The Council of State wrote that the roof was in such disrepair that "every shower of rain runs through it."⁶²

By 1782, the Assembly sought to sell the Palace and appointed a caretaker named Colonel Longfield Cox to make necessary repairs. In 1784, German traveler Johann David Schoepf remarked that Tryon Palace "was a very genteel house built, the only one of brick, on the banks of the Trent. This palace, for it is honored with that much too splendid name, is at this time almost in ruins; the inhabitants of the town took away everything they could make use of, carpets, pannels of glass, locks, iron utensils, and the like, until watchmen were finally installed to prevent the carrying-off of the house itself. The state would be glad to sell it, but there is nobody who thinks himself rich enough to live in a brick house [sic]."⁶³ Bills introduced to the Assembly in 1784, 1785, 1786, and 1792 continued to attempt to sell the Palace to the highest bidder.⁶⁴ In 1790, a jury verdict revealed that William Hoboye was murdered in an apartment "at the Pallace

⁵⁹ Dill, *Governor Tryon*, 242-243.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 243.

⁶¹ J. Tillman to Governor Burke, 25 August 1781, in Walter Clark, ed., *The State Records of North Carolina*, Volume XV (Raleigh, N.C.: P.M. Hale, 1886-1907), 623.

⁶² Council Proceedings, 18 November 1779 in Clark, *The State Records of North Carolina*, Volume XXII, 961.

⁶³ Alfred J. Morrison ed., *Travels in the Confederation, 1783-1784: From the German of Johann David Schoepf*, vol. 2, trans. by Alfred J. Morrison, (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1911), 128-129.

⁶⁴ Dill, *Governor Tryon*, 252.

Kitchin.”⁶⁵ The Palace received a distinguished visitor in 1791 when George Washington stopped in New Bern on his southern tour. At the Palace, Washington was entertained at a banquet and ball and noted that Tryon Palace was “a good brick building but now hastening to ruin.”⁶⁶ Because it was no longer occupied as a residence, the Palace was vulnerable to vandalism. To help fight the destruction of the Palace, the Assembly ordered the caretakers to rent rooms and use the revenue to make repairs. Renters used the Palace to teach lessons in French, dancing, and fencing, used rooms as law offices, a Masonic meeting place, and a schoolhouse for the New Bern Academy.⁶⁷ Despite the condition of the Palace, in 1792 Richard Dobbs Spaight held his inauguration at Tryon Palace, the last governor to do so. The Assembly held their last meeting in New Bern in July 1794.⁶⁸

When a fire started in the cellar in February 1798, the wooden structures burned and left the edifice in ruins. A local family purchased the west wing, which survived the fire relatively unscathed. The owners used the west wing as a school, chapel, rectory, stable, and later as apartments. Later in the year, the Assembly passed an act to sell the bricks and the lots on which the Palace stood. Absolved of what to do with the decaying Palace, the Assembly extended George Street directly over the foundation of the main building to the waterfront. Soon, residents built houses on the original site of the Palace and its grounds.⁶⁹ In the twentieth century, U.S. 70, a major highway ran directly over

⁶⁵ Gertrude Carraway, “Tryon’s Palace: North Carolina’s First Capitol,” [<http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/nc/ncsites/Tryon.htm>], January 2005.

⁶⁶ Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, eds., *The Diaries of George Washington*, vol. 6, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 117.

⁶⁷ Powell, *Four Centuries*, 253-254.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 257-258.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 260-261.

the site to the Trent River bridge and more than fifty homes and businesses were located on the original Palace grounds.

CHAPTER TWO – THE RECONSTRUCTION OF TRYON PALACE

The original construction of Tryon Palace was a manifestation of the governor's authority, dominance, and extravagance. However, the reconstruction was the product of elite white culture that used the Palace to reinforce their beliefs about the way society and culture should be in New Bern in the 1950s and 1960s. The reconstruction created a sense of historical connectedness but at the same time provided a false identity for the community.

The movement to reconstruct the Palace had roots in the 1920s. In 1922, the local chapter of the Colonial Dames erected a marker at the remaining west wing of the Palace as “The Last Home of Colonial Governors.”⁷⁰ Talk of reconstruction began in 1929 when Mrs. William N. Reynolds of Winston-Salem, state regent and honorary vice president general for life of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), dedicated \$3,500 for the restoration of Tryon Palace. The DAR originally tried to purchase the west wing for use as a state DAR museum, but the owner's asking price was too high.⁷¹ The DAR was intent on saving important local colonial history sites. In 1935, President Roosevelt signed the Historic Sites Act, which made it national policy to preserve historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance. It also enabled the Secretary of the Interior to designate properties significant to the nation as a whole as National Historic Landmarks or Sites, administered by the National Park Service.

Gertrude Carraway, a local historian, journalist, DAR member, and native of New Bern, appealed to the National Park Service to review the site of Tryon Palace for

⁷⁰ Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion*, 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 11-12.

inclusion as part of the Park Service. The Park Service agreed the site was significant, but did not have the resources to undertake a restoration.⁷² In 1937, newly elected Governor Clyde R. Hoey cited the restoration of Tryon Palace as a priority of his administration.⁷³ He and many others believed the restoration of the Palace would create a major tourist attraction for North Carolina.⁷⁴ Proponents believed that New Bern was ideally located between Williamsburg and Charleston, which were experiencing tourism booms and creating their own romanticized versions of local history. Colonial Williamsburg became both a source of inspiration and competition for the restoration of Tryon Palace.

Because North Carolina lacked an organized statewide preservation organization, David Brooke argues “North Carolina’s old social elites bore the brunt of preserving isolated architectural gems.” Preservation in North Carolina was centered on the local level, and as a result, preservation efforts were rare.⁷⁵ In 1938, the Garden Club of North Carolina held a statewide spring tour created in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development. According to the *Raleigh News and Observer*, the tour was meant to “stimulate interest in the historic treasures of North Carolina, many of which are falling into decadence for lack of interest by influential and civic minded persons capable of restoring them, or callously torn down because public sentiment is not sufficiently aroused to prevent it.”⁷⁶ In response to their successful tour, the Garden Club of North Carolina created a restoration committee and a book committee

⁷² Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion*, 13.

⁷³ Clyde Hoey served as governor from 1937-1941.

⁷⁴ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 13-14.

⁷⁵ David Louis Sterrett Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage: A History of the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities 1939-1974* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1997), 6.

⁷⁶ *News and Observer* (Raleigh), “Garden Fortnight and Tour,” 10 April 1938.

whose membership consisted of Ruth Cannon of Concord (president of the Garden Club of Concord), Maude Moore Latham, and Anna Fenner of Tarboro, to develop a book of one hundred examples of antebellum architecture and gardens in North Carolina.⁷⁷

Also in 1938, Christopher Crittenden expressed his concern regarding funding for historic sites and called for “the creation of a society to acquire and care for . . . old houses, of the graves of eminent persons, and of other historic spots.” Crittenden wanted a North Carolina equivalent of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the first statewide preservation group in the country, founded in 1889.⁷⁸ At its December 1938 meeting, the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association voted to “create a North Carolina society to preserve old homes and the like.” They created a steering committee whose goal was “to preserve North Carolina antiquities.”⁷⁹ William Sumner Appleton, founder of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, wrote to the new organization warning them against creating local chapters and sternly urged the society to preserve existing buildings and to avoid reconstructing disappeared landmarks.⁸⁰ In its call for charter members, the steering committee wrote that “Persons from other states have sometimes scornfully remarked that North Carolina has no historic places worth preserving.” In response to their letter, Robert Lee Humber wrote “By preserving these monuments we keep faith with the past and discharge our duty to the future. They are the authentic signets of our true lineage and the building material of our history and destiny.”⁸¹

⁷⁷ Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage*, 11.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 15.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 20.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 23.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 24.

However, 1939 proved to be the year for concrete advancements towards reconstructing Tryon's Palace. Written by Archibald Henderson, a professor at the University of North Carolina, the Garden Club of North Carolina published their book *Old Homes and Gardens of North Carolina*. Mrs. Maude Moore Latham, a wealthy native of New Bern, financed the publication of the book and later became the major financial supporter behind the restoration of Tryon Palace. The theme of the book was "The Governor's Palace must be restored."⁸² The book sparked an interest in a number of "architectural gems" and historic buildings that had been destroyed or modernized beyond recognition.⁸³ Also in 1939, the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities was chartered on October 5, 1939 with 276 members. Maude Moore Latham, Mr. and Mrs. Kellenberger, and Gertrude Carraway all attended the first meeting of the Society.⁸⁴ The constitution of the new organization stated that its objectives were "to acquire, administer, hold in custody, restore, reconstruct, preserve, maintain, and dispose of historic buildings, grounds, monuments, graves, or other sites, places, or objects, to erect historical markers and monuments, and to take other steps for the purpose of attaining its objectives."⁸⁵ The book and this new organization demonstrated the burgeoning interest in historic homes and the desire to preserve buildings.

At their first annual meeting on December 7, 1939, the Society approved projects that included finding and restoring a "typical" plantation home, preserving covered bridges and waterwheel mills, restoring and preserving fortifications and battlefields,

⁸² Bayard Morgan Wootten, Archibald Henderson, Ruth C. Cannon, Mrs. Lyman A. Cotton, Maude M. Latham, *Old Homes and Gardens of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939).

⁸³ Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage*, 13.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 26.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 29.

both Revolutionary and Civil War era, and specific projects that included the restoration of St. Thomas Church in Bath, Tryon Palace in New Bern, and the Burgwin-Wright House in Wilmington.⁸⁶

By endorsing the reconstruction of Tryon Palace, the Society clearly intended to ignore Appleton's thoughtful advice. The Society's members continued to research in an attempt to find more information about the Palace. In 1939, Gertrude Carraway discovered John Hawks' original plans of the Palace at the New York Historical Society.⁸⁷ Dr. Charles Christopher Crittenden, then a member of the North Carolina Historical Commission, discovered a second set of plans, dated February 23, 1767, at the British Public Records Office in London.⁸⁸ Carraway contacted Fiske Kimball, a scholar of early American buildings and consultant to Colonial Williamsburg, about the Palace restoration. He expressed enthusiasm for the project, stating he was "fully in agreement that this building was doubtless the finest house in Colonial America."⁸⁹

Because of his many accomplishments, Fiske Kimball provided credibility to the burgeoning movement to restore the Palace. Historian Patricia West described Fiske Kimball as "articulate, commanding, and well-connected" who "embraced a position of national leadership in the museum field."⁹⁰ Kimball received his degree in architecture from Harvard, then completed his doctorate in architectural history at the University of Michigan. Kimball wrote his dissertation on Thomas Jefferson's design for the Virginia State House. At the same time, Thomas Jefferson Coolidge Jr., a descendant of

⁸⁶ Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage*, 31.

⁸⁷ The New York Historical Society had six original plans of the Palace that included front and rear elevations, plans of the rooms, details of the roof and a plan of the drain pipes. Their collection also included six boxes of Hawks manuscripts. Robinson, *Three Decades*, 16.

⁸⁸ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 17.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 14.

⁹⁰ West, *Domesticating History*, 123.

Jefferson, approached Kimball and asked him to write a book on Jefferson's architectural drawings. The book was published in 1916 and according to architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson, it "set new standards for the analysis and study of Jefferson's sources, as well as for assessing his accomplishments."⁹¹ In 1919, Kimball established an architectural program at the University of Virginia where he wrote *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and Early Republic* (1922), as well as *American Architecture* (1925). In 1923, he accepted a position at New York University and in 1925 he began his directorship at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where he worked until 1955. Kimball remained active in historic preservation and served on the board of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation and directed the restoration of Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home, into the 1950s. He also served as head of the advisory board for the Colonial Williamsburg restoration and directed the restoration of Gunston Hall, George Mason's home located near Mt. Vernon, and Stratford Hall, Robert E. Lee's ancestral home. He died soon after retiring in 1955.⁹² The association with Kimball provided an opportunity to connect with other scholars. Carraway soon solicited support and guidance from other influential members of the preservation and historic house movements in America.

Gertrude Sprague Carraway was one of the most influential people involved in the restoration of Tryon Palace. She was born in New Bern on August 6, 1896. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Women's College of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and continued her graduate work at Columbia University. Carraway received three honorary degrees: Doctor of Laws from Northland College,

⁹¹ Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 153.

⁹² *Ibid*, 154.



Figure 5. Gertrude Sprague Carraway. From Tryon Palace Commission, *Tryon Palace: Its Restoration and Preservation*, p. 25.

Wisconsin; Doctor of Humanities from Lincoln Memorial University, Tennessee; and Doctor of Humane Letters from Woman's College, University of North Carolina.⁹³

Carraway began her career as a teacher, but later became a journalist and editor for New Bern's town newspaper, *The Sun Journal*, from 1924 to 1937. She also authored numerous books, articles, and pamphlets about state and local history. Because of her activities, Carraway was appointed one of the original members of the executive board of the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History and served from 1942 to 1967.

Carraway also had an impressive career with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). She became a member of the local chapter in 1926 and in 1946 was unanimously elected State Regent of the North Carolina DAR. Under her supervision, local chapters across North Carolina erected thirty five Revolutionary and World War II grave markers. While State Regent, she continued to raise funds for the restoration of Tryon Palace. In 1949, Carraway was elected a Vice President General of the national DAR and in 1953, she was elected President General of the National Society of the DAR.⁹⁴

During her three-year term, the National Society reached its highest peaks in membership, financial strength, and activities. Between 1953 and 1956, 27,565 new members joined the National Society. Carraway also succeeded in paying off the \$10,000 debt for the enlargement of the Administration Building, incurred no new debts, and put the National Society on a cash-only basis while raising the staff payroll by thirty-five percent. The National Society also received record revenues from the DAR

⁹³ Gertrude S. Carraway, "Historic Tryon Palace," (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Restoration, 1963), 6.

⁹⁴ "RDS_GertrudeCarraway," [http://www.ncs-dar.org/RichardDobbsSpaight_GertrudeCarraway.htm], October 2003.

magazine. Carraway's greatest success as President General was convincing President Dwight Eisenhower to declare one week in September as National Constitution Week.⁹⁵ During this time, Carraway served as the secretary of the Tryon Palace Commission from 1945 to 1956. After her work with the DAR, the Tryon Palace Commission (TPC) elected Carraway as director of restoration in 1956 with an annual salary of \$8,000.⁹⁶

The efforts of Maude Moore Latham, a native of New Bern who lived in Greensboro, provided the financial impetus for Tryon Palace. According to Robinson, Mrs. Latham "dreamed during her childhood that perhaps someday she might see the historic building rise nobly again on its foundations."⁹⁷ On January 26, 1944, Latham established the Maude Moore Latham Trust Fund with a donation of \$100,000 for the restoration of Tryon Palace.⁹⁸ According to his obituary, Latham's husband, Mr. James Edwin Latham was "a pioneer in the development of Greensboro, member of the New York cotton exchange, and successful business man." He was the president of J.E. Latham Company, a cotton brokerage and commission business, and Greensboro Warehouse and Storage company. Mrs. Latham served on the Greensboro Planning Commission and the family was responsible for developing large sections of the city. Mr. Latham was a native of Goldsboro and married Maude Moore in 1892. They had two children, Edward, who died of influenza during the epidemic of 1918 at the age of 23 and May Gordon (Mrs. John A. Kellenberger). Mr. and Mrs. Latham moved to Greensboro from New Bern at the turn of the century. His obituary reports

⁹⁵ "RDS_GertrudeCarraway," [http://www.ncs-dar.org/RichardDobbsSpaight_GertrudeCarraway.htm], October 2003.

⁹⁶ Tryon Palace Commission Meeting Minutes, Volume 2, 1956-1957, "Personnel Committee Meeting," June 7, 1956, 1.

⁹⁷ Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion*, 29.

⁹⁸ "Mrs. James Edwin Latham, Benefactor, Donor, Tryon Palace Restoration," pamphlet, (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Commission, ca. 1958).



Figure 6. Mrs. Maude Moore Latham. From Tryon Palace Commission, *Tryon Palace: Its Restoration and Preservation*, p. 2.

that at one time, Mr. Latham “was considered one of the largest cotton brokers in [this] section” of North Carolina.⁹⁹ Mr. Latham’s success and generosity enabled Mrs. Latham to give her time and money to the restoration efforts.

Janie Gosney, the secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, wrote a friend about Tryon Palace: “Let’s keep talking it, pushing it, and pulling for it, and one of these bright happy days a Rockefeller will appear on the scene.”¹⁰⁰ Gosney and the Society did not have to wait long for their own Rockefeller. In December 1941, at the third annual meeting of the NC Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, Latham revealed she would give a “considerable sum” for the restoration. It was also at this meeting that architect William Perry expressed his interest in the Palace and volunteered to work “on credit” for the restoration.¹⁰¹

William Graves Perry was the primary architect responsible for the restoration of both Colonial Williamsburg and Tryon Palace. Perry graduated from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1913, he earned a degree in architecture from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. In 1922, he started the firm Perry, Shaw, & Hepburn with Thomas Mott Shaw, a space planner, and Andrew H. Hepburn, a designer. Their successful firm, based in Boston, was known for their designs of academic and commercial buildings in New England. Perry received support and encouragement from Reverend W.A.R. Goodwin and Fiske Kimball.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ “J.E. Latham, Prominent Business Leader, Dies After Lengthy Illness.” *Greensboro Record*, April 16, 1946.

¹⁰⁰ Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage*, 42.

¹⁰¹ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 26.

¹⁰² Will Molineux, “The Architect of Colonial Williamsburg,”

[<http://www.colonialwilliamsburg.com/Foundation/journal/Autumn04/perry.cfm>], November 2004.



Figure 7. Restoration architect William Perry gives tour of Palace grounds to Commission members, 20 November 1953. From Green, *A New Bern Album*, p. 340.

Just a few days after the NC Society for the Preservation of Antiquities meeting, the United States became involved in World War II when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The war effort shifted attention from the restoration. However, in 1944, Mrs. Latham established the Maude Moore Latham Trust Fund and noted that more money would “be available before I pass out.” She hoped that those involved in the restoration would “get its ducks in a row and be prepared to go ahead as soon as war conditions permit.”¹⁰³

Latham’s trust was contingent upon the state agreeing to purchase the property, maintain the site, and direct the restoration. In 1944, Carraway and Latham received the support of the Board of Conservation and Development who passed a resolution endorsing the restoration and encouraging the General Assembly to appropriate funds to acquire the site and adjoining land.¹⁰⁴ Carraway expressed fear that people in Western North Carolina would not support the restoration. She wrote that when she and Mrs. Latham met with the Board, they “were afraid of some of the Western Carolina members’ reaction and were surprised and delighted when the motion was seconded by Mr. Carroll Rogers” of Tryon, North Carolina.¹⁰⁵ The resolution also designated the site as a state park when it was acquired by the state. The Executive Board of the State Department of Archives and History passed a similar resolution.¹⁰⁶

Meanwhile, interested parties worked to address the problem of the Trent River bridge. Officers at Camp Lejeune, Camp Davis, and Cherry Point all argued that Highway 70 was a principal access road to their bases and the existing bridge was

¹⁰³ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 29, 31.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 32-34.

