Gen. William Moultrie & Company ~

Continuing with William Moultrie as I promised last week, I'm hoping to get more of his life story told, along with summarizing his distinguished military career. In 1759, he was appointed aide-de-camp to Governor William Henry Lyttleton and accompanied the governor on his Cherokee campaign (1759). The following year he was a captain in Colonel Thomas Middleton's Provincial Regiment and participated in the Cherokee Expedition (1760-1761). By 1774, Moultrie had advanced to the rank of colonel in the militia. When the Revolution broke out, he was elected by the Second Provincial Congress to be the commander of the Second South Carolina Regiment of Foot. He commanded the American forces at Fort Sullivan's Island on 28 June 1776, who defeated the British Navy under Admiral Peter Parker as they attempted to capture Charleston. The state named the Fort on the island in his honor, and he received the official thanks of the Continental Congress for his gallant conduct.

On 20 September 1776, Moultrie's regiment became a part of the Continental Line, and he was promoted to brigadier general. He defeated the British at the Battle of Port Royal Island (February 1779) and thwarted their drive on Charleston (May 1779). Second in command of Charleston's defenses, he was taken prisoner when the city fell in 1780. He was paroled to barracks at Haddrell's Point and then sent to Philadelphia where in 1782 he was exchanged for General John Burgoyne. Promoted to major general on 15 October 1782, Moultrie returned to active duty and served until the end of the war. Although sometimes criticized for his procrastination and slowness, he was an able and successful field commander.

In addition to his political and military activities, Moultrie found time to be a member of the South Carolina Society (1757-1805) and the St. Andrew's Society (1758-1805). In 1758, he was one of the founders of the South Carolina Jockey Club and in 1792 was one of the founders of Charleston's Washington Race Course. He also was a founder and the president of the South Carolina Society of the Cincinnati (1783-1805).

Following his retirement from public life in 1792, Moultrie lived quietly in St. John's Berkeley where he had two plantations, Northampton and Kent. He had purchased the latter, a portion of the confiscated Colleton estates, in 1782, for L1,124.16 sterling. His other landholdings, totaling 8,800 acres, were scattered through the backcountry. He obtained most of these lands and 2,000 acres in North

Carolina after he had served on the commission to settle the boundary between the two Carolinas.

Moultrie married Damaris Elizabeth St. Julien (1728-d. bef. 1779) (daughter of emigrant Pierre de St. Julien) , and they had three children: Lucretia, William, and an unnamed infant. It is presumed they probably moved to Northampton soon after being married. In October 1779, after the death of his first wife, he wed Hannah Motte, daughter of Jacob Motte and Elizabeth Martin and the widow of Thomas Lynch (1727-1776). Their marriage was childless. William Moultrie retired to Northampton after the Revolutionary War and died in Charleston on 27 September 1805.

The name Northampton may have come from Northampton, a town in England's East Midlands region. Relating to Northampton, Peter, the eldest son of emigrant Pierre de St. Julien, willed the place to his sister, Elizabeth (wife of General William Moultrie). Apparently, therefore, the tract was secured by the emigrant Pierre de Malacare St. Julien I, or by his son, Peter II, around the year 1700.

Northampton house, a square building with a half-story of massive brick walls, was built about 1715/16, by, it is thought, Benjamin, grandson of the emigrant. (This probably in error, as Benjamin wasn't born until 1729/30.) Perhaps his father, Pierre III built the house and passed it to Benjamin, or, it was built later by Benjamin. Benjamin died without issue, and Northampton reverted to his father and then to Elizabeth.

Cousin Richard D. Porcher, Jr., author of *Our Lost Heritage*, tells us, "During the Revolution, a time at which personal survival was the main concern of the colonists, interest in a possible canal waned. The Revolution over, there was renewed interest in the linking canal. A meeting was held in Charleston on 10 November 1785, chaired by Governor William Moultrie and reported in the South Carolina Gazette of Saturday, 14 November 1785. The opening statement read: "The following PLAN, for opening the Communication between Santee and Cooper Rivers, (by a Canal and Locks) from or near Cook's Landing [on the Santee], through Green Land Swamp to Biggin Bridge was agreed to." We learn from this, and follow-up, the importance William Moultrie placed on the Canal project.

