Catherine Ann McKay Fulton, sometimes referred to as Kate, posed for her portrait garbed in a dark colored pleated gown with long open sleeves. She is adorned with earrings and a lace collar pinned by a wide ribbon. Her hair is pulled up in the back with a slight curl, covering her ears. Her left hand rests on a short stack of books signifying she could read and was educated. In her right hand she holds a rosary. Her expression implies confidence, goodness, respectability.

For comparison studies, such as Catholic elites in the slaveholding south, Mrs. Fulton’s an appealing theme for historical investigators. She left much evidence of her life, for instance through real estate transactions, census appearances, personal papers and according to Wilmington city directories she occupied 114 North 4th Street for half a century. These vestiges help us trace her easily. She also was pretty, and if we can choose our subject matter, or ancestors matter of fact, wouldn’t we choose them to be attractive?

Please continue to the third page.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR NORTH CAROLINA QUAKERS?
See the second page

Catherine Fulton, 1860
Photograph courtesy New Hanover Public Library
The Religious Society of Friends

So just why are the Quakers called Quakers

The term "Quaker" refers to a member of the Religious Society of Friends, which is the proper name of the sect. There are two reputed origins of the term, the first refers to people "quaking" or trembling when feeling moved by the Holy Spirit to speak in Meetings for Worship. The other according to Elfrida Vipont Brown, is: George Fox was arrested in Derby in October 1650 and charged with blasphemy. The magistrates who tried him were Gervase Bennett and Colonel Nathaniel Barton. George Fox was questioned intermittently over an eight hour period, during which at one point George Fox told the magistrates "Tremble at the word of the Lord". It was Justice Bennett who coined the name "Quakers" for the followers of George Fox.

http://www.pendle.net/Attractions/quakers.htm

As early as 1730's we know of Quakers settling in the New Hanover area. Elizabeth F. McKoy, *Early Wilmington Block by Block from 1733* on (© 1967) page 129, mentions "affirmations" in the New Hanover Court records and a Quaker burying ground east of Fifth Street and north of Walnut, just beyond Block 221.

Quaker history may be found in local public libraries. Ellen T. Berry wrote *Our Quaker Ancestors: Finding Them in Quaker Records* (© 1987 by Genealogical Pub. Co., Inc. Baltimore). The author reveals a history of the Quaker movement and discusses its organization and structure. She also describes Quaker migrations to and within America and types of records that are available.

In 1926, William Wade Hinshaw began gathering family lineages. He published his extractions into six Encyclopedias of American Quaker Genealogy. Volume 1 contains items found in records and minutes of the thirty-three oldest monthly meetings which belong to the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends.

Try Cyndi Howell’s, Cyndi’s list

Catherine Ann McKay was born at Smithville, now Southport, North Carolina on September 9, 1821, the daughter of William McKay and Henrietta Berry. William McKay was from Bladen County, NC, his immediate family having come to North Carolina from Scotland. He moved to Wilmington where he was engaged in the mercantile business.

Henrietta Berry, was the daughter of William Graves Berry and Sarah Ancrum, and the sister of Dr. William Augustus Berry, of Wilmington.

The marriage of William McKay and Henrietta Berry was performed at St. James Episcopal Church in Wilmington. By this union there were two daughters. First Caroline Eliza, born on July 30, 1819 and second, Catherine Ann.

Mr. McKay died as a young man on February 7, 1823. Mrs. McKay married a second time to William Hogan. Unfortunately, she died two years later on January 1, 1826.

James Iver McKay (1792 - 1853), also from Bladen County, a close friend of William McKay, although of no known kinship, was appointed guardian of the two children. As he was a member of the House of Representatives from North Carolina he took the girls with him to Washington D.C.

There the eldest child Caroline was taken ill and died. James McKay fearing the climate of Washington had something to do with the girl's death asked Catherine Ann's uncle, Dr. Berry, to take over guardianship. From that time until her marriage Miss McKay lived with the Berry family. Ann Eliza Usher Berry, Dr. Berry's spouse, was Roman Catholic. By her aunt's model, Catherine Ann McKay joined this church and remained a loyal member through her life.