¹⁰⁵ Carraway, “The Restoration of Tryon Palace,” 4.

¹⁰⁶ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 33-34.

inadequate and dangerous for transporting troops and heavy equipment. Governor Broughton also argued that a new bridge was a military necessity.¹⁰⁷ In September 1944, the Governor announced that a new concrete bridge would be built in a different location and endorsed the reconstruction of Tryon Palace as a tourist attraction.¹⁰⁸ With this hurdle out of the way, Latham and Carraway refocused on seeking funds for the restoration.

In February 1945, with tremendous state-wide support, Maude Moore Latham and Gertrude Carraway successfully lobbied the General Assembly to appropriate \$150,000 for the restoration. A later bill, passed in March, created the twenty-five member Tryon Palace Commission whose members were appointed by the governor and acted under the authority of the State Board of Conservation and Development.¹⁰⁹ The State Department of Conservation and Development was authorized to “accept gifts, acquire property, and restore Tryon’s Palace in New Bern.”¹¹⁰

The Commission met for the first time on November 6, 1945 at the Governor’s office in Raleigh. The Commission elected Mrs. Latham as active chairman. She stated, “This is the day I have dreamed of, this indicated the fruition of my dreams. I hope we can carry this project through to a successful completion.”¹¹¹ May Gordon Kellenberger, Latham’s daughter, noted the number of organizations that supported the Palace restoration, including the state DAR, Daughters of Colonial Wars, Daughters of American Colonists (both the state and national chapters), North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, United States Daughters of 1812, North Carolina Society for the

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Melville Broughton served as governor from 1941-1945. Robinson, *Three Decades*, 34.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ For members of the original Tryon Palace Commission, please refer to Appendix A.

¹¹⁰ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 43-44.

¹¹¹ Tryon Palace Commission Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 6, 1945, 2.

Preservation of Antiquities, Garden Club of North Carolina, State Federation of Women's Clubs, Board of Alderman of New Bern, and the North Carolina Colonial Dames of America.¹¹²

The second Commission meeting brought up several important issues that shaped the restoration. Mrs. Latham discussed the book *Old Williamsburg and Her Neighbors* which demonstrated that the restoration of Williamsburg was based upon historical accuracy.¹¹³ She told the Commission, "If I am not here when Tryon's Palace is rebuilt, this is my idea and ideal for it." She wanted the restoration and the interiors to look appropriate and historically accurate.¹¹⁴ Latham also suggested that the time was not the best to pursue the restoration. She believed that if the Commission waited, labor could be obtained more easily and real estate prices would be more reasonable. Dr. Crittenden, now Director of the State Department of Archives and History, believed it could take two years to research, acquire all the property and excavate the land before construction began. At the same meeting, the Commission voted to approve Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn as architects of the restoration.¹¹⁵

Dr. Crittenden would prove to be an important ally during the years of the reconstruction. He was a native of North Carolina and earned his undergraduate and M.A. degrees from Wake Forest College and received his doctorate from Yale University in 1930. He served as an assistant professor of history at UNC and was appointed secretary of the NC Historical Commission in 1935. Crittenden helped to found the Society of American Archivists, was a founder and first president of the American

¹¹² Tryon Palace Commission Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 6, 1945, 3.

¹¹³ William Oliver Stevens, *Old Williamsburg and Her Neighbors*, New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1938.

¹¹⁴ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, December 13, 1945, 5.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 6.

Association for State and Local History, as well as a founder and trustee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and president of North Carolina's archaeological society.¹¹⁶

The Tryon Palace Commission met on December 3, 1948 and again on January 23, 1950. While the Commission was recessed, Maude Moore Latham donated an additional \$150,000 on April 26, 1949. Latham also donated the Maude Moore Latham Tryon Palace Collection, an extensive assortment of antiques, valued over \$125,000 to the State of North Carolina to use for the Palace. When the donation was made, May Kellenberger stated that her mother was "firmly convinced that the restored Palace will bring fame and renown, not only to New Bern, but to the whole state of North Carolina which she ardently loves and has given liberally of her time, her strength, her mind, and her fortune in the furtherance of this endeavor."¹¹⁷ The Department of Conservation and Development was also busy during the break. The Department hired Hugh B. Mills, a New Bern realtor, "to secure options on tracts of land within the restoration area." Mr. Mills reported at the January 23 meeting that there were thirty-three houses with twenty-four owners. He obtained satisfaction options from eight of ten owners within one week.¹¹⁸ To assist Mr. Mills, the state provided an additional \$77,000 to purchase property, bringing the total given by the state to \$227,000.¹¹⁹

Maude Moore Latham died at the age of eighty on April 8, 1951 at her home in Greensboro.¹²⁰ Mrs. Latham bequeathed the residuals of her estate, valued at over

¹¹⁶ Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage*, 21.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 51.

¹¹⁸ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, January 23, 1950, 9.

¹¹⁹ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 51.

¹²⁰ James Edwin Latham died on April 16, 1946 at the age of 79. "J.E. Latham, Prominent Business Leader, Dies After Lengthy Illness." *Greensboro Record*, April 16, 1946.

\$1,250,000 to the Tryon Palace Commission.¹²¹ The Commission did not know Mrs. Latham intended to leave her entire estate to restore the Palace. At the next meeting of the Commission on June 14, 1951, a motion passed in tribute to Mrs. Latham “for her outstanding generosity and patriotism in making the restoration possible.”¹²² Mrs. Kellenberger was elected chairman of the Tryon Palace Commission to replace her mother. Mr. Mills reported that twelve of twenty-five lots had been purchased with five others under options.¹²³

In 1952, the Executive Committee of the Tryon Palace Commission hired several key players for the restoration. William Perry was confirmed as the architect of the restoration. Alonzo T. Dill, Jr. was hired to perform documentary research on Governor Tryon and the Palace. Professor Morley J. Williams of North Carolina State College was hired to perform physical and archaeological research and examine artifacts that turned up during the excavations of the site.¹²⁴ Mr. Perry reported that work began on the site on June 25, 1952. In the west wing, workers removed the “modern work” and stripped the structure down to the original brickwork.¹²⁵

Local resident Bill Edwards recounted that “the stable was all that was left of Tryon Palace. It had remained in its original location . . . but had been converted into apartments.”¹²⁶ The Acquisitions Committee continued to make purchases to finish the interior of the Palace. Several trips were made from 1952-1953 to England for research

¹²¹ “Mrs. James Edwin Latham, Benefactor, Donor, Tryon Palace Restoration,” pamphlet, (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Commission, ca. 1958).

¹²² TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, June 14, 1951, 13.

¹²³ Ibid, 15.

¹²⁴ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 61-62.

¹²⁵ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, June 22, 1953, 63.

¹²⁶ Emily Herring Wilson, *Memories of New Bern: An Oral History* (New Bern, N.C.: New Bern Historical Society Foundation, Inc., 1995), 11.



Figure 8. West Wing, circa 1890. From Green, *A New Bern Album*, p. 161.



Figure 9. West Wing of Palace, 1930. From Wilson, *Memories of New Bern*, p. 36.



Figure 10. West Wing Renovation, ca. 1955, New Bern, North Carolina, John Hawks, 1767-1770. From Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, p. 208.



Figure 11. Restored West Wing, 2005, New Bern North Carolina, original architect John Hawks, 1767-1770, restoration architect William Graves Perry. Photo by author.

and shopping trips. Dill and Perry both spent considerable time in England completing their research.¹²⁷

In 1954, the Commission continued its work to purchase all the lots on the original site. Gertrude Carraway appealed to the Department of Conservation and Development for \$300,000. She argued that Tryon Palace was part of “a growing restoration industry that is being practiced in almost every state as a tourist enterprise with high corollary values in education and inspiration for democratic peoples.”¹²⁸ The request was approved which allowed the property on Metcalf and South Front streets to be purchased. The TPC unanimously decided to acquire six properties in addition to “All property located between George and Eden Streets . . . to the Channel of the Trent River; also all the property lying between George and Metcalf Streets between South Front Street and the channel of the Trent River.” According to the Commission, this land was “the ground on which Tryon Palace was situated and which was used in connection therewith and without which the said restoration would be incomplete.”¹²⁹ The TPC authorized funds for the Board of Conservation and Development to use to purchase or condemn the needed real estate.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Latham’s trust continued to grow in value. At the Commission meeting on November 29, 1954, Mr. Kellenberger reported that after the Commission turned over more than \$400,000 to the state, the trust was still worth \$2,888,000.¹³⁰ He stated the success was due mainly to “19,000 shares in Jefferson Standard stock. Then we have another security that advanced a whole lot. There were 1,200 shares of du Pont

¹²⁷ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 68.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 72-73.

¹²⁹ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 29, 1954, 112.

¹³⁰ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 29, 1954, 110.

stock. Those are two securities that we are going to hold on to unless something happens that we can't anticipate."¹³¹

While they had the money necessary to complete the restoration, members of the TPC needed expertise and training to have a successful and accurate site. In the summer of 1955, the Kellenbergers visited Monticello and Ashlawn and were later joined by Elizabeth and Virginia Horne. The four traveled around Washington, D.C. and Annapolis and visited Gunston Hall, Woodlawn, Mount Vernon, State House, Brice House and the Hammond-Harwood House.¹³² That summer, the Horne sisters and Mrs. Kellenberger attended a course on Historic Housekeeping, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation at Cooperstown, New York. The three traveled to Boston where they met with Mr. Perry and visited Old Sturbridge Village. They also stopped at the factory of the Schwamb Company where they "inspected millwork and hand-carved woodwork being made for the Palace."¹³³ In June 1955, Mr. Henry Francis du Pont of Winterthur assisted the TPC and Mr. Perry in purchasing \$7,125 worth of items from the estate auction of Ruth Vanderbilt Twombly in New York City.¹³⁴

At the November 3, 1955 meeting, the Acquisitions Committee reported they unanimously voted to furnish the Palace as a historic house rather than a museum. They also decided to furnish the Palace according to the inventories of Governors Tryon and Martin, with an emphasis on the former. They desired to furnish the Palace with antiques rather than reproductions whenever possible. The Committee chose to make no further

¹³¹ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 75.

¹³² Ibid, 82.

¹³³ Ibid, 83.

¹³⁴ His wife, Ruth Wales du Pont was a direct descendant of Palace architect James Hawk, and was appointed to the TPC in 1946. TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, June 9, 1955, 132.

acquisitions until they secured a curator for the restoration.¹³⁵ At the meeting, Mrs. Kellenberger announced it was her hope that Tryon Palace could open in conjunction with Jamestown's celebration of its 350th birthday, which continued through 1957. Echoing the ideology of Colonial Williamsburg, she stated "the Palace must be a living Restoration with a definite program of interpretation – the purpose of which is to make history come alive."¹³⁶ Mrs. Kellenberger advised the historical society and Palace guides to "begin now to prepare yourselves by reading and learning by heart, not only the acts of history of the period, but interesting anecdotes of striking personalities. Human interest stories are of paramount value, but one word of warning – be authentic. Authenticity is the watchword of a restoration."¹³⁷ She stated, "To teach history, a restoration is better than any history textbook. It is said that an army private wrote to Mr. Rockefeller that one visit to Williamsburg had meant more to him in creating an appreciation of America than had any study of history or reading during his whole life."¹³⁸

Construction of the Tryon Palace complex moved rapidly while the Commission made other important decisions. The price of admission to Tryon Palace was set at \$1 per adult, \$.25 per child, \$.10 per school group child, and no charge for orphanage groups. The Personnel Committee of the TPC elected Gertrude Carraway as director of the Tryon Palace Restoration Complex with a salary of \$8,000. The Committee charged Carraway with finding "a suitable person to serve as curator."¹³⁹ She resigned her

¹³⁵ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 3, 1955, 152-53.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 168-169.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 168.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 170.

¹³⁹ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, Personnel Committee Meeting June 7, 1956. 1.

position on the TPC and began her official duties as Director on November 15, 1956.¹⁴⁰

The Executive Committee of the TPC decided to acquire ten additional pieces of property that bordered the restoration site. They resolved “to take whatever steps necessary to acquire the properties.”¹⁴¹ Alonzo Dill, a native of New Bern and the Chairman of the Festival Committee for the 350th Anniversary of Jamestown, attended an open meeting of the TPC and suggested that “New Bernians begin to think now about ways and means of publicizing the restoration, for he stressed the difficulties of much competition elsewhere.”¹⁴²

In November 1956, Mrs. Kellenberger announced the Personnel Committee selected Gregor Norman-Wilcox for a one-year appointment as curator at Tryon Palace.¹⁴³ Norman-Wilcox served as curator of Decorative Arts at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from 1931-1969. He graduated from the Cleveland School of Art and worked as an interior designer in Cleveland before moving to Los Angeles. Norman-Wilcox wrote a number of articles on decorative arts and was a regular contributor to *The Magazine Antiques*, as well as other publications. From 1949-1959 he wrote a column on antiques for the *Los Angeles Times* and was nationally syndicated from 1958-1969.¹⁴⁴ A number of experts on antiques recommended Norman-Wilcox and the Kellenbergers met with Norman-Wilcox and his wife while on a trip to California. As curator, he received a salary of \$10,000, payment of all his travel expenses, and use of the Stevenson House on the complex grounds during his one-year appointment.¹⁴⁵ He took a leave of absence

¹⁴⁰ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 93.

¹⁴¹ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, Executive Committee Meeting, June 11, 1956, 3.

¹⁴² TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, TPC Open Meeting, June 11, 1956, 8-9.

¹⁴³ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, Executive Committee Meeting, November 25, 1956, 28.

¹⁴⁴ Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library, “Finding Aid to the Gregor Norman-Wilcox Papers, ca. 1930-1970,” [<http://findingaid.winterthur.org/html/col115.html>], December 2004.

¹⁴⁵ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 94.

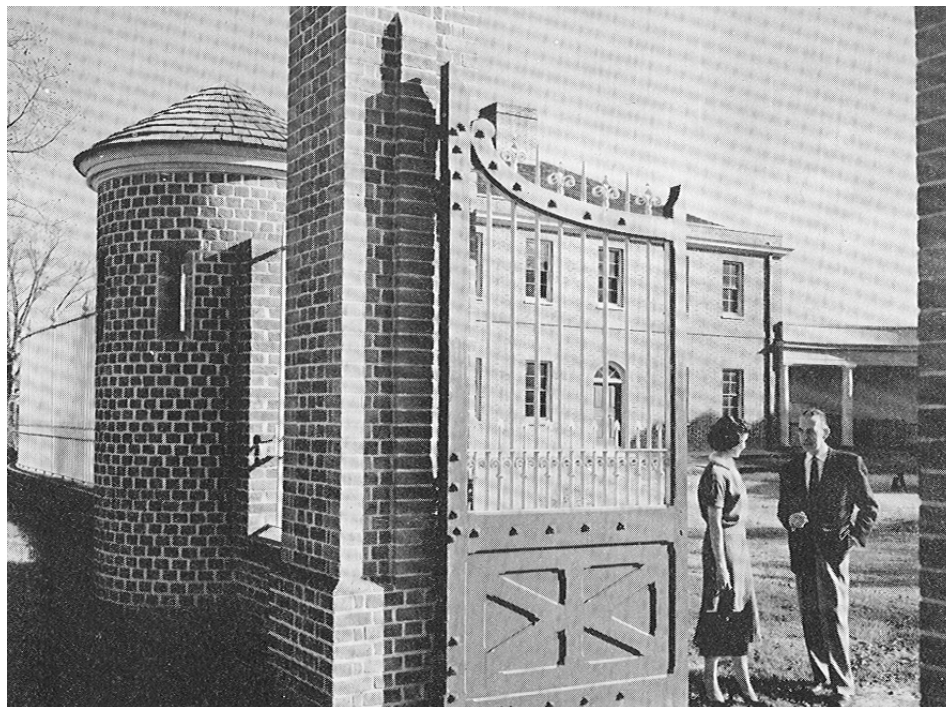


Figure 12. Gregor Norman-Wilcox, restoration curator, at the Tryon Palace gates, 1958.
From Green, *A New Bern Album*, p. 348.

from the LA Country Museum and began his work on the Tryon Palace restoration on May 1, 1957.¹⁴⁶

Work progressed quickly on the restoration of Tryon Palace. By May 9, 1957, Miss Carraway reported that the construction of the Palace was 99 percent complete.¹⁴⁷ The Kellenbergers, the Horne sisters, and Norman-Wilcox planned to attend the sixth annual British National Trust Summer School on Historic Houses of Great Britain and Scotland in July.¹⁴⁸ The TPC also anticipated a buying trip for furniture in England which followed the summer school.¹⁴⁹ They purchased over two hundred items “at a cost . . . of much less than had they been purchased in this country.”¹⁵⁰ During the trip in England, the Kellenbergers, Hornes, and Norman-Wilcox visited Lord and Lady Tryon at their home in Great Durnford, near Salisbury. While there, the Tryon family donated a portrait of Charles Tryon, Governor Tryon’s father, for the restoration.¹⁵¹ Mrs. Kellenberger reported that the trip “was a very rich experience in many ways and the knowledge gained by our visits to forty or more great houses and castles . . . constituted a liberal education for those of us who were privileged to attend, and prepared us in large measure for the arduous and painstaking duties ahead in furnishing and operating the Tryon Palace restoration.”¹⁵²

After purchasing a number of English antiques on their trip, the Kellenbergers decided to include some American-made furniture for the restoration. Mrs. Kellenberger reported “it is thought highly probable that some American made pieces were acquired by

¹⁴⁶ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, TPC Meeting, May 29, 1957, 74.

¹⁴⁷ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 98.

¹⁴⁸ Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, TPC Meeting, November 27, 1956, 55.

¹⁴⁹ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, TPC Meeting, May 29, 1957, 79.

¹⁵⁰ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 105.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 104.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 105.

Tryon after he came to this country. As you doubtless know, American pieces made by the finest Cabinet Makers are much sought after and bring a higher price on the market than English furniture.” As a result of this decision, they bought a matching pair of mahogany tables made in Newport, Rhode Island circa 1770 by Townsend and Goddard.¹⁵³ In March 1958, “a large number of items,” mostly of North Carolina provenance were purchased near High Point, but were placed in the east wing, the reception center, and the basement of the Palace.¹⁵⁴ On April 28, 1958, before Gregor Norman-Wilcox left New Bern, members of the TPC and invited guests spent the day touring the partially furnished Palace.

