BENJAMIN BURROUGHS

BY
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In Burke’s Peerage, the name of an ancient family is shown under the name of Burrows, having originated in Kent, England. The different ways of spelling the same name was a common custom in the old days.¹

The History of the Burroughs Family goes back to the Elizabethan days of England’s glorious marine exploits. An old record names Captain Stephen Burroughs as captain of one of three vessels which attempted to reach China by way of Nova Zembla in 1553. In the old books of heraldry is described the Burroughs Coat of Arms, and many other records that indicate the prominence of the name in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sir John Burroughs who was knighted in 1624 was an attendant and court official to King Charles I, and his descendants have been prominent in England from that time to the present day, one of them in recent years having been the head of the largest drug house in the world located in London, England.²

The founder of the family in America was John Burroughs, who was born in Dorsetshire, England in 1617, and traveled to Salem, Mass. about 1642 (See Appendix 2). As an adherent of Charles I he had been one of those who fled to America from England at the time to escape the religious and political persecution following the dissolution of the long Parliament, of which he was a member.³

Fourth in descent from John Burroughs was Benjamin Burroughs. Benjamin was born at Newtown, on Long Island, March 31, 1779.⁴ In 1795, he brought the name of the Burroughs family to the south by relocating in Augusta, Georgia,⁵ and proceeded in the following year to venture down to Savannah where he planted his roots by marrying a savannian, Miss Catherine Eirick on Tuesday July 2, 1799.⁶ Miss Eirick

¹ GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3, Document 640.
² GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3, Document 640.
³ GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3, Document 640.
⁴ Georgian, 24 of April 1837, p.2, c.6. MF 990255.*
⁵ GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3, Document 640.
⁶ Columbia Museum and Savannah Advertiser, 5 of July 1799, p.3, c.4. MF 990208.
was the daughter of Alexander Elrick, a member of the Colonial Parliament.7

Benjamin Burroughs was a very religious man and seemed to have religion as one of his top priorities in life. He was involved in church functions the entire time he lived in Savannah. He was an elder in the Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, and gave $5,000 to assist in building the church in 1817.8 He was also present at a meeting which was the foundation of a Missionary Society on January 8, 1818. A Missionary Society was created, and he was elected as 2nd vice president (see appendix 1 for Missionary Society Constitution). Burroughs continued his activities within the Missionary Society by holding meetings in his own home9 and by being elected 2nd vice president of the Society for a second year in a row.10 He was also very active in the Georgia Bible Society in which he was elected to the Board of Managers for 1820-21.11 There is a transaction that took place in May of 1820 that I can not comprehend: The Treasurer of the American Bible Society has received in payment for Bibles and Testaments, from the Georgia Bible Society, by Benjamin Burroughs, Esq., treasurer.12

Burroughs was an active member in community service outside of religion promoting security for citizens and property in the city of Savannah. He became a Constable in the spring of 1808,13 and was a founding member of the, “Insurance Company of the city Savannah”, which insured property and effects against sea risks, fire and other casualties.14 His main contribution was helping strengthen the growing city by supporting the Savannah Poor House and Hospital Society:

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the state of Georgia, in general assembly met, and by authority of the same it is hereby enacted that Benjamin Burroughs along with many

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7 GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3, Document 640.
8 GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3, Document 640.
9 Columbian Museum and Savannah Daily Gazette, 24 of February 1818, p.3, c.2. MF 990214.
12 Columbian Museum and Savannah Daily Gazette, 25 of April 1820, p.2, c.3.
13 Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger, 9 of April 1808, p.3, c.4. MF 990219.
14 Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger, 24 of December 1812, p.2, c.2. MF 990222.
others shall become members of the corporation hereby erected, (Poor House and Hospital), by subscribing and paying annually into the treasury therefore, the sum of ten dollars shall be and they are hereby declared to be a body corporate in name and in deed, by the style and the denomination of the "Savannah Poor House and Hospital Society."  

Burroughs was an intelligent and prosperous merchant who dealt in shipping. His main dealings seem to be with cotton, although he did piddle with potatoes and porter. His partner Mr. Oliver Sturges, and himself owned a third of interest in the "Steamship Savannah", which in 1819 was the first vessel to cross the Atlantic Ocean under her own steam. Due credit should be given to Moses Rogers, then living in Savannah who spread the word of a boat being built at Colear's Hook, New York, by Crocker's and Fickett, as a sailing packet between New York and Liverpool. This interested Messrs. Dunning, Scarborough, Burroughs & Sturges, McKenna and others who bought her and reconstructed her as a steamboat to ply between Savannah and Liverpool. She made her first crossing on November 5, 1821. There are accounts of investments in other vessels. In 1822 he owned 3 ships, three-fourths of the ship or brig Osgood, Olive Colt, Master. In 1822 he bought and owned the whole ship. In 1828 he bought the Sarah Jane from John Oldham of New Orleans, Joseph Wise, Master.

