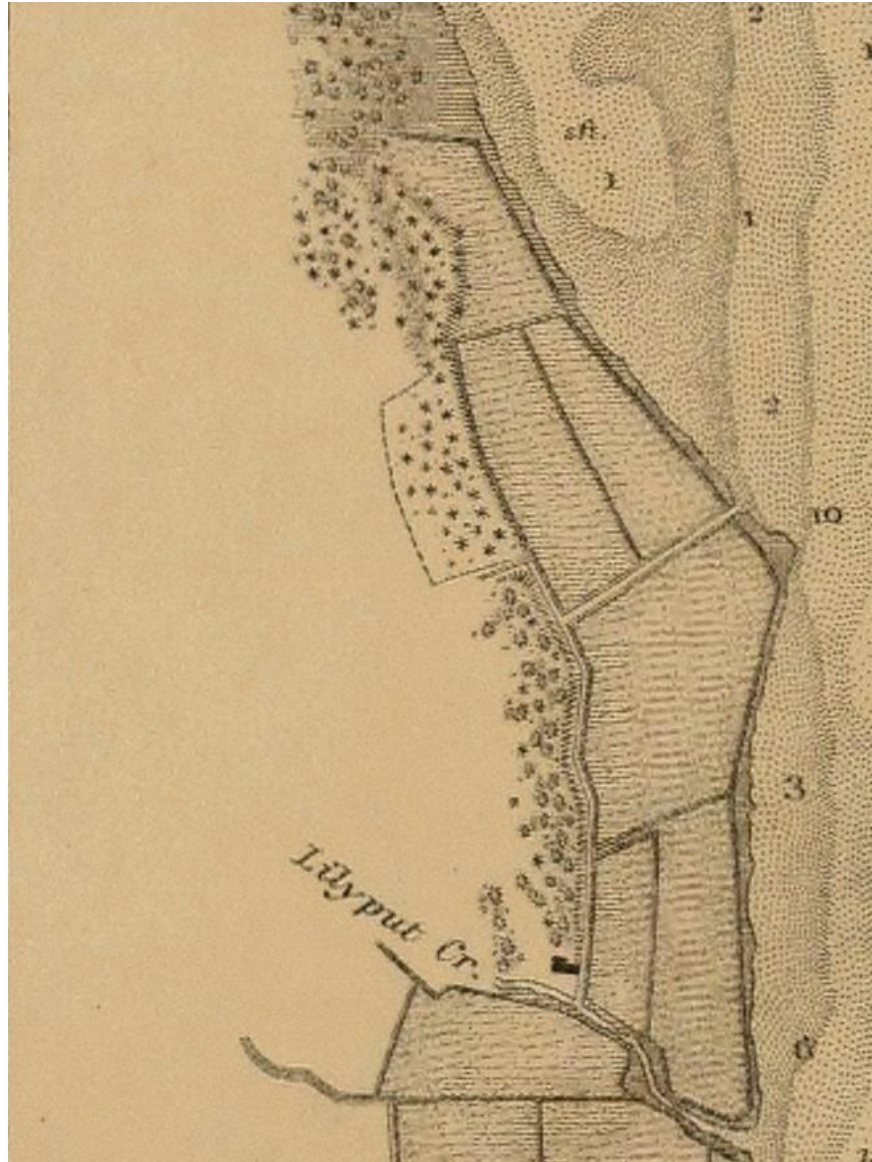


# HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF LILLIPUT PLANTATION, BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA



Cover illustration is the *Preliminary Chart of Lower Cape Fear River North Carolina From Near Federal Point to Wilmington*, 1856.

# **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF LILLIPUT PLANTATION, BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

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**CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 590**



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September 2018

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"It was a custom introduced by this prince and his ministry . . . that after the court had decreed any cruel execution, either to gratify the monarch's resentment, or the malice of a favourite, the Emperor always made a speech to his whole Council expressing his great lenity and tenderness, as qualities known and confessed by all the world. This speech was immediately published through the kingdom; nor did any thing terrify the people so much as those encomiums on his Majesty's mercy; because it was observed, that the more these praises were enlarged and insisted on, the more inhuman was the punishment, and the sufferer more innocent." — Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Part I, Chapter VII)



## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

This brief report provides a historical introduction to Lilliput Plantation on the Lower Cape Fear River. Situated north of Orton and Kendal, and south of The Oaks and Sand Hill, Lilliput was settled very early in the eighteenth century by South Carolina expatriate Eleazer Allen.