While it seemed as though the Palace was ready to open, there were still a number of tasks to finish. The Commission still needed to secure a curator, accession furniture and accessories, inscribe each gift to the Palace in the “Gift Book,” determine the layout and landscaping of the gardens, determine what would happen to South Front Street,¹⁵⁵ make a decision about installing plumbing in the basement of the main building, educate and costume the guides, and plan for the formal opening.¹⁵⁶ In November 1958, the Palace opened for special preview tours to allow local residents a peek behind the iron gates. The *Raleigh News and Observer* reported that after his tour, one “old-time” New Bern resident remarked, “Now I can see where the three million went.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, “Trip to Great Britain,” by Mrs. John A. Kellenberger, November 6, 1957, 215.

¹⁵⁴ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 117.

¹⁵⁵ The question was whether or not South Front Street could be closed. The street ran across the back portion of the complex, near the waterfront. The State Highway and Public Works Commission agreed to widen Eden and Metcalf Streets around the Palace and construct a loop around the waterfront, allowing the portion of South Front Street on the complex grounds to be closed. Robinson, *Three Decades*, 121.

¹⁵⁶ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 118.

¹⁵⁷ Dotty Cameron, “Preview Tours Held at Palace,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, 16 November 1958.

The Palace finally opened on April 8, 1959, when the TPC sponsored “Legislative Day” for state officials, Supreme Court justices, members of the General Assembly, and other invited guests. North Carolina Governor Luther Hodges cut the ribbon on the gates of the Palace and Mrs. Kellenberger presented the Governor with a key to the Palace, officially turning over the title to the building and property to the state.¹⁵⁸ Governor Hodges remarked that:

Attractions of this type have far-reaching effects. The historic value alone would justify the time, effort and expense in the restoration. But there are other values to be considered – values that accrue naturally from this type of activity. Many thousands of people will come annually to visit this birthplace of government in North Carolina. Our own citizens and tourists from out of state will come, and their effect will be felt on the local, regional, and state economy. Very likely they will visit, not just Tryon Palace, but other historical sites. Every facet of the state’s economy that benefits from the tourist industry . . . will benefit from the restoration of Tryon Palace.¹⁵⁹

Later that night, Dr. Richard Howland, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, commended the TPC for “taking the necessary time for a master plan for the restoration, maintenance, interpretation, and historic importance of Tryon Palace and not taking hasty action with ill-conceived plans as many others have done. Tryon Palace is a model restoration.”¹⁶⁰

The following day, on April 9, the TPC hosted over 500 “distinguished professional guests.” Governor Hodges told the crowd “we in North Carolina have every right to be proud of the people and events that have given us a great tradition. We have a responsibility as citizens and parents to ensure that future generations of North Carolinians hold the same pride in their past that we hold today. There is no better way

¹⁵⁸ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 128.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 130.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 140.



Figure 13. May Kellenberger and Luther Hodges cut the ribbon on the gates of Tryon Palace, April 8, 1959. From Green, *A New Bern Album*, p. 350.

of insuring this pride than by preserving, as we have here in Tryon Palace, the physical evidences of our heritage.”¹⁶¹

The Palace opened to the general public on April 10, 1959. Miss Carraway reported that at 8:30 a.m., fifteen people waited in line, even though the Palace did not open until 9:30. She also stated that on opening day there were visitors from seventeen states and Canada.¹⁶² By all accounts, Tryon Palace held a very successful opening. By June 30, 1959, 13,716 people visited the complex, representing forty-six states and twelve countries.¹⁶³ By September, 24,062 tourists visited the Palace¹⁶⁴ and generated revenue of \$43,432. The Palace received over 168 visitors per day.¹⁶⁵

At the Executive Committee meeting on October 4, 1959, Mrs. Kellenberger advised the committee that “we must not rest on our laurels, but must seek ways to draw more and more people to New Bern and the Palace. The town itself must make the most of its many attractions, and visitors should be encouraged to visit the interesting and historic spots here. New Bern must be made as attractive to visitors as possible so that they will remain not a few hours, but a few days. Everything possible should be done by the city and its citizens to bring this about.”¹⁶⁶ The TPC estimated that the first year of operation would bring revenues of \$35,000.¹⁶⁷ The Executive Committee was overwhelmed when Miss Carraway announced that from April 10, 1959 to May 31, 1960, there were 39,576 paid admissions for a total revenue of \$70,157. Visitors came from all

¹⁶¹ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 141.

¹⁶² Ibid, 142.

¹⁶³ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 3, 1958-1959, 173.

¹⁶⁴ Before the Palace opening, admission prices were changed to \$2 per adult and \$1 per child. TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, Personnel Committee Meeting, 7 June 1956, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 143.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 147.

¹⁶⁷ Bryan Haislip, “Tryon Palace Project Proving History Can Pay Big Dividends,” *Greensboro Record*, August 28, 1959.

fifty states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and thirty-two foreign countries.¹⁶⁸ The final cost of the restoration was \$2,993,345.35, which included property acquisition, restoration, reconstruction, furnishings, and landscaping.¹⁶⁹

Tryon Palace created numerous benefits for New Bern and North Carolina. From April to August 1959, visitors to the Palace spent an estimated \$100,000 in New Bern for meals, lodging, gasoline, and “other things tourists buy.” Dr. Crittenden told a reporter that “a tourist spends about \$14 per day. Figure it up yourself. If we got 100,000 a year, staying four or five days in the state – there’s \$5,000,000 to \$7,000,000.” Crittenden believed “There is no doubt about it. Tourists want to see history The visitor to Tryon Palace will be likely to stop at another place where history was made.”¹⁷⁰ At the first TPC meeting in November 1945, Commission member Mrs. William Reynolds offered the idea “that the project should be extended on a statewide basis, that all portions of North Carolina would have an interest in it and that all parts of the state would benefit.” She asserted that “Visitors to the restored Palace should be encouraged to visit other parts of North Carolina.”¹⁷¹ Because of the success of Tryon Palace, North Carolina citizens voted on a bond referendum in October 1959 to give \$250,000 to historic projects across the state.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 153.

¹⁶⁹ John B. Green to Palace Guides, Memorandum, “Cost of Palace,” dated 8 October 1990, located in “Tryon Palace” vertical file at Kellenberger Room, New Bern and Craven County Public Library, New Bern, North Carolina.

¹⁷⁰ Bryan Haislip, “Tryon Palace Project Proving History Can Pay Big Dividends,” *Greensboro Record*, August 28, 1959.

¹⁷¹ TPC Meeting Minutes, vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 6, 1945, Raleigh, p. 3.

¹⁷² The sites included in the referendum were Town Creek Indian Mound near Mt. Gilead, Fort Fisher in New Hanover County, Old Brunswick Town, the birthplace of Civil War Governor Zebulon Vance in Currituck County, and the birthplace of Governor Charles Aycock in Wayne County. Bryan Haislip, “Tryon Palace Project Proving,” *Greensboro Record*, August 28, 1959.

While the successful opening of the Tryon Palace Complex was significant, the motivations for opening the Palace reveal more about the importance of the Palace. There were many reasons for wanting to recreate the Palace. Every person involved in the restoration had their own motivations for supporting the reconstruction and each had their own ideas regarding the purpose of Tryon Palace. One of the primary reasons for the reconstruction was the historical and architectural significance of the original Palace. Tryon Palace was the first permanent capitol of the province of North Carolina, the last home of English Royal governors, and taxation for its construction led partly to the War of the Regulation and the Battle of Alamance. The Palace was also the site of the first meeting of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina, the first in America to be called and held in defiance of British orders. Tryon Palace was also the place where four state governors held their inaugurations, and the site of the state legislature's first meetings. A brochure from the late 1990s touts that Tryon Palace was a place "Where Governors Ruled, Legislators Debated, Patriots Gathered, and George Washington Danced."¹⁷³ Another brochure from Tryon Palace describes the complex as a place where one can "discover 200 years of American history with a North Carolina accent."¹⁷⁴

New Bern was the home to many important historic events and restoring the palace allowed Tryon's home to serve as the main attraction. When professionals and members from the National Trust for Historic Preservation visited New Bern, hostesses told visitors that:

¹⁷³ "Welcome to Tryon Palace - Where Governors Ruled, Legislators Debated, Patriots Gathered, and George Washington Danced," brochure, (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens, ca. 1999).

¹⁷⁴ "North Carolina Begins Here," brochure, (New Bern, N.C.: Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens, ca. 2000).

New Bern is also proud of its many FIRSTs [original emphasis]. Among them: First in America to record officially the legal principle that a legislature is limited in power by a constitution; First in America for a provincial convention called and held in defiance of British orders; First in America to celebrate Washington's Birthday; First in North Carolina and third in America to celebrate Independence Day; First incorporated school in North Carolina and second private secondary school in English America to receive a charter; First printing press, first pamphlet, first newspaper, and first book printed in the province.¹⁷⁵

Architecturally, the original Palace was one of the finest buildings in colonial America. Governor Tryon brought his own architect, John Hawks, with him to the colonies. Hawks apprenticed with Stiff Leadbetter and helped to construct Nuneham-Courtney in England. Hawks designed the building in the late Georgian style, which represented Governor Tryon's authority and dominance in North Carolina. Georgian architecture of the eighteenth century was a product of the elite and wealthy that emulated the high fashion of England in the American colonies. Governor Tryon wrote, "Several persons who have passed through here from the other colonies esteem this house the finest capital building on the continent of North America."¹⁷⁶ William Perry, architect of the restoration, told the Tryon Palace Commission that "it appears more clearly than ever the Palace will have an architectural significance all its own. It will be to all intents an English building modified, of necessity, by availability of materials here, more specifically, it will be a London building, or to state it more simple still, an English country house, designed and erected by an architect conversant and sympathetic with contemporary London mannerisms."¹⁷⁷

The Palace is late Georgian in style with symmetry maintained throughout. The two and a half story main block centers on a pedimented projected pavilion. The edges

¹⁷⁵ Gertrude Carraway, "Information for Bus Hostesses to Give Visitors, National Trust for Historic Preservation, October 9-10, 1965, From Beaman's Fork to City of New Bern," located in Hostess Notebook at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens Archives, New Bern, North Carolina.

¹⁷⁶ Gertrude Carraway, "Tryon's Palace: North Carolina's First Capitol," [<http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/nc/ncsites/Tryon.htm>], January 2005.

¹⁷⁷ TPC Meeting Minutes, vol. 1, 1945-1955, June 22, 1953, 65.



Figure 14. Front Elevation, Tryon Palace, New Bern, North Carolina, original design by John Hawks, reconstructed by William G. Perry, 1952-59. Photo by author.

of the projecting pavilion and corners of the house are emphasized by decorative brick quoins. The Palace is bilaterally symmetrical around a center axis with a double pile plan. Typical of the Georgian style are the modillion cornice, belt course, double hung six-over-nine sliding sash windows on the first and second stories, four interior brick chimneys, flat topped hip roof, Flemish bond brickwork and embellished central entrance with pedimented portico, fluted Doric columns, and double doors with four molded panels. The specialization of rooms within the Palace reflected greater formality developing in the eighteenth century.¹⁷⁸

Commission member Mrs. Lyman Cotton feared that people did not recognize North Carolina's contribution to the architectural record. At the first meeting of the TPC, she stated the Commission would develop "Palace programs [that] would controvert any idea that North Carolina did not have fine homes and other buildings in the Colonial era."¹⁷⁹ Some historians have recognized Tryon Palace as an important architectural site. Architectural historian Leland Roth called the original Tryon Palace "one of the most ambitious southern houses." Roth compared Tryon Palace with other prominent Southern buildings, including George Washington's Mount Vernon, the Miles Brewton house in Charleston, and Mt. Airy in Richmond County, Virginia.¹⁸⁰

Others involved in the restoration saw the reconstruction of the Palace as a shrine to their Anglo-Saxon heritage. The Georgian Revival of the twentieth century was a product of the elite and was meant to create a nostalgic view of the past. The reconstruction no longer represented Governor Tryon's power and authority, but the power of elite white culture in North Carolina that financed and participated in the

¹⁷⁸ Leland Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 73.

¹⁷⁹ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 5, 1945, Raleigh, p. 3.

¹⁸⁰ Roth, *American Architecture*, 90.

restoration. Gertrude Carraway wrote that the Palace “would be a great historic site and state Park, an educational museum with its antique furnishings of the Colonial era, an outstanding architectural showplace without a peer in America, and an important patriotic shrine where were laid the foundations of North Carolina’s fight for independence and freedom and for establishment of its State government.”¹⁸¹ Governor Luther Hodges believed the restoration “symbolizes a growing awareness of the rich heritage that is ours, a realization that pride in this heritage is justified, and even more important, a new-found determination on the part of our people to preserve this heritage as an inspiration to our future generations.”¹⁸² By reconstructing the Palace, members of the TPC assured that their names would be synonymous with this grand edifice that was intended to benefit all citizens of North Carolina. The people involved in the reconstruction controlled the messages, and therefore the history, that was portrayed to the public.¹⁸³

Many of the twenty-five original members of the Tryon Palace Commission were prominent members of North Carolina society.¹⁸⁴ The Commission members included Mrs. Charles A. Cannon, whose husband was an innovator in the textile industry and owned Cannon Mills Company; Mrs. Katherine (Peter) Arrington, President of the North Carolina State Art Society, whose husband was manager of the British Division of the American Tobacco Company; Mrs. Elizabeth Dillard (R.J.) Reynolds, whose husband ran the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco company, maker of Camel cigarettes, and owned Reynolda House in Winston-Salem; and Mrs. Mary Lenora Irvin (William Henry) Belk, whose

¹⁸¹ Gertrude Carraway, “Tryon Palace Restoration Is Assured,” *Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel*, May 29, 1949.

¹⁸² “Palace Good Investment, Hodges Says,” *Greensboro Record*, April 8, 1959.

¹⁸³ For more information on how southern elites in North Carolina have shaped public memory through architecture and monuments, see Catherine W. Bishir, “Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past, 1885-1915,” *Southern Cultures*, inaugural issue (1993): 5-45.

¹⁸⁴ For information on the original Commission members, please refer to Appendix A.

husband was the founder of the Belk Department stores. The TPC membership also included important politicians such as Mrs. Gertrude Dills (E.L.) McKee of Sylva, North Carolina's first female state senator, Judge D.L. Ward from New Bern, Senator Carroll P. Rogers of Tryon, Judge Richard Dixon of Edenton, Senator Clyde R. Hoey of Shelby, and former Governor J. Melville Broughton.¹⁸⁵

Patriotism was closely tied to this sense of preserving one's heritage. Mrs. Latham hoped "the restored palace may become the loveliest shrine of its period anywhere in America."¹⁸⁶ She also wished to restore the Palace "as a memorial to her son, Edward, who died at Fort Thomas, Kentucky in 1918 during World War I in the service of his country."¹⁸⁷ He died of influenza during the epidemic of 1918 at the age of 23.¹⁸⁸ When Dr. Edward P. Alexander, the Vice President and Director of Interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg, spoke at a Commission meeting in 1956, he stated the main purpose of historic houses in America "is to recreate the past in order that the future may learn from it." Alexander believed the restoration could teach visitors about eighteenth century life, architecture, gardens, decorative arts, the history of the restoration, and the concepts of the "American way."¹⁸⁹ However, no comment was made as to what this "American way" actually was.

In a speech given to the North Carolina State Literary and Historical Association on December 6, 1957, Restoration Director Gertrude Carraway discussed why preserving Tryon Palace was so important. She argued:

¹⁸⁵ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, 1.

¹⁸⁶ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, December 13, 1945, 6.

¹⁸⁷ "Mrs. James Edwin Latham, Benefactor, Donor, Tryon Palace Restoration," Tryon Palace Commission, ca. 1958.

¹⁸⁸ "J.E. Latham, Prominent Business Leader, Dies After Lengthy Illness," *Greensboro Record*, April 16, 1946.

¹⁸⁹ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, November 26, 1956, p. 33.

Our nation is getting old enough to glance backward in gratitude for the pioneers who brought us where we are today to accept the challenge of the past for better citizenship in the present, and preservation of our rich heritage for posterity. These uncertain times and its international threats make us want to understand the firm foundations laid by our predecessors. This gives us an assurance of permanence and continuity. We learn that older generations survived perplexing problems and pressing dangers. Hence, our future appears more certain and secure, especially if we retain the ideals on which America was founded and built – with courage, endurance, and faith.¹⁹⁰

By restoring Tryon Palace and preserving other historic sites, Americans would be better citizens and appreciate the efforts of our ancestors. To Carraway and other members of the TPC, preserving colonial sites such as Tryon Palace was a demonstration of filial piety and mid-twentieth century Progressivism. Latham, Carraway, and other members of the Commission believed Tryon Palace could be used as a tool to empower and edify visitors. As Charles Hosmer pointed out, many preservationists believed that “a willingness to pause inside a historic house and reflect upon the simple, rugged life of the past would provide an antidote for the materialistic ills of the present.”¹⁹¹ Hosmer goes on to note that “many preservationists gave of their time and money because of an underlying conviction that the public could be educated and regenerated by exposure to homes symbolic of the virtues of the past.”¹⁹² The TPC enabled visitors to spend time in and experience the home of a man they believed possessed important qualities.

Still others wanted to reconstruct the Palace to “correct” the historical record. The *Greensboro Daily News* wrote “For long decades the very name ‘Tryon’s Palace’ was a disgusting symbol. It conjured up visions of British tyranny during the Revolution. Governor Tryon . . . won the hatred of up-country Tar Heels; the governmental ‘palace’

¹⁹⁰ Gertrude Carraway, “Nation Glances Backward with Gratitude Now,” in “History is Proving Both Important and Valuable Product,” *New Bern Sun Journal*, 4 April 1959.

