THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the year draws to a close, we can look back with pride to the number of accomplishments the Society has made. We have endeavored to place more emphasis on preservation of the historic central part of our city than ever before and we have made progress. However, much remains to be accomplished. I do think the tide has turned in our favor, but in order to keep up this momentum we cannot relax our efforts. One of the most important contributions in this direction was the meeting held some two months ago, spearheaded by the Society, which accomplished the raising of $1,650.00 to be used toward a master plan for our Historic District. These funds will be matched by city and federal funds. The plan will accomplish the following:

1. Revaluation of all structures within the Historic District to determine their historical and architectural significance. The results of this study may indicate a need for re-defining the boundaries of the district.
2. Survey and tabulation of existing land-use, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, social and economic characteristics, visual characteristics, and structural conditions.
3. A study of existing zoning and other controls in the District with recommendations for improvements.
4. The development of a long-range plan for the development and preservation of the Historic District including an evaluation of the various means, both private and public, for the carrying out of the plan.

On behalf of the Society I wish to thank the following organizations for their help in this endeavor:
The Catherine Kennedy Home
The Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
The National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of North Carolina
First Baptist Church
First Presbyterian Church
St. John’s Art Gallery
St. James Episcopal Church
St. Mary’s Catholic Church
St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
The Temple of Israel

In addition to the master plan the officers of the Society have met with city and county representatives about the possibility of having legislation passed by the State Legislature which would recognize our Historic District and give incentive to people who purchase property in the district.

The Confederate Centennial Commemoration, with members of our Society furnishing the leadership, came to a conclusion with ceremonies marking the anniversary of the fall of Fort Fisher on January 15, 1865.

Our headquarters, the Latimer House, has received several handsome gifts of furnishings. Outstanding among these gifts are a Meissen vase given by Mr. Herbert Latimer, an overmantel mirror presented by Miss Katherine Von Glahn and Dr. William C. Von Glahn, a set of bedroom furniture attributed to the workshop of Charles Honore Lannuier, circa 1815, consisting of bed, dressing table and chest of drawers given by Miss Annette Lewis, and a tapestry woven Bessarabian rug given by Mr. Waldo B. Tyler. There are other objects which are on loan. It is hoped that the Society with the assistance of the Richardson Foundation can soon start decorating the main rooms with appropriate wall treatment and draperies.

As President I wish to thank the Board of Directors and the membership for their support and my hope is that the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society will play an ever increasing role in our community development.

N. Winfield Sapp, Jr., President
MEETING

Time: Friday, May 28, 1965, 8:00 p.m.
Place: St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church
Speaker: Mr. Peter Manigault
Subject: The Ansonborough Restoration

Peter Manigault is the president and publisher of the Charleston newspaper. His grandfather, Arthur M. Manigault, a rice planter at Georgetown, entered the newspaper business with the Charleston Evening Post around the turn of the century. The Post acquired the Courier under Arthur Manigault’s presidency in 1926. Peter succeeded his father, Edward Manigault, as president and publisher.

He was graduated from Episcopal High School in Virginia and Princeton University, both with high honors. He also studied business and finance at the graduate business school of the University of Pennsylvania.

He served in the Naval Reserve as an enlisted man during the last days of World War II and as an officer during the Korean War. He received combat decorations from both the United States and South Korean governments. Presently he is a Commander in the Naval Reserve.

Mr. Manigault learned the newspaper business as a reporter for the Columbia Record and as reporter and advertising solicitor for the Charleston papers, and went into general management six years ago. He is married, and a member of St. Philip’s Protestant Episcopal Church. He is active as a board of directors member of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Charleston Museum and the Historic Charleston Foundation.

Catherine Kennedy must be reckoned among the great in the history of the Lower Cape Fear. The monument to her enduring service to this community looms as a modern three-building complex wherein live seventy-six elderly men and women: the Catherine Kennedy Home, a non-profit charitable institution which dedicated on May 5 the new Lita Whitehead Wing, latest in a long record of achievements.