Allen, coming from Massachusetts, married into the Rhett family and slowly amassed a significant fortune. Siding with the those favoring proprietary rule, his move out of South Carolina was not quite as quick as that of the Moore family, but it did occur and by at least June 1734. There he planted corn, peas, and indigo. For reasons that are not altogether clear, by 1745 Allen had run into considerable financial difficulties, borrowing a very large sum to stay afloat from Thomas Frankland, his wife's niece's husband. Upon his death, his wife, Sarah Allen, inherited the property and she did her best to make the property profitable. At her death, Lilliput passed through a great number of hands, eventually being known as "Mackenzie's or Lilliput."

Lilliput eventually morphed into a rice plantation, and is historically often associated with Orton or Kendal. It eventually fell into the hands of James Sprunt and remains in the Sprunt family today (albeit under the name, Lilliput Interests, LLC).

These brief accounts suggest that Lilliput is every bit as significant as the previously explored Orton and Kendal plantations. In fact, in some respects it may – with investigation – prove to be even more archaeologically and historically productive.



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# Introduction

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This plantation is situated between Kendal Plantation to the south and The Oaks and Sand Hill plantations to the north along the Cape Fear River in Brunswick County, North Carolina. It was likely every bit as elaborate and costly as either Orton or Kendal (Trinkley and Hacker 2012, 2016a), but it has received far less attention. Sprunt in his *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1660-1916* may have suggested at least one reason,

The lordly residence of Chief Justice Eleazar Allen, upon the adjacent plantation of Lilliput, which was distinguished in his day for a large and liberal hospitality, has long since disappeared, but the grand old oaks which lifted their majestic branches to the soft south breezes in colonial times still sing their murmured requiem above a “boundless contiguity of shade” (Sprunt 1916:57).

It is much easier to revel in standing grand structures than in live oaks. While Lilliput was owned by some of the same families we have discussed for Kendal and Orton, and even saw its property used in support of the Orton gardens, it has largely lapsed into history.

This brief overview will provide some historical background on the plantation and illustrate its importance to the history of the lower Cape Fear.

## The Area

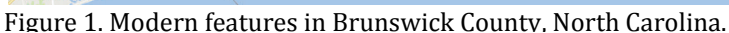
Brunswick County is located on the extreme southeastern coast of North Carolina, just above the South Carolina boarder. To the south is

the Atlantic Ocean where the mainland is separated from the Ocean by six islands of various sizes and a variety of beaches, including Bird Island, Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle (or Hales) Beach, Holden Beach, and Oak Island (which includes Caswell, Yaupon, and Long Beaches). With the exception of Bald Head Island, the coast has an east-west orientation and is partially protected by the Cape Fear. Bald Head Island (known historically as Smith Island) exhibits the remains of a series of forested dune and beach ridges separated by troughs, some of which are marshes. The wooded ridges are oriented roughly east-west, being truncated by the north-south beach on the east side of the island (more detailed information can be found in Pilkey et al. 1980).

Major inlets draining into the Atlantic include the Little River (which empties into the ocean in neighboring South Carolina), the Calabash (which empties not into the ocean, but rather into Little River), the Shallotte River, Lockwoods Folly River, Dutchman Creek, and the Cape Fear River.

The east side of Brunswick County is defined by the Cape Fear River. While there are a number of islands in the river, the largest is Eagle Island; the Cape Fear flows on its east side, while on the west is the shallow Brunswick River. At Wilmington, just above Eagle Island, the Cape Fear separates into two branches – the northeast (flowing into New Hanover County) and the northwest, which continues to mark the boundary of Brunswick with New Hanover, Pender, and Bladen counties.

Between the towns of Delco and Sandy Creek a line separating Brunswick from Columbus County to the west strikes off, running through Green Swamp. The border then follows Juniper Creek to the Waccamaw River about eight miles



The County achieved its current form by 1877 with annexation of a small area of Brunswick into Columbus County.

While much of the county consists of sandy soils, many of which are droughty, about a fifth of the soils are wet, often flooding. Only about 20% are identified as having few agricultural crop limitations (i.e., they possess a Land Capability classification of II or better). The U.S. Department of Agriculture classifies only 13.8% of the acreage in Brunswick County, mainly in the south-central, western, and northeastern parts of the county, as prime farmland. In contrast, about 78% of the county is covered by forests, typically pines.