¹⁹¹ Hosmer, *Presence of the Past*, 299.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 299-300.

he built for \$75,000 at New Bern became the focal point of that anger.”¹⁹³ Senator Carroll Rogers of Tryon, North Carolina was one of the most outspoken members of the Commission and advocate for Governor Tryon. He wanted “to reverse history now and make up for what our predecessors in piedmont and western Carolina then did. We in the west want to help rebuild the palace now, and we and our children will live to see it restored as one of the great showplaces of the state.”¹⁹⁴ Senator Rogers hoped that one result of the restoration “would come in leading to a better general opinion of Royal Governor William Tryon.” After all, his hometown was named after Governor Tryon. He argued, “The name of Tryon should be declared,” and that the Royal Governor “was constructive and fair minded.”¹⁹⁵ At a Commission meeting in June 1954, Mr. Rogers “spoke of Royal Governor William Tryon and his outstanding ability and character, and read a letter to prove that Tryon was held in high esteem in New Bern prior to the Revolutionary War.”¹⁹⁶

Members of the Commission also attempted to idealize Governor Tryon. In response to the question, “What did Tryon look like?” the hostesses were told that “only conjecture can bring us a picture, but let us look at a few clues.” Governor Tryon “came of a family of substantial wealth and social standing in England. So he doubtless had been trained in all graces and airs of well-to-do social life of the period. A certain self-confidence, bred of a secure knowledge of his social standing; an exhilarating sense of ambition that must have been present as he considered who and what he might become.” It continues, “We see a young man of thirty six whose posture is imposing, head held

¹⁹³ “Tryon’s Palace: Tar Heel Showplace,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 8 April 1959.

¹⁹⁴ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 33.

¹⁹⁵ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 6, 1945, 3.

¹⁹⁶ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, June 30, 1954, 101.

high with a spring in his step, trim with the exercise of the military, and with this an air of grace and charm, which through a source of great vanity to him, surrounded him with people eager to serve him, anxious to please him.” The memo also maintained that “We are lucky in the choice made in Governor Tryon He saw it [the colony] for what it was and is today – a vast area of opportunity for men of vision.”¹⁹⁷

Mr. Kellenberger also worked to redeem Governor Tryon’s reputation. The meeting minutes from November 1957 read, “Hoping to give and get more favorable publicity for Royal Governor William Tryon, whose decision to hang Regulators in 1771 was more widely known and publicized than his many good deeds, Mr. Kellenberger called attention to the fact that, despite worthy character and many wise and charitable actions, a man today would make front page headlines if he committed one bad or illegal act.” Mr. Rogers agreed and maintained “Tryon was this province’s best administrator during the colonial period.”¹⁹⁸ By redeeming the reputation of a Royal Governor, those behind the reconstruction helped to make Governor Tryon a heroic North Carolina figure, rather than a British tyrant. Tryon Palace could therefore be celebrated as a product of colonial achievement.

Another constituency wanted to reconstruct the Palace for its financial potential for the state. Tourism was a rapidly growing industry and became even more important in the post World War II era. One of Governor Clyde Hoey’s goals for his administration was to advertise and publicize North Carolina to the country as a whole. He believed North Carolina “had so far failed to proclaim the importance of its historical shrines and

¹⁹⁷ “What did Tryon look like?” no date, no author, located in the Hostess binder at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens Archives, New Bern, North Carolina.

¹⁹⁸ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 2, 1956-1957, Advertising and Publicity Committee, November 5, 1957, 176.

colonial buildings as Virginia had done, and he wanted the state to proceed with such an effort.”¹⁹⁹ Fiske Kimball wrote to Gertrude Carraway that the restoration of Tryon Palace “is just what North Carolina needs to buck Williamsburg and Charleston as a tourist attraction.”²⁰⁰ Senator Ward believed “The tourist business in Virginia has grown into the millions because of the restoration of historic sites.”²⁰¹

Landscape historian John Jakle argues that tourism “was a precipitator of changing social values.”²⁰² He points out that “With the coming of mass automobile ownership after World War I, travel was less the exclusive preserve of the well-to-do, and middle-class Americans sought to identify with exotic places also.”²⁰³ The automobile meant that more and more people had the opportunity to travel, and eagerly did so. Workers also found themselves with more free time they could use to travel. By 1960, “the American industrial workers enjoyed an additional day of leisure every week beyond the free time they had enjoyed in the 1920s, and they had twice as many hours for recreation as they had had in the 1890s. Compared to the previous century, leisure time had increased from some ten hours a week to more than seventy.”²⁰⁴ Jakle argues that historic sites were of great interest to tourists and allowed them to reflect on the past. He states “Historical sites offered a sense of permanence in an ever-evolving world of new, highly standardized landscapes. Historical flavor served as a counterpoint to modernity.”²⁰⁵ This sense of permanence was particularly important to people who lived

¹⁹⁹ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 13.

²⁰⁰ “Discovered Drawings of John Hawks Added to Restoration,” *New Bern Sun Journal*, Special Tryon Palace Edition, 4 April 1959.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, 42.

²⁰² John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), xii.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 9.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 1.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 286.

in urban areas and saw their landscape constantly change with new construction. Jakle believes that sites of national importance were especially attractive and significant to tourists because “these sites served to create a sense of national identity, to bind the tourist closer to the national body politic.”²⁰⁶

Though never directly stated as a reason for the restoration, increasing urbanization in Western North Carolina was also a factor. Tourism was a way to bring money and attention to the eastern part of the state. New Bern had been the largest city in North Carolina until the 1830s when Wilmington surpassed it. By 1910, Charlotte became the state’s largest city.²⁰⁷ The Piedmont and mountain sections of the state were experiencing rapid growth, reflecting a shift from the older, agricultural based east to the more urban and industrial west.

In 1944, Governor Broughton visited Colonial Williamsburg and met with Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, the financiers of the Williamsburg restoration. After their visit, Governor Broughton endorsed the reconstruction as a tourist attraction. At a luncheon, the Governor told the group “that one [Williamsburg] official had half-jokingly offered to finance the entire cost of reconstruction if he could be allowed just the gasoline sales tax that the state of North Carolina would derive from the many tourists who would be attracted to the Palace.”²⁰⁸ Mrs. Latham had stated she believed in “the whole hearted interest of all citizens, of those interested in history as well as those interested in seeing the state become a tourist mecca.”²⁰⁹ Politicians and members of the Commission believed that the restoration would bring fame and wealth to the entire state through

²⁰⁶ Jakle, *The Tourist*, 288.

²⁰⁷ Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 415.

²⁰⁸ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 35.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 40.

tourism. Senator Rogers promised that “Western Carolinians will act as press agents for the palace, in the belief that what benefits the eastern part of the state will also help the western areas.” He believed that many westerners would support the restored Palace to help create a popular tourist destination.²¹⁰

But not everyone supported the restoration and believed it would be good for New Bern. Between forty and sixty homes and businesses were moved or demolished to reconstruct the Palace. Gertrude Carraway called the resistance to the reconstruction “New Bern’s Wars of the 1940s.”²¹¹ Opposition to the reconstruction was evident as early as 1944. At the meeting of the State Department of Conservation and Development on November 13, 1944, the members expressed their approval for the restoration project, but debated whether the state would have the power to condemn land to be used in the restoration. Several members of the board, including Governors Broughton and Cherry, believed that a special act might be necessary.²¹² Before the General Assembly would consider an appropriation for the reconstruction, Mrs. Latham and Miss Carraway had to receive the approval from the Advisory Budget Commission. The *Greensboro Record* reported that after hearing Mrs. Latham’s and Miss Caraway’s presentation, the State Advisory Budget Commission “did not display any great enthusiasm and their recommendation is expected to be rather negative.”²¹³

Several residents in New Bern hired attorney Charles Abernethy, Jr. to block any appropriation from the General Assembly. Almost one hundred citizens of New Bern signed a petition in opposition “to the closing of George Street, the condemnation of

²¹⁰ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 6, 1945, 3.

²¹¹ Carraway, “The Restoration of Tryon Palace,” 1.

²¹² Robinson, *Three Decades*, 38.

²¹³ Lynn Nisbett, “Tar Heel Capitol,” *Greensboro Record*, 15 November 1944.

homes and business property and the removal of the bridge across Trent River for the purpose of restoring Tryon's Palace." They argued they had no notice of the State Advisory Budget Commission hearing, were not aware legislation was pending, and asked for a hearing before the Joint Appropriations Committee.²¹⁴ At the hearing on January 29, 1945, Mr. Abernethy argued that the proposal called for the acquisition of the entire original site, including a block of George Street, which he called a main artery through the city. He stated, "We want Tryon's Palace restored, but we want it put to the west of the original site in order to salvage the highway and bridge." Frustrated at the lack of progress, he later stated "There is no earthly reason for the palace. It's a pig in a poke." Mr. Abernethy also stated that during war times, it was "unpatriotic to tie up money for something that we can do without when we have so many institutions in the state that are needing these funds."²¹⁵ Despite the *Greensboro Record's* prediction of failure and local opposition, the Advisory Budget Commission recommended that the General Assembly appropriate the \$150,000 requested for the Palace site.²¹⁶

Back in New Bern, a handbill printed by the "Citizens Emergency Committee, Preservation [of] George Street, Trent River Bridge and Business Area" circulated around town. They argued the restoration "would not offset the tremendous harm done to a growing business and industrial area, would not compensate for the loss of and ultimate removal of the bridge, and would not compensate for the many homes to be torn down."²¹⁷ Opposition was given on a February 5 radio address by Mr. Abernethy and by concerned citizens at the New Bern Board of Alderman meeting. Despite the resistance,

²¹⁴ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 39-40.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 41.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 41.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 42.

the aldermen voted to approve a motion that reaffirmed their support and endorsement of the reconstruction. On February 21, 1945 the General Assembly passed the bill appropriating funds to Tryon Palace.²¹⁸

Opponents of the restoration continued their efforts to stop, delay, or move the reconstruction. At a meeting of the Tryon Palace Commission, realtor Hugh Mills discussed some of the difficulties in purchasing several of the lots. He told “of a condemnation suit brought to clear the title to one piece of property, and of efforts to negotiate with the owner of the remaining West Wing of the Palace to reach a satisfactory price for her property. The Wing matter is now in the hands of a special commission approved to hear both sides relative to the price to be paid for the Wing.”²¹⁹ A court appointed committee of New Bern citizens determined a value of \$30,000 for the West Wing of the Palace, but the price was not acceptable to the owner.²²⁰ The *Greensboro Daily News* reported “it took considerable negotiating to arrive at a satisfactory price for the ancient building. The owners had gone to considerable expense to renovate and improve apartments, and were in no mood to take a financial licking.” The paper also stated that “Most New Bernians are viewing the restoration with mixed emotions. Needless to say, those citizens who were forced to sell their homes in order to make room for the palace weren’t too happy about it. A goodly number are enthusiastic, where there are others who insist that the whole thing is a foolish waste of money.”²²¹ Elbert Lipman’s mother, whose house was demolished to make way for the Palace, had to be physically removed from her home because “it was just a matter of not wanting to pull up

²¹⁸ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 43.

²¹⁹ TPC Meeting Minutes, vol 1, 1945-1955, June 14, 1951, 15.

²²⁰ TPC Meeting Minutes, vol. 1, 1945-1955, August 10, 1951, 17.

²²¹ J. Gaskill McDaniel, “New Bernians Vent Mixed Emotions About Restoration of Tryon Palace,” *Greensboro Daily News*, August 30, 1953.

roots.”²²² Gertrude Carraway reported that “Objections galore rose from owners of the properties on the Palace Square. They did not want to sell their homes and/or move their businesses.” However, she wrote “With Mrs. Kellenberger’s advice and assistance, every family losing their home . . . was relocated to much better dwellings.”²²³

The state did not hesitate to condemn properties and use their power of eminent domain if an owner would not sell their property. One owner, Mr. B.G. Hines, did not let the restoration stop him from building a new warehouse on the waterfront behind the Palace. The Tryon Palace Commission attempted to halt and discontinue the construction, but was unsuccessful. Mrs. Kellenberger reported that “condemnation proceedings were instituted for the lot.”²²⁴ At the same Commission meeting, the members voted unanimously to acquire “All property located between George and Eden Streets . . . to the Channel of the Trent River; also all the property lying between George and Metcalf Streets between South Front Street and the channel of the Trent River,” otherwise the restoration would be “incomplete.”²²⁵ The 1931 Sanborn map of New Bern clearly shows the number of buildings impacted by the restoration.

Residents and attorneys continued their squabbles in court. One dispute focused on a small piece of land lying between Front Street and the Trent river and a fence that supposedly existed there in 1779. Owners of the land argued their property was located outside the original Palace grounds and should not be subject to condemnation

²²² Wilson, *Memories of New Bern*, 12.

²²³ Gertrude Carraway, “The Restoration of Tryon Palace,” undated, located at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens Archives, New Bern, North Carolina, 5-6.

²²⁴ TPC Meeting Minutes, vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 29, 1954, 111.

²²⁵ *Ibid*, 112.

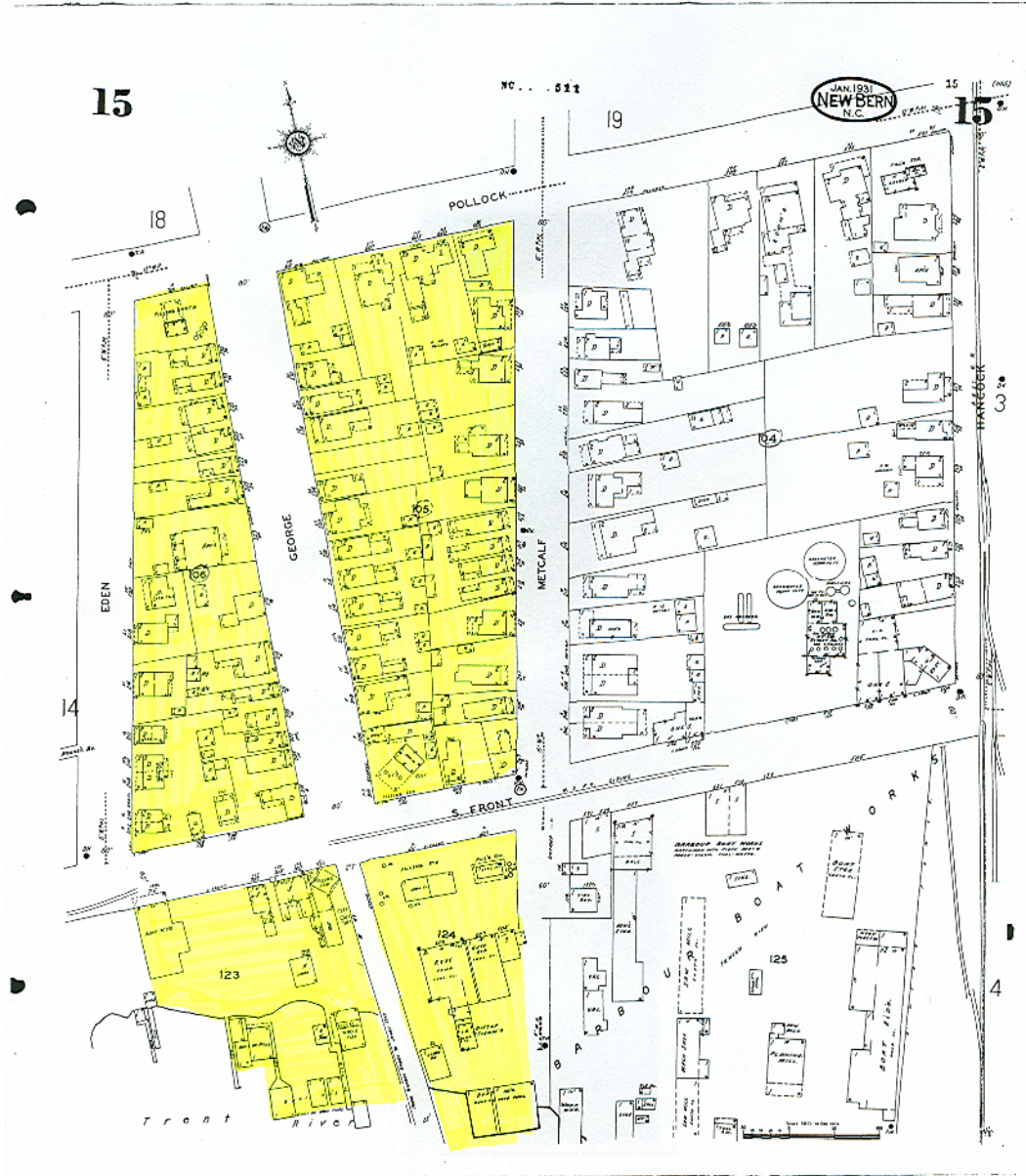


Figure 15. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, the highlighted areas indicate the site of the Tryon Palace Complex and the buildings that were moved or demolished. "New Bern, North Carolina," Sheet 15, January 1931, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970, ProQuest Information and Learning's Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970.



Figure 16. Aerial view, Palace restoration, January 3, 1956. From Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion*, p. 86.



Figure 17. Aerial view, restored Palace, 1959. From *Tryon Palace: Its Restoration and Preservation*, p. 23.

proceedings. They questioned whether “it was reasonable or necessary” to the restoration to acquire the land, even if it was a part of the original Palace grounds.²²⁶ In May 1956, the State Utilities Commission granted the State Department of Archives and History a certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to acquire the property by condemnation.²²⁷ The property owners appealed through the court system to the North Carolina Supreme Court. They called the condemnation “unlawful, unjust, unreasonable, and unwarranted.”²²⁸ The court ruled unanimously in favor of Tryon Palace and condemnation proceedings began on July 31, 1957. The property owners appealed for a rehearing of the case and asked for \$90,000 for the Hines warehouse and \$110,000 for the properties owned by the Hamilton family. In February 1958, the court ruled that the Hines family be paid \$51,000 and the Hamiltons received \$56,000 for their property. The families vacated by December 1 and the buildings were demolished to make way for the gardens.²²⁹

Even though there was resistance to the restoration, the majority of citizens in New Bern supported the restoration. Some business owners saw the potential revenue tourists would bring. When the Palace opened, the *Sun Journal*, the local newspaper, carried special advertisements where businesses welcomed Tryon Palace and visitors to New Bern. Trent Marine Service tried to capitalize on the tourists visiting the Palace. They advertised the prime location of New Bern, located “Where Two Beautiful Rivers Join to Afford Abundant Boating and Fishing” and encouraged visitors to “Come to New Bern For Lots of Water Fun.” First Citizens Bank and Trust lauded Tryon Palace as

²²⁶ “Hearing Begun on Acquisition of Grounds for Tryon Palace,” *Greensboro Daily News*, January 13, 1956.

²²⁷ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 107.

²²⁸ “Land Owners Act to Halt Tryon Palace Action,” *Greensboro Daily News*, June 22, 1956.

²²⁹ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 108-109.

PLEASE RETURN A PERSONAL TELEPHONE OR HISTORIC PERSONAGES ARE



*We Welcome Visitors to Tryon Palace
and New Bern . . . Where Two Beautiful
Rivers Join to Afford Abundant
Boating and Fishing.*

Tryon Palace is located on one of these rivers and the other is within
sight . . . Boats, both small and large can navigate and the fishing is
wonderful most of the year.

