THE PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I was recently reading an article in History News (December 1963) by Mrs. Ella F. Wood which laid down certain rules that historical societies should follow in their organization. Some of these rules are the following, and it is my hope that you may find them useful in your society.

1. Choose a president who is an administrator — not just a lover of old things. A good administrator will attract people to your society.

2. Elect officers for two-year terms with one re-election — good officers get tired. You don’t want to worry about having to replace them every year.

3. Elect only the people who will really serve — not just because they are the ones who are good at it.

4. Elect a secretary the first time for a one- or three-year term so that he or she shall not co-terminate with the other officers. These people are the backbone of your society.

5. Stay in touch with your state society and with your local historical society.

6. Have a newsletter or bulletin at least twice a year; the BEST way to stimulate and hold your member’s interest.

7. Set up your program a year in advance; send it to all members.

8. Start with committee members — not just a chairman — or you may have committee members who find it easier (and more noble) to do the work themselves instead of getting (or maybe “letting”) others help, than falling to develop a pool from which to draw new executives.

9. Get experts for certain key jobs — they may be volunteers, but they must have training and experience.

   a. GOOD PUBLICITY is vital, especially for a community-minded society, and calls for an expert in public relations, which is far more than newspaper publicity.
   b. Raising Money in a substantial amount is just as much a job for an expert as raising a house. Being a bank president or a church deacon requires men of character, but neither job necessarily makes a man a money-raiser.
   c. DRAW IN JUNIORS either through a junior historians chapter or through the schools by giving them jobs that will interest them — again an expert in dealing with teenagers is needed.

10. Incorporate for safety and tax exemption, and for your own sake and the good of the historical cause join your state historical league and national association.

From time to time bills pertaining to historical preservation are presented to the U. S. Congress. There is a bill before the Senate (Senate 1307) which I would like to call to the attention of the membership. The bill passed the House by one vote last October. Specifically, it appropriates up to $560,000 a year for five years to be used by the General Services Administration with the advice and upon the recommendation of the National Historical Publication Commission to make grants to federal, state and local institutions for collecting, describing, preserving and compiling and publishing the documentary sources illustrative of the history of the United States. If passed, this could be the answer to our long sought objective of cataloguing the large amount of information which has been collected by the Society and other organizations pertaining to the Cape Fear area.

N. Winfield Sapp, Jr.
President

Purchase of Latimer House
(See Page 2)
IN MEMORIAM
MRS. HENRY JAY MACMILLAN

JANUARY 31, 1964

NEW MEMBERS

Regular

Dr. R. Richard Corbett, P. O. Box 3253
Mrs. Sara L. Carr, 230 East 48th St., New York City
Admiral Robert B. Ellis, 8 Water St., Wrightsville Beach, N. C.
Mrs. Robert B. Ellis, 8 Water St., Wrightsville Beach, N. C.
John Henry Mohr, 1122 Market St.
Mrs. E. N. O'Quinn, 1810 Princess Street
John M. Reeves, Pinehurst, N. C.
Howard Penton, Jr., 1119 Country Club Road
Mrs. Howard Penton, Jr. 1119 Country Club Road
John Schiller, 1445 Knollwood Drive
Mrs. John Schiller, 1445 Knollwood Drive
Robert Strange, 14 North 7th St.
Mrs. Jean Tillett, 111 South 7th St.
Mrs. George Smithson, 111 North 5th St.
Mrs. Beth Y. Wells, 109 South 4th St.

Contributing

Mrs. J. Archie Cannon, 108 No. Union St., Concord, N. C.
James B. Walton

INFORMATION REQUESTED

Any member of the Society having in his possession volumes from early Cape Fear libraries, or having knowledge of any such volumes, is requested to notify Mrs. Henry B. Rehder, 763-4837. The second half of Mrs. Rehder's study on Cape Fear Libraries will appear in an early issue of the Bulletin, and it is hoped to make it as complete as possible.

ARCHIVES CONTRIBUTIONS

We appreciate contributions to our archives collection from the following persons: Mrs. Ludlow P. Strong, H. F. Newkirk, Mr. and Mrs. Aquila J. Marshall, Stanley South, Henry J. MacMillan, Claude F. Howell and Williams Foard.
Development of Libraries
In The Lower Cape Fear

By Barbara Beeland Rehder

1. The Parochial-Public Libraries
   of the Eighteenth Century

In 1742 the settlements in the Cape Fear area of colonial North Carolina extended some one hundred fifty miles along the coast and penetrated in some places as deeply as one hundred fifty miles. In all this large extent of land there were only about three thousand people. The early settlers, having slaves and finding along these gentle water courses mild climate and fertile soil, were invited to lead a country life. They took up large tracts of land and soon were almost segregated from the world. This pattern of life later developed into that of the English country gentry, but for some time these early settlers were engaged in wrestling order from the wilderness. One would hardly expect any intellectual development. They were not ignorant men or unappreciative of literature, however. They had come to the colony for political and economic reasons, and there were libraries among the first of them. George Durant, one of the earliest known colonists, brought with him a copy of the Geneva Bible printed in 1599. As early as 1676 and 1680, books are given prominent place in wills and inventories.