Geologically, the Wicomico surface, ranging between 75 and 45 feet above mean sea level (AMSL), covers about a third of the County.



The Talbot surface covers more than half of the County and ranges from 45 to 25 feet in elevation. The Pamlico surface covers a narrow strip of mainland near the ocean and Cape Fear River and also covers the floodplain of the Waccamaw River. It ranges from 25 feet AMSL to sea level.

A geological characteristic of the County is the presence of sinkholes. These are naturally occurring, roughly circular depressions in the land surface, formed most commonly in areas of limestone bedrock, which readily dissolves in the presence of slightly acidic groundwater. In areas of humid climate, rain water percolates downward through the soil cover into openings in the limestone bedrock, gradually dissolving the rock matrix. Void spaces in the subsurface will eventually form, ranging from microscopic to cavern size.

In most areas of the County, limestone bedrock is not directly exposed at the surface, but is covered by a variable thickness of sand, silt, and clay. This overburden may bridge subsurface cavities for long periods of time. Eventually a catastrophic collapse of the overburden into the subsurface cavity may occur, and a sinkhole is formed. This type of sinkhole is known as a cover collapse sinkhole. Most of these sinkholes are located in the southeastern portion of the County east of Boiling Spring Lakes.

Topographically, one of most obvious features of Brunswick County is Green Swamp, a roughly circular area of about 175,000 acres in the north central part of the County. Green Swamp accounts for the largest undissected interstream area in the County and the largest area of muck soils. The poor drainage has resulted in an accumulated organic surface layer of variable thickness. In many areas these deposits have obliterated landscape features such as Carolina bays, as well as the upper parts of many drainages. The east side is drained by the Cape Fear River, the west side by the Waccamaw River, and the south side drains to the Atlantic Ocean.

The main waterways in Brunswick County

are wide and shallow and those near the ocean are affected by tides. A short distance inland, the streams become narrow with broad interstream areas.

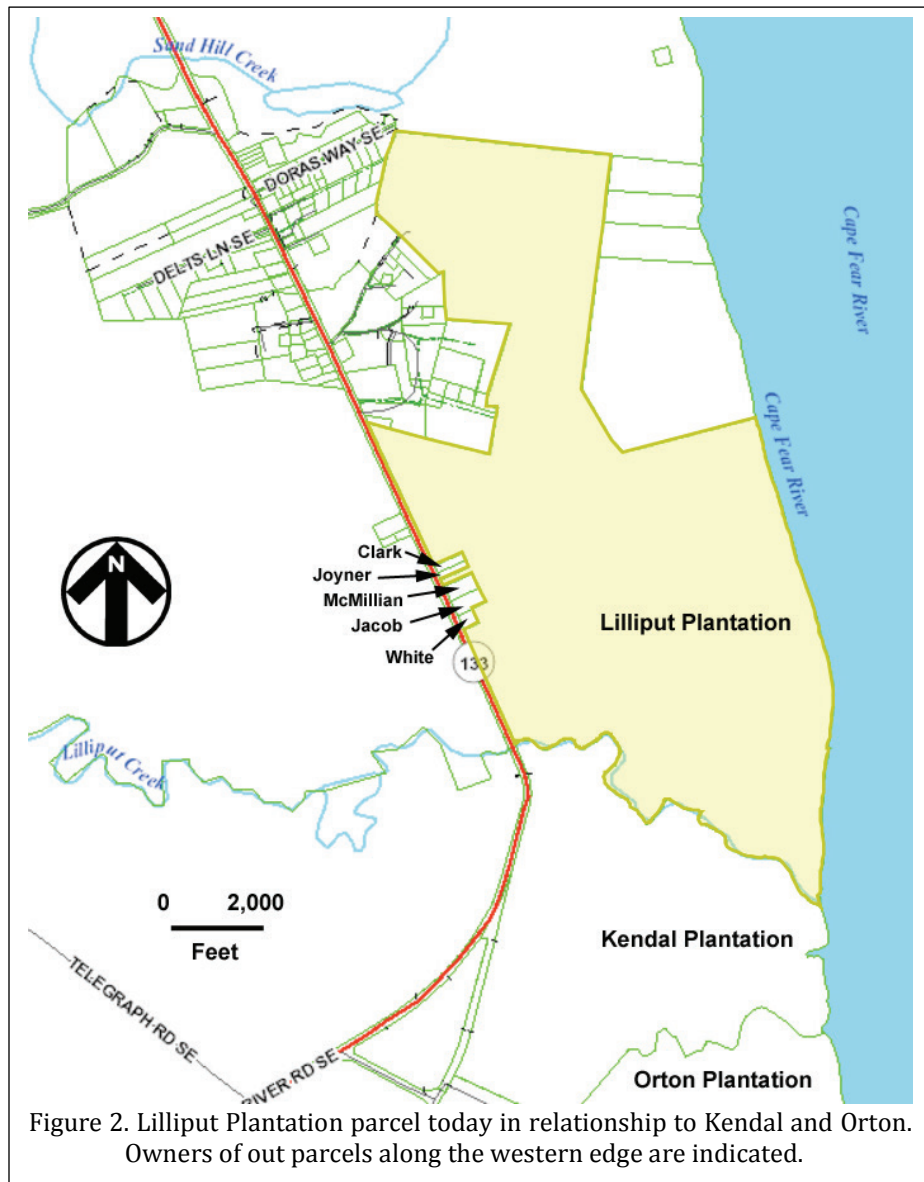
On the east side of the County, the Cape Fear drainage contains many of the previously discussed sinkholes. Much of the southeastern part of this area is undulating sand, and the rest is smooth or has convex slopes near drainageways. Much of the Cape Fear is tidal, with a substantial inflow of fresh water from upstream. Water salinity, at various locations and various depths, ranges from a few parts per thousand to almost the concentration of the ocean.