Born Catherine Gabriella deRosset in 1800, she was descended from one of the oldest and most honored of Cape Fear families. She grew to be a young woman of noble character noted for befriending the poor and helpless. She did not marry until she was thirty-five years old and then married a Methodist minister seventeen years her senior, a widower with a young daughter also named Catherine. The Reverend William Magee Kennedy had been minister to the Front Street Methodist Church from 1816 to 1825 and was at the time at Trinity Methodist Church in Charleston. It was there the couple made their home for five brief years. Mr. Kennedy died in 1840, and according to church archives: “Her husband having finished his work in His Lord’s Vineyard, his widow returned to the home of her father’s to take her former place among his brethren to their joy.”

LOWER CAPE FEAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
BULLETIN

Volume VIII, Number 3 Wilmington, N. C. May, 1965

The Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Inc. Bulletin is published by The Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Inc., Wilmington, N. C., a nonprofit organization. It is regularly issued in November, February, and May and is distributed under a second-class mailing permit. The editor is Barbara Beeland Rheder; the chairman of The Bulletin Committee, Henry J. MacMillan. Printed by The Wilmington Printing Company.

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Catherine Kennedy

She returned also to her former church, since 1887 Grace Methodist Church. The records of that institution reveal that she served tirelessly in every phase of its work. She also took upon herself the responsibility of teaching the children of slaves, sometimes instructing as many as two hundred fifty at a time. When civil war came she nursed the sick and wounded, even going to Petersburg when the need for nurses there became critical. Especially did she recognize the problem of caring for the poor and homeless old women in this community.

Catherine Kennedy organized in 1845 “The Ladies’ Benevolent Society” which began with many charitable interests, though by 1879, when the first home was purchased, this was the Society’s chief work. The home was called “The Old Ladies’ Rest” and cared for six women. With financial help it grew quickly. In 1895, not long after her death, it was moved to new quarters at Ninth and Princess Streets. At that time it was re-named in honor of its founder, The Catherine Kennedy Home.

The report of the Superintendent of Sunday School of

(Continued On Page Six)
A Man With Two Countries
A Loyalist in Colonial Cape Fear

By Mary B. Broadfoot

"My house is almost finished & paid for at a very easy rate, considering the Strength, Beauty and Conveniency of the building..." 1

It was the year 1759. James Murray, trader, planter, and prominent citizen of the Cape Fear region was describing, in a letter to his brother John in Scotland, his long-planned-for plantation home on the Cape Fear River, 15 miles from Wilmington.

Two hundred and five years later, his great, great, great granddaughter, Mrs. Raymond Emerson of Concord, Massachusetts, visited the site of the old mansion. She wrote:

There were a few scattered pine trees and some dogwood in bloom and a tangle of brush...I looked down and saw that the ground was impregnated with old brick, and following it around I saw that it covered a space of about sixty feet square. In one place there was a very small pile of brick which would hardly have been noticed if one were not looking for it...This then was the site of my ancestor's plantation home, Point Repose. 2

Records of exactly how and when Point Repose sank from a mansion of "Strength, Beauty and Conveniency" to a ground cover of brick are remote and elusive. But records of colonial history and hundreds of personal letters of James Murray provide a narrative of the owner's life which portrays vividly the pre-Revolutionary Cape Fear period.

James Murray was one of the early settlers of Wilmington, or New Town, as it was then called. His story holds particular pathos, for his life span included the struggle for independence from British rule, and Murray believed that the American colonies were not ready for this independence.

Born in Scotland near the English border on August 19, 1713, he was "strictly bred in hardship and industry," 3 his early years being typical of Scottish upbringing. At 19 he was apprenticed to a London merchant in the West India trade. After three years in London, he became interested in seeking his fortune in the New World. His sights were aimed at the Cape Fear country of the Carolinas, and in a letter to his uncle, Andrew Bennet, in May, 1735, Murray listed his reasons:

...1. It is a climate as healthy as England. 2. It is cheaper living there than anywhere in Scotland.
3. Land which may now be bought there...will in all probability double the value every year, the place growing more populous as the Land Lower down in that

River has already done...4. I am sure of the Governor's [Gabriel Johnston] interest to support me. 5. My own fortune is sufficient both to buy a handsome plantation and carry on as large a trade as I have occasion for... 6. The place by its situation is entirely out of the power of a foreign enemy, which is no small advantage in these uncertain times. 7. I have the advantage of two faithful correspondents...who are willing to join Interests with me so far as our little trade requires it...

