THE
SOCIETY OF COLONIAL WARS
IN THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

WINTER COURT

HELD

MARCH 2, 1935

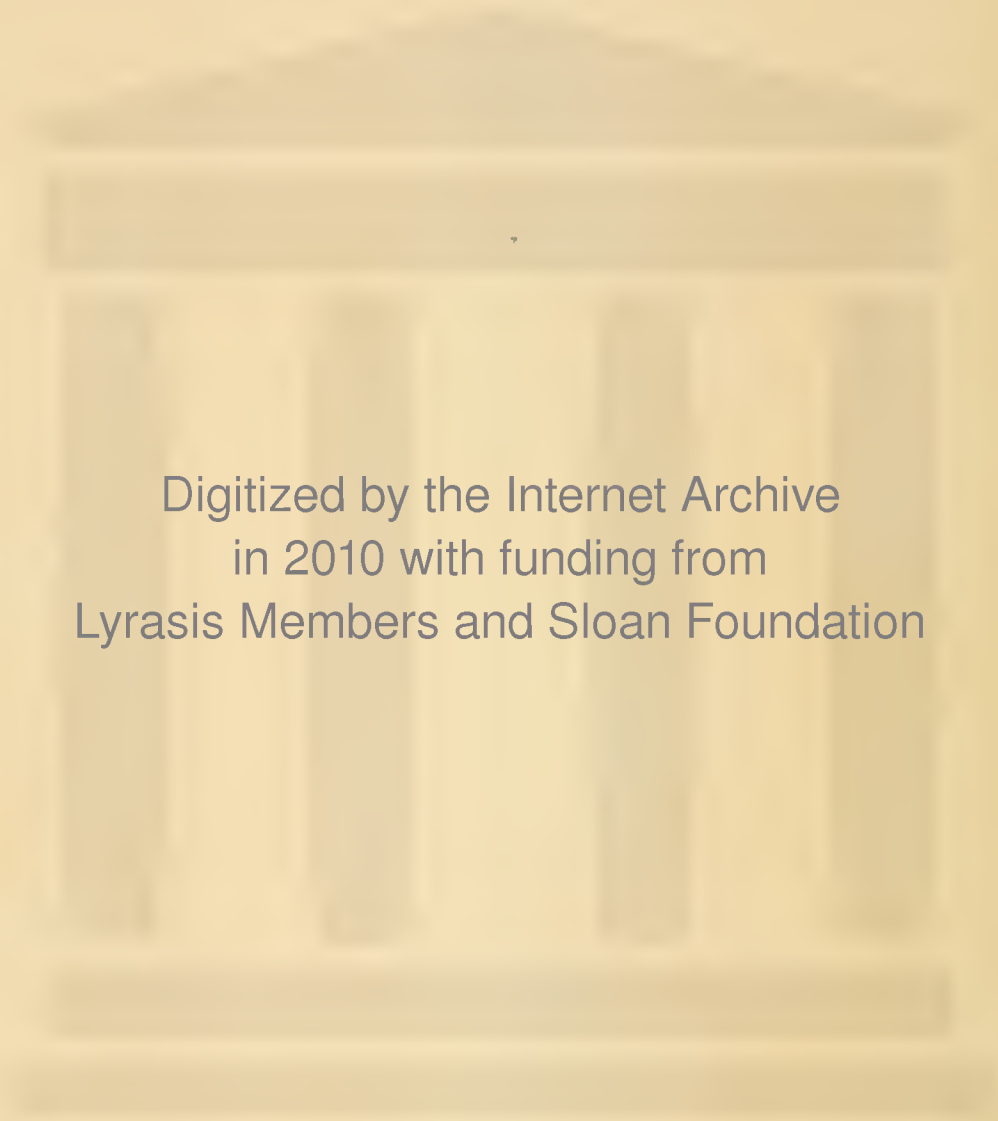
AT

MANSFIELD PLANTATION

GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

ADDRESS OF

THE REV. HENRY DESAUSSURE BULL



THE WINTER COURT of the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of South Carolina met on the afternoon of March second, 1935, as the guests of Colonel Robert L. Montgomery, one of the Gentlemen of the Council of the Society in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at his winter home, Mansfield Plantation, Georgetown County, S. C.