Exploring the soils on the Lilliput tract, nearly two-fifths are the frequently flooded Bohicket silty clay loams of the marsh. These soils formed the original rice fields of the plantation. The most common upland soils are the Blanton fine sands. These are the moderately well drained soils that composed most of the agricultural fields of the plantation. Nearly as common, however, are the Baymeade fine sands. These are well-drained sandy soils. The poorly drained Dorovan, Muckalee, and Woodington soils tend to be found in relatively small area and account for less than 5% of the acreage. Lilliput seems to have been well suited for subsistence or even many cash crops.

The rising sea level and navigation improvements such as dredging have resulted in increases in salinity farther upstream, and changes in the nature of swampy areas along the river. These changes may in particular affect Town Creek and Rice's Creek, with stands of centuries-old cypress on their banks.

The Lower Cape Fear River is a nursery and habitat for several hundred species of fish. Among the most abundant are Atlantic menhaden, Atlantic croaker, spot, star drum, penaeid shrimp, mullet, weakfish, bay anchovies, killfish, silversides, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, striped bass, and Atlantic sturgeon.

Historical records show that the natural



depth at the mouth of the Cape Fear River in colonial times was about 10 feet. Beginning in the nineteenth century, a succession of dredging projects created a channel 42 feet deep and 500 feet wide. The result is an extreme example of disturbing the natural state of equilibrium of beaches and inlet, creating an artificial situation that can only be sustained by constant dredging and beach nourishment.

On the west side of the County is the

Waccamaw River. It is dissected by shallow tributary streams and has broad interstream areas of poorly drained to moderately well drained soils. Numerous Carolina bays and low parallel sand ridges are found in this area.

There are at least eleven plant communities characterizing Brunswick County's aquatic, wetland, and terrestrial areas. The aquatic communities include those found in freshwater ponds, such as Orton Pond, and those found in riverine and estuarine areas. The latter areas have been extensively degraded by development, although at one-time Eagle Island possessed a wide variety of characteristic species.

The wetland habitat can be divided into five vegetative types, although the bay forest and lowland pine communities are the most common. The bay forest, found on broad, flat interfluvies, is best

represented by Green Swamp. There the dominant vegetation is red maple, Atlantic white cedar, loblolly pine, sweet bay, red bay, pond pine, swamp black gum, and pond cypress. The community is largely maintained by frequent fires.

The lowland pine community, often also called the flatwoods, cover a large percentage of Brunswick County and much of the surrounding region. They are typically found on low marine

ridge and swale areas, Pleistocene backbarrier flats, and other broad interfluves. They were historically maintained by natural conditions, most importantly frequent, “uninterrupted” fires. The dominant canopy was historically longleaf pine, while the understory was essentially a function of fire frequency. These flatwoods have largely been converted to other forest types so that few natural areas remain today.

The terrestrial plant communities include barrier island beach communities, the maritime forest communities found as climax communities on stabilized dune areas, Pleistocene sand ridge communities often recognized by mixed pine/oak and wiregrass, and the upland hardwood communities of mixed oaks and hickories.

Brunswick County is hot and humid in summer, but sea breezes frequently cool the coast. Winter is cool with occasional brief cold spells. Rain falls throughout the year and is fairly heavy. Annual precipitation is adequate for all crops, with about 32-inches falling between April and September during the growing season. Every few years a hurricane crosses the area.

These environmental conditions affected the history of the area. Extensive drainage efforts were necessary for cotton, but naval store production was ideally suited to the region. This, in turn gave rise to what has become known as industrial slavery. The fish in the Cape Fear eventually resulted in a thriving African American fishing community in Southport (earlier Smithville).

## Lilliput Today

The Lilliput tract today is known as TMS 1440000108 and is 656.86 acres roughly bounded by the Cape Fear River to the east, Lilliput Creek (occasionally in the past called Allen’s, Kendal, or McKenzie creek) on the south, west by NC 133, and various tracts on the north and northeast (Figure 2). Some of the largest surrounding parcels to the north, west, and south are owned by Orton Plantation Holdings. The Lilliput property, however, is owned by Lilliput Interests, a limited

liability company registered in the State of North Carolina, with Samuel Nash Sprunt, Jr. as the manager.

Remnant rice fields are found along the Cape Fear River and Lilliput Creek, with about 15 acres of inland rice field. There are numerous remnant dikes from highland out to Lilliput Creek, as well as several extant canals. There is also a 2-acre field in the property where daffodils can still be seen and a 0.25-acre clearing where several still standing tenant houses are found. Otherwise, the tract is heavily wooded in mixed hardwoods and pines (Figure 3).

NC 133 tends to run along a slight ridge and consequently elevations in the western portion of Lilliput are about 26 feet above mean sea level (AMSL). Topography tends to slope toward the Cape Fear River, but over much of the parcel, areas approaching 22 feet AMSL are common. The peninsula stretching south along the Cape Fear and toward Lilliput Creek also contains high ground, generally about 22 feet AMSL. It was on this high ground next to the cooling breezes off the river that all of the plantation houses in the area were built, including not only Lilliput, but also Kendal and Orton. In addition, this allowed the plantation owner to be in proximity to his rice crop, as well as the processing and shipping facilities that relied on water. While there was always road access and often-impressive oak avenues, this land access always arrived at the rear of the plantation. Thus, a final reason often mentioned, is that by building on the river edge, the early planters were able to make a strong statement about their power, wealth, and prestige to all those traveling on the river.

There are a series of small marsh “islands” with elevations of about 2 feet AMSL between the high land and the current Cape Fear River. These are the remnants of the dikes intended to protect the rice fields from flooding by the river. Their diminished and intermittent form today testify to their ultimate failure and the power of the river. The rice fields themselves are about 2 feet below mean sea level.