One can imagine the enthusiasm with which this energetic 22-year-old Scotsman wrote of his proposed adventure! Recruiting a small group of relatives, friends and servants, Murray spent the summer of 1735 making preparations to leave England. On September 20 the little company embarked for the port of Charleston.

JAMES MURRAY 1731-1781
By John Singleton Copley 1778-1815
Collection: Frank Lyman, Northampton, Massachusetts

At that time, having rid themselves of the rule of the Lords Proprietors, the Carolinas were entering a more prosperous period as dependencies of the Crown. Gabriel Johnston, a Scotsman, had recently been appointed governor of the northern colony. Because of this native connection, Murray had secured letters of recommendation to Governor Johnston. He
had also been commissioned by friends to buy land in the Cape Fear region, and, as stated in his letter to his uncle, he himself wanted to make similar investments.

Upon arriving in Charleston in November, 1735, the group was cordially received and efforts were made to dissuade them from proceeding to the Cape Fear. Murray was not to be deterred, however, and by the end of the year had left Charleston and reached, not New Town, but the rival settlement of Brunswick.

At Brunswick Murray found a population strongly opposed to his countryman, Governor Johnston, whose allegiance to the Crown was firm. He rented a house from the Roger Moore family, bitter critics of the governor. Within a year he found himself at such odds with the Moores that he bought a house and lot in New Town, "and immediately after purchased a plantation within 15 miles of about 500 acres."

On July 8, 1736, he wrote to a friend regarding the latter purchase: "... but when I shall turn to planter God knows. It will not be till I can turn some money out of the country to buy some Negroes."

The same letter reflects his political problems: "... I wish I could write you something agreeable of the country or rather the present set of inhabitants, for the place itself is well enough were it peopled by frugal, honest, industrious people who would not sacrifice the general good of the province for obtaining their own private ends or would not be so stupid as to be led by the nose by those that would. Then I might say without the spirit of prophecy that this Province would soon be one of the best in America."

Murray had been in the New World for less than a year, but already his sentiments are obvious. Throughout his life his allegiance to the King stemmed from the belief that such allegiance was for "the general good of the province," and that the alliance was mutually beneficial to the mother country and to the colonies.

New Town was growing that year, due largely to an influx of Swiss and Irish settlers. But even while he noted with satisfaction the increase in population, Murray felt keenly the disadvantages and difficulties of creating a new civilization. To his cousin John Murray, in January, 1737, he wrote gloomily: "... we can write of nothing so well as the inconveniences we suffer in reality for the advantages we form to ourselves in imagination, and was I to undertake to give you a description of the place, it would only be darkening instead of enlivening your Idea of the Continent..." But in the same letter he concluded more brightly: "... For all my complaints a man with a moderate fortune and tolerable management may live very happily and plentifully here..."

James Murray’s sister Barbara had made the original voyage to the New World with him in 1735. In 1737 she was married to Thomas Clark, who became a Justice of the Peace and member of the General Assembly, figuring prominently in Cape Fear history.

In the summer of 1737 Murray received news of the death of his mother in Scotland. A 16-year-old brother and 14-year-old sister were now totally dependent on his care, and he returned to Scotland for a year. During this period he renewed friendship with his Bennet cousins, particularly his cousin Barbara; and brought back to North Carolina with him his brother William and his sister Elizabeth.

With part of his mother’s inheritance he purchased some Negro slaves, enabling him to “turn to planter,” and increased his investments in trade.

While in Scotland, he wrote to a friend in New Town a somewhat wistful summary of his relationships with his fellow townsmen there, blaming himself for an “imprudent zeal”:

I have observed in you a justness of thought and generosity of temper that I would endeavor to imitate wherever I found it. If some gentlemen of our acquaintance had with the same good nature overlooked a zeal (perhaps a little imprudent) for one’s friends I should have had more friends in Cape Fear, but as it is, I am sensible there and will subsist a Dryness between some certain Gentlemen and me until the unhappy Differences of the Province are reconciled.

DOROTHY MURRAY (Mrs. John Forbes) 1745-1811
By John Singleton Copley 1738-1815
Collection: The Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts

The "Dryness" to which he refers is a pun on the name of one of his political adversaries, William Dry, who was Collector of the port of Brunswick.