Burroughs owned property and liked to buy property. On March 17, 1835 he purchased the lot of land known as number (4) first-Tything Reynolds Ward, in the City of Savannah fronting on Bay Street and containing Sixty feet in front and Ninety feet in depth, more or less, from Mary Laffitte for $1250. Earlier in 1829 he had purchased lot number (2) two third Tything Reynolds Ward which fronted Reynolds Square for $6500. He also owned property outside of the City of Savannah. This article was in the Savannah Georgian on April 14, 1826 as a warning from Burroughs:

15 Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger, 28 of December 1808, p.2, c.3. MF 990225.
16 Savannah Georgian, 18 of April 1826, p.2, c.6. MF 990245.
17 GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3. Document 641.
18 GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3. Document 641.
19 Chatham County Superior Court, deed bk. 2T, 122.
20 Chatham County Superior Court, deed bk. 2P, 102.
Caution

All persons are hereby cautioned against purchasing any of the following property advertised by John H. Morel, Esq. marshall-case Bank of the U. States against Ponce+Mackenzie, say.

All the household furniture, plantation tools, horses, sheep, cattle, carriages, and c. and c. at Pleasant Valley, on the 3rd Tuesday in April; and on the first Tuesday in May next, at the Court House in Milledgeville, all the plantation and tract of land known by the name Pleasant Valley containing 597 acres, and the following Negroes:

Reuben, little George, Anthony, Quash, Hannah, Rosana, Sally, Jenny, Dick, Peggy and her child Laurence-and also George, advertised for sale the first Tuesday in May-

As the property is bona fide mine, and the law will be strictly enforced, against seller and purchaser. The Titles for this property are recorded in Hancock and also in Chatham Counties, and of which the President and director of the Branch U. States Bank in Savannah, were duly and fully aprized.21

Benjamin Burroughs

Like many southern Gentlemen of his time he also dealt in slavery. He purchased slaves from a Mr. Brown on January 20, 1835. For $3800 dollars he purchased slaves by the names of Anthony, Polly, Mary, Bash?, and her two children (Dora and an infant), Lettice, and her infant child, Maria, Adam, Ned?, Caesar, William, Hester, Milo, Cupid, Hector, and Juno.22 On January 27, he purchased a woman named Hager and her unborn child from Eliza Jewett.23

Burroughs was also fortunate enough to inherit property. This property transaction may be of some importance to anyone who is working on this particular woman. On January 14, 1828 the property of

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21 Savannah Georgian, 14 of April 1826, p.2, c.6. MF 990232.
22 Chatham County Superior Court, deed bk. 2T, 65.
23 Chatham County Superior Court, deed bk. 2P, 103.
Alexander Erick the former husband of Ruth Armour, after the death of the said Ruth was agreed to be divided between Benjamin Burroughs, Dimas Pouce, Francis H. Welman and Jane Armour being the heirs of the said Ruth Armour.\(^\text{24}\)

Burroughs took a deep interest in the welfare of his business, and involved himself in as many ventures as he could. He was Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce in 1809.\(^\text{25}\) He held stock in the Bank of Darien.\(^\text{26}\) On Monday January 5, 1818 he was elected as one of the directors of the Planter’s Bank, on the part of the Stockholders-along with twelve other men.\(^\text{27}\) He was elected again as one of the directors of the Planter’s Bank in 1819,\(^\text{28}\) 1821,\(^\text{29}\) 1822,\(^\text{30}\) and 1824.\(^\text{31}\) In 1826 he was involved in an act to incorporate a company. This company was to be called “the Mexico-Atlantic Company, of Georgia.” This company had the power to construct Canals or Railways between the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and those that flow into the Gulf of Mexico.\(^\text{32}\) This company had plans to build a canal from the Ogeechee to the Savannah River.\(^\text{33}\) In 1836 he was one of the commissioners appointed by Bulloch, Gordon, Habersham, Culer, Anderson and Lamar to open subscription books for the building of the Central Railroad. A few months later he was a delegate with John Macpherson Berrien, McAllister, Wayne, Cumming and others to a Convention at Knoxville to consider the building of a railroad from Cincinnati to some point on the South Atlantic coast.\(^\text{34}\)