We've learned the Revolution ruined many planters of St. John's. With the removal of the bounty from indigo, the planters had no staple crop. Cautiously, at first, they turned to cotton as a money crop. It was General Moultrie who first in South Carolina attempted cotton on a large scale on his plantation at Northampton.

As early as 1748, a shipment of cotton had been exported from Charleston. The cultivation of the crop grew slowly, however, and it was not until towards the close of the century that it became a financial success. In 1788, Kinsey Burden raised the first crop of "long cotton" in South Carolina on his lands in St. Paul's Parish. Five years later, in 1793, General Moultrie made the first experiment on a large scale by planting one hundred and fifty acres of Northampton to "long cotton."

Probably because of his, and almost everyone else's, inexperience in the cultivation of the crop, the experiment was a complete financial failure. It is said that his yield was only nine pounds per acre. From that time, however, the movement spread rapidly, and five years later, in upper St. John's, Captain Peter Gaillard, of the Rocks (my fourth Great-Grandfather) and Captain James Sinkler of Belvidere were averaging better than two-hundred pounds per acre, for which they received seventy-five cents per pound.

The cultivation of the crop was a crude process in the latter 1700's and early 1800's. All the work was done by slave labor. Cotton was planted in "hills", four to five feet square (rather than in rows). Four workings (or cultivations [hoeing's, cleaning away weeds, bedding up the ground around the plants as they grew bigger as they needed to be held upright both during winds, and in the weights the plants were to hold upright]) were considered sufficient to raise a crop.

According to old accounts, mules were a rarity in St. John's. On Pooshee Plantation, adjoining Northampton, during a time when 500 acres of cotton were cultivated, there was but one mule on the place, chiefly used to meet the canal boats at the Black Oak landing to bring freight. Oxen were used to haul straw for the manufacture of manure (and that's a whole 'nuther story!) Cultivation was done entirely by hand labor.

General Moultrie's son, William II, who inherited the place, died at an early age, unmarried. At his death, Northampton was sold (and changed hands many times thereafter).

Northampton house partially burned in 1842. The upper story was destroyed, but the fortress-like walls of the half-story were undamaged, and the house was soon restored with no serious loss. F.M. Kirk tells us in 1935, "The house was put into beautiful repair. Surrounded by its numerous outbuildings, all snow-white, and its yard, planted to Italian rye grass during the winter, it presents an ante-bellum look."

In 1802, Moultrie published his *William Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution* as two volumes of letters and accounts of the *Revolution in the Carolinas and Georgia*. He emerged from retirement in 1804 to accept a commission as Treasure, for the lower division of South Carolina. Failing health prevented his remaining in office and he resigned within the year.

An interesting story recorded, on the formal opening of the old Santee Canal in 1800, a breakfast was given at Northampton Plantation by General William Moultrie, then Governor and one of the Directors and President of the Santee Canal Company. The event was to honor Major Christian Senf, engineer in charge of the Santee Canal Company project, and other prominent citizens of the state who had been instrumental in the realization of a half-century dream of many.

Major Senf, who appears to have made himself thoroughly unpopular with the planters of the community (*and just about the whole county*), demanded full credit for all he thought he was due, and he was very fond of dramatizing.

The morning of the Canal opening, Senf had carefully left a little soil in the bottom of the canal, which blocked the Santee (canal) from flowing to its new destination. He planned to divert the Santee into the Cooper by himself, removing the last barrier.

Sending his servant from Northampton to make sure that all arrangements were completed, he sat down at the general's table to make merry with his host and the distinguished visitors, and then, in company with them, set out for the canal after breakfast.

The Frenchman's surprise was little short of apoplexy when, upon reaching the scene of his little drama, he found the show stolen from him. The last spade-full of dirt had been removed and the Santee was running triumphantly to Cooper.

Investigation divulged that the servant, wishing to spare his master possible inconvenience and embarrassment before the assembled visitors, had himself shoveled out the dirt. The servant lost his job.

Keith Gourdin

References: A Plantation Series, by Francis Marion Kirk, 1935, The News & Courier, Charleston, SC; Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives, Volume II, The Commons House of Assembly 1692-1775; Collections from the library of Keith Gourdin; Our Lost Heritage, by Richard Dwight Porcher, Jr., Cecile Ann Guerry, and Robert Joseph Hauck; and The History of the Santee Canal, by Prof. F.A. Porcher

Northampton Plantation, built ca. 1716

General William Moultrie