After luncheon, the Society convened with His Excellency, Governor Charles S. Dwight, in the chair. After the invocation and the reading of the minutes, a paper on "Colonial Georgetown" was read by the Rev. Henry DeSaussure Bull.

After a brief business meeting in the course of which invitations for future meetings were received from Mr. E. W. Duvall for Cheraw and Mr. Rees Ford Fraser for Ashepoo, the Society adjourned to meet again at the call of the Governor.

Mansfield Plantation, Georgetown County, South Carolina

ADDRESS OF
THE REV. HENRY DeSAUSSURE BULL
Member of the Society of Colonial Wars
in the State of South Carolina

Colonial Georgetown

IT would be neither possible nor appropriate to attempt here a detailed account of the history of Georgetown county, and it would require more learning than the present writer can lay claim to; rather this will be but a brief story of early days in one small section of our state. There are not many sources: Judge H. A. M. Smith's invaluable articles in the files of the South Carolina Historical Society Magazine are, of course, authoritative; Gregg's "History of Old Cheraws;" and Cook's "Rambles in the Pee Dee Basin," contain much that is informing: we are hoping that Professor D. D. Wallace's long-looked-for history of South Carolina which is soon to appear will deal accurately and fully with the history of Craven county. Material, however, is scanty. This has always been a rural section: family papers were kept in plantation houses which sooner or later fell a prey to the flames—the relentless enemy of country homes. And finally all of the county records and most of the Winyah Indigo Society papers were destroyed seventy years ago. We have the parish records and registers of Prince George and Prince Frederick's churches from 1713 to 1779: there are a few newspaper files, some family records, and there is little else.

The circumstances of the beginning of the colony are familiar, at least in outline, to all of us. From the outset it had the blessing of the Crown, and in later years it was a favorite royal colony and in a measure continued so up to the Revolution. These early pioneers were all Englishmen: it was later that the stream of Scotch Irish and French Huguenots flowed into Carolina. In the beginning it was from

southern and midland England that they came. The religious rancor and bitterness of previous years in England had died down under the careless rule of Charles II, and now English Churchman and dissenter emigrated together and together lived in comparative peace. In South Carolina there was always religious freedom for Christians of every name, except those of Rome and they were apparently never molested. No principle of freedom of conscience was involved: these were no fugitives from persecution. They came to build new homes, to make money, to acquire land. It is the same land-hunger that has driven Englishmen to the far corners of the earth and has made our English speech a sort of *lingua franca* of civilization. New land, free for the asking: land, free for every free man who came. And so the steady stream flowed through Charles Town and from there spread north, south, west. For every newcomer there was waiting a grant of 200 or 300 or 400 acres of land, with additional acres for every member of the family or of the party. Beginning in 1670, they spread out for the next forty years in every direction, each grant just beyond the last. The three volumes of warrants for land grants from 1672 to 1711 published by the South Carolina Historical Commission tell the story of the growth of the infant colony. There was never any fiction about buying the land from the Indians: the Red Man either moved on before the advancing settlement or he was moved on. When he complained he was pacified with promises and assurances, and if he still objected, other means were found for quieting his protests.

Though lands might be granted far from Charles Town, the authorities discouraged settlements at remote distances on account of danger from the Indians, and in 1709, much too late to be effective, the Assembly passed an act, with a penalty attached, prohibiting settlement north of the Santee, but the tide could not be stemmed. The first record of a white man living north of the river is in 1699: in the last month of that year, Lawson the explorer, slowly pushing his way up the Santee then in flood, found shelter at night on the north bank of the river beneath the roof of Bartholomew Gaillard, one of the first of the long line of South Carolinians