Murray was an intensely loyal person, as evidenced by his devotion to and care of all members of his family. His father had died when he was 15, leaving him, as the eldest son, in charge of four younger brothers and sisters. John, the next eldest, had remained in England to become a surgeon. His sister Barbara Clark was close by in New Town, and after his mother’s death he became the guardian of William and Elizabeth. His correspondence to other relatives expressed his constant concern and deep affection for them. Undoubtedly it was this same strong sense of loyalty which pervaded Murray’s
political affiliation to his countryman Governor Johnston; this same steadfast loyalty which bound him inextricably to his native land.

In 1739 he was appointed collector of the port. New Town became the port of entry, taking precedence over Brunswick which had formerly been the port. This naturally increased the competition which had always existed between the two towns, and drew Murray more intimately into political life. In February, 1740 Governor Johnston appointed him a member of the Board of Councilors, an office which he did not seek, but which he received because of the governor's need of his cooperation.

Governor Johnston's account of actions of the General Assembly that year reads: "Our Assembly, which met here on the 5th of February, 1740 ... behaved with decency and parted in very good humor (a thing not very common here) after passing some Laws. At present I shall only take notice of one, which is an Act to erect a Village called Newtown on the Cape Fear River into a township by the name of Wilmington ...".

Murray's vote was instrumental in the passage of this Act.

Impressions of relationships between the governor and the people are set forth in a letter from Murray to a friend in April, 1741:

... As to the Disputes of this province, they are not between the people in General and the Governor, for they are well satisfied with him, but there are a certain set of Men in this Province who are never satisfied, if they have not the Chief Management of Affairs ...

Here again we are given insight into Murray's reasons for loyalty to the Crown. Always it is for the "good of the province," and those who would sever the ties are the real mischief makers.

In 1744 he travelled back to Scotland to marry his cousin Barbara Bennet, to whom he had been engaged for two years. His brother-in-law, Thomas Clark, was left in charge of his Cape Fear properties. Word of Clark's death in 1749 spurred Murray's return to Wilmington. A daughter, Dorothy, had been born in Scotland; and with his little family and sister Elizabeth (who had come back to Scotland with him), he sailed first to Boston, leaving his wife and daughter there in his sister's charge; and went on alone to North Carolina. Barbara Murray joined her husband again in August, 1750.

In November of that year he wrote to his cousin John Murray:

... I am giving up all thoughts of Trade and retiring to a Plantation in the Country there not to live in a disgraceful Ease but to be ready at every call to serve my Country or my Friend. When I was appointed one of his Majestys Council for this Province about Eleven year ago there were eight before me. Now I stand the fourth in the List—this office, to compare small things with great, is like your Attendance on Parliament. It gives me the benefit of a two hundred Miles Ride twice a Year, some Influence in the Country and some Power to promote the good of it ...

At that time there was only a log house on the "plantation." A letter to his sister in February, 1755 said: "... I have about 100 Thou'd Bricks burnt, & am to begin my House, if the Bricklayer keep his word, early next Month."

He was not yet through with trade, however, for a little later in the same year he wrote of the "quality of our Cypress and its fitness for Matts." He also continued to trade in indigo, rice and tar.

His concern with politics and commerce was again expressed in a letter to a friend:

... Another cause of our Poverty, idleness and uselessness to our Mother Country (is) a Single person being able to hold a great quantity at a low rent without Cultivation. All Instructions restraining this are continually broke thro. A more effectual way to remedy the past ills of this kind & to prevent the future seems to be to impose a smart Land tax, either by the General union, if it takes place, if not by act of Parliament. Such an act might be so contrived as to procure a good rent roll for the Crown thro out the Provinces, a Considerable part of this Tax to be applied to encourage Manufactures beneficial to the Province and Great Britain ... Our Governor [Governor Dobbs, who had recently succeeded Governor Johnston] has the Interest of the Crown and his Government much at heart, but does not thoroughly understand the ill Tendency of a paper Currency, especially to a poor Colony, as will be evident to you when I send you his plan for a Land Bank ... If it passes, it will continue us ... so much the longer useless to ourselves & the Mother Country.

Again we note his reference to the mutual benefits of continued ties with Great Britain, although he did foresee, with apparent equanimity, the possibility of a "General union" of the colonies.