At the age of 25, Miss McKay met and married David Fulton, a strong acquaintance of the family. He was born in County Donagal, Ireland, on August 28, 1821. He came to America with his father and brother James in 1838, first living in Raleigh, then in Sampson County, North Carolina where he practiced law.

To further the cause of the Democratic Party in opposition to the Whig Party, Fulton moved to Wilmington, establishing a weekly newspaper. In partnership with Alfred Price, a practical printer, they started the Wilmington Journal, first issued on September 21, 1844.

According to the St. Thomas Baptismal Register, Catherine Fulton's two year four months marriage with David Fulton produced a daughter, Mary Katherine, born on November 21, 1847, and baptized January 9, 1848.

Tragically, Mr. Fulton's health began to fail. The Wilmington Journal kept updates on his declining vitality even reporting the family's journey to Charleston, South Carolina in the hope the climate there would improve him. It did not.

At the age of 27 years, on December 17, 1848, David Fulton died at the Mansion House Hotel, Meeting Street, in Charleston. His remains were returned and buried in Wilmington.

James Fulton, "a sound and tried Democrat," formerly editor of Charlotte, NC's "Mecklenburg Jeffersonian," continued the Journal newspaper with Mr. Price on March 30, 1849.

Confusion about the Fulton brothers occurs often. Namely times and placements, even going so far as the Wilmington Morning Star naming James Fulton as the father of Mary Katherine Fulton, later Mrs. Thomas Henry Wright, in her obituary on March 18, 1935. James Fulton resided with his sister-in-law Catherine until his death on December 14, 1865.

This is a remarkably good example of family and kinship bonds practiced in the mid-19th century. Households of the time were made up of many different relations and generations of family.

Mrs. Fulton remained a widow for fifty years. The "Fashion of Mourning," a diversion the 19th Century offered Western culture, was popularized by Queen Victoria, for whom the period is named. Whether it be for a parent, spouse or child, people donned their sorrowing black garb. Sometimes for decades. The act was already in vogue by colonial Cape Fear residents as evidenced by the 1756 will of Rebecca Dry. She “gave and bequeathed unto her beloved sister, Mary Clifford, a suit of mourning, also a mourning ring.” Customs for expressing loss have changed over the centuries. One example, in 14th Century England, Catherine, widow of Thomas (4th) Lord Berkeley, after the death of her husband, was “given licence” to take a journey beyond sea, for a year of mourning pilgrimage. Her lord’s grandfather’s wife had before done the same.

We don't know if Mrs. Fulton selected this grieving occupation out of loving devotion for her dead spouse. Even though she controlled her own fortune, she lived in a society that inhibited female autonomy, where community, not gender, bound women.
Self-sacrifice in the Victorian’s belief was clearly identified with a woman’s lot to suffer. They are usually referred to as pious flowers of pleasing demeanor who had a tear for the pity and hands open for melting charity. Society may have forced public grieving upon Catherine Fulton preventing new suitors. Plus, this kept her in check. A rich woman in organized mourning was rarely outside her home, therefore obstructing her from using her influential funds for empowerment.

On the practical side, Catherine Fulton was economically independent of the need for marriage as many women were. Mrs. Fulton had her own money, land and servants to meet her every need. She had the community’s respect and prestige of a “Mrs.” title without the mister to drain her freedom. By that period’s law, all the property a wife owned before marriage or inherited during it came under her husband’s control. Why would she marry again?

Mrs. Fulton continued to live in Wilmington, conducting her ‘realty business’. The New Hanover County Real Estate Conveyance grantor index lists 12 transactions alone. She also performed charitable acts as women of her station practiced, such as preparing the body of Confederate spy Rose Greenhowe for burial.

Mrs. Fulton’s character is always described as good natured in personal letters. In her later life she moved to Portsmouth, Virginia to stay with her daughter, Mary Wright. She died in Portsmouth on January 5, 1898, her body was brought to Wilmington, where she was buried in Oakdale Cemetery next to her husband David and brother-in-law James Fulton.

A great scholarly interest with Mrs. Fulton, nee Miss McKay, was her association with the Church of St. Thomas Apostle. St. Thomas Parish was formed under Ignatius Aloysius Reynolds 1798-1855 D.D. Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston on January 1, 1845. Thomas Murphy (1806 - 1863) was appointed Vicar Forane. He became the first full-time Roman Catholic priest in Wilmington, North Carolina. Under Murphy’s superintendence the Church of St. Thomas Apostle, a Gothic Revival style structure was completed, dedicated and opened for Christian worship on July 18, 1847. The building, presently called St. Thomas Preservation Hall, stands at 208 Dock Street.