of that name. But the next year, the sloop "Rising Sun," entering Winyah Bay and the Sampit found no white settler, only Indians and league upon league of towering pines without a clearing. But the settlers were not long in coming: among the first to appear armed with land warrants in 1704 were Benjamin Schenckingh, George Montgomery, Patrick Stewart and Daniel McGregor. In 1705 George Montgomery, John Abraham Motte, Peter Stewart and John Sauso took up large tracts on the Santee. The Huguenots were coming now: in addition to John Abraham Motte, Henry Bruneau, Michael Pequott, Philip Gendron, Peter and John Gaillard, and Daniel Huger, the last of whom got a tract from Landgrave Smith on the Black River. Then John Bell, senior and junior, and John Lane who is mentioned often in these early records but whose name hereabouts has long since disappeared. He was most active in the founding of the Church north of the Santee, and the names of himself and of his family are the first recorded in the parish register of Prince George Church, Winyah. In 1711 a barony on the lower end of Waccamaw was granted to Landgrave Robert Daniel, which he immediately transferred to Landgrave Thomas Smith for a consideration: this is the present beautiful estate, Hobcaw Barony.

This is the first phase: the phase of settlement. Hard, unremitting toil. The small two-room log house in the clearing, the slow pushing back of the forest, unceasing warfare against the elements, the all-embracing wilderness; and always hard, physical toil. No neighbors, no school, no church, no doctor, no books, no newspapers, no roads. Indians who might seldom commit acts of violence but who constantly stole and plundered, and wandering white men who were often as much to be feared as the redskin. It was the time of the laying of foundations; better times were coming, but not yet. It was a hard, crude life. James Truslow Adams says, "The decade of about 1700 to 1710 marked the lowest period of English culture reached in America before or since." It could not be otherwise: there was neither time nor means nor opportunity for the arts, for letters, for recreation, for leisure. In any age where the people are condemned to

poverty, scanty living and hard labor, culture finds no root and withers away: a fact which we might well ponder seriously in our own day.

How did they live? First, gathering and selling furs—bear, deer, coon: then soon cattle raising was the leading industry, and very soon naval stores. This latter industry has been one of our mainstays for two hundred years and is today one of the few we have left. Rice was grown in Carolina prior to 1690 and indigo about the same time: both were admirably adapted to the soil and the climate and soon became staple crops and immensely profitable. In the course of time the production and sale of these two commodities became the basis of our economic and social development in the decades that followed. Rice culture required slave labor and much of it: as Georgetown county became the leading rice producing section on this coast, so it was one of the largest of the slave holding settlements The effect is still with us, as the census shows exactly two negroes to every white person in the county, and on this immediate coastal belt the proportion is probably four to one. With the development of money crops and slave labor there came civilization, better homes, and a slow building up of culture.

For a long time there was no town. The point of land between the Black and the Sampit Rivers was unoccupied by settlers previous to 1705; but in that year it was granted by the Lords Proprietors of Carolina to John and Edward Perrie who were natives of Cork, Ireland, the former of whom was an official of the Crown in Antigua in the West Indies. John Perrie appointed John Abraham Motte, of Antigua, his agent and sent him to Carolina with twenty-five negroes and large supplies with instructions to occupy and develop his grant. Motte arrived safely in the colony and stayed, but Perrie seems never to have come here. The grants to the two brothers and to their sister amounted to 3,300 acres and included all south of Weehaw Creek, west of the Black River, and north of the Sampit. All of this property passed in some way to John Perrie alone who willed it to his daughter, Mary. The latter married John Cleland, of London, and moved to South Carolina in 1735, eventually leaving their real estate to their only

daughter, Anne Isabelle, who in 1715 married Francis Kinloch. The Kinlochs held these lands along the west bank of the Black River, leaving Kensington and the southern half to their son, Francis, Jr., and the northern end including Weehaw to their second son, Cleland Kinloch. Harriott Kinloch, the daughter of Cleland Kinloch, inherited the Weehaw property: she married Henry Augustus Middleton, the ancestor of Judge H. A. M. Smith, and left the estate to her daughters. Their descendants still hold it, the land having been in the hands of the same family since its original grant in 1705 and in nearly every case descending through the female line.