Murray's interest in public affairs was active while Governor Johnston lived, although he did not by any means support all the governor's measures. But a rift developed between him and Governor Dobbs. Continued friction between the two resulted in Murray's suspension from Council membership. Through friends in England, however, he was reinstated a few years later, and became senior member of the Council with the ex-officio rank of president.

Strangely enough, Dobbs' animosity to Murray stemmed from the feeling that he was "leading and advising (a) Junto, that he as one of the Council endeavored to lessen his Majesty's prerogative and add to the power of the Assembly: That he had endeavored to form a party in the Assembly to make himself popular against the Government, raised and encouraged a republican party ..." Imagine Murray, fervently loyal to Great Britain, cast in the role of a rebel and conspirator, trying to "lessen his Majesty's prerogative!"

In a letter to his brother John in January, 1759, he was tolerantly philosophical about the whole affair: "... In my present Temper & Circumstances I had much rather be the private man minding my farm & endeavoring to leave something clear to my Family than be the Zealous Counsellor struggling against the Stream for Measures thought right, & hated or envied by those I contended for ..."

Meanwhile, he had suffered the profound personal grief of the death of his wife, a newborn infant, and his four-year-old daughter Jean in February, 1758. Of seven children he had now only his eldest daughter, Dorothy, who was with her Aunt Elizabeth in Boston, and two-year-old Elizabeth who "... must be my little Comfort here if it pleses God to spare her ..."

Elizabeth had set up a millinery business in Boston which was modestly successful. On a visit there, Murray met a
widowed friend of Elizabeth's whom he married in November, 1761. At the persuasion of his sister and his new wife, the Murrays left Point Repose in 1765 and made Boston their home.

James Murray made only one brief visit back to Wilmington. His nephew, Thomas Clark, took charge of the plantation, and when the property was confiscated after the Revolution, Clark presented an account for more than the assessed value and it was ultimately by act of legislature made over to him.

Murray's niece, Ann Clark, married patriot William Hooper. Although his customary tolerance was evident in accepting the match, neither Murray nor the Hooper family, because of political differences, was very enthusiastic. He wrote: "... This match Anny made for herself without her brother's approbation. This young man is an attorney at law in North Carolina whither he went under my patronage and where he may do well if he has prudence, which is doubted." "Prudence," of course, meant the wisdom to keep on the King's side.

With the coming of the war James Murray left Boston and settled in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he died in 1781.

The epithet "Tory" was a label hurled in opprobrium at all those who opposed independent rule for the American colonies. Some were Tories from motives of mere self-interest; others because of their love of peace and quiet, and because of their aversion to the excess and violence that characterized the acts of those who styled themselves Patriots. Still others, and these deserved to be called Loyalists rather than Tories, took the British side because they could not sever connections with the old home. A few there were who were Tories from pure patriotism, by reason of their conviction that rebellion meant ruin to America. James Murray was one of this last group. He remained convinced that the best interests of America were being sacrificed by the very men who maintained that they were asserting her rights. And although, like all those who sided with the King, he incurred suspicion and hatred, he never could see himself as an enemy to the land he had helped to build.

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FOOTNOTES
1 Tiffany and Lesley, op. cit., p. 102.
2 Emerson, op. cit., p. 16.
3 Tiffany and Lesley, op. cit., p. 8. All subsequent direct quotations are taken from this volume.

CATHERINE KENNEDY
(Continued from Page Two)

Grace Church, November 6, 1889, one month before she died, includes a gentle and revealing note: "We will not leave this subject [of the general condition of the Sunday School] without calling attention to our dear old Mother in Israel, Mrs. Kennedy, who still teaches in the Sunday School, and though feeble in body yet is strong in spirit, pointing the lost the way of salvation. I know when I say 'May God spare this aged one many years' there will come up within your hearts a responsive 'Amen.'"

When she died Grace Church was draped in mourning, and The Wilmington Messenger ran an obituary of over five hundred words. "The years of her life were spent in doing good and attending to the wants of those of her fellow creatures who were in poverty and distress." And again, "... she, perhaps more than anyone else, moved this community to a more generous and possibly wisest charity." Thus did the public praise the lifework and lament the death of Catherine Gabriella deRosset Kennedy.

—B.B.R.

LOWER CAPE FEAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA