Abstract

William Fairchild Deveau was a young man whose life was cut off before he had had much of a chance to make a name for himself. It is likely he would have done so, had he lived. Born into a family of rebellion from the Crown, he watched history take place around him. This is an investigation into the life and times of William F Deveau, a young lieutenant taking part in the formative years of a young country. This paper is an account of his activities and through his own personal deeds, and those of his family.
William Fairchild Deveaux was born the son of William and Ann Gannwell Deveaux. The date of his birth is unknown at this time but, by taking the date of his father's birth, it is my own belief that with some common sense and other facts we can estimate the year in which he was born. The birth of his father occurred on Sept. 28, 1740 by adding 25 years to allow for his father to grow up and marry Ann Gannwell, and then looking at his father's will, you see that he is the third son mentioned. This will also indicated that he was the last son born to the couple. Therefore by adding at least 23 years to 1740, we start to see that William F. should have been born around 1763 for a starting date. This figure does not take into account the fact that his father also had three daughters, who are mentioned later in his will. This also does not account for the fact that in 1769, he only had two children, and in a 1769 account, he still only had 2 children while he gained ten more slaves totaling 53. His brother and sisters could add more time to the date. It is of my opinion that he was born into the earlier part of the next decade, in the 1770's. This is due to the fact that he received his commission as a lieutenant in 1793. His rank would indicate a person of a youthful age.

Like his birth, there are few concrete facts to be found about his life, but what there is, plus family information, can provide a picture that will show the life of William Fairchild Deveaux.

Unfortunately, he was not really a history maker, and only contributed to the record of early America a few times in the latter part of his life, in particular, the last five years of it, for William was to die on March 28, 1803. How he died is not known, but his death was recorded in the April 1st edition of the local
Appendix A1. This was an unfortunate time for him to die as historian since it was not until October of that year that the county started to keep death records of the individuals who were<br>the office of Vital Statistics and Records had no information on the location of his burial.<br><br>For the year of death, he was living a very active life serving his country. In 1798 he received a commission from President Washington as a Lieutenant in the 2nd Artillerist and Engineers, a branch that would serve in Fort Greene as part of the defense of the fort on Cockspur Island in the Savannah River. Fort Greene, after Nathaniel Greene, was most likely a dirt construction with very few actual structures to its credit. It is no longer in existence due to hurricane that destroyed it completely in 1804, but before it was destroyed the new Commander of the fort Capt. A. Y. 1, wrote that he would prefer a good morgue to the quarters of the commanding officer, in that the officers quarters were below that he enlisted and dirt and sand commonly fell through the floor.<br><br>It was to this fort that William was sent in December 1798, New York, as an early expedition to put the new fort in order, that the rest of the regiment could move in and take up their stations. His early command was not one of initial success, ever. It seems that on the 7th of that month, shortly after the departure of "Rendezvous in Savannah", a young man of 22 years named Morgan deserted from William's command of the Federal forces. Thus Lieutenant Mr. Deveaux was forced to place a reward for the capture of this young man. The lieutenant offered ten dollars (See Appendix B.11), which was the standard for the time. His order, having taken off to such a bad start, could only get better,
January 14th of 1800, we see in the local paper the first act of the garrison taking place under William. He gave the on Sunday the 4th of January, for the fort's 15 minute guns fired in honor of the late Chief and President George. William set off a week of mourning for the city of Savannah with his order (See Appendix D). He did, eventually, lose command when the rest of the regiment arrived. He then continued serve under Captain William Littlefield, who had originally sent to Savannah.

The rest of his service has conflicting information. In that in report history prepared by the National Park Service, it claims in September 24th of 1801, William was promoted to the rank of Lieut. At the same time, if one turns to his obituary (See Appendix A), he is given the rank of a Lieutenant. This difference in facts, ever, must at this time remain unanswered, because nothing to that either has been found. The report prepared by the Park Service gives no citation for his promotion and the paper could be, due to the fact that there is no evidence at this time that was him in Savannah, other than that the paper covered his death the 29th in the very next issue on April 1st. The paper's cover page would indicate that he died in a close proximity to Savannah, since news did not travel that fast, but there is still the difference in facts. To resolve this issue would take more time than a paper is allowed, but in a conversation with a Park ranger at Pulaski, which now stands on Cockspur Island, he suggested that facts could be resolved by locating William's Service record in A D.C., if it still exists. His military career ended on the first of 1802, when he was honorably discharged. He would
tant rice plantations, Shaftsbury, consisting of a large

of Argyle Island on which he had close to 66 slaves. He

likely named after the Earl of Shaftsbury who led a group of

ents to South Carolina. The only connection to this is that

was originally from South Carolina and might have wanted to

his plantation with the name of the Earl. He was married to an

archild, from which we get William’s middle name. (See Appendix

He was a wealthy man prior to the war, and thus, even if

an’s parents were failures as providers, he could have made up

from the wealth of his plantation. As already noted, prior to

an’s birth, his father had already acquired 38 slaves, which

definitely suggest that the Devereux’s were far from having

difficulties, since at no time would such a purchase have come

diy, and the cost of upkeep would be quite high. When the war

James sided with the Revolutionaries and was given the rank of

el. He was placed in charge of the 1st Georgia Militia. He did

die until 1785, at which time he would leave Shaftsbury to

an’s father (See Appendix F), also a William, who would die some

years later, on September 10, 1790 (See Appendix F).