Benjamin Burroughs died from a hemorrhage under the supervision of his Doctors; Burroughs, Law, and Waring, at the age of 58.\(^\text{35}\)

\(^\text{24}\) Chatham County Superior Court, deed bk, 2P, 100.
\(^\text{25}\) Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger, 9 of March 1809, p.3, c.3. MF 990225.
\(^\text{26}\) Georgian, 31 of May 1837, p.2, c.2. MF 990256.
\(^\text{27}\) Columbia Museum and Savannah Daily Gazette, 7 of January 1818, p.2, c.1. MF 990214.
\(^\text{28}\) Columbia Museum and Savannah Daily Gazette, 6 of January 1819, p.2, c.2. MF 990214.
\(^\text{29}\) Daily Georgian, 4 of January 1821, p.3, c.3. MF 990241.
\(^\text{30}\) The Georgian, 9 of January 1822, p.2, c.1. MF 990242.
\(^\text{31}\) The Georgian, 8 of January 1824, p.2, c.1. MF 990243.
\(^\text{32}\) Savannah Georgian, 17 of January 1826, p.2, c.2. MF 990232.
\(^\text{33}\) Savannah Georgian, 13 of March 1826, p.2, c.2. MF 990232.
\(^\text{34}\) GHS MSS, John Macpherson Berrien Collection, #67, Box 3, Folder 3. Document 641.
Obituary

Departed this life, on Friday April 14, 1837, in this city after a painful illness, Benjamin Burroughs Esquire, aged 58 years.

Mr. Burroughs was born at Newtown, on Long Island, on the 31st of March 1779. While yet very young he emigrated to this State, and settled in Augusta. From thence, he sometime of or removed to this city, where he has resided with little exception for upwards of thirty years. During this long period of he was distinguished in the merchant community, by the intelligence, and professionalism with which he discharged his profession: As a private citizen he was patriotic and liberal. Of his character in the domestic relations of life, in the circle in which he was delighted to dwell, the grief of his surviving relatives, is more expressive than language. To these qualities which commanded the respect of the community in which he lived, and endeared him to his friends, Mr. Burroughs superadded the character of a Christian. He was for many years an elder in the Church, of which he was a member, and found in the Gospel of the Redeemer, the light which cheered him, in his journey through life, and the strength which sustained him, in the last great struggle. It enabled him to bear with exemplary patience, the sufferings which awaited him on the bed of death; and almost in the agonies of the dying hour, with a clear and unclouded intellect and an unwavering confidence in the mercy of the Savior, to address the afflicted members of his family and to his brethren of the session, an affectionate and instructive farewell.

It is the consolation of those who loved him in life, and sympathized in his sufferings during its closing scene, that for him, Death had nothing, that over him the Grave could achieve no victory-that having faithfully fulfilled his duties here, he has been translated to the mansions of eternal bliss.38

38 Georgian, 24 of April 1837, p.2, c.6. MF 990255.
Mr. Burroughs was put to rest in Colonial Park Cemetery in section B-46.\footnote{Colonial Park Cemetery. An Alphabetical List of Persons Buried in Colonial Park (Old Burial Ground), W.P.A. official Project # 165-34-6999, 1937, p.8.}
APPENDIX 1

This was the outcome of the meeting:

The Rev. Dr. Kollock was called to the chair; and Mr. Mason requested to act as secretary.

The Chairman opened the meeting by prayer.

The following preamble and constitution, was unanimously adopted:-

The subscribers, afflicted at the situation of so many of the inhabitants of our state, who are destitute of the ordinances of religion-animated by a desire to promote the happiness of their fellow-men and the glory of the redeemer-wishing to express their gratitude to God for the many religious privileges they enjoy, by their endeavors to extend the light and the consolations of the gospel-feeling a desire to concur with the numerous missionary societies that have been formed in the Northern States, and in Europe; and thus to show that we also sympathize with those who are “perishing for lack of vision” -Do agree, to form ourselves into an association, adopting the following

Constitution-

Article 1.-This society shall be designated and known by the name of “The Savannah Missionary Society.”

Article 2.-It shall be the object of this society to send missionaries to such parts of the state of Georgia, as are destitute of the regular administration of the ordinances of religion; to aid in missions employed by Christians for the consolation of the heaven; and conscientiously to send missionaries to extend the gospel of the Redeemer.

Article 3.-The funds of this society shall be raised by annual subscriptions. Private donations and legacies will be gratefully received and faithfully appropriated.

Article 4.-Persons paying fees annually and subscribing the constitution, shall become members of the society.

Article 5.-Persons making donations or legacies to the society, may designate them for the church which shall be under the direction of the board of managers, but shall be vested in some public stock, and on no account loaned out to individuals.