COME TO NEW BERN FOR LOTS OF WATER FUN

TRENT MARINE SERVICE

Yacht Sales, Service, Supplies and Storage

Located on Trent River, Just Across From the Palace

James City, N. C. DIAL ME 7-4537

Figure 18. Trent Marine Service advertisement. From *Sun Journal* (New Bern), 4 April 1959.

“Marking another milestone in New Bern’s Progress.” With their ad, Coleman Motors promoted the new Galaxie Ford model. They called Tryon Palace “The Glamour Place of Carolina” which complemented the new “Glamour car of the year!” The Union Bag-Camp Paper Corporation recognized the important role Tryon Palace would have in uplifting visitors and the community. Their ad stated, “We believe that historical and cultural values should go hand in hand with present and future endeavors. We feel that in this way a full and better life can be had for us all.”²³⁰

The S.B. Parker Company used their advertisement to promote their connection to Tryon Palace. The ad proudly stated, “We supplied the roofing and sheet metal work on both wings and also the ornamental sheet metal work on the Palace building.” Their association with Tryon Palace could be important in securing future business. Other homeowners might have been interested in using similar materials in their home renovation or construction projects.

Other businesses connected the twentieth century to colonial New Bern. “The Businessman’s Department Store” Branch’s ad recalled the past: “Business men in Colonial Times had their office most anywhere, but today’s businessmen work in efficient, comfortable quarters, thanks to modern equipment and machines.” Likewise, International Harvester’s ad read, “Farming has come a long way since Colonial Times. Back in the Colonial days farming was really hard work. Men and animals did it all with manpower doing most [sic]. Today, with modern machinery like the International Harvester Farmall tractors and equipment, one man can do more work than many did

²³⁰ New Bern *Sun Journal*, 4 April 1959, Special Tryon Palace Edition.



The Glamour Place of Carolina
TRYON PALACE

Glamour car of the year!

Beautifully proportioned new Galaxie
 Club Victoria... one of six models
 including the Continental Creamer model.



Acclaimed by the World of Style
Acclaimed by the World of Fashion

Thunderbird elegance anyone? Then step this way to the most sophisticated new Ford ever... the brilliant new Galaxie. Here is the most perfect match yet of the Thunderbird's silhouette! This altogether new line of 59 Fords offers you an exciting choice of six models, including two- and four-door sedans, two- and four-door hardtops, a sleek convertible, and the incomparable hardtop convertible. These six glamorous new Galaxies look like the Thunderbird... go like the Thunderbird... see like the Thunderbird in everything except price.

Galaxie
BY FORD

Newest of the World's Most Beautifully Proportioned Cars

We Join In Welcoming You To Tryon Palace

COLEMAN MOTORS

Your Friendly Ford Dealer In New Bern

Figure 19. Coleman Motors advertisement. From *Sun Journal* (New Bern), 4 April 1959.

Tryon Palace

THE RESTORED
CAPITOL OF
COLONIAL CAROLINA



FOR years and years the idea of restoring the seat of the Colonial Government of North Carolina has been a dream of hundreds of New Bernians and others in the State.

MANY did not live to see the dream come true, but thousands did, and on April 10, 1959, they will see the finished results.

WE urge everyone to visit this beautiful restored palace and see the priceless furnishings that are here.

• WE SUPPLIED THE ROOFING AND SHEET METAL
WORK ON BOTH WINGS AND ALSO THE ORNAMENTAL
SHEET METAL WORK ON THE PALACE BUILDING.

The S. B. Parker Co.

ROOFING — HEATING — SHEET METAL WORK

NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

Figure 20. S.B. Parker Co. advertisement. From *Sun Journal* (New Bern), 4 April 1959.

then.”²³¹ By evoking colonial imagery, these ads created a sense of nostalgia regarding the past.

Gertrude Carraway described the reconstruction of the Palace as “a long story, filled with contrasts: pessimism and optimism, disapproval and approval, difficulties and dividents [sic]; worry and wealth.”²³² Despite the many obstacles the TPC faced, they were intent on recreating Tryon Palace in the belief that it would benefit the citizens of North Carolina. The reconstruction of Tryon Palace was successful because the Commission members were determined to see their vision complete. They continued to pursue their goals despite numerous obstacles in their way because the reconstruction of Tryon Palace connected these North Carolinians to their colonial roots. The reconstruction allowed Commission members and visitors to the Palace to forget their problems, ignore their fears, and lose themselves in a comforting, albeit romanticized past.

²³¹ All ads appeared in the Special Tryon Palace Edition of the New Bern *Sun Journal*, 4 April 1959.

²³² Gertrude Carraway, “The Restoration of Tryon Palace,” undated, located at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens Archives, New Bern, North Carolina, 1.

CHAPTER THREE – CONSTRUCTING A COLONIAL PAST

Although the reconstruction of Tryon’s Palace faced opposition, there was tremendous interest in the restoration as a facet of the Colonial Revival movement in America. The Colonial Revival flourished in the twentieth century as elites attempted to refocus Americans on their past, rather than look forward to an uncertain future and grapple with current issues that included immigration, economic depression, industrialization, urbanization, and war. Many historical sites in America grew out of the Colonial Revival movement, including Tryon Palace and Colonial Williamsburg. While the Colonial Revival movement celebrated the past, it also obscured the historical record.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Americans have expressed a continual interest in the colonial era of American history. Art historian Karal Ann Marling argues that the more modern Americans become, “the more desperately we cling to our Washingtons, to our old fashioned heroes, to an imagined colonial past, to the good old days when patriots stood firm on their pedestals.”²³³ Dona Brown and Stephen Nissenbaum argue that visits to recreated sites in the post war era “symbolized a return to a world where the order, stability, and hierarchy associated with the past still had sway – a place where their ancestors had held unchallenged authority.”²³⁴ In times of instability and uncertainty, the concept of colonial America served as a comfort. Recreated and restored historic sites provided a place for Americans to reflect on American exceptionalism and the glories of Revolutionary heroes, when life seemed simpler, and there were specific enemies rather than abstract adversaries such as communism that threatened the American way of life.

²³³ Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revival and American Culture, 1876-1986* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), viii.

²³⁴ Dona Brown and Stephen Nissenbaum, “Changing New England: 1865-1945,” in William H. Truettner and Roger B. Stein, eds., *Picturing Old New England: Image and Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 5.

Creating shrines to the past gave Americans a place to “worship” their forefathers and share a national identity.

In the mid-nineteenth century, historic house museums were tourist sites that entertained as well as helped to refine and uplift middle class America.²³⁵ Preserving George Washington’s home was seen as a way to promote refinement and patriotism. Tourists visited Mount Vernon as a patriotic shrine, long before its renaissance as a house museum. In 1853 when Congress and the state of Virginia declined to purchase the site, Ann Pamela Cunningham and her mother Louisa Bird Cunningham appealed to Southern women to rescue the home from harm and “furnish a shrine where at least the mothers of the land and their innocent children might make their offering.”²³⁶ Others, including Northern women, became involved in the preservation of Mount Vernon because they believed it would help to create unity in a time when sectionalism was rapidly growing in America. In 1860, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association (MVLA) successfully purchased the estate, but plans to preserve the site were delayed by the Civil War. During those unstable years, Ann Pamela Cunningham sent both Southern and Northern supporters to protect Mount Vernon from harm. Cunningham returned to Mount Vernon in 1867 and began the task of “rescuing” the crumbling home amidst financial decline and continued division within the MVLA and the nation. She resigned in 1874 and encouraged the MVLA to continue their quest to preserve Mount Vernon. She called for the Ladies to:

²³⁵ West, *Domesticating History*, 4.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, 6-8.

“see to it that you keep it the home of Washington. Let no irreverent hand change it; no vandal hands desecrate it with the fingers of progress Let one spot in this grand country of ours be saved from change When the Centennial comes, bringing with it its thousands from the ends of the earth, to whom the home of Washington will be the place of places in our country, let them see that, though we slay our forests, remove our dead, pull down our churches, remove from home to home, till the hearthstone seems to have no resting place in America, let them see that we know how to care for the home of our hero.”²³⁷

George Washington’s home was intended to be a place untouched by the world and a shrine to the greatness of Washington and his colonial accomplishments. Cunningham’s efforts encouraged other women’s groups to become involved in preservation and historic house museums. With their involvement in this movement, women extended the domestic sphere from their own homes to the homes of historical figures, creating a wider base for woman’s involvement in public life.

The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition created a renaissance of patriotic sentiments, sparked collecting of colonial artifacts, and furthered interest in preserving colonial buildings. Over ten million people attended the Centennial and saw “colonial kitchens” and “colonial homesteads” which created great interest in recreating these scenes in their own homes. Marling succinctly argues, “If an afternoon’s visit to Washington’s headquarters could improve one’s character, long-term exposure to colonial antiques could transform one’s life. Or so the theory ran.”²³⁸ Americans sought order in their lives and reflecting on the past and creating idealized colonial interiors in their own homes allowed them to ignore the instability of the world around them. In 1881, journalist and art critic Clarence Cook wrote that “Everybody can’t have a grandfather, nor things that come over on the Mayflower, and those of us who have not

²³⁷ West, *Domesticating History*, 36.

²³⁸ Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, 86.

drawn the prizes in life's lottery must do the best we can under the circumstances."²³⁹

These circumstances allowed people to purchase colonial artifacts or even reproductions to create an imagined colonial past in their homes. If the colonial past was not handed down through the family, you could purchase your own piece of colonial history. To capitalize on these efforts, the official Williamsburg Reproduction Program began in 1937 and by 1958 produced more than five hundred items, including furniture and accessories, which were available for purchase.²⁴⁰ The Products Review Committee, originally known as the Craft Advisory Committee, has met regularly since 1937 "to pass judgment on the authenticity and suitability of products to be marketed to the public as reproductions of Colonial Williamsburg antiques." Early on, visitors wanted to purchase items like they saw in the restored buildings. Colonial Williamsburg reproduced only items used in Williamsburg or approved for use in Williamsburg by the Furnishings Committee.²⁴¹ The Reproduction Program allowed people to create their own "mini-Williamsburg" and incorporate the restoration's ideology at home.

The colonial revival encouraged Americans to glorify and romanticize the past. The fascination with the colonial era soon moved beyond objects and into popular culture with the publication of plays and novels whose subjects were heroes of the American Revolution.²⁴² Other events marked the continued interest in the colonial era and the beginning of museum involvement in the Colonial Revival. Between 1870 and 1890,

²³⁹ William H. Truettner and Thomas Andrew Denenberg, "The Discreet Charm of the Colonial," in William H. Truettner and Roger B. Stein, eds., *Picturing Old New England: Image and Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 89.

²⁴⁰ Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 49.

²⁴¹ Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *New History In an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 35.

²⁴² Geoffrey L. Rossano, *Creating a Dignified Past: Museums and the Colonial Revival* (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc., 1991), 2.

historical societies in America doubled in number and often acquired historic houses to use as their headquarters and museums.²⁴³

New patriotic and hereditary organizations were formed in the late nineteenth century to promote colonial heritage. In October 1890, a group of women organized the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.²⁴⁴ The purpose of the Daughters of the American Revolution was threefold: historical, educational, and patriotic. They intended “to perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and women who achieved American independence,” “to promote, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge,” and “to cherish, maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; to foster true patriotism and love of country.”²⁴⁵ To this end, they purchased more than 250 homes by 1941 to keep these buildings from “passing into the hands of improper people.”²⁴⁶ Karal Ann Marling argues that hereditary organizations brought together “a new class of old Americans” which set them apart from the growing number of immigrants - the “improper people,” in America.²⁴⁷ The Sons and Daughters of the Revolution, the Society of Cincinnati, and the Colonial Dames created a hierarchy of those who had a direct family connection to heroes of the colonial past and those who did not.

As Patricia West points out, at the turn of the twentieth century, historic preservation shifted from a private, female dominated enterprise to an increasingly public, professional, and male dominated world. At the same time, larger museums took

²⁴³ West, *Domesticating History*, 42.

²⁴⁴ Ann Arnold Hunter, *A Century of Service: The Story of the DAR* (Washington, D.C.: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, 1991), 7.

²⁴⁵ Mrs. Robert V.H. Duncan, *In Washington: The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, 1965), 17,

²⁴⁶ West, *Domesticating History*, 44-45.

²⁴⁷ Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, 94.

advantage of the “rediscovery” of the colonial era. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts held the first large exhibition of American decorative arts and early American silver in 1906.²⁴⁸ The opening of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1924 reinforced the interest in historic interiors and collecting. Preservation became increasingly highbrow and geared towards connoisseurship. The move towards connoisseurship was highlighted by the opening of Henry Francis du Pont’s Winterthur Museum in Wilmington, Delaware in 1951. The museum displayed one of the largest private collections of American decorative arts set in highly stylized and arranged period rooms. Ken Ames has described Winterthur as “a monument to one person’s fascination with the American colonial past, and it is a generator and perpetuator of interest in things colonial.”²⁴⁹ The growing professionalization of preservation, away from dedicated amateurs to sophisticated connoisseurs, helped spark growth and continued interest in preserving the past.

John D. Rockefeller’s Colonial Williamsburg and Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village also capitalized on the resurgence of interest in history and inspired the creation of historic homes and museum villages throughout America. After beginning the restoration of Williamsburg, six major villages opened in New England alone: Mystic Seaport (1930), Old Sturbridge Village (1947), Plimoth Plantation (1947), Historic Deerfield (1952), Shelburne Museum (1952), and Strawberry Banke (1958). Dona Brown and Stephen Nissenbaum argue that when these museums began, they were postwar villages that “enshrined a vision of New England forged in the nineteenth

²⁴⁸ West, *Domesticating History*, 47-48.

²⁴⁹ Kenneth L. Ames, “Introduction,” in Alan Axelrod, ed, *Colonial Revival in America*.

century” with an interpretive focus on the “rural, homogenous, preindustrial.”²⁵⁰ John Jakle supports this view by arguing that “Historical sites offered a sense of permanence in an ever-evolving world of new, highly standardized landscapes. Historical flavor served as a counterpoint to modernity.”²⁵¹ The world around many Americans changed rapidly, but the past remained the same, and was therefore comforting. Historic sites such as Colonial Williamsburg and other recreated villages took visitors directly to that comforting place, allowing them to escape their reality.

The restoration of Colonial Williamsburg inspired many Americans, including Maude Moore Latham and Gertrude Carraway. From 1926 to 1934, Colonial Williamsburg underwent its dramatic restoration under the supervision of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Reverend W.A.R. Goodwin. After the capital of Virginia moved from Williamsburg to Richmond in 1780, Williamsburg “began 146 years of anonymity.” Other than the Battle of Williamsburg in 1862 during the Civil War, the town was virtually forgotten and in the twentieth century Williamsburg was described as a backwater. In the early twentieth century, eighty-eight colonial buildings still existed in Williamsburg, even though many had fallen to disrepair or been modified to reflect Victorian tastes.²⁵² Because the city developed slowly and much of the original fabric existed, Williamsburg was an excellent candidate for restoration. Goodwin, the rector of Bruton Parish Church, oversaw the restoration of the church to its colonial form, which prompted his desire to restore the entire town of Williamsburg. Historian Anders Greenspan argues that Goodwin wanted to restore Williamsburg because he wanted

²⁵⁰ Brown and Nissenbaum, “Changing New England: 1865-1945,” 12.

²⁵¹ Jakle, *The Tourist*, 286.

²⁵² Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 6.

Americans to have an appreciation of eighteenth century life and help “to imbue the modern era with a renewed sense of Americanism.” Goodwin believed that if Americans had a common background, “there would be a stronger sense of national community and less of a likelihood that socialists or anarchists could destroy the country’s economic and political framework.”²⁵³ In an ever changing world, the colonial revival site acted as a unifier, focusing people on American ideals.

Goodwin felt the modernization of Williamsburg was mainly due to the automobile and initially contacted Henry Ford to finance the restoration. Neither Henry nor his brother William were interested in undertaking the restoration. Ford’s interest in the industrial history of America and his own project at Greenfield Village forced him to turn down Goodwin’s proposal.²⁵⁴ Goodwin then turned to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (JDR Jr.) of the Standard Oil Company. Rockefeller supported “the promotion of the beauty of the past” and helped restore Louis XIV’s palace at Versailles, Sleepy Hollow in New York, and the Cloisters in Manhattan.²⁵⁵ JDR Jr. “preferred to return to the pre-industrial past, feeling that it possessed superior attributes to the present day.” He insisted on accuracy, authenticity, and precision in everything he did throughout his life and believed that restoring Williamsburg and its appreciation of traditional values distanced himself from his father’s industrial world.²⁵⁶

Goodwin and Rockefeller had similar interests that made them good partners in the restoration. Goodwin met JDR Jr. at a Phi Beta Kappa meeting in New York City in February 1924. At the meeting, Goodwin convinced Rockefeller to pay for the

²⁵³ Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 8.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 8-9.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 9-10.

construction of Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall at the College of William and Mary, where the society was founded in 1776. When JDR Jr. attended the dedication of the building in the spring of 1926, he realized the historic significance of the town but committed only to the hiring of an architect to prepare drawings of a restored Williamsburg.²⁵⁷ By December 1926, JDR Jr. agreed to purchase an early colonial home and Goodwin continued his own quest to purchase colonial buildings. The Boston architectural firm Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn drew up preliminary plans and Rockefeller soon agreed to finance the entire project.²⁵⁸ Rockefeller's involvement in the restoration was initially kept a secret to avoid paying inflated costs for the real estate. Goodwin served as the front man, but residents soon became suspicious of his activities. In June 1928, Goodwin finally disclosed that JDR Jr. was the financial backer and intended to restore the town.²⁵⁹

Rockefeller and Goodwin were motivated to recreate Williamsburg because they “dreamed of creating a wholly peaceful world that stressed the rights of the individual and the importance of representative government.”²⁶⁰ The recreation of Williamsburg allowed JDR Jr. and Goodwin to help regenerate a lost sense of Americanism that took pride in the accomplishments and sacrifices of eighteenth century Americans. Many locals supported their plans and ideas. Unlike New Bern, many residents in Williamsburg willingly sold their properties to Goodwin and Rockefeller. Greenspan points out that the sale of the homes improved some residents' lives. In a time of economic depression, they were able to afford medical care, new clothes, a car, or other

²⁵⁷ Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 18.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 20.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 20-21.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 7.

luxuries from the sale of their homes. People who owned colonial homes that were not slated for demolition were offered life tenancies. These residents could sell their homes, turn maintenance over to Colonial Williamsburg, and live in the home until their death, after which, CW would assume control of the building.²⁶¹ Williamsburg residents did not resist as much as New Bern residents to tearing down inappropriate (non-colonial) homes and buildings. Most were happy to eliminate what they perceived as blight from their community.²⁶² Greenspan points out that the economy during the early restoration efforts probably worked to secure support within the town. The Rockefeller money helped to alleviate hard times for many people and the restoration meant there was virtually no unemployment during the Great Depression.²⁶³ If the economy were better, there may have been less support for the restoration. Many in Williamsburg believed a local editorial which stated their town would be “the mecca for thousands of tourists and visitors in the years to come.”²⁶⁴ For them, the potential benefits the restoration would bring far outweighed any doubts they may have had about Rockefeller and his intentions.