His father did not serve in the war. There is no listing of him

the Georgia rosters of the war soldiers. He may have been looking

the family interests in Savannah, while his father and brother

off to fight. He would not only have been charged with looking

his own wife and children, but he had to also fend for his

her’s, father’s, and his sister’s, whose husbands had gone off to

assets and families. It seems therefore probable that it was

plant to have at least one member of the family stay out of the

and it proved to be a good idea since Savannah was captured and
As for part of the war on December 29th, 1778. Prior to the war, William's father was a representative from the district of the Georgia's, in the Parish of Christ Church.

Eventually, with the death of James Deveaux, the family land was divided with William's father receiving the plantation, while his uncle received the lands neighboring it, which had purchased from Bartholomeow Rouburthuhler (see Appendix E) and the plantation adjoining Shaftsbury. William's father, a war, tried to re-establish the plantation, but was unable as the economy being shattered after the war. Five years after inheriting, he died, leaving the land to his three sons, John, James, and William Fairchild Deveaux, on the condition that he could inherit his lands at the age of 21. The only stipulation they could do was that their mother Ann would have full use of the plantation and the house lot in the town of Beaufort. South Carolina. The sons were to divide the land into thirds once all of them had come of age. Thru them, the executors of the will were to use the lands and stock as they saw fit in order to raise money from the estate to educate his children in the best possible means, in a profession to best suit (See Appendix G). Although prior to his death, William's father had already rented the plantation. His estate wars on the 1793 tax records with a three pound tax being levied at (See Appendix H). This estate may have allowed William to try engineering, which would be a fair assumption due to his having in the 2nd Artillerist and Engineers.

Today, the remains of this grand plantation are lost in an overgrown area of grass and wild animals. Argyle Island, where the station was situated, is, today, part of the Savannah Wildlife
In a conservation with Game and Fisheries, they stated that
and no knowledge of the plantation or any area know as
the knob, on which a building was located. The Game and
Fishing Dept, which runs Argyle Island, only investigates
archaeological land which they plan to disturb and, since they have
ruins on the island, they have never had any cause to
excavate the area. In another conversation, this time with James
who, as a child, lived on Whitehall Plantation, to whose owner
Bury was later sold, recalls never having seen that there were
ruins on the island, though he often played on it and,
more, would have noticed any ruins.

William's mother had access to the use of the plantation until on
29, 1793 she signed over her claim to her son John Berners, who
by that point reached the age of 21 and who was a rightful heir
executor of the estate, and to her brother-in-law, Peter
Burr. She agreed to move to Beaufort S.C. for 100 pounds sterling
seven slaves, which belonged to the estate (See Appendix I). The
estate, being already rented out for profit, was used to raise
a but, unfortunately, we see evidence that it went to pay other
for these two partners in business (see Appendix I)

Once we turn our attention to William's uncle, we see a man who,
along the war, served as General Gates' aide. He was a very active
in the business of real estate and was often buying and renting
1. Today, in the manuscript collections of the Georgia Historical
society in Savannah, there are a great many records of his dealings.
Hill that he usually paid individuals with promissory notes plus
interest, which suggests that he was spending money he did not
illegally have in his possession. Some of these payments were made
the injunction of a court order, which is in itself suggestive.

In 1793, before he even had full control of the estate from

ster-in-law, he was already diverting the funds to pay his own

(see Appendix J). Eventually, along with William's brother,

Sennor Devaux, they would lose a court decision in 1804 which

them to sell the plantation to Mr. Gibbons who would use it

fields for his plantation, Whitehall.

In conclusion, we see, through his relatives, that his family

for the most part, a highly respected family in Savannah, with

grandfather and uncle serving as officers in the war, and his

and grandfather serving in the government of Georgia. His

were wealthy and were able to provide for him a rich and

ing life. After his father's death, there must still have

sufficient resources in the estates of his grandfather and

er to assure his acquiring a proper education for a young man in

position. His position in society is apparent from the fact of

having received a commission from President Adams as a

tenant. He most likely realized even greater prominence with hi

tion to Captain, assuming the truth of the information gathered

Pulaski. His death, occurring within one year of his leaving

Army, cut short a life that had every hope of achieving

ness, as had his ancestors before him.
Gioch, J.G. *A History of the Families of Bellinger and Deveaux*:
Morning News Print. Savannah, Ga. 1895. GHS rare books

Sudler, Allen. *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*:
4. Aug. 1738 p643, March 1769 p701

*Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser* 6/26/1798 3:3 GHS

id 4/1 1903 3:3 GHS

Attinore, Ralston. Historical Assistant National Park Service.
Fort Pulaski Library File #37

bid.

