

**LIFE AND TIMES OF
JONATHAN
BRYAN, 1708-1788**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649431281

Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan, 1708-1788 by Mrs. J. H. Redding

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Cover @ 2017

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Redding, Isabella Remshart.

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MRS. J. H. REDDING,

WAYCROSS, GEORGIA.

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SAVANNAH GA.
THE MORNING NEWS PRINTING
1901

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NEW YORK
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CHAPTER I.

South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, by nature and events, have been closely linked together, and their histories so interwoven, it would be impossible to write the biography of one who was born in South Carolina in 1708, and died in Georgia in 1788, whose services, first to the British Crown, and later in the cause of American Independence embraced fifty years of that period, without some description of the scenes in which he lived, and the men with whom he was associated.

The first English colony landed in South Carolina near Port Royal in the year 1670. Settlements were made by several English gentlemen, who purchased the land from a company chartered by Charles II in 1663, under whose corporate authority North Carolina had been colonized. The second governor, Sir John Yeamans, carried with him, in 1671, fifty families of colonists from Barbadoes, and nearly two hundred slaves. In this way slavery was introduced into South Carolina. This colony was strengthened by others, who, filled with the spirit of adventure and thrilled with enthusiasm by descriptions of the country, left the congested centres of civilization in the old world for America, where freedom of conscience and opportunity, like stars of hope, beckoned them onward. Not

T. H. H. 300 p. 1 (1950)

only the oppressed and the sons of toil, but the children of luxury were fascinated with such descriptions as Waller's account of an island in this region :

“The lofty cedar which to Heav'n aspires,
 The prince of trees is fuel for their fires,
 The sweet Palmettoes a new Bacchus yield,
 With leaves as ample as the broadest shield,
 Under the shadow of whose friendly boughs
 They sit carousing, where their liquor grows.
 Figs there unplanted through the fields do grow;
 Such as fierce Cato did the Romans show:
 With the rare fruit inviting them to spoil
 Carthage, the mistress of so rich a soil.
 With candid Plantines and the juicy Pine,
 On choicest Melons and sweet Grapes they dine,
 And with Potatoes fat their lusty swine.
 The kind spring, which but salutes us here,
 Inhabits there, and courts them all the year.
 Ripe fruits and blossoms on the same trees live,
 At once they promise, what at once they give.
 So sweet the air, so moderate the clime,
 None sickly lives, or dies before his time,
 Heav'n sure has kept this spot of earth uncurst,
 To show how all things were created first.”

From the vast phosphate beds of South Carolina to those of Florida, with the higher elevation of Georgia lying between, a country great enough in extent to

sustain an empire, and with soil and climate unsurpassed, it is not strange that Spain struggled to call this fair land her own from the gold regions of North Georgia to the sea; nor that, when the colonist reached this country, now divided into three states, with its long coast line washed by the Atlantic and Gulf, gigantic forests filled with game, and rivers great, abounding in life, the imagination could go no further, and some were ready to declare: "Here is the life-giving fountain, the beautiful fountain of youth."

But to the philosopher, the humanitarian, the practical side appeared, and Oglethorpe wrote back to England: "The Colony of Georgia, lying in about the same latitude with part of China, Persia, Palestine and the Madeiras, it is highly probable, that when hereafter it shall be well peopled and rightly cultivated, England may be supplied from thence with raw silk, wine, oil, dyes, drugs and many other materials for manufacture, which she is obliged to purchase from Southern countries."

Antedating the advent of the Indians, the phosphate beds reveal the fact that a dense population once lived here, contemporaneously with all prehistoric animals, and all that now inhabit the earth, and that by some mighty cataclysm these vast sepulchers were made.

This was a land a beneficent Father had prepared for the tramp of the coming hosts of another race, this

the country we know not why, the noblest tribes of the Red Race were destined to yield up, not without a struggle, within a little more than a century.

It has been said: "There is nothing great in the world but man, and nothing great in man, but his soul." If then the pure great souls of those who have walked the earth stand like sentinels along the corridors of time, pointing humanity to higher hopes, and linking us not only to the past, but to reunion hereafter with the innumerable company who have gone before; if, among such as these, we can claim the founders of our republic, may we not justly rejoice in their memories, and leave for our children the glorious heritage of their sufferings and their achievements?

CHAPTER II.

In 1680 another small colony of English gentlemen joined the one that arrived at Port Royal in 1670. Among them was Joseph Bryan, of Hereford county, England. But little is known of his life and character, except that his kindness and hospitality won for him and his family the undying friendship of the Yemassee Indians. He married Janet Cochran and they settled in the vicinity of old Pocotaligo. He burnt the bridges behind them, and America henceforth became the home of their descendants. We have the record

of four children born to them; his oldest son, Joseph, probably in 1697; Hugh, in 1699; Hannah, in 1706, and Jonathan Bryan, in 1708; three weeks later Mrs. Bryan died, leaving the infant son. Joseph Bryan, the first, owned a plantation called Providence, in Prince William's parish, between Pocotaligo and Prince William's Church—the spot is near the line of the Savannah and Charleston railroad, in the vicinity of Yemassee. Calmstead, lying on the right bank of the Pocotaligo, belonged to his son Hugh; and Walnut Hill, lying between Providence and Calmstead, was settled by Jonathan in 1734. The oldest son, Joseph, gave aid and personal effort to the infant colony of Georgia.

Hugh held many positions of honor and trust, and early in the life of the colony became identified with its interests. An old map gives this record: "South Carolina and a part of Georgia, containing the whole sea coast, all the islands, inlets, rivers, creeks, parishes, and townships, burroughs, roads, bridges, as also several plantations with their proper boundaries and the names of their proprietors, compiled from surveys taken by the Hon. William Bull, Esq., Lieut. Gov. Gascoigne, Hugh Bryan, Esq., and William deBraham, Esq., Surveyor General of the Southern District of North America. Republished with considerable additions made from the surveys made and collected by John Stuart, Esq., His Majesty's Superintendent of Indian Affairs;".

by William Faden, successor to the late T. Jeffrys, Geographer to the King, Charing Cross, 1780."

Twelve years before George I had ceased to reign, and when Louis XIV was about to die, peace had been settled between England and France, and the colonies of these two countries would have been left undisturbed to pursue their own development, but the Spaniards, then in occupation of Florida, claiming that their territory covered the subsequent province of Georgia, extending even to Virginia, were permanent enemies on the Southern frontier of South Carolina. They made allies of unfriendly Indians, and gave refuge to runaway slaves. The whole Indian world from Mobile to Cape Fear was in commotion. The Yemassee of South Carolina, the most warlike of all the Southern tribes, renewed friendly relations with the Spaniards at St. Augustine, won alliances with many other tribes, and on the morning of Good Friday, April 15, 1715 indiscriminate massacre of the English began, hiding by day in the swamps, and by night attacking settlements. All who could fled to Charlestown (afterwards called Charleston), which was also in peril, and the colony seemed near its ruin. At last the deliberate courage of civilized man prevailed, and the savages fled. The colonists checked them on the north, and they vanished into the forest. On the south, Charles Craven, Governor of the province, pursued them; the Yemassee retired into Florida and were warmly wel-