The work to restore Williamsburg began quickly. The first building, Raleigh Tavern, opened to the public on September 16, 1932.²⁶⁵ The Capitol building and the Governor’s Palace opened in 1934. Rockefeller personally funded the entire restoration of Williamsburg with his own money. No state or federal monies were used in the project which allowed the restoration to progress at its own pace. Guidelines for the restoration stressed that all work be done with “fidelity to an ideal, rather than fidelity to

²⁶¹ There were thirty-four life tenancies in Colonial Williamsburg. Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 23.

²⁶² Ibid, 24.

²⁶³ Ibid, 33.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 25.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 35.

a time schedule.” The goal for Williamsburg was to provide an accurate representation of an eighteenth century town, though accommodations were made for health, safety, comfort and convenience. As much as possible, Rockefeller insisted on accuracy in the restoration. However, some issues, such as slavery, presented a dilemma. As early as 1930, Goodwin discussed the portrayal of slave life at Williamsburg with Rockefeller. Goodwin knew slaves were an integral part of the culture, but did not know how best to incorporate their story in the restoration. He believed that “[T]o exile them completely from the Colonial area would, I am convinced, be a mistake which we could not justify.”²⁶⁶ For a number of years, officials at Williamsburg simply ignored the topic and refused to address the problem. Williamsburg did not begin to seriously interpret African American life in the colonies until the mid 1960s. After 1976, African American interpretation became an integral part of their programs.²⁶⁷

Rockefeller invested a large sum of money in the restoration, which, in turn, attracted big spenders. In 1935, in the midst of an economic depression, Colonial Williamsburg drew about sixty thousand visitors who paid a total of \$75,000 in admission fees. By that time, Rockefeller invested over fourteen million dollars in the restoration.²⁶⁸ The first visitors to Williamsburg were of high economic standing, were well educated, and often had ties to the founders of the colony. Those who visited during and after World War II came to Williamsburg because of its popularity.²⁶⁹ One Colonial Williamsburg employee, Thomas G. McCaskey, did not believe the “snob appeal” was intentional. “I think Mr. Rockefeller built this in order to have as many Americans as

²⁶⁶ Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 27.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 28.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 42.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 40.

possible come and touch it and be touched by it, and the snob appeal is not for this project as I see it.” However, he remembered, “Cadillacs and chauffeurs were common sights all over the place It seemed to be a wealthier, slightly older audience; you saw very few children.”²⁷⁰ Elizabeth Lee Henderson, a hostess at Williamsburg for many years, recalled that most early tourists were well educated, “we don’t have many of the usual types of tourist as a rule. We have some of them, I know, but the average Williamsburg tourist is certainly far superior to the average [visitor] at Coney Island, for instance.”²⁷¹

In the postwar period, Williamsburg shifted from a tourist destination for the wealthy to an educational site for middle-class Americans. Part of this resulted from the number of soldiers who returned after World War II to visit Williamsburg with their wives and families.²⁷² Increasingly, a greater variety of people desired to visit the restoration. Attendance increased from thirty one thousand in 1934 to more than three hundred thousand in 1953. Within a decade, close to a million tourists visited the restoration.²⁷³ Like New Bern, Williamsburg saw itself as the perfect tourist destination between New York and Florida. Greenspan argues that Williamsburg was a “natural addition” to tourist sites of the upper South that included Washington, D.C., Mount Vernon, and Charlottesville, Virginia, the home of Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello.²⁷⁴ Despite the popularity of the site, the number of tourists who visited Colonial Williamsburg failed to pay for operating costs and the restoration consistently created an annual deficit. By 1954, Colonial Williamsburg amassed over \$50 million in donations,

²⁷⁰ Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 41-42.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, 48.

²⁷² *Ibid*, 80.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, 107.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 88.

primarily from the Rockefeller family. Thirty five million of that had already been spent on the restoration, but the Rockefeller family pledged an additional ten million for the reserves.²⁷⁵

Colonial Williamsburg's initial advertising efforts were restricted to word of mouth. Interest in the restoration continued to grow through articles published in national magazines and newspapers such as *House and Garden* and the *New York Times*. Daniel Boorstin, an associate professor of history at the University of Chicago, took note of Colonial Williamsburg in 1958. He believed in the significance of Williamsburg and argued that the restoration "distinguished our national past from that of people in other parts of the world." Though Boorstin supported the restoration, he was also critical of the sanitized version of history presented there. He criticized the recreations of some buildings, which promoted a false image of eighteenth century life in Williamsburg. Boorstin also criticized the "American penchant for erasing the past just to improve it."²⁷⁶ Tryon Palace was much the same. To reconstruct the Palace, over sixty homes and businesses dating from the late eighteenth century to the twentieth century were moved or in most cases, demolished. If left standing, these buildings would have presented an inconsistency in the Tryon Palace story. By moving and demolishing these buildings, the Commission created an idyllic setting in which to showcase their Colonial reconstruction.

Tryon Palace sought to emulate Colonial Williamsburg, but it was always a few steps behind. Colonial Williamsburg was a site that was in constant revision. As the museum grew both in size and popularity, so did the amount of criticism the site received. Colonial Williamsburg responded to the critics and continued to critically

²⁷⁵ Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg*, 109.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 119-120.

examine the messages they sent to the public. Sometimes, particularly with controversial issues such as slavery, they were slow to respond, but they eventually did. Williamsburg was larger, more popular, more professional, better funded, better supported, and more accurate than Tryon Palace. Unfortunately, Tryon Palace failed to learn from the twenty years of experience and mistakes made by Colonial Williamsburg.

The reconstruction of Tryon Palace celebrated the site's past, but it did not always tell the complete story about its own history. The Commission members recreated the Palace to escape their problems of the day and reinforce their place and influence in society. The reconstruction was a reflection of each Commission member involved and became a place where they could get lost in the details and ignore the more important, more controversial, and more interesting parts of their history. The founders and Commission members lost themselves in the novelty of the reconstruction, rather than focus on the reality of the past.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE COLONIAL REVIVAL’S IMPACT ON NEW BERN AND TRYON PALACE

The Colonial Revival flourished in New Bern before the reconstruction of Tryon Palace. In keeping with national trends, by the early twentieth century, Colonial Revival architecture was commonly found in cities and towns across America. Georgian Revival, Dutch Revival, and Cape Cod styles were all common colonial revival forms found in new construction, while older buildings were remodeled to look colonial. In New Bern, Tryon Palace was the grandest demonstration of the Colonial Revival, but it was not the first. The Colonial Revival was present in public and residential architecture throughout New Bern, but also manifested itself in other aspects of everyday life.

The return to the Colonial form happened slowly. Eastern North Carolina remained largely agriculturally based into the mid twentieth century. Towns in eastern North Carolina experienced a building boom in the early twentieth century as railroads and highways expanded, bringing new economic opportunities such as truck farming, lumber mills, and tobacco warehouses.²⁷⁷ As that part of the state continued to grow, Catherine Bishir and Michael Southern contend that people rejected the “picturesque and ornate architecture expressive of industrialized mass production” and began to favor more simple and classic designs, prompting an interest in revival styles.²⁷⁸ They further argue that these classic forms of architecture conveyed “a sense of permanence and reliability” that applied to public, civic, religious, and residential buildings.²⁷⁹ A cartoon by Charles Addams appeared in the *New Yorker* in 1946 which reflected America’s

²⁷⁷ Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996), 35, 43.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

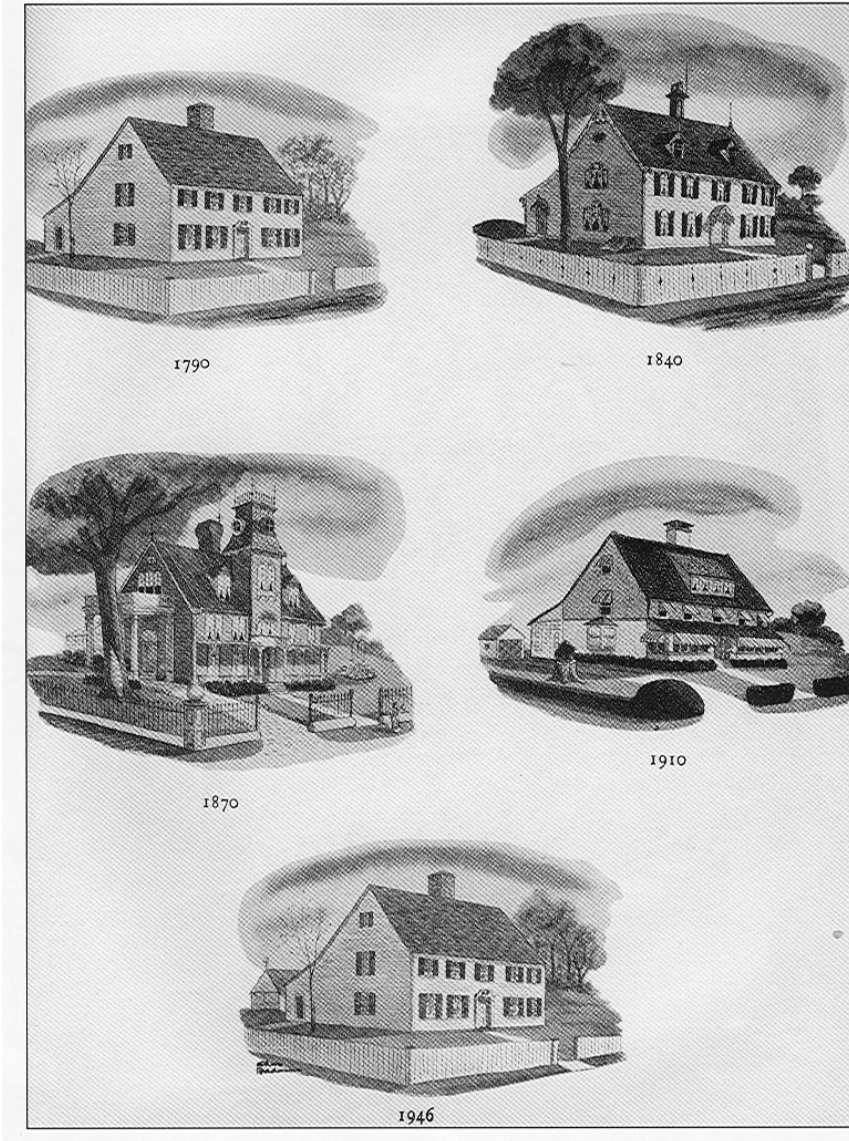


Figure 21. "The Remodeled House," by Charles Addams, printed in *The New Yorker*, 1946. From, Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*.

changing taste in architecture.²⁸⁰ The cartoon also mirrors the evolution of the stable at Tryon Palace from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. In the cartoon, a Colonial home changes to Federal style, but still evokes colonial-era Mount Vernon. By 1890, the home evolves to an eclectic Victorian, and in 1910 is drastically remodeled to reflect the bungalow style. By 1946, the house is restored to its colonial appearance.

The Colonial Revival was evident in many public and residential buildings built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in New Bern. There were both elaborate and simple designs. Public Colonial Revival buildings were often grand in scale. The Moses Griffin Building of the New Bern Central School was originally built in 1904 and designed by Herbert Woodley Simpson, a prominent professional architect in New Bern. Architectural historian Peter Sandbeck noted that the Griffin Building was the first public building in New Bern to rely heavily on the Georgian Revival. Its pedimented pavilion, modillion cornice, dentil moldings, dormer windows, and Palladian fanlight evoke the Georgian style. In 1930, the building was expanded to include a front classroom addition and portico, which were designed by Leslie N. Boney, Sr. of Wilmington. The New Bern Federal Building was designed by New Bern architect Robert F. Smallwood and built from 1932-1934. Smallwood intended the Georgian Revival building “to blend with the Colonial homes in New Bern.”²⁸¹

Herbert Woodley Simpson was the leading residential architect of New Bern in the 1890s and continued his status through the 1920s before relocating to Norfolk, Virginia. Like many other residential designers, his buildings often combined one or more architectural styles with the Colonial Revival. The William B. Blades House

²⁸⁰ Pictured in Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*.

²⁸¹ Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, 153-154.



Figure 22. Moses Griffin Building, 1930, designed by Leslie N. Boney, Sr. of Wilmington. From Green, *A New Bern Album*, p. 291.



Figure 23. New Bern Federal Building, built 1932-1934, designed by Robert F. Smallwood. Photo by author.

combined the Queen Anne with Colonial Revival detailing. Built for lumber magnate William Blades, Sandbeck argues the house makes “a fitting symbol of the immense fortunes made in the city during the heyday of the lumber industry.”²⁸² Simpson remodeled the Coor-Bishop house, originally a Georgian structure built ca. 1770-1780, to combine Colonial Revival with Neo-Classical design. Likewise, Simpson designed the Larry I. Moore House in the Colonial Revival style with a large Neo-Classical portico.²⁸³

In the 1920s, construction slowed as the population of New Bern leveled off. The Colonial Revival still persisted as a popular design choice, spreading outside of the town limits to new construction in the suburbs. Many of the suburban Colonial Revival homes were not as grand as Herbert Woodley Simpson’s designs. The John S. Garrett House, built circa 1923, combines the more modest bungalow style with the Colonial Revival. The Clyde Eby House, built in 1925, combined a more simple colonial style with elaborate detailing. Built in 1927, the E.F.C. Metz House was a more “traditional” Colonial Revival house.²⁸⁴

Other Colonial forms proved to be popular in New Bern. Several “Dutch Colonial” homes were constructed in New Bern. The Mrs. William P.M. Bryan House was built in 1926 by John F. Rhodes, who also built the Clyde Eby House. The gambrel roof of the Bryan House is somewhat de-emphasized by the large Doric columns of the porch that support the second story.²⁸⁵ The William Hand, Sr. House was constructed

²⁸² Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, 162-163.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, 164.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 168-169.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 179.



Figure 24. William B. Blades House, built in 1903, designed by Herbert Woodley Simpson. Photo by author.



Figure 25. Coor-Bishop House, built ca. 1770-1780, remodeled in 1904 by Herbert Woodley Simpson. Photo by author.



Figure 26. Larry I. Moore House, built in 1908, designed by Herbert Woodley Simpson.
Photo by author.



Figure 27. John S. Garrett House, built ca. 1923. From Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, p. 168.



Figure 28. Clyde Eby House, built 1925. From Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, p. 168.



Figure 29. E.F.C. Metz House, built 1927. From Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, p. 169.

circa 1926 and is attributed to John David Gullett, an architect from Goldsboro, North Carolina.²⁸⁶ The house has an unusual gambrel roof detailing on the front with a bonnet over the main entryway. These buildings, as different as they may be, are just a few examples of the Colonial Revival in New Bern.

Sparked by the reconstruction of Tryon Palace, interest in the Colonial Revival spread beyond architecture and into the everyday lives of New Bern residents. The 1958 Junior-Senior prom at New Bern High School featured colonial “scenery,” decorations, costumes, and dances. Gertrude Carraway reported to the Commission that “a number of local girls and women are getting colonial costumes” for the prom. Elsewhere in New Bern, Mr. and Mrs. William F. Ward “arranged and equipped a Colonial Kitchen at their home, building in a large Colonial fireplace, and plan to have their house open at times to visitors by appointment.”²⁸⁷ Citizens of New Bern embraced the Colonial Revival so much so that they were willing to let visitors into their own private spaces.

As part of a “Tour of Historic New Bern,” Gertrude Carraway noted the influence of the reconstruction on New Bern. She stated, “The name ‘Tryon,’ has become very popular here since the restoration of Tryon Palace. There are now a Tryon Theatre, Tryon Road, Tryon Realty Company, Tryon Construction Company, Tryon Gas and Appliance Company, Tryon Moving and Storage, Inc., Tryon Shoe Shoppe, Tryon Cabs, Tryon Ice Cream and Tryon Hams.”²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, 169.

²⁸⁷ “Report of the Restoration Director to the Tryon Palace Commission, September 23, 1958-September 22, 1959,” TPC Meeting Minutes, vol. 3, 1958-1958, located at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens Archives, New Bern, North Carolina.

²⁸⁸ Gertrude Carraway, “Tour of Historic New Bern,” script, 1960, located in Hostess Notebook at Historic Tryon Palace Sites and Gardens, New Bern, North Carolina.



Figure 30. Mrs. William P.M. Bryan House, built 1926. From Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, p. 179.



Figure 31. Dr. William L. Hand, Sr. House, built ca. 1926. Photo from Sandbeck, *The Historic Architecture of New Bern*, p. 169.

Several years after the Palace opening, TPC member Virginia Horne wrote that “today, more than almost any town in North Carolina, New Bern still has a wealth of fine houses, and furniture, giving an air of elegance to the town. It has an admirable citizenship, including many of the state’s outstanding leaders. Pleased with such a heritage and proud of it, for it could yield countless financial returns when exploited, New Bern should one day become again the North Carolina capital in architecture and the decorative arts.”²⁸⁹ New Bern did have an impressive architectural history, and many original examples of eighteenth century architecture survived.

Members of the Tryon Palace Commission were so enthusiastic about their project that they believed the entire town of New Bern should want to participate. Mrs. Kellenberger told the Commission that “New Bern has passed through many historic eras – all of them should be emphasized. If you desire, Tryon Palace and its Time could become the keynote. Business houses and private homes through architectural changes should help recreate the proper atmosphere of the past, without sacrificing any of the comforts of the present.”²⁹⁰ Some members of the community agreed. New Bern mayor Robert Stallings designed his new service station “along Colonial lines” while Burke H. Taylor, another New Bern resident, “designed a new office building similarly, and has an antique fence for his home.”²⁹¹ The restoration of Tryon Palace did succeed in sparking interest in preserving other New Bern buildings. On May 18, 1957, seventeen local people met “to discuss ways and means of preventing the threatened loss of some of New Bern’s oldest homes.” At the meeting it was proposed that “municipal legislation might

²⁸⁹ Virginia Horne, “New Bern’s Picturesque Past,” 2 April 1968, located in Hostess Notebook at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens, New Bern, North Carolina.