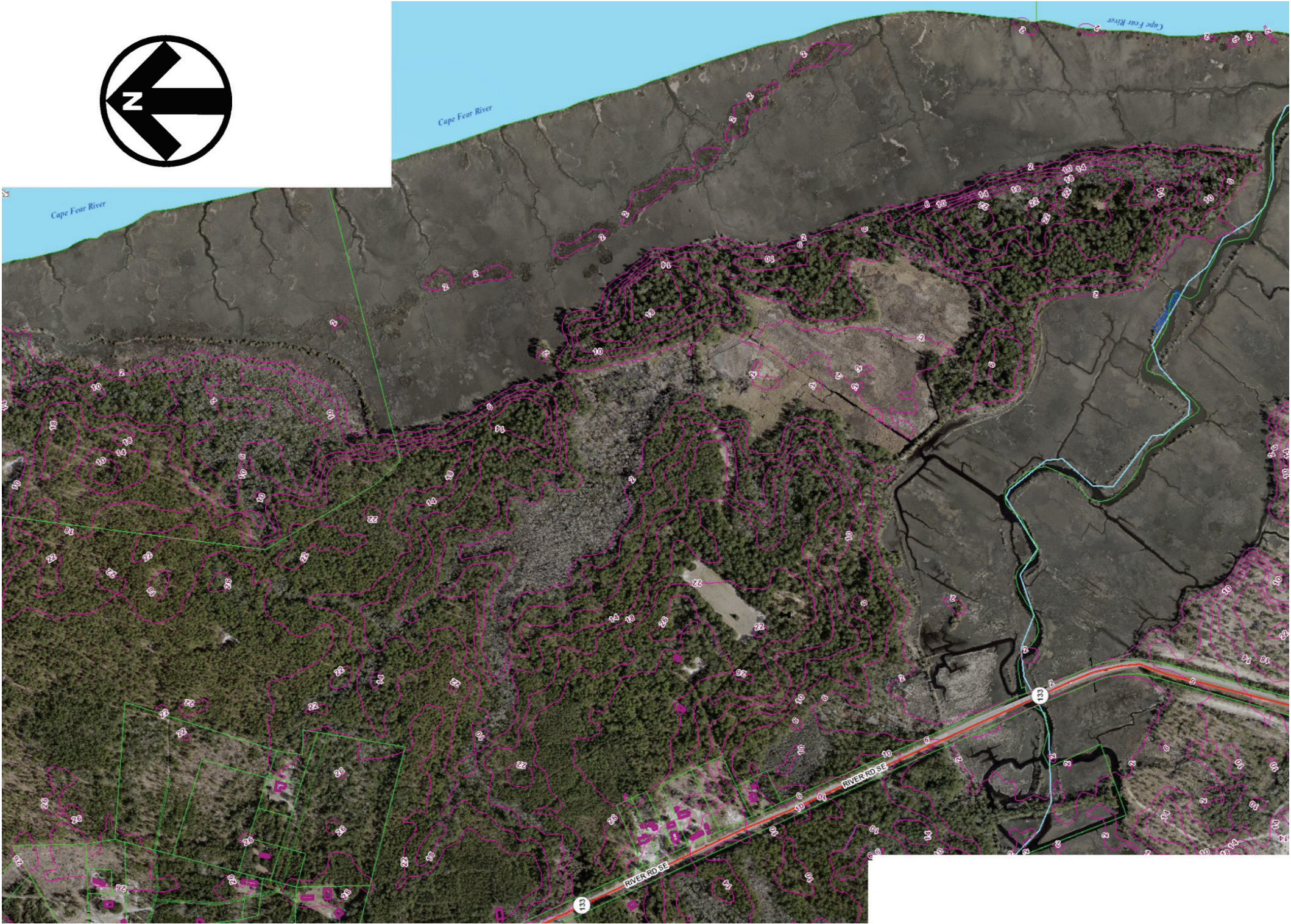


Figure 3. Aerial of Lilliput Plantation showing current vegetation and contour lines (courtesy Brunswick County, NC GIS).





Figure 4. A 1959 aerial showing the vegetation of Lilliput. Remnant dikes along the Cape Fear are visible, as is their loss along the southern section. Interior dikes along Lilliput Creek are in better condition. Fields and their canals are distinct.

The vegetation on Lilliput has not substantially changed since at least 1993. But if we go back to the 1950s, the rice fields, their dikes, and the canals are far more pronounced, and there is perhaps four-times the area in cleared fields (Figure 4). The remnant dike, significantly eroded with the newly developed riverside marsh can be seen even more clearly than today.



# History

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## The Beginning

North Carolina's English settlement begins with the explorations of William Hilton in 1662 for Massachusetts Bay colonists who formed a company, "Adventurers about Cape Fayre" and who subsequently attempted to establish a settlement there in 1663 (Lee 1965:29). Lee explains that within a few months these settlers made a hasty departure, leaving behind their cattle and swine. He remarks, "why they left is not known definitely, but some seventy years later a writer explained that they had been driven away by the local Indians" (Lee 1968:14).

