

Three New Families in North Carolina Re: Land Along the Cape Fear, 1734/5

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abstracted by Ransom McBride

Hugh T. Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome wrote in their *The History of a Southern State - NORTH CAROLINA* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), pp 78-79:

"In the 1730s the most rapid population growth was in the Coastal Plain and particularly in the Lower Cape Fear Valley, extending from fifty to a hundred miles inland. This was a natural development. Brunswick, which had been founded about 1725, was one of the best ports in the province; and Wilmington, destined to outrank all ports, was begun a decade later. Both towns were included in the 'Port of Brunswick,' for a colonial port was an area rather than a specific town. As early as 1732 forty-two vessels cleared from Brunswick and there were twelve hundred people in this area. The next year Governor BURRINGTON reported, 'The reputation this Government has lately acquired, appears by the number of People that have come from other Places to live in it. Many of them are possessed of good American estates...a thousand men have already settled here since 1731.' He estimated the colony's population at thirty thousand whites and six thousand Negroes. By 1740 an estimated three thousand lived in the Lower Cape Fear region. Settlement was moving slowly and steadily up the Cape Fear and other eastern rivers. ... In 1744 Governor Gabriel JOHNSTON reported that the Cape Fear Valley was being settled by 'a sober and industrious set of people...'"

On 25 February 1734, N.C. Governor Gabriel JOHNSTON laid before His Majesty's Council in Edenton, N.C., the following petitions from three newcomers to North Carolina (George GIBBS, Griffith JONES & Edward JONES) who had recently arrived from other colonies. Their grievances were over land in the Cape Fear region, a growing area and a constant problem.¹

1. Petition of GEORGE GIBBS; "Cape Fare 7 Feb 1734/5.... I took up three Tracts of Land by Warrant from Sir Richard EVERARD in June 1729 And that I settled it within the space of Two Years after and that I paid a year's quit rents and after this I bought Warrants & Rights as they then called them of Govenour BURRINGTON but all not Sufficient to satisfy Mr. Roger MOORE'S Covetous Eye but he must and will have the Land altho it has been in my possession almost Seven Years and new One Mr. TREMAIN by Mr. Roger MOORE'S Order as he says forewarned me from planting the land I have lately cleared... [I] humbly petition your Excellency . . . to Order me quiet possession . . . I have a great family of Children and a few Slaves but not enough to secure the whole by my rights . . . please to consider the Charges and hardships I have been at in Settling Of the Land . . . first in coming to take it up & returning back to the

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JERSEYs to my family . . . then coming within two years after by land from the JERSEYs . . . I was five weeks upon the Journey . . . I am sure I road a thousand Miles to come here . . . afterwards I went back for my family . . . hired a sloup to bring them in. .brought a great deal of provisions with me... I have three sons & I hope your Excellency..will please to consider that a Tract of Land for each of them will not be too much... /s/ GEO. GIBBS "

2. Petition of GRIFFITH JONES; " . . . your petitioner was an Inhabitant in PHILADELPHIA & there hearing of his Majesty a most gracious order of Instructions for the Settlement of Cape Fear... your Petitioner was induced to undertake a voyage hitherto... take up Land for the Settlement of himself & family & accordingly did undertake such voyage and arrived here on or about the third day of October 1728 and went up the No West branch of the River..and..pitched on (as he thought) a fit, and Convenient place, to seat on.

. . . your petitioner applyed himself to one Mr. John PORTER a Sworn Land Surveyor to admeasure & runn out the same & to give your petitioner a plat thereof and the said PORTER accordingly did run out the same & returned your petitioner a plat.. bearing date the 17th day of Octobr 1728 . . . [after payment of a required sum of One pound ten shillings proclamation money.]

. . . your Petitioner after six years quiet and peaceable possession is Credibly informed that the same PORTER had wickedly & Clendestinely filled up a Patent in the name of one VEALE of No. Carolina wherein the very self same land your Petitioner has a plat for under the hand of said PORTER... [and] the same has dated the said patent ten days prior to your petitioners plat . . . [If it appearing that the said PORTER is guilty of the facts laid to his charge, that from your Excellcy will afford such relief . . . as . . . shall think fit. /s/ GRIFFITH JONES "

3. Petition of EDWARD JONES: "...your petitioner above Seven Years ago removed himself [from] PENSILVANIA to Cape Fear leaving his family behind him and when your petitioner arrived at Cape Fear he applyed himself to Col. Maurice MOORE and desired him to inform your petitioner where he might have some Vacant Land agreeable to settle . . . whereupon the said MOORE advised your petitioner to a Tract of Land lying on the Northwest Branch of Cape Fear River and likewise recommended your Petitioner to Mr. John PORTER to be the Surveyor thereof who accordingly surveyed the said Tract of Land for wch your petitioner made him full satisfaction which being done your petitioner returned to PENSILVANIA in order to fetch his Wife and family, but your petitioner being detained longer than expected . . . which was now two years... & at your petitioners return he was told that the said Land was Relapseable . . . Therefore your petitioner applyed himself to Mr. John Baptiste ASHE for advice . . . who told your petitioner he must be at the charge of relapsing the said Land otherwise it would be free for any other Person And thereupon your Petitioner payed Mr. ASHE for Relapsing the said Land in his Office and also the first Charge your Petitioner was at in Surveying the Land & afterward your petitioner built a House & settled himself and family on the said Land and Cleared about ten acres of the same . . . and had the said Land a second time surveyed by virtue of a Warrant from George BURRINGTON Esq. . . . Notwithstanding all the aforesaid Charge and trouble your Petitioner has since been incredibly informed, . . . there is a pretended patent laid on the said Land by One Mr. VEALE which patent if it takes place will be the entire Ruin of your petitioner.... [from EDWARD JONES]

From the Moseley Map of 1733 (from facsimile in W.P. Cmmring, North Carolina in Maps (Raleigh: N.C. Dept. of Archives and History, 1966), Plate VI.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE JONES FAMILY

On 9 Apr 1724, Governor George Burrington and the Executive Council at Edenton, heard "the Petition of Alexander Spence Shewing that Griffen Jones in the year 1716 obtained a patent for 74 acres of Land Lying in Pasquotank which is not Cultivated as the Law directs prays a Lapse patent for the same, etc. Ordered that a Lapse patent issue as prayed for." (The Colonial Records of North Carolina, Second Series; Robert J Cain, ed; Vol VII; p 139)

At the Council meeting of 25 Feb 1734/35, Gov Johnston also presented a petition from Edward Jones that he too had come to North Carolina from Pennsylvania in 1728 (NCGSJ Vol 11, No 1, pg 15). Edward had also acquired a patent for 400 acres in Pasquotank about 1718 which he allowed to lapse (NC Colonial Records, 2nd Series; Vol VII, pg 110.) It would appear that Edward and Griffith were brothers. Col Frederick Jones was Chief Justice for North Carolina in the early 1720s (NC Col Rec, 2nd Ser; Vol VII, pg 109) and may also have been a brother to Edward and Griffith.

Griffith Jones was a member of the North Carolina Assembly in 1729. (North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal, Vol 8, No 3, Aug 1982, pg 167)

Will of Griffith Jones, dated 21 Mar 1757, proved Aug Term 1782 Bladen Co, NC, Wife unnamed. Daughters: Anna Houston, wife of William Houston; Margaret McRee, wife of William McRee; and Mary White, wife of John White. Grandsons: Griffith Jones White and Griffith Houston. Will proven by Isaac White.