²⁹⁰ Tryon Palace Commission Meeting Minutes, vol. 1, 1945-1955, 3 November 1955, 169-170.

²⁹¹ TPC Meeting Minutes, vol. 2, “Progress Report Tryon Palace Restoration, 5/20/1957-10/31/1957,” by Gertrude Carraway, 261.

be passed requiring new or remodeled buildings to utilize colonial designs” and that “money be raised to buy, rent or repair some of the fine old homes that that should be restored instead of being destroyed.”²⁹² Over 400 people attended a meeting of the New Bern Historical Society on October 8, 1957 where Carraway spoke on the “economic values of historical restorations and their opportunities for this city.”²⁹³

Many people believed that the restoration activities in New Bern could serve as a model for other towns. Catherine Bishir and Michael Southern contend that the original Tryon Palace “interjected a new level of ambition and sophistication into North Carolina’s architecture.”²⁹⁴ The reconstruction of Tryon Palace did the same. Tryon Palace gave new impetus to the Colonial Revival in North Carolina and the movement to construct colonial buildings spread beyond New Bern. Charles A. Cannon, whose wife Ruth was an active member of both the TPC and the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, was an influential businessman in Kannapolis. The New Bern *Sun Journal* reported that Cannon was so fond of colonial architecture in Kannapolis, he ensured that “all buildings in the expanding business district are designed along the lines of Colonial architecture . . . more than one hundred stores bear the Colonial stamp, with quaint roofs, dormer windows, wide chimneys [sic], copper gables, tall cupolas, second-floor shutters, upper porches, wrought-iron grilles, effective columns and entrances.”²⁹⁵ For a town that already embraced the Colonial Revival, the reconstruction of Tryon Palace brought the focus of North Carolinians back to New Bern.

²⁹² Gertrude Carraway, “Progress Report of Tryon Palace Restoration, November 15, 1956 - May 20, 1957,” 27 May 1957, in Tryon Palace Commission Minutes, vol. 2, 1956-1957, 147.

²⁹³ TPC Meeting Minutes, vol. 2, “Progress Report Tryon Palace Restoration, 5/20/1957-10/31/1957,” by Gertrude Carraway, 261.

²⁹⁴ Bishir and Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, 27.

²⁹⁵ “Historic Old Buildings Being Restored Throughout Nation,” New Bern *Sun Journal*, Special Tryon Palace Edition, 4 April 1959.

Over time, Tryon Palace acquired a significance of its own as a Colonial Revival site. The restoration, the reconstructed building, and the messages sent to the public are all significant. When it opened, Tryon Palace presented itself as an authentic colonial site, but it is better understood as a product of the twentieth century Colonial Revival movement.

Like Colonial Williamsburg, Tryon Palace was a product of its time, and the same issues that made the Palace inaccurate and inauthentic placed the building solidly in the colonial revival movement. At a meeting of the Tryon Palace Commission, architect William Perry stressed “that everything was being done as authentically as possible” which made the findings of Gertrude Carraway and Alonzo Dill “most important.”²⁹⁶ The Commission desired to make the reconstruction as accurate as possible and relied heavily on documentary evidence found in England, New York, and North Carolina. Perry assured the Commission that every effort was made to “duplicate the original, the skills of mechanics in simulating eighteenth century manners and methods and in the assembly of physical and historical data.”²⁹⁷ Even the timbers and beams for the floors and roof were finished to “simulate the saw cut markings that were found on one of the surviving pieces from the old building.”²⁹⁸ However, Perry and the Commission failed to see the overall importance of their project. They focused on small details such as saw marks, rather than seeking to understand the significance of the Palace itself and their own motivations for reconstructing the Palace. Historian Carl Lounsbury argues that architects of the Colonial Revival failed to understand the cultural context and social and

²⁹⁶ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, 22 June 1953, 48.

²⁹⁷ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, 22 June 1953, 63.

²⁹⁸ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, 22 June 1953, 64.

economic circumstances of the eighteenth century that produced these buildings.²⁹⁹ In the early twentieth century, people were distracted by classical ideals rather than historical reality, therefore distorting the significance and their understanding of the past.

When she funded Tryon Palace, Maude Moore Latham made a conscious decision to ignore New Bern's Civil War history and instead focus on colonial history. The reconstruction of Tryon Palace and the interest in the colonial era of history represented an aberration in the story North Carolina previously told about its past. No longer was there a focus on memorializing the Civil War and the "Lost Cause" that was typical of many Southern towns in the first quarter of the twentieth century. New Bern did not have a "glorious" Civil War history. After winning the Battle of New Bern in 1862, Union troops occupied the small town until the end of the war.³⁰⁰ A large number of white citizens fled New Bern, which quickly became a haven for free blacks and slaves. By 1865, the black population of New Bern increased from 2,981 to over 15,000.³⁰¹ New Bern was plagued with disease, fire, poverty, and homelessness during the Civil War. Historian Alan Watson pointed out that "as a war-torn, militarily occupied town beset by social upheaval and economic dislocation, New Bern exhibited a degree of moral degeneration often associated with such turmoil."³⁰² To add further insult to New Bern and North Carolinians, Abraham Lincoln appointed Edward Stanly as governor of North Carolina in 1862. Lincoln hoped to establish a "loyal government" and believed the appointment of Stanly, a native of New Bern who opposed secession and lived in California, would create peace in North Carolina. Stanly was regarded as a traitor by

²⁹⁹ Carl Lounsbury, "Beaux-Arts Ideals and Colonial Reality: The Reconstruction of Williamsburg's Capitol, 1928-1934," *Journal for the Society of Architectural Historians*, December (1990): 373-389, 373.

³⁰⁰ Watson, *A History of New Bern*, 379.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, 400-401.

³⁰² *Ibid*, 411.

many North Carolinians and quickly realized he would be unsuccessful as governor. He resigned in 1863 after less than a year of service and there were no more attempts at creating a loyal government in North Carolina.³⁰³ During the Civil War, New Bern acted as the home of Union raiding parties sent to capture supplies heading to Confederate troops. In 1864, Confederate troops launched an attack on New Bern with the hopes of taking the city from Union troops. Confederate forces could not penetrate the fortifications and New Bern remained under Union control until the end of the war.³⁰⁴ In the eyes of elite whites in the twentieth century, there was little cause or reason to celebrate New Bern's Civil War history. Instead, the decision was made to celebrate New Bern's colonial past, which had more value and significance to them.

Despite the romantic ideas of the Tryon Palace Commission, colonial life was not glamorous. Life was difficult for most people. Society was complex and rigid, which made it difficult to rise above one's station in life. Blacks were slaves, women were treated as inferiors, and most men spent their days laboring. Education was generally reserved for the gentry, not the lower classes. Unlike Governor Tryon's home, colonial homes in North Carolina were very modest. Almost all homes were constructed of wood and most were unadorned, unpainted, and more comfortable than beautiful. Wealthy planters lived in one or two story houses with several outbuildings and furnished with a variety of fineries. Lower classes lived in one or two-room log or frame houses. Furniture was simple and limited to necessities such as a bed, table, and benches.³⁰⁵ These types of dwellings would not have been appropriate for a man of William Tryon's standing. He needed a home that reflected his status and power in the community. By

³⁰³ Powell, *Four Centuries*, 360.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 362.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 117.

reconstructing Tryon Palace, the members of the Commission attempted to rewrite history and make Tryon, an English Royal Governor, into a heroic figure of North Carolina history. Tryon had been called a British tyrant and ineffective leader, but people like Carroll Rogers and John Kellenberger insisted that the restoration “would come in leading to a better general opinion of Royal Governor William Tryon.”³⁰⁶

Because they were intent on recreating the image of Governor Tryon, some members of the Commission desired to make the Palace more fancy, as Tryon would have wanted the Palace, rather than how it actually was. In 1954, William Perry solicited estimates on creating “alternate plans for simple or more elaborate carvings and decorations in various rooms of the Palace.” Despite archaeological evidence which suggested that moldings in the Palace were simple, Virginia Horne moved that the more elaborate designs be approved at an additional cost of \$145,000. The Tryon Palace Commission approved the motion.³⁰⁷ Plaster moldings found during the excavation were all plain struck molding, unlike the elaborate designs proposed that included “floral, foliated, egg and dart ornamentation, dentils, triglyphs, medallions, rosettes” and other designs.³⁰⁸ At the following meeting, Dr. Crittendon, Director of the State Department of Archives and History, stated that he thought “the restoration should be carried out as it actually was and not what Governor Tryon had wanted it to be.” Perry argued that they followed the original plans as much as possible. Perry was asked to define “beautiful” and “simple” in the context of life in the Palace in 1779. He responded that “One has to use conscientious judgment when there is so much missing.”³⁰⁹ In the end, a compromise

³⁰⁶ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, November 6, 1945, 3.

³⁰⁷ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, June 30, 1954, 99.

³⁰⁸ Beaman, “Fables of the Reconstruction,” 17.

³⁰⁹ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 1, 1945-1955, Executive Committee Meeting, September 4, 1954, 105.

was met which was less ornate than Perry's original plans, but more ornate than documentation and archaeological evidence suggested. When the Palace opened to the public, the local newspaper reported that Tryon Palace was "primarily furnished as he [Governor Tryon] would have liked to have had if he had been able to get all the articles of the eighteenth century assembled for its opening this year as a historic house."³¹⁰

Carl Lounsbury argues that architects like William Perry who were trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts "often misread the intentions and realities of colonial architecture and tended to embellish or improve a structure beyond what was warranted by documentary or physical evidence." Beaux-Arts principles were "often at odds with the architecture and historical evidence of eighteenth century American architecture."³¹¹

William Perry was guilty of the same offense during the restoration at Williamsburg. The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities felt that Perry and the other architects misinterpreted the meaning of surviving elements of the Governor's Palace and "habitually overestimated the degree and scale of elaboration and finish proposed for the building." They felt the architects' designs "did not accord with the economic and social conditions of Virginia in the first decade of the eighteenth century." The architects defended their perspective from their understanding of Beaux-Arts design and their interpretation of Georgian architecture.³¹²

James Marston Fitch points out that "all attempts to reconstruct the past, no matter what academic and scientific resources are available to the preservationist, necessarily involve subjective hypotheses. In historiography, such hypotheses can be (and indeed

³¹⁰ "Palace Properly Furnished in Period," New Bern *Sun Journal*, Special Tryon Palace Edition, 4 April 1959.

³¹¹ Lounsbury, "Beaux-Arts Ideals," 373.

³¹² *Ibid*, 377.

are) constantly revised; in architecture, the hypothesis is obdurate, intractable and not easily modified.”³¹³ At Tryon Palace, Perry and members of the Commission hypothesized when necessary, which resulted in inaccuracies that were both oversights and intentional choices. The reconstructed palace has several dormer windows that did not appear in John Hawks’ original drawings or in sketches of the Palace used on North Carolina bills. Perry assumed there were dormer windows because of the similarity of the Palace to Isaac Ware’s *Complete Body of Architecture* (London, 1756). Perry believed John Hawks used Ware’s book as a guide because it was the prevailing style for young London architects in the 1750s. In an interview, Perry stated that because of his involvement with the restoration, he had to act as “both architect and historian” to uncover the appearance of the original building. Because of the similarity between Tryon Palace and Ware’s other designs, Perry believed Tryon Palace did have dormer windows. He visited a London house Isaac Ware constructed around 1750. Perry said, “I found that it had a parapet, as I thought it would, but from the street I could see no dormers. On going on, I found the central stairway rising to the roof, and lighted by a skylight. And I found there, too, the dormers.”³¹⁴ Perry was so convinced Tryon Palace had dormers that he ignored the evidence that told him otherwise.

After Josiah Martin moved to the Palace, he contracted with John Hawks to add a smokehouse, pigeon house and poultry house. During the excavations of the site, foundations for these buildings were never uncovered. Perry wrote, “I do not expect to

³¹³ James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 46-47.

³¹⁴ Willard de Loe, “Finding the Palace Secrets,” *The State*, 5 November 1955, 12, 26.

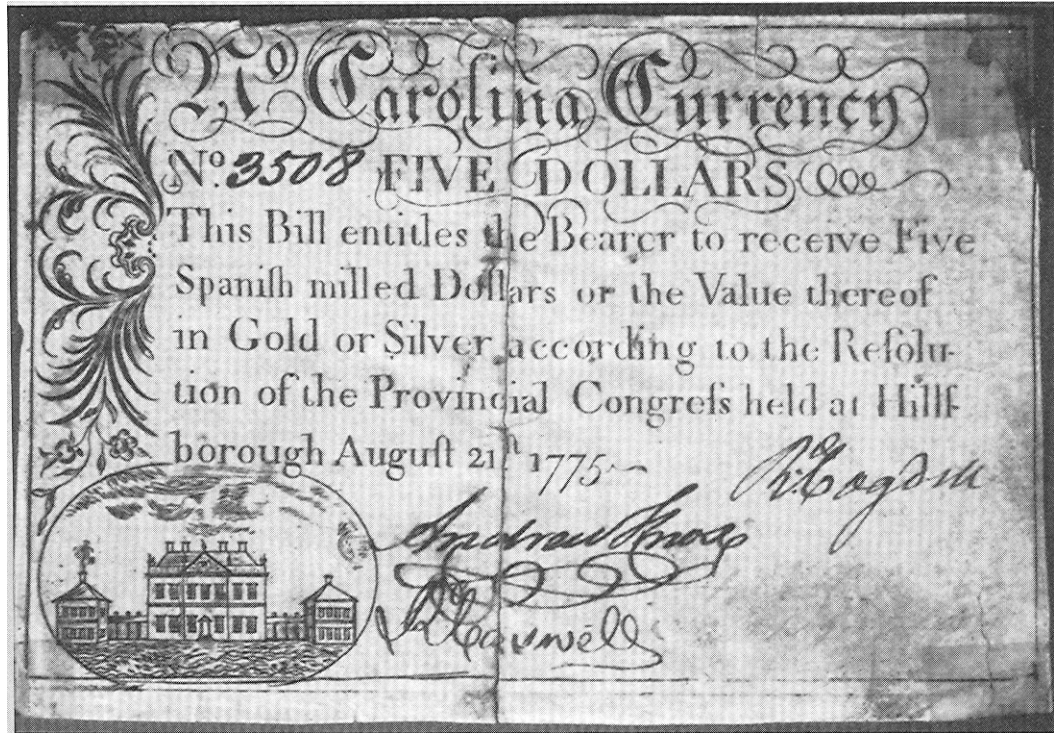


Figure 32. Five Dollar North Carolina bill from 1775, with engraving of Tryon Palace. From Young, *A Tryon Treasury*, inside cover.

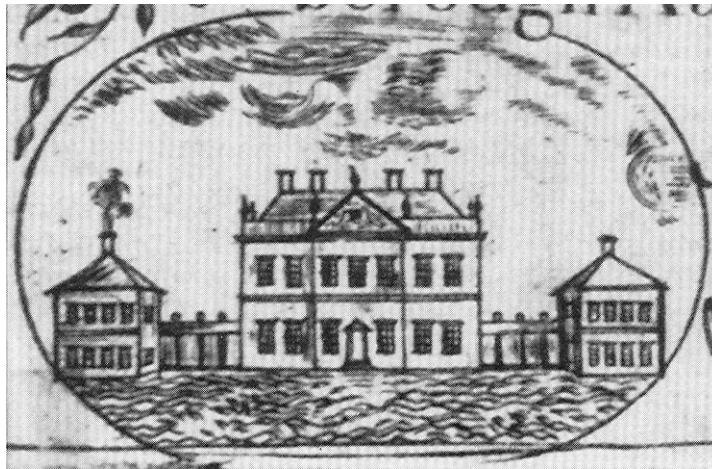


Figure 33. Detail of bill, showing no dormer windows on Tryon Palace. From Young, *A Tryon Treasury*, inside cover.

find masonry foundations for a poultry house or a pigeon house, but normally smoke houses stood upon such foundations.”³¹⁵ Perry and Morley Williams constructed those buildings and the gardens without archeological evidence. The excavations did uncover the foundations of two five-sided brick privy structures on the grounds, which were not added to the reconstruction plans until late 1956 after a discussion among Commission members regarding the accuracy of the restoration.

Thomas Beaman’s article, “Fables of the Reconstruction: Morley Jeffers Williams and the Excavation of Tryon Palace, 1952-1962,” discusses how archeological evidence was both used and ignored in the restoration. Beaman points out that Perry’s plans “showed a different arrangement of how the palisade joined the sentry house.” The steps of the north entrance of the main building also differed from archeological evidence. The marble chosen for the main foyer did not match the type of marble found during the excavations. The original glass of the Palace was more green and irregular than that used in the reconstruction, in addition, the original floors of the buildings were dirt rather than cement.³¹⁶ For the comfort of twentieth century visitors, plumbing was installed and the Palace was air-conditioned. At a Commission meeting in April 1958, “the important matter of installing plumbing in the Palace building was discussed.” Perry “reluctantly [gave] his consent, saying that it was inauthentic! However, so are heat and air conditioning, but necessities, and we think that plumbing is a real necessity.”³¹⁷ Visitors wanted to see what life was like in the eighteenth century, but did not actually want to experience it.

³¹⁵ Beaman, “Fables of the Reconstruction,” 14.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 17.

³¹⁷ TPC Meeting Minutes, Vol. 3, 1958-1959, 20 April 1958, 21.

Because little documentation existed, the Tryon Palace Commission had no local evidentiary basis for what the original interior of the Palace looked like. John Hawks' original plans only discussed the exterior and the placement of rooms. There was little archeological evidence to guide in recreating the interiors. Regardless, Morley Williams told the Commission that what was found "was in the height of fashion – the latest thing and I think very choice in design."³¹⁸

The interior of the reconstructed Palace was elaborate and extravagant. Rooms were filled with period furnishings from England and opulent reproduction fabrics and window coverings. There was little information to guide the Furnishings Committee on how rooms were arranged in the eighteenth century. Brenda Reigle, a museum curator at a Colonial Revival historic house, points out that "some" period rooms at historic homes were based on original research, but many were "based more strongly on the 'colonial spirit.'"³¹⁹ At the Governor's Palace in Colonial Williamsburg, curators based their room arrangements on Lord Botetourt's extremely detailed inventory from 1770. His inventory listed the name of each room, followed by the contents. The inventory reveals that Botetourt's pantry alone contained over 1,650 items.³²⁰

To furnish the Palace, the staff used an inventory of Tryon's possessions made after a disastrous fire at the Governor's home in New York (after he left New Bern).³²¹ The document is most significant to the home in New York, but still has value for Tryon Palace. It is very likely that Tryon took his furnishings with him to New York,

³¹⁸ Tryon Palace Commission Meeting Minutes, vol. 1, 1945-1955, June 22, 1953, 21.