Hilton's explorations led John Vassall of Barbados to finance and lead a group of settlers to the Lower Cape Fear where they established Charles Town, 20 miles upstream on the west bank of the Cape Fear, in the vicinity of Indian River in 1664. The settlement grew to about 800, but was crippled by Vassall's failed negotiations with the Lords Proprietors (the settlement was made prior to any final agreement with them regarding the terms). When the Proprietors chose Vassall's rival, John Yeamans, as governor, Yeamans began an active campaign against the Cape Fear settlement. That, coupled with difficulties with the local Indians, caused settlers to leave the area and by the end of 1667 the site was deserted (Anonymous 2010:1-2). Wood recounts that this string of failures was the result of Indian hostilities coupled with the lack of support from England. Moreover, the two failed expeditions ruined the reputation of the Cape Fear region for years to come (Wood 2004:46).

South Carolina's Maurice Moore participated in the 1712 Tuscarora campaign with his brother, James Moore, Jr. He apparently chose

to stay in the Albemarle area at the conclusion of hostilities, marrying Elizabeth, the daughter of Alexander Lillington and widow of Samuel Swann. This marriage solidified his connections with Edward Mosely and John Porter, who were also married into the Lillington family (Lee 1965:91). By the 1720s, it appears that he was in the Cape Fear area, owning a plantation on Old Town Creek near the failed 1665 settlement (Gregg 1975:189).

In 1724-1725 North Carolina's new proprietary governor, George Burrington, spent the winter exploring the Cape Fear region in an effort to create a development plan. In 1725, he began issuing grants to almost 9,000 acres in the Cape Fear area. Since this was in violation of the proprietor's wishes, his warrants could be held until the proprietors stated the terms for the conveyance. Holders might then accept the terms or abandon the land, but in the meantime, they could occupy the tracts (Lee 1965:93).

Coupled with Burrington's willingness to overlook Proprietary rules, South Carolinians were having trouble getting land in their own colony. Some of these went to the Cape Fear and found they "like[d] it pretty well" (quoted in Wood 2004:17). During this period, South Carolina faced a severe depression and taxes were raised steeply to generate money for the government. There is compelling evidence that many in South Carolina left for the Cape Fear to avoid the taxes and strong central control of the colony's government in Charleston. In the Cape Fear they found a far weaker and less centralized government with no or lower taxes (Wood 2004:20).

Of course, many in South Carolina also claimed that the Cape Fear provided a refuge for debtors, with North Carolina helping them defraud their creditors (Wood 2004:19). This view was

summarized by Thomas Lowndes when he wrote the Board of Trade in 1724, "North Carolina which ever since t'was a separate Government has only been a Receptacle for Pyrates Thieves and Vagabonds of all sorts" (quoted in Wood 2004:21).

Much of the land disposed of by Burrington went to a powerful group of settlers joined by blood and marriage. This group became known as "The Family" and included Maurice, Roger, James, and Nathaniel Moore of South Carolina, along with the North Carolina families of Allen, Porter, Moseley, and Swann, all joined by marriage (Lee 1952:230, Powell 2006, Wood 2004:18).

There is no doubt that these South Carolina migrants played a disproportionate role in the region's development. Through the maneuvering of the Moore family and Governor Burrington, many of the South Carolinians managed to acquire enormous land grants. Roger Moore owned more slaves and acquired more land in the Lower Cape Fear than any other individual in the region prior to the American Revolution. Eight former South Carolina residents documented by Wood, who patented land in the region prior to 1730, expanded their patents to include more than 91,000 acres (Wood 2004:18). Lee noted that by 1731, there were 28 patentees in the Lower Cape Fear; at least half of them were related to the Moore family and they held nearly 80% of the land (Merrens 1964:27).

Nevertheless, only 24 of the 150 traceable ties to original locales lead to South Carolina during the first 15 years of settlement. During this same period 22 people came from northeastern North Carolina, 14 came from the middle colonies, 18 came from Scotland and Ireland, and an additional 20 came directly from England. Those linked to South Carolina, however, did own more slaves than those from other locations. Wood notes that while the other groups never seemed to be quite as prominent as the Moores were, the others "offered the region alternative expectations and visions of success" (Wood 2004:19-21).

## Eleazer and Sarah Allen

Born in Massachusetts about 1692, Eleazer was the son of Daniel Allen and Maryann Bendall. In 1717, when he was about 25 years old, he immigrated to South Carolina (Price 1979). Just four years later he married Sarah Rhett, the daughter of William and Sarah Rhett and from then on, his wealth and prestige was inexorably linked to the Rhett family (Edgar and Bailey 1977:32).