Article 6.-The officers of this society shall be chosen annually by ballot.

Article 7.-The officers shall be a president, two vice presidents, treasurer, secretary, and five directors. These shall constitute the board
APPENDIX 1

... of managers, of which the president shall be chairman. A majority shall be competent to do business.

Article 8.-It shall be the duty of the president to preserve order, to state questions, to confine speakers to the subject under discussion, to give a tie busting vote in all equal divisions, and to call special meetings of the society according to the conditions here after prescribed.

Article 9.-In the absence of the president his duties shall be preformed by the first vice-president or in the absence of both the second vice-president.

Article 10.-The treasurer shall receive and take charge of all monies belonging to the society, shall appropriate them according to the direction of the board, and shall annually present an account of receipts and disbursements. No disbursement shall be made by him without an order from the board of managers, signed by their president. He shall give such security for all the monies and specialties in his hands, as shall be satisfactory to the board of managers.

Article 11.-The secretary shall keep a list of the members names, shall faithfully record all the proceedings of the society, and to transmit and receive all communications made from and to this body.

Article 12.-The board of managers shall meet on their own adjournments, and at the call of the president. To them shall be committed the management of the institution, subject to the directions of the annual meetings of the society, to which they shall always present a statement of their proceedings during the year; the missionaries employed, the beneficial effects produced, the various appropriations that have been made, and in general of all those circumstances that may be interesting to the members.

Article 13.-The missionaries may be stationed or intinerant, according to the express direction of the board, and as circumstances may require They shall exhibit each quarter to the board of managers, a faithful account of the manner in which they have discharged their duties; the number of times and the places where they have preached, the effects produced, the prospects of usefulness from missionary labors, the places to which missionaries might be sent with advantage, and all other information which they may esteem useful to the board.

Article 14.-No one shall be employed as a missionary, on any terms or for any time, who is not either known to the board of managers, or recommended by some clergyman of known respectable standing, as well qualified for performing the office and discharging the duties of a
missionary.

Article 15.-The society shall meet annually, and on its own adjournments. Twelve members shall form a quorum. On the application of four members, special meetings of the society shall be called by the president; of which meetings previous notice shall be given in the public papers.

Article 16.-The annual meeting of the society shall be held on the first Thursday in January.

Article 17.-Any member, on application made in writing, for dismissal at an annual meeting, shall be entitled to it, on paying up all arrears. Persons neglecting for three years to pay their subscriptions, shall forfeit their membership.

Article 18.-All meetings, both of the society and board of managers, shall be opened and concluded with prayer.

Article 19.-No alteration shall be made in this constitution except by the consent of two thirds of those present at an annual meeting.

The officers required by the foregoing constitution were then chosen by ballot, as follows:

Rev. Dr. H. Kollock, President.
Mr. Charles W. Carpenter, 1st Vice-President.
Mr. Benjamin Burroughs, 2nd Vice-President.
Mr. Ebenezer S. Rees, Treasurer.
Mr. L. Mason, Secretary.

Directors,
Messrs. Josiah Penfield,
John Carr,
Edward Coppee,
Nathaniel Lewis,
and John Hunter.

Family Tree

JOHN 1617-1678
born in England
came to Salem, Mass. 1637.
settled at Newtown, Long Island about 1652
married-sister of Edward Jessup
married-widow Elizabeth Reed

JOSEPH

JOHN
d. 1767
m. 1750 Margaret Renne

JOHN
d. 1755
m. 1747 Sarah Hunt

JOSEPH 1747-1820
m. 1765 to Lydia Hallett 1739-1793

Benjamin 1779-1837

William Howe-Cotton
Merchant with
Benjamin.
d. 1806
APPENDIX 2

BENJAMIN BURROUGHS CHILDREN

LYDIA 1800-02
RUTH 1801-02

JOSEPH HALLET 1803-54
HENRY KOLLOCK 1809-51
OLIVER STURGES 1814-?
WILLIAM HOWE 1805-1884

BENJAMIN 1807-54
ELIZABETH REID 1811-?
CATHERINE JANE 1816-?

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Family Genealogical Chart. The Chart was developed from family data in the book, The Annals of Newtown, by James Riker, published in 1852 and then collected by Mac H. Burroughs of Brunswick, Georgia. It was made by Robert A. Burroughs at Jackson, Florida in 1949. Chart is located in the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA. (Under Family Genealogical Charts in the bottom of the map cabinet).

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*All Microfilm listed with Newspapers are located in the Georgia Historic Society, Savannah, GA. Microfilm numbers are subject to change.