³¹⁹ Brenda Reigle, "But Is It Really History?: Interpreting the Colonial Revival at Your Historic House Museum," *History News* 51, no. 2, (Spring 1996) : 14.

³²⁰ Betty Crowe Leviner, "A New Look at Colonial Williamsburg," in *Creating a Dignified Past: Museums and the Colonial Revival*, ed. Geoffrey L. Rossano (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1991), 45.

³²¹ "Tryon Palace," [http://www.tryonpalace.org/pages/indepthpgs/e7_frame.html] Accessed 14 October 2002.

particularly because he furnished Tryon Palace on his own. For Tryon Palace, the strength of the inventory is that it can possibly reveal the quantity of furniture as well as the type of furnishings owned by Governor Tryon and his family.

The inventory lists the contents of each room in Governor Tryon's home in New York, but some details regarding the furnishings are rather generic. Tryon's bedchamber contained "1 Mahogany Bedstead Venetian Cornishes, fluted and turned posts, India Chints hanging, lined throughout with Calico Muslin; 1 Fine white Calico Bed Quilt, a Chints pillimpon; 1 Feather Bed, 1 White Holland & 1 large hair Mattresses, 1 Bolster, 2 Pillows and Blankets; . . . 1 Mahogany Spider-legg'd Table; . . . 3 [Mahogany] Chairs, stuff't seats with fine printed Cotton covers fringed; 1 Pier Glass, gilt frame, 6 agate cups, 1 paper House, His Excellency's picture in plaster of paris, with Eleven more the same size [sic]."³²² Modern curators rely on inventories, period newspapers, correspondence, trade cards, ledgers, paintings, illustrations, and other sources to determine eighteenth century room arrangement. While the Commission did not have the luxury of all of these primary sources, it was the responsibility of Norman-Wilcox, Carraway, and the TPC to secure appropriate furnishings and to interpret the inventory for Tryon Palace.

Even though the staff at the Palace had the inventory of Tryon's possessions, they did not follow it closely. Listed in Tryon's study in New York were "1 Large five shelved Mahogany Book Case with folding doors and Crown glass; 1 Walnut-tree writing Desk; 1 Rose wood writing Table with a Drawer; 1 Pier Glass, carved & gilt frame; 6 Mahogany Chairs, Horse-hair seats; 1 [Mahogany] stool [with horse-hair seat]; 1 Globe, a pr. of Silk Colour's, 2 Swords & 1 Hanger; 1 Picture over the Chimney; 1 Small

³²² "An Inventory of the Furniture which was destroy'd in His Excellency Governor Tryon's House in Fort George in New York the 29 December 1773," in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 2, 851.



Figure 34. Governor Tryon's Library. Postcard, ca. 1959, from collection of author.



Figure 35. Parlor at Tryon Palace. Postcard, ca. 1959, from collection of author. Photo by L.H. Frohman, Bronxville, NY.

Carpet.”³²³ The library at the restored Palace contained several portraits, an arm chair, an elbow chair, an upholstered chair, a small table, and a book stand that did not appear in Tryon’s inventory.³²⁴ In addition, the library was missing a set of six mahogany chairs, a stool, two swords, and the mirror that appeared in Tryon’s inventory. When furnishing the Palace, it was not necessary to follow the inventory exactly as it appeared, but the Commission should have placed more importance on the document, rather than get distracted by purchasing large quantities of fine antiques that may not be appropriate to the Palace.

Interpretation at historic sites should not be static, and in 1978, the decision was made to reinterpret the Governor’s Mansion at Colonial Williamsburg. Curators corrected the Colonial Revival arrangement of the interiors to make them more accurately reflect life in the eighteenth century. Chandeliers were moved out of the parlor to more public rooms such as the ballroom or dining room. Formal flower arrangements were removed from the Palace because contemporary graphics revealed that those arrangements were generally found in spaces “dominated by females.” Inventories revealed that window curtains were usually located in bedchambers “where privacy was a greater consideration” rather than public spaces such as a parlor or dining room. Easy chairs, or wing chairs, were also typically located in bedchambers and positioned close to windows to capture light.³²⁵ The reinterpretation of the Governor’s Palace resulted from a shift within Colonial Williamsburg from a decorative arts based museum to a history museum. Curators recognized the Colonial Revival movement but felt that to accurately

³²³ “An Inventory of the Furniture which was destroy’d in His Excellency Governor Tryon’s House in Fort George in New York the 29 December 1773,” in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 2, 851.

³²⁴ Refer to the picture of the furnished library on the previous page.

³²⁵ Leviner, “A New Look at Colonial Williamsburg,” 49.

represent eighteenth century life, the furnishings needed to be moved or replaced. After reinterpreting many buildings, Colonial Williamsburg faced a dilemma with their large collection of decorative arts. They constructed the Dewitt Wallace Gallery which provided Colonial Williamsburg with an appropriate forum for their outstanding collection and reserved the exhibition buildings to present the material culture of eighteenth century Williamsburg.³²⁶

Even though the Acquisitions Committee decided to furnish Tryon Palace as a historic house rather than a museum, Tryon Palace still embraced the Colonial Revival emphasis on the decorative arts. Tryon Palace was guilty of the same type of Williamsburg arrangements that reflected the “colonial spirit” rather than period accuracy in their recreated rooms.³²⁷

There were other inconsistencies in the interior of the Palace. In the council chamber there were three “original” pieces of furniture, which are believed to have provenance to the Palace. One table supposedly belonged to Governor Tryon and is starkly simple and plain when compared to the rest of the furnishings. If indeed this is an original piece, it reveals much more about the furnishings Governor Tryon probably had in his home. Governor Tryon wrote to Lord Hillsborough regarding his furniture that “has been so abused, that it would disgrace even the upper story of the Edifice.”³²⁸ This statement alone suggests that the Colonial Revival interpretation of the furnishings and

³²⁶ Leviner, “A New Look at Colonial Williamsburg,” 56.

³²⁷ Please refer to the pictures of the interiors on page 112. Note the easy chair in the library and the window coverings and ornate chandelier in the parlor.

³²⁸ Tryon to the Earl of Hillsborough, 12 January 1769, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 2, 289.

interior were much too fancy and decorative, particularly if Tryon furnished his home with his own money.

Members of the Commission had clear ideas about the type of furniture Governor Tryon should have had in his home. Miss Virginia Horne, member of the TPC and the Acquisitions Committee wrote that owners of eighteenth century “dwellings” in New Bern “had to set about finding furniture of comparable excellence to their houses. Undoubtedly much of it came by sea from England and from cities in the Northern colonies, especially Philadelphia. But one year after the Palace was started, Joseph Ashbury, cabinetmaker, was doing business there and New Bern citizens could get their furniture made locally.” Another cabinetmaker, Peter Brett, was residing in New Bern by 1770.³²⁹ Because at least two cabinetmakers lived in New Bern, Governor Tryon could have commissioned locally made furniture. Governor Tryon most likely did not have the time to have significant quantities of furniture shipped from England because he remained at the Palace for only thirteen months. Skilled craftsmen were brought from Philadelphia to construct the Palace and it is possible that furniture for the Palace was also sent from Philadelphia, a center of American furniture making. Most likely, Tryon had a mix of English and American furniture in the Palace.

The collection of decorative arts at Tryon Palace consisted of an overwhelming majority of high quality English pieces with a few American pieces. The Commission purchased a pair of tables made in Newport by Townsend and Goddard, some of the finest craftsmen in colonial America. They also purchased items of North Carolina provenance, but placed them in the east wing, the reception center, and the basement of

³²⁹ Virginia Horne, “New Bern’s Picturesque Past,” 2 April 1968, located in Hostess Notebook at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens Archives, New Bern, North Carolina.

the Palace.³³⁰ The location of these items suggests that Commission members found these furnishings to be inadequate for the main rooms of the Palace. These furnishings were inconsistent with their ideas of how Governor Tryon lived, but suitable for spaces where servants lived and worked. It is probable that these North Carolina furnishings were more indicative of the type of furniture Governor Tryon actually purchased and used for himself and his family. During Governor Tryon's tenure, Wilmington, North Carolina and Charleston, South Carolina were producing rather high quality pieces of furniture which would have been more readily available than furniture from northern colonies. Governor Tryon's palace was most likely a mix of English pieces brought with him to the colonies and newer pieces purchased once he arrived. There was no room in the reconstructed Palace for furniture that was "so abused." This would have conflicted with the messages the Commission was trying to portray to visitors. Even though visitors would have related to an eclectic mix of old and new and foreign and domestic, it was not appropriate for the Palace because Commission members believed Governor Tryon's palace was elegant and refined. The opulence of the interiors reflected the elevated taste and high status of Mrs. Latham and the members of the Tryon Palace Commission.

Moreover, the founders of the Palace took away the authenticity of their reconstruction by eliminating any mention of race, class, or gender, which created a false portrayal of the past. Despite all their efforts at accuracy, they neglected to see some of the most significant parts of their site's history. The reconstruction ignored the townspeople, servants, slaves, and workmen who were not prominent members of society, but who built the Palace and worked in and on the Palace grounds. The excavations of the Palace grounds uncovered a stone foundation three feet underground,

³³⁰ Robinson, *Three Decades*, 117.

“about 55 ft southwest of the southwest corner of the Palace.” Archeologist William Tarlton noted that the cellar “was found to be walled with ballast stone laid up with mud and to contain numerous Indian relics as well as trade items of European origin.” He speculated that the cellar dated to the settlement of New Bern.³³¹ Because the structure did not fit their plans to glorify Governor Tryon or the political history of North Carolina, the foundation was reburied in November 1954. There was no interest in interpreting any story outside of their established guidelines and mission. The discovery of the foundation presented a unique opportunity to show a broader picture of colonial New Bern. However, there was no mention of Native American life and the displacement that resulted from the settlement of New Bern because it did not fit into the founders’ version of colonial history.

The Commission members defined colonial history as history relevant to the original Palace. However, they neglected to reflect African-American life at the palace. No discussion was made of the slaves and servants who cooked, cleaned, and made the Palace function successfully. Governor Tryon had at least seven servants and two slaves who lived and worked at the Palace.³³² Little is known about African-Americans at Tryon Palace, but documents reveal more about Governor Tryon’s slaves and servants before and after his tenure at the Palace. In 1769, Tryon had ten African-American slaves at his home in Brunswick County. In a letter written from Brunswick in 1765, Tryon mentioned several of his servants, including his “trusty servant George,” “The Lad we took from Norfolk, a sailor I have made my groom and a little French boy I got here,” as well as “Le Blank, Cuisinier; & Turner, the Farmer.” Tryon also had “the girl we took

³³¹ Beaman, “Fables of the Reconstruction,” 16.

³³² Patricia Samford, interview by Jeanne Barnes, 7 November 2002.

from my Farm.”³³³ A 1773 inventory of Tryon’s New York household listed twelve slaves.³³⁴ “Life under the stairs,” African-Americans, lower classes, and servants were not discussed at the reconstructed Palace. Rather than interpret the basement of the Palace as a space where servants and slaves lived and worked, the basement was used as restrooms, locker rooms, dressing rooms, and a sitting area for employees of the Palace. During the tour, visitors were told that “there were Preparation Rooms here in the basement to warm food brought from the Kitchen and prepare it to be taken upstairs.” In the basement, visitors were asked to note a “wine-measuring stick,” a “beer trolley,” and the original foundations of the building. They were shown the Coachman’s room in the basement, which contained “many useful furnishings” such as a “schoolmaster’s desk, pine campaign chest, old chairs and other accessories such as a Coachman might have needed.”³³⁵ Interpretation at the Palace was strictly decorative arts with a mention of political history, which allowed Commission members to ignore other significant parts of history and unique interpretive opportunities.

Historian Mike Wallace argues “all history is a production – a deliberate selection, ordering, and evaluation of past events, experiences, and processes.” In this view, museums “falsified reality and became instruments of class dominance.”³³⁶ Wallace further argues that museums “generated ways of not seeing. By obscuring the origins and development of capitalist society, by eradicating exploitation, racism, sexism, and class struggle from the historical record . . . the museums inhibited the capacity of

³³³ Tryon to Sewallis Shirley, 26 July 1765, in Powell, *The Correspondence of William Tryon*, vol. 1, 140.

³³⁴ “The Kitchen Office,” <http://www.tryonpalace.org/pages/planpgs/b1_frame.html> Accessed 14 October 2002.

³³⁵ Gertrude Carraway, “Hostess Notes,” 1959, located in the Hostess Notebook at Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens Archives, New Bern, North Carolina.

³³⁶ Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 24.

visitors to imagine alternative social orders – past or future.”³³⁷ Because the Palace only portrayed one facet of life in the site, visitors were only able to reflect on the good and prosperous, therefore reinforcing patriotic sentiments about colonial history. Visitors were not faced with issues of class, sex, or racial strife and tensions, but could instead focus on the “birthplace of freedom” in North Carolina and the collection of fine antiques.

Commission members and some members of the community desired to create an ideal of the past. They did not understand or see that by focusing on the colonial era, they were ignoring the years of history between 1800 and the 1950s. Their choice in ignoring the twentieth and nineteenth century was intentional because those were the same years that contained many “ugly bits” of history such as sectionalism, economic depression, war, and the shift within North Carolina from the east to the west. They were more concerned with highlighting the best part of New Bern’s history and ignoring the rest. They desired to recreate a lifestyle they perceived as romantic, elegant, refined, and significant.

James Baldwin wrote “American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it.” Critic James Loewen expands this to argue that “the truth is also more wonderful and more terrible than the lies Americans have been telling themselves.”³³⁸ For the Tryon Palace Commission, there was no need to imagine any other kind of history at Tryon Palace than what was portrayed at the reconstruction. Consistent with the Colonial Revival movement, the founders of the project constructed a version of history they deemed

³³⁷ Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 24.

³³⁸ James Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1999), 23.

correct and appropriate, therefore creating a sense of historical connectedness and an identity for a community. History was not being falsely created; rather parts of New Bern's history were being selectively emphasized, while other parts were being purposefully ignored.

Art Historian David Gebhard has argued, "the colonial always ended up commenting on both the past and the present."³³⁹ At Tryon Palace, the reconstruction connected people to their colonial past, but their connection was based on a false and romanticized version of history. Whether intentional or not, Maude Moore Latham, Gertrude Carraway, the Kellenbergers and members of the Tryon Palace Commission created a historical site and colonial shrine that revolved around idealized notions of history. By ignoring Governor Tryon's controversial administration, African-Americans, and lower classes, and instead focusing on the beauty of colonial decorative arts and architecture and patriotic sentiments instead of historical accuracy, the reconstruction of Tryon Palace obscured the historical record for visitors to the Palace.

Public Historian Antoinette Lee believes it is important to study the context in which historic sites were preserved. She argues that "understanding the important historic forces that shaped preservation achievements enhances the educational messages that historic properties convey today."³⁴⁰ Preservation is not static, but dynamic. Historians of today examine the context and decisions made at historic sites in the past, just as future historians will examine the work of today. The restoration of Tryon Palace should prompt historians to look critically at other reconstructed sites and the messages

³³⁹ David Gebhard, "The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s," *Winterthur Portfolio* 22 (Summer/Autumn 1987): 109.

³⁴⁰ Antoinette J. Lee, "Introduction," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 2, no.1 (Winter 2005): 4.

they convey to the public about history. Tryon Palace is not unique, and the issues it has faced over the years plague other historic sites, recreated or not. Because Americans cling so desperately to the past, they sometimes choose to ignore what really happened in American history. It is easier to pretend not to see than to confront issues that may make some people feel uncomfortable and at the same time empower others. By having a critical eye and asking questions, visitors can cause these sites to revise their interpretation. In response to inquisitive and critical visitors, new historical discoveries, and new historical interpretations, reconstructed sites such as Colonial Williamsburg and Tryon Palace have revised their interpretive plan over the years to reflect a more inclusive and accurate representation of the past. However, many sites still fail to recognize their Colonial Revival roots. The Colonial Revival played an important role in shaping the decisions made during the reconstruction of Tryon Palace. Members of the Tryon Palace Commission were guided by their emotional response and a sense of connectedness they felt to their ancestors and the past. By examining the period and the context in which it was reconstructed, we are better able to understand why Tryon Palace was rebuilt, the intention and meaning behind the reconstruction, and its significance to North Carolina.

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APPENDIX A – ORIGINAL TRYON PALACE COMMISSION

1. Mrs. Maude Moore (J. Edwin) Latham – Greensboro
2. Mrs. May Gordon Latham(John A.) Kellenberger - Greensboro
3. Miss Gertrude Carraway – New Bern
4. Mrs. Minnette Chapman (Richard N.) Duffy – New Bern
5. David Livingstone “Libby” Ward – New Bern
6. Mrs. Ruth (Charles A.) Cannon – Concord
7. Miss Virginia Horne – Wadesboro
8. Mrs. Katherine Clark Pendleton (Peter) Arrington – Warrenton
9. Mrs. Elizabeth Dillard (R.J. Jr.) Reynolds – Winston-Salem
10. Mrs. Martha Gold Winstead (Paul L.) Borden (later, 1960, Mrs. William E. Stroud) – Goldsboro
11. Carroll Rogers – Tryon
12. Mrs. P.P McCain – Sanatorium
13. Mrs. Elizabeth Henderson (Lyman A.) Cotten – Chapel Hill
14. Judge Richard D. Dixon – Edenton
15. Former Governor J. Melville Broughton – Raleigh
16. Mrs. J. Wilbur Bunn – Raleigh
17. Mrs. J.S. Mitchener – Raleigh
18. Senator Clyde R. Hoey – Shelby
19. Mrs. Andrew Stoney – Morganton
20. Mrs. Mary Lenora Irvin (William Henry) Belk – Charlotte
21. Mrs. Gertrude Dills (E.L.) McKee – Sylva
22. A.H. Graham – Hillsboro
23. Mrs. S. Clay Williams – Winston-Salem
24. Dr. Fred Hanes – Durham
25. Mrs. J. Laurence Sprunt - Wilmington

Ex-Officio Members

1. Governor R. Gregg Cherry
2. Attorney General Harry McMullan
3. Director R. Bruce Etheridge of State Department of Conservation and Development
4. Dr. Christopher Crittenden, Director, State Department of Archives and History
5. Mayor L.C. Lawrence of New Bern
6. Chairman George W. Ipock of the Craven County Board of Commissioners