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A Biography of Quintin Peeler

Cynthia A. Johnson

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How to impress upon this mortal the ways of the times over 200 years ago? My world was so completely different from this of 1986. To be able to see the differences, which occurred with "progress" is a true treat, but to relinquish such tidbits of my life is as taxing for myself as the researcher.

I, Quintin Pooler, arrived in the fair thirteenth colony from Belfast, Northern Ireland, on Friday, the 6th of December, 1768, on board the ship Prince George, captained by Robert Beatty¹. Also, on board the ship was Reverend Mr. David MacKay, appointed pastor of the Williamsburg congregation of South Carolina and 144 settlers of whom I was one. Obviously, they thought me quite the gentleman, for I signed in the name of them, with David MacKay and Clothworthy Robson, in thanking Captain Beatty for their safe passage across the Atlantic².

After arriving in the colony, I petitioned the Crown, on Monday, March 6th, 1769, for a land grant for cultivation of one hundred and fifty acres in St. George's Parish and a town lot in the township to be called Queensborough³. It was granted under the condition that I register the grant in the Register's Office of the province of Savannah within 6 months, so that his majesty would not be defrauded of his Quit Rents⁴.

But, as I once again sailed for London on February 24, 1770, on board the ship Georgia Packet, captained by Mr. Anderson, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Werreat, Arthur Gordon, John Stuart, and Henry Preston⁵. I did not register under the conditions of the land grant. Therefore, when I returned from London, I had to petition the crown again, on Tuesday, November 6th, 1770, for the same land

grant. It was granted again, irregardless of the lapse of time since the first petition, under the condition that I register within 2 months so that the crown should receive its Quit Rents⁶. I did so in accordance with the conditions of the grant, for William Livingston petitioned the court on March of 1771, for one hundred acres of land in St. George's Parish to adjoin my land⁷.

I worked as a merchant in Savannah in partnership with John Parkinson⁸. We petitioned the crown for a land grant for a wharf⁹ for the business of Pooler and Parkinson on Tuesday, March 5th, 1771. We wished to be granted 300 acres of land on Bryer Creek in St. Paul's Parish, which had been formerly surveyed for Joseph Brantley, but the platt had been elapsed since the year 1768. Again, this was granted to us under the conditions that we register within 6 months so that the crown shall receive his due of Quit Rents¹⁰. We imported and sold slaves in our merchant business and ran advertisements such as:

To Be Sold Cheap For Cash, or rice will be taken in payment.

Eight Likely Young Negroe Wenches, imported in the Brigatine Prince of Wales, now lying at Pooler and Parkinson's Wharf.

Enquire on Board said brigatine, or Pooler and Parkinson who have to dispose of on the above terms.

Eight Likely Young Negroe Fellows, very fit for sailors, boathands, or plantation work¹¹.

John Parkinson and I also owned slaves jointly in connection with our business. We owned six slaves jointly at the time we petitioned the crown to grant us the property for our business¹².

I also, personally owned slaves. In January of 1776, I had a slave run away,

named Jack, which I advertised in the Georgia Gazette. I wished him to be returned to me, for I suspected some white persons in this province of harboring him¹³. Within two months, I believed these people to include William McDaniel, John Green, William Christie, and Thomas Burton, planters, to also be harboring 5 other of my slaves. Upon discovering that these men were in possession of my property, I petitioned the Council of Safety to have them return these negroes to me. I had sufficient deed in law to show my ownership, therefore the Council did petition them to return my property¹⁴. After the slaves were returned to me, my problems began, for in July of 1776, Archibald Bulloch, his Excellency of Georgia, decided by virtue of unlikely means, in my opinion, that those very same slaves do not lawfully belong to me and I should deliver them to Thomas Burton, the executor of the Estate of William McDaniel, now deceased¹⁵. Well, I felt my rightness in this case, and simply refused to obey his Excellency's orders. Perhaps I am stubborn, but orders were issued to apprehend and take me into safe custody¹⁶. In July of 1776, Archibald Bulloch upheld this and issued a warrant for the apprehension of the negroes and their safe return to Thomas Burton, and my apprehension by the Provost Marshall¹⁷. Within four months of the issue of this warrant, I died without a will and without my estate being in order¹⁸.

Along with being a merchant and slave owner, during my wight years in Savannah, I was also the captain of the 1st regiment of the 5th company of militia of Georgia¹⁹. I was known as Captain Pooler in many circles for I also commanded the first regiment of foot militia²⁰. I was additionally a member of the parochial committee for the Town and District of Savannah, and attended meetings for this at the house of Mrs. Tondee²¹. Her house was a known meeting place for a type of underground organization of Liberty Boys, who were a rebel rousing group in favor

of revolution from the Crown. I was a known supporter of revolution and associated with these Liberty Boys on occasion²². Once, I remember, on July 27th, 1775, we took John Hopkins, a known tory, from his home, tar and feathered him and paraded him in the streets for up to three hours. Then we lead him to the square near the dial and took him to the Liberty Tree and threatened to hang him if he did not denounce the King of England and drink damnation to all Tories and success to American Liberty²³. I was proud to be a part of this organization and proud to support the Revolution, even in this small way. Should I have lived later than 1776²⁴, I would certainly have used my military know-how to fight for American Liberty. Since I passed from this world with no will and no immediate heirs, my property was sold at a Marshall's Sale²⁵, to diminish my debts and the remaining assets were left to my only relative, John Pooler²⁶. My property situated on a large island in the Savannah River opposite Purysburgh and my town lots of #1 and #10 in Savannah fronting on Broughton Street were sold on Saturday, November 24th, 1781 to settle my estate²⁷. Therefore, little remained of either my business or property for John Pooler to inherit. Not only was little left of my property but no record of my death or burial remains. Evidently, I died as I lived with neither wife nor children, without will or death records and with few clues of my life for further generations.

Notes

1 Georgia Gazette 1768 - 12/7 p. 2, C. 2.

2 Ibid.

3 Candler's Colonial Records of Georgia X: 706

4 Ibid.

5 Georgia Gazette 1770 2/28, p. 2, C. 2.

6 Candler's Colonial Records of Georgia XI, 175.

7 Ibid. XI, 281.

8 Georgia Gazette, 1775 6/14, p. 1, C.2.

9 Ibid. 1774 2/9, p. 3., C.1.

10 Candler's Colonial Records of Georgia XI 298.

11 Georgia Gazette 1774 2/9 p. 3, C.1.

12 Candler's Colonial Records of Georgia XI 298.

13 Georgia Gazette 1776 1/17, p. 3, C. 1.

14 Candler's Colonial Records of Georgia I 143.

15 Ibid. I 157.

16 Ibid. I 163.

17 Ibid. I 166.

18 General Index- Wills, Estates, Administrations, Etc. Chatham County, Ga.

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19 Georgia Gazette 1775 7/5, p. 3, C. 2.

20 Candler's Colonial Records of Georgia V. 38 pt. I 1772-75, 570-571.

21 Georgia Gazette 1775 11/15 p. 2, C. 2.

22 Ibid. XII 424.

23 Candler's Colonial Records of Georgia XII 424.

24 Ibid. I. 215.

25 Georgia Gazette 1788 4/3, p. 2, C. 2.

26

Gazette of the State of Georgia 1785 12/29 p. 2, C. 1.

27

The Royal Georgia Gazette 1781 4/19 p. 3, C. 1.