Acting first as a benefactor towards the purchase of the church lot, Mrs. Fulton is noted often in the St. Thomas registers. She is listed, for example, sponsoring children’s baptisms or as an entry participant herself, such as her marriage with David Fulton on August 10, 1846. Also noteworthy, are the numbers of persons identified as the “Slaves of Mrs. C. Fulton.”

Antebellum Christian churches on the whole never warmly embraced their Negro communicants, and they moved with unbecoming caution in extending religious instruction and social services to them. In the countryside, almost nothing was done to confirm or nourish Christianity among blacks, slave or free. These feelings slowly changed after 1865 when religious orders that specifically ministered to African-Americans gained momentum. Rev. Murphy provided good will to all within his parish. Mrs. Fulton’s example, by sponsoring slaves, such as Maria Ann Jones (1838 - 1929), encouraged other slaves to come forward for baptism and other rites. Maria Anna Jones, who’s own story is appealing to historians, is often mistakenly referred to as North Carolina’s first and oldest baptized Black Catholic.

We know from Bishop John England’s visits to North Carolina in the 1820s he provided sacraments for African Americans.

The Church of St. Thomas Baptist.

Marriage and Death Registers normally name the slave, his holder, age, date of birth and sometimes parents names. For instance, Maria Ann Jones, also know in various county records by the surname of McKay, Fulton and Howard, was baptized on September 15, 1849; She was born in November 1838 and her parents were Daniel and Elizabeth. She married John Howard, slave of Mrs. Mallhenry, on July 13, 1857. Their first child, John B., was born and was baptized September 19, 1858. Mrs. Jones later died at her home on Myrtle Grove Sound on October 21, 1929.

This data is valuable for those seeking slave ancestors. These records suggest patterns of values and behavior that provide revealing, if brief, glimpses into the interior world of slaves. They also faintly outline the nature of master-slave relations on the sensitive subject of religion. The end.


7. James Fulton's death notice printed he died at the age of 39 and that he came to America with his father at the age of twelve. *Daily Journal*, December 16, 1865, 2.


12. Church of St. Thomas Death Register.


16. *The Landmark* of Norfolk, Virginia actually printed in Mrs. Fulton’s obituary on Jan. 6, 1898, “...practical and pious, an exemplary woman and charitable Christian.”


20. The Diocese of Charleston was founded in 1820, and comprised the three states of North and South Carolina and Georgia. It embraced an area of 127,500 square miles. John England (1786-1842) served as bishop from 1820-1842. Peter Guilday, *The Life and Times of John England* (New York: America Press, 2 volumes, 1927). Ignatius Reynolds was a native Kentuckian and was consecrated to bishop on March 19, 1844, taking his See the following April, he served eleven years. Charleston, SC *News & Courier* newspaper, March 9, 1855.

21. Thomas Murphy (1806-1863), was a native of County Carlow, Ireland, and began his studies for the priesthood in that country. He transferred to the Diocese of Charleston and completed his studies in the seminary there and was ordained by 1836. By 1838 he was stationed in Fayetteville, NC. In 1844 he was transferred to Georgia and the
following year was assigned to Wilmington. Wilmington, NC Daily Journal newspaper, Aug. 18, 1863. Church of St. Thomas Death Register.

22. The opening page of the St. Thomas Church register notes, “On the 1st of November 1845 a suitable lot for the erection of a Church was purchased for the sum of $797. by these individuals, viz. Mr. William A. Berry, Bernard Baxter & Miss Catherine McKay.” There are six volumes of baptisms, marriages, deaths and miscellaneous church depositions dating from 1845 to 1968. Copyright St. Mary Pro-Cathedral, Wilmington, NC. Microfilm of the original registers may be viewed in the Special Collections Department, New Hanover Public Library.

23. The 1860 Federal Census, slave inhabitants in Wilmington, North Carolina, page 300, lists C. A. Fulton as the owner of 14 slaves.


29. New Hanover County Standard Certificate of Death, 158.