The province of North Carolina had been settled for some forty or fifty years before a town was laid out. The first town to be incorporated was Bath in 1704, and five years later it had only “about twelve houses.” The settlers throughout the province were slow to produce the village communities that characterized the New England colonies and consequently slow to produce village institutions. Schools were virtually impossible if only for the mere exercise of getting children together. Churches were non-existent. We read in a letter from Mr. Henderson Walker to the Lord Bishop of London in 1703: “My Lord, we have been settled near this fifty years in this place, and I may justly say most part of twenty-one years of my own knowledge, without priest or altar . . .” For the time the colonists were dependent upon their own family resources for the rudiments of religion and literacy.

With the Eighteenth Century came improvement. This was probably due in large measure to the Rev. Dr. Bray, who was the outstanding force for beginning Christian missions in America. He inspired the sending, about 1700, of Daniel Brett, the first minister from the established church. Dr. Bray regarded “a small but well-chosen library” a necessity for every missionary, and since there was no organization as yet, he sent “of his own pious gift” a library worth about a hundred pounds for the benefit of Mr. Brett’s flock.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This is the first of two articles expected to trace the development of libraries in the Cape Fear area from the colonial era to the present day.

Here is the origin of North Carolina’s first public library. Mr. Brett turned out not so pious, in fact quite a disgrace, and the library seems to have led a peripatetic existence for a while, but it was finally settled at Bath. Meanwhile Dr. Bray, in England, was working zealously to organize the missions. In 1701 King William chartered the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and in 1703 the Society sent out the Rev. Blair, its first missionary to the province of North Carolina.

Edward Moseley’s Bookplate

The content of the Society’s libraries was mostly religious. Mention is made in many places of Bibles and Prayer Books. The only catalogue we have of such a collection is that of Edward Moseley. In 1723 this eminent colonist wrote to the Society, sending a catalogue of books he had purchased “desiring the honorable Society would be pleased to accept them toward a provincial library for the government of North Carolina, to be kept at Edenton.” There are seventy-six volumes listed. Largely religious works, they include
some philosophy and a Greek grammar. Nearly all were written in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew. This is considered a comment on the intellect of the colonists, for as the books were purchased for their use, it is only reasonable to suppose there were a sufficient number of learned minds to make them practical. Perhaps Moseley’s library required more of its readers than most, but at least it gives us some idea of the content of the library at Bath and the ones sent later to St. James in Wilmington and St. Phillip’s in Brunswick. There is no record, however, that Moseley’s library was ever established at Edenton.

The library at Bath suffered considerable abuse, and some of the missionaries wrote that it was virtually destroyed, but this could not be so for its protection was the purpose of an act passed by the Assembly in 1715, the only act relating to libraries passed in North Carolina before the Revolution. It provided for a “Library-keeper,” who was to catalogue the books, keep accurate record of their use, and lend to any inhabitant of Beaufort Precinct any book, upon his giving a receipt and promise to return “if a folio, in four months; if a quarto, in two months; if an octavo or smaller, in one month’s time...” In case the borrower of a book “doth refuse to return the same, or doth damnify the said book,” the Chief Justice or two other justices were required to levy a fine of three times the book’s value on his goods and chattels, or “for want of such distress, to commit the person to prison till satisfaction be made to the Library-keeper.”

Correspondence of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel shows a desire for books that was so great as to impel the people not only to protect them, but to descend to some shenanigans to possess them. The Rev. James Adams departed North Carolina in 1710, leaving his library in charge of Mr. Richard Sanderson at Currituck. Mr. Adams died, and Mr. Sanderson thereafter refused to surrender the books to any other missionary of the Society. Writes one: “[I] was denied the books and so will be everyone that is not musket proof. The precinct where the deceased last dwelt, pretending the books belonged to them, would not part with them, except I would live with them.” All the shenanigans, however, were not for appreciation. Missionary Mr. Rainsford complains that “Madame Hyde, the wife of the Governor, sold me all the Society’s books committed to her care for butter, eggs, etc. when they were to be disposed of gratis according to the interest of the Society.”