Jordan B. Smith Files, Georgia Historical Society. SV, Deveaux

*Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser* 12/14 1798 3:1

Attinore, Ralston. *Biography of a Block House*

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Kirkland, interviewed by author, Fort Pulaski, Savannah Ga, 1893

Loch J. A. History of the Families of Bellinger and Deveaux

Langer, Mary. Savannah River Plantations

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B. and R. J. Wood manuscript collection. GHS collection # 1299

Folder #106 Box 10

McCAll Mrs. Howard A. Register of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia, Vol III. Baltimore Genealogical Publishing Comp. 1969

211 Book B Chatham County Court House. p228-242, p229

Griffin B. Smith File. Georgia Historical Society

Tankley, Current, Freidel, Williams. American History

Book B CCCH p229-230

Sear, Mary. Savannah River Plantations

Book D Chatham County Court House p229-243

Digest Chatham County Ga. 1793 GHS Microfilm # X-5126-0)

Govt. and Fisheries Dept., Savannah Ga., phone call from author,

14th, 1993

Sara Oliver, interviewed by author, April 2nd, 1993 Savannah Ga.

Red Book 1L Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga.

182-429

*Anna Stites Anderson Papers*. GHS MS collection # 646 folder 440

Station 41-A-5 box 18

Call Mrs. Howard A. *Register of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia*

Anna Stites Anderson Papers. GHS MS collection 646

Red Book 1U Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga. p152

Stanger, Mary. Savannah River Plantations
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Ledger, Allen. Colonial Records of the State of Georgia. Hakkin Turner Co. 1908

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Book 11 Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga. 425-428

Book 14 Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga., p154

Game and Fisheries Dept. Savannah Ga., phone call from author, April 14th, 1993

Jordon B. Smith Files, Georgia Historical Society. SV. Deveaux

Land, Tally. interviewed by author. Fort Pulaski, Savannah Ga 1993

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Call Mrs. Howard A. Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia III. Baltimore Genealogical Publishing Comp. 1969


Dix Digest Chatham County Ga. 1793 GHS Microfilm # X-5125-01

Hayne, Stites, Anderson Papers. GHS MS collection # 846 folder 443
Location 41-A-5 box 10

End J.S. and R.J. manuscript collection, GHS collection # 1299
Folder #105 Box 10

Will Book B Chatham County Court House. p228-242, p228

Will Book D Chatham County Courthouse p229-243
It is unfortunate that more time was not available for researching and writing of this paper. The time and personal constraints involved have greatly hindered the search. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my assistance to future researchers by imparting certain information that I have uncovered.

In my search for documents and reports on William Fairchild Brewster, certain of these sources offered nothing of use or were improperly cited by others, leading me on futile searches. Some of the sources merely restate facts learned through others, and, in so doing, have repeated the same errors, rather than seeking out the information first hand and learning of the mistakes. In this way false information has been perpetuated through ignorance and idleness. One such place is in an abstract of William's father's will, which is listed under the name of DePoeux. This is easy to understand since in the will the "V" does resemble a "v", but in addition to this error is the erroneous listing of the will as being found in Will Book C of the Gohagan County Court House, which I found to be false information. Upon requesting this book, the clerk and I noticed that Will Book C covers a period before the death of William's father, and that his will would, therefore, be located in Will Book H. Another problem which I ran upon was that, on the microfilm containing William's obituary, there was a piece of tape that obscured certain words from view. (See Appendix A). Once I found the original printing of the paper at the Georgia Historical Society, I learned that all that was hidden beneath the tape was his name, William.
In my search for any living descendants, I contacted a Mr. Lee, who, before her marriage, was Sarah Morel, and a distant descendant of John Morel's brother. In our phone conversation on the 26th of May, 1993, we confirmed the marriage of William's sister, who was this same John Morel (see Appendix B). We also confirmed the correct listing of their daughter, and found her marriage and children to be accurate, as far as William's though, she had no information.

I feel that if it were possible to track down where he was married, then some further sources would undoubtedly surface. One place which would possibly prove fruitful would be South Carolina, since his mother returned there upon settling the estate with his elder brother and uncle. Since I was unable to locate any proof of her marriage to William's father here in Savannah, it is possible that they were married in Beaufort, and that this is her original home. It is, therefore, a plausible conclusion that William went to his mother's property in South Carolina upon his leaving the military.

Finally, in my local search, I made an attempt to contact Gordon B. Smith, who had done some initial work and may have been able to give me some leads on my search. He was, unfortunately, in Ireland and, upon his return on the 24th of May, we were unable to connect with one another and share information in time for us to make use of it. There is also in extant a Beaufort family file that, as of yet, I have not been able to obtain from the Curator of the Juliette Gordon Low House here in Savannah. In conclusion, I have two letters that remain unanswered as I write this. One is to the Huguenot Society, and one to the Deans of the Court of Honor. These letters request
section pertaining to William and, as of yet, I have not heard a