There is reason to believe that the younger Francis Kinloch owned Beneventum, Mansfield, Wedgefield and Windsor, and sold them about 1820 when he also parted with Kensington, his home plantation. He had an interesting and varied career, having been a captain in the Continental Army, a Member of Congress, a European traveller and an author. His second wife was the daughter of Governor John Rutledge, the "Dictator." (Mansfield later belonged to a Miss Mann. Some local gentleman in a facetious moment once proposed the toast: "Here's to Miss Mann. She lived an old Maid, and died an old Mann.")

To go back to Georgetown. In the absence of the Perries in England, in 1710 John Abraham Motte undertook to deliver to William Screven the elder, of Craven county, deeds of conveyance of the lands at Winyah, or 1,500 acres of them, from John Perrie, of London; this tract including the present site of Georgetown. Screven died in 1713 and the property passed to his son, Elisha. Apparently the Perries knew nothing of the transaction, and when Mary Perrie and her husband, John Cleland, arrived on the scene in 1735 they found this part of their property in the possession of others; but after long delay a financial adjustment was made and the Clelands were left secure in the possession of all their lands outside of the present town of Georgetown. Judge Smith says: "The suitability of Georgetown for a townsite and port about this time seems to have been borne in upon the government. In January and February, 1729/30, Governor Robert Johnson, in a communication to the Board of Trade and American Plan-

tations, in England, informs them that many people are settled upon 'Wyneau' River and conceives it necessary to lay out a Town on the settlement on that River and to make a port of entry. Sometime between this date and 1734, Elisha Screven had the town plan projected and laid out on the Sampit River on part of the 1,550 acres devised to him by his mother..... In December, 1734, he gives notice in the 'Gazette' that all people interested in Georgetown may procure titles from him. On the 16th of January, 1734, Elisha Screven executed a deed of conveyance of the town to three trustees. This deed has a copy of the town plan annexed to it." The town was to be called George Town: the three trustees were George Pawley, William Swinton and Daniel LaRoche, all of Craven county. The streets were regularly laid out and named: lot No. 227 at the foot of Broad Street containing two acres was for the Church of England, that at the foot of Orange Street containing one acre was for the "Presbyterian meeting," and a lot of the same size at the foot of Screven Street was for the "Anna Baptist" meeting; next in line was a one acre lot for the house of correction, and at the other end of the same row was a lot for a free school. These lots were all on Church Street on the Black River side of the town. On the Sampit side, at the foot of Cannon Street, there was to be a fort. A number of desirable lots were reserved for the Screvens, the Clelands and the trustees. The land between Front Street and the Sampit River was to be commons and free of houses, so as to give an unobstructed view of the river and harbor: unhappily in later years this land was occupied and built up with stores and warehouses.

The town developed much as Elisha Screven laid it out, names of streets and all, except that we have no fort at the foot of Cannon Street; our free school in the course of two hundred years has moved up town; the "Church of England," the "Anna Baptist" and the Presbyterian houses of worship are not where he had appointed them to be. Among the original lot holders were: John Lane, the Churchman, the first of a family long prominent here; Othiel Beale who in his youth as a captive had navigated a pirate ship into the Thames and surrendered it with its dismayed crew to the authorities;

George Pawley from whom Pawley's Island took its name; William Waties, the Indian trader whose son, Colonel William Waties, was one of the three South Carolina Commissioners who helped to run the boundary line between this and the northern colony; Daniel LaRoche, William Allston, Meredith Hughes, John Richardson, Alexander Skene, Thomas Blyth, Nathaniel Broughton, Nicholas Trott, Daniel Dwight, John Coachman, Josiah Smith, Charles Pinckney and George Smith. The last named was the younger son of the first Landgrave Smith; his descendants have always lived in Georgetown, the present mayor, Mr. H. L. Smith, being one of them.

The town grew slowly, not being incorporated until 1805. It was, no doubt, for many years only a village, a trading post, a port of entry for the planters. But it is a place of many memories. On its wharves a dark eyed Huguenot boy, Francis Marion, played in the warm sunshine, not dreaming of desperate days and the fame that lay ahead of him. Here old sailors talked of how the pirates, Stede Bonnett the gentleman cutthroat, and Warley and others of the gallows crew made Winyah Bay a haven and a rendezvous long ago. Here sad eyed Theodosia Burr Allston, leaving the body of her little son buried on Waccamaw, boarded the ship "Patriot" and sailed away into the unknown.