The first such parochial-public library at Wilmington was the same in origin and content as the others of the Society but somewhat later. Apparently during the last years of the proprietors few books were sent over, for in 1735 we find the Rev. Richard Marsden, the first rector of St. James, writing: “Indeed, my Lord, it would be a great act of charity without delay to supply this part of the province at least with good books.” It was twenty years later in 1755 that the Society sent to the parish of St. James a gift of books, and in 1770 another. Among the first were two volumes that were a gift from the Prince of Wales, afterward George III. At Brunswick twenty-six volumes were deposited by the Society in 1765, and the next year forty-two others. We have no further record of the collection, at Brunswick.

These, then, were the earliest public libraries in North Carolina. They were parochial libraries, sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Meant primarily for the clergy, they met the wants of the whole people and became public property. The Society continued this practice during the royal regime, but with the Revolution its work came to an end.

II. Private Libraries of the Eighteenth Century

In an area which in its infancy suffered the Revolutionary War and less than a century later the War Between the States, one can only expect a dearth of records. To find any early books at all is indeed quite remarkable. North
Carolina scholars, aware of the wealth and leisure that came quickly to the Cape Fear and aware particularly of the brilliance of early leaders, have sought diligently for knowledge of the libraries that surely existed.

McRoe writes in *Life and Correspondence of James Iredell*, "That town [Wilmington] and its vicinity was noted for its unbounded hospitality and the elegance of its society. Men of rare talents, fortune, and attainment united to render it the home of politeness, and ease, and enjoyment. Though the footprint of the Indian had scarcely been effaced, the higher civilization of the Old World had been transplanted there and had taken vigorous root." There were John Ashe, later General; Samuel Ashe, to be Governor; Cornelius Harrett, "who could boast a genius for music and a taste for letters"; Dr. John Eustace, the correspondent of Sterne; Col. Thomas Boyd, "adorned with classical literature"; Dr. John Fergus, a graduate of Edinburgh, a Greek and Latin scholar; Samuel Swann, who with Edward Moseley compiled the first revision of the laws of the province, its first printed book; Adam Boyd, editor of the *Cape Fear Mercury*; Robert Howe; Lewis Henry de Rosset; William Hill; Alfred Moore; Lillington; Maclaine; and more. "These were no ordinary men," writes McRoe. "They were of the remarkable class that seem ever to be the product of crises in human affairs."

Though records are meager, scholars have searched with some reward. Their sources are wills and inventories, existing collections, and some few volumes in the hands of individuals, mostly descendants of the original owners. Bookplates and inscriptions give us some information. Where so little information exists, every small item seems of great importance. We are indebted to Mr. William S. Powell, Curator of the North Carolina Collection at the University for invaluable aid in using the books there. That is the last home of the great Moseley-Hasell-Lillington library, and it is a thrill to be able to examine the old books, some tied to hold them together, some in good condition, all of them now oiled and cared for.

This collection (not as large as the well known Johnston collection, which contained the bookplates of at least twelve other collections) is representative of what happened with private libraries. It was begun by Edward Moseley. Moseley was a foremost North Carolinian for many years. He had a large law practice and owned 25,000 acres of land and nearly a hundred slaves. He served in many public offices in Edenton and Wilmington, to which he came in 1735, remaining until his death. His library was one of the largest in the colony, but it is interesting more because it continued to grow after his death, due to the extension of his family, which came to include Hasells and Lillingtons. In 1854, having been housed for some time at Lillington Hall, its remnant, then four hundred volumes, was sent to Wilmington to the Lillington heirs. Only three volumes of Moseley’s own library have come down to us, according to Dr. Weeks. At least one is in the North Carolina Collection at the University.

The Moseley-Hasell-Lillington collection at the University contains one hundred and fifty volumes. Many of these bear the James Hasell bookplate. Several of them have the Hasell bookplate pasted over another bookplate and have also Sampson Moseley’s name inscribed. One has borne three bookplates and the inscription. Plates which were Thomas Child’s have been damaged. There are volumes separately inscribed George, John, Alexander, and Mary Lillington, and Sampson and Edward Moseley. Looking upon this remarkable reminder of another era and its courageous and cultured minds, one recalls the words of the Hon. George Davis concerning Edward Moseley’s own collection:

Many years ago I had the opportunity to examine the wreck of his library after more than 100 years of accident, neglect, and plunder had preyed upon it. Its mutilation was painfully apparent; but enough was left to excite my wonder and my admiration for the man, who, in the wilds of a new country, not shunning the activity incident to its life, but always and everywhere a leader among men, had yet the generous taste to gather around him a library which would do credit to any gentleman of our day; and every volume of which had to be brought from England with great expense and trouble.