This section being a part of Craven county, was originally in the Parish of Saint James, Santee, which was founded in 1706 under the Church Act. On March 10, 1721, it was enacted that a new parish be set off to be known as Prince George Parish Winyah, its bounds to be "to the southwest on Santee River, to the northeast on Cape Fear River, to the eastward on the ocean, and the west as far as it shall be inhabited by His Majesty's subjects": surely spacious enough! Governor Francis Nicholson gave one hundred pounds toward the erection of a church, and Arthur Middleton, President of the Council, wrote the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel asking for a minister. The first church, a wooden structure, was erected about 1726 on the right bank of the Black River at Brown's Ferry, fifteen miles from Georgetown. The parish was named after that prince who was afterwards George II. The church proved to be not in a strategic posi-

PRINCE GEORGE PARISH CHURCH, WINYAH, SOUTH CAROLINA

tion, and after Prince Frederick's Parish was cut off in 1734, the building was turned over to it and preparations were made for the erection of a new and much finer structure in Georgetown. In spite of much encouragement and many donations the church was slow in building. The Rector blamed the Vestry, as rectors sometimes do. At last, about 1750, the edifice was finished and occupied. It is probably the oldest building of any kind now standing in the county, having been in continuous use for the worship of Almighty God for one hundred and eighty-five years and the spiritual home of generations of our people. It is very dear to us. Strangers come from far and near to admire its antique beauty: to us, its beauty is of a more intimate quality, for it is ours.

One of the earliest rectors was the Reverend Thomas Morritt from 1728 to 1734: he travelled over Craven county and tried to minister to the widely scattered settlers in the face of discouraging difficulties. To his other accomplishments, he added that of being a voluminous letter writer: his comments upon the manners and morals of these early pioneers and planters were hardly complimentary—they would not have added to his popularity if they had come to light in his own day; though evidently he worked hard and hoped for the best. Another early clergyman who committed his thoughts about the people to paper was the Reverend Charles Woodmason. The letters of these two men give a realistic picture of the life of the people of their time.

Prince Frederick's Parish still survives, after many vicissitudes and several long periods of suspended animation, to celebrate last year its 200th centennial. It is now very much alive and ministers to the spiritual needs of a large area.

All Saints Parish is a mere child compared to the other two colonial churches in the county, not having been founded until 1767. Waccamaw is the home of the Allstons, the Flaggs and the Hugers: they have always been identified with the parish and a part of it. The present All Saints Church is quite modern, though one of the most quietly beautiful country churches in the South. Waccamaw has a unique beauty and charm of its own; for two hundred years the plantation homes have lined the western shore of the peninsula, fronting upon

acres and acres of rice fields with beyond the gleaming river. When Washington, who loved farming above all else, visited Colonel William Allston's place, Clifton, in 1791, he was astonished: he had never imagined that country life could be carried to such perfection. Today there are few of the original homes left: Fairfield is there; Lichfield, much transformed; Caledonia went up in flames a few years ago; there are scarcely any others.

With rice and indigo production on a large scale came wealth and with wealth came plantation life and the unique culture that went with it. The ladies and gentlemen went to Charleston on occasion (it must have been a stupendous trip), or perhaps northward to Philadelphia and New York; the best of furniture, household goods and silverware were imported, portraits were painted, books and journals came from England and the Continent, the sons were sent to the Mother Country for their education and then to France and Italy for the Grand Tour. The plantation was a little world in itself; apart from the luxuries that were imported, so far as possible everything needed to be eaten, worn, or used, had to be produced on the place. The family lived at home, so the home was made as comfortable, as luxurious and as beautiful as possible.