This is the only private collection of any size that we know of that has come down from the Cape Fear area. Through wills and correspondence we have some knowledge of other libraries. Some owners were: William Hooper, whose
library was "shamefully injured" by rioting North Carolina Militia in 1781, when they not only plundered but carted away over a hundred volumes; Archibald Maclaine, whose law books were stolen in the same year; Col. James Innes, who willed "all my books" to the Innes Academy; Dr. Samuel Green, owner of Greenfield Lake and Garden, who carefully divides his books in his will; John Burgwin, who kept his collection at the Hermitage. Dr. Weeks had a letter from Miss Sallie Burgwin, John Burgwin's granddaughter, dated April 13, 1894, describing it.

I can see it now as it was built in the wall of the old place. The busts of two Roman emperors — Marcus Aurelius and Caracalla — and Faustina, the mother of Marcus Aurelius, were placed in a niche just above the library. These busts seemed to guard the old books. ... I think these books must have been placed there by my grandfather. His name was in many of them, with the crest and the coat of arms of the family.

Inventories, required as they were to list titles of books, are a source of great interest in telling us something of the tastes of these men. That of Dr. John Eustace in 1769 is a good example, being not the largest nor confined to religious or professional works. It lists a collection of almost three hundred volumes. These include French, Latin, and Greek dictionaries, as well as Dr. Johnson's in English. Besides religion, there are works on philosophy, law, history, poetry, and fishing. There are such works as: Gulliver's Travels, Paradise Lost, The Iliad, Letters of Abelard and Heloise, a "full set" of Tristram Shandy (Dr. Eustace was "the correspondent of Sterne"), and a volume of his own original poetry. Approximately half the books are listed under the heading "Books on Physick, Surgery, and Anatomy, &c." These include a wide range of what must have been standard works of the time, with a few rather quaint titles: Effects of Air on Human Bodies, Lob on Painfull Distempers, The Ladies Physical Directory, and Observations on Night Shade.

These are just examples of the private libraries in the colony before the Revolutionary War. Sparse as the records are, we have enough to get a clear and fascinating picture of them, and as many as are mentioned in all sources, we can be sure that there were many more.

III. The Unique Cape Fear Library

It is not surprising that the Cape Fear area produced the only non-parochial public library in North Carolina prior to the Revolutionary War. Almost nothing is known of its history. It was organized in 1760 in Wilmington, the population then being less than eight hundred. Supported by a "society of gentlemen," it was called the Cape Fear Library and was in existence at least until 1780.

From later developments we can guess something about the nature of the Cape Fear Library. A group of congenial men would agree to pay a fee, perhaps ten dollars a year each. They would purchase books and acquire a reading room, where would be kept the society's collection and some newspapers and periodicals. These reading rooms became not only centers of intellectual activity but fashionable lounging places. The gentlemen of the Cape Fear Library did not spare any expense, for they ordered their books bound in rich leather with "Cape Fear Library" stamped in gold on the face of each volume. The sturdy volumes that have come down to us are little damaged by time.

There are eight books that bear this original stamp in the North Carolina Collection at the University in Chapel Hill. Five are volumes of a set of Rollin's Roman History. All these have pasted inside the cover a plate "Loaned to the Library of St. James Church by A. M. Hooper Esq." Volume Seven of this group has in script on the flyleaf, "Cape Fear Library, 1780," this setting the last known date for the library. Two other volumes are religious works typical of the times, and the other, the last acquired (in 1853), is a translation of political discourses and includes Cicero's orations against Catiline. All these books were published at London between 1740 and 1750.

There is a ninth volume in this collection which is said to be one of the original library, though its cover is gone. It is the third volume of a set of Shakespeare that belonged to Archibald Maclaine and contains many notes and comments in the margins. These are the work of a thoughtful scholar, written in a very fine, precise hand but now extremely difficult to read even with a glass. William Hooper wrote of Maclaine that "his criticisms on Shakespeare would, if they were published, give him fame and rank in the republic of letters."

There is one more volume of the Cape Fear Library known to us. It belongs to Mrs. Charles P. Graham (Jean Victor McKay) of Wilmington. A quarto bearing the original gold stamp of the library, it is entitled The History of Japan by
Engelbertus Kaemfer, M. D., but that is only its initial title and is by no means all of it. It was the custom of the time to print an elaborately informative title page with various sizes and styles of print. The title page here is not only typical but also charming and amazing, its most outstanding subtitle informing us that there is included “A History of the Kingdom of Siam Written in High Dutch.” (One looks with wonder toward that “society of gentlemen”!) Mrs. Graham’s book is Volume II of a set and was printed at London in 1728.

Mrs. Graham also owns a bookcase which belonged to her grandfather, Thomas W. Brown, and which is believed to be one of the original Cape Fear Library cases. It is a well-designed pine case of the type which has a cupboard below with book shelves and glass-paned doors above. The tradition in Mrs. Graham’s family is that Mr. Brown and “two other men in Wilmington” bought the library’s cases at a time when they had to be disposed of, presumably long after the library ceased to exist as Mr. Brown was born in 1803.

What happened to the Cape Fear Library? We have no record at all. Since both the British and the riotous State Militia who came in 1781 showed a propensity for stealing and destroying books, perhaps the Cape Fear Library met the same fate as Hooper’s and Maclaine’s. Anyway, we know it existed in 1780 and we hear nothing of it after that time. It is interesting to note that the bookplate in the Rollin’s volumes reading “Loaned to the Library of St. James Church by” are printed with a space left for a name to be written in, in this case “A. M. Hooper Esq.” This suggests that when the Cape Fear Library was discontinued, for whatever reason, the books were divided among its subscribers, who then housed them with the parochial collection of St. James Church, with the intention of reorganizing the library.

The Moseley-Hasell Lillington Collection at the University of North Carolina

BIBLIOGRAPHY

It was originally intended that this article be annotated in the hope that it would be made more useful. As the research for it went along, however, it became apparent that Dr. Weeks, whose report was published in 1896, had done a study almost complete to this time. He had practically nothing on the Cape Fear Library, however. Mr. Wetmore, writing almost fifty years later, found but a little to add, but by then was able to examine some of the CFL books and some other sources. Except for original research all the facts in this article can be found in those two works. What is new here results from the privilege of examining the Maclaine Shakespeare, two additional volumes of the CFL, and the fascinating remnant of the Moseley-Hasell-Lillington Collection. The discussion of Dr. John Eustace’s inventory, which came about from a suggestion of Mrs. S. C. Kellam, is original, and accordingly that reference is noted. The conjectures are mine. — BBR

“The library of Thomas Child was one source for the James Hasell library. The Child bookplate, which James Hasell covered with his own, has been identified from one in the collection of Henry J. MacMillan. Thomas Child was Attorney General of the Province of North Carolina during the administrations of Governor Gabriel Johnston and Governor Arthur Dobbs.

1 Dr. Weeks and Mr. Wetmore both blame the British entirely for this injury but Hooper’s letter (G.J. McRae’s Life and Correspondence of James Iredell, Vol. II, pp. 1-5) makes it plain the damage was due mainly to the militia under Rutherford, scavenging after the occupation and evacuation of Wilmington.


4 WETMORE, THOMAS HALL, JR. The Literary and Cultural Development of Ante-Bellum Wilmington, North Carolina. This is a thesis written for Duke University in 1940. There is a carbon copy in the Wilmington Public Library and it is on microfilm in the University of North Carolina Library.
Recent Developments At Brunswick Town
And Fort Fisher

By Stanley South, Archaeologist
North Carolina Department of Archives and History

Plans for the visitor center-museum at Brunswick Town are being worked out with the architect, James Milam of Raleigh, and the contract for the construction of the building will be awarded in March. The clearing of the area where the museum will be located has been completed.

At Fort Fisher, clearing of the newly acquired land near the ocean front is being carried out by the maintenance crew. Volunteer help from Camp Lejeune Marines helped with the clearing of the undergrowth from the mounds of the historic fort.

Recent erosion at Fort Fisher prompted a request by the County Board of Commissioners for help from the State Highway Department and the Water Resources Board in stopping this erosion which endangers Fort Fisher and U. S. Highway 421.

At the meeting of the New Hanover County Confederate Centennial Committee plans were made for a ceremony at Fort Fisher in August to commemorate the battle of Fort Fisher. The story of Fort Fisher and the blockade runners will be told in fireworks.

Plans for the restoration of the palisade fence along the land face of Fort Fisher are being drawn by the archaeologist, and restoration is planned to begin within two months.

The architectural firm of Ballard, McKim and Sawyer have drawn plans for the visitor center-museum at the site, and construction is expected to begin in late spring.

Following the excavation of the ruin of the lighthouse keeper's house which was used by Colonel Lamb as a headquarters building, the hundreds of buttons recovered were analyzed, and a report on these and those recovered from the Brunswick Town ruins was written. This report is to be published along with other papers presented at the fourth annual Conference on Historic Site Archaeology held recently at Macon, Georgia.