The plantation life of lower South Carolina came into being as a native culture: in the course of time it went its way and it cannot be reproduced. It was not a perfect culture—it would be easy to point out its defects—but it was a distinctive way of life in itself. It had a charm, a grace, a spaciousness and a leisurely beauty which made it a thing apart. Here in the coastal region of Craven county all of the elements that went to make up that life were found in their fullness: here it flowered unsurpassed.

Up to comparatively recent years, Georgetown county was remote in a sense that is true of few other sections of this state. Cut off entirely on the south by the broad Santee, divided clear across by the Black, the Pee Dee and the Waccamaw Rivers, with the Sampit adding its waters to the other three to make up Winyah Bay, all communication was most difficult except by boat. The result was that for generations

the population was static: few came and few went. Of the people who lived here when George II was our ruler, their descendants are still here. Not far away from here, on the western side of the Waccamaw, are two rural churches, St. Peter's and Prince Frederick's; with scarcely an exception the people who make up the worshippers bear the names of their ancestors who settled in this county two centuries ago. There is hardly a family name among the country people which cannot readily be found in the census of 1790 listed under Prince George and Prince Frederick's Parishes. They are nearly all English names, the exceptions being French: the latter are Huguenot, or perhaps Acadians; though these Acadian exiles quartered among the English settlers were said to have been so desperately unhappy as to have nearly all slipped away further north or west.

According to an early account, "the planters of the Georgetown district about the year 1740 formed a Convivial Club, which met in the town on the first Friday of each month to talk over the latest news from London, which was never less than a month old, to hold high discourse over the growth and prosperity of the Indigo plant,.....and to refresh the inner man, and to keep up to a proper pitch the endearing ties of social life by imbibing freely of the inevitable bowl of punch. The Old Oak Tavern which stood on Bay Street not far from its intersection with Broad Street, was the place of this monthly reunion. The first Friday in May of each year was the anniversary meeting." There was an initiation fee and an annual contribution from each member to defray the expenses of the meetings: these were always paid in indigo. About the year 1753 these gentlemen found that a large balance had accumulated, and it occurred to them to devote the purposes of the Society, in part, to a sober and a worthy object, *i. e.*, the establishment of a free school, which proposal was heartily approved and forthwith adopted.

The Winyah Indigo Society received a royal charter from the King in 1755; other privileges were later granted to it by the legislature of the state. The present building was erected very shortly before the War Between the States. The free school conducted by this society continued for many

years and was a great blessing to our people, especially in the latter half of the last century. The Winyah Indigo Society is still perpetuated and its annual banquets serve to remind us of its long and useful life.

Many of the sons and daughters of the plantations have by their talents and intellect enriched the cultural life of our state: Governor R. F. W. Allston, Washington Allston the painter, Marion's 300-pound brigadier, General Peter Horry, Benjamin and Isaac Huger, Francis Kinloch Huger whose gallant effort to rescue Lafayette from imprisonment at Olmutz is well known, Joel R. Poinsett who spent the declining years of his life on Pee Dee, Christopher Gadsden, and Thomas Lynch, Jr., of Hopsewee, the Signer of the Declaration of Independence, who died at sea before his promising career had more than begun. Of the old rice planter families, the Fords have always lived here and still do, the Pyatts have planted for generations, the Smiths, the Tamplets, the Allstons, the Westons and the LaBruces are still here and here they belong. Other honored names are no longer borne in this county: the Heriots, the Horrys, the Kinlochs, the Priors, the Rothmahlers, the Shackelfords, the Trapiers and the Witherses. Their descendants are scattered far and wide and we are the poorer for their departure.

In the days to come perhaps someone with a bent for accuracy, for patience and skill, will piece together the long story of Winyah and Pee Dee and Waccamaw. The courage, the toil and the vision of the earlier years will adorn it, but if it is to be true it must bear as its accompaniment a thread of melody that will be truer even than the chronicle of events —a melody of spacious days, of the glory of spring on these river banks and marshes, of the call of the marsh hens, of the wind in the towering pines. The silver, silent river in the fading light must be there, and the grace of the winging gull. These are a part of the story and the truer part; true because they come from the loving and tireless hands of God who gave them all.