The 1719 demise of Proprietary rule in South Carolina was resisted by Allen's father-in-law, William Rhett, as well as a variety of others, including Nicholas Trott, William Rhett, Jr., and Roger Moore (Edgar and Bailey 1977:32). Nevertheless, in 1725, both Allen and William Rhett, Jr. were elected to the Second Royal Assembly from St. Philip and Roger Moore was elected from St. James Goose Creek. By 1727 (the 13<sup>th</sup> Session), Allen was elected Clerk of the House, a position he held off and on until the end of 1732.

On the business side, Allen and William Rhett, Jr. formed a partnership with Thomas and Jacob Satur of Dorchester for trade in that interior area (S.C. Department of Archives and History, Conveyance Books, Vol. E, pg. 125).

Edgar and Bailey note that Allen and others did not reject their proprietary roots and "found a more sympathetic ear in North Carolina where the province remained loyal to the Lords Proprietors" (Edgar and Bailey 1977:33).

This does not mean, however, that he abruptly uprooted from South Carolina and moved to the Cape Fear. Allen's first blank patent appears to have been given on November 16, 1725 (N.C. Department of Archives Shuck 168, Book 9, pg. 84), identified as 640 acres "at Cape Fair River" with additional grants to follow. Sprunt (1896:55) believes that the blank patent leading to Lilliput was dated November 6, 1725 (cf. Colonial Records and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 6, pg. 317-318; Sprunt, however, incorrectly identified Allen as a Charleston native and also erred in his death date, so the information is suspect).



Nevertheless, Allen found it difficult to establish himself in North Carolina because of his continued ties to the southern colony. Governor George Burrington reported in 1731 that while Allen was recommended for a position on the Council, “but he is not an Inhabitant in North Carolina, lives in South Carolina where he is Clerk to the Assembly therefore ought not in my opinion be in the Council here” (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 3, pg. 209). This seems supported by Edgar and Bailey, who recount a variety of documents indicating that Allen was actively engaged in Charleston business activities during this period (Edgar and Bailey 1977:33). This problem seems to have resolved itself by 1733 since Burrington reported, “I hear he [Allen] designs speedily to settle on his Estate in this Country” (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 3, pg.435). This is in spite of Allen that same year, issuing a bond in Charleston regarding the South Carolina interests of Admiral George Anson (Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, Staffordshire County Records Office D615/PS/4/4).

We know, however, that regardless of his South Carolina activities, Allen must have been working diligently to create his estate on the Cape Fear River, which he called Lilliput – as Wood observed, “an obvious reference to Jonathan Swift’s famed satire *Gulliver’s Travels*,” published in 1726 (Wood 2002:82).

In the middle of June, 1734, a visitor to Roger Moore’s brick house at Kendal observed that Moore had a “Prospect” not only of the Town of Brunswick, but also “of another beautiful Brick House, a building about half a Mile from him, belonging to *Eleaver* [sic] *Allen*, Esq.” (Anonymous 1737:43).

In addition, we know that in March 1735 the commissioners to establish the boundary between North and South Carolina met at Allen’s home on Cape Fear (Connor 1919:245). As his interests in South Carolina waned, he began playing a far more active role in North Carolina. He was named a justice of the peace for New Hanover

(1734, 1736, 1739, 1740, and 1744), an assistant judge of the Court of Oyer and Terminer (1735), Receiver General (1735), and as previously mentioned, a member of the boundary commission. He became Public Treasurer of North Carolina in 1749 and remained on the Council until his death in 1750.

Just as Roger Moore’s father, James, ran into problems handling money as Receiver General in South Carolina (ultimately owing the proprietors £2,300 as a result of comingling monies, driving him into insolvency), Allen was accused of essentially the same offence in 1742 – which he strongly denied (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 4, pg.762-763).

It is interesting that in 1745, Allen placed the following advertisement in a Charleston newspaper,

To be sold, a Plantation on *Cape Fear* River, within 3 Miles of *Brunswick*, containing 640 Acres of Land, with a very good brick Dwelling House upon it, fronting the River, about 140 Acres of hard Marsh about it very easily improv’d, with a good Stock of Cattle. As also another Tract of 640 Acres adjoining, this at the Quit Rent of 4s. per 100, the former at 6d. by *Eleazer Allen* (*The South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, February 25, 1745, pg. 2).

The property was not sold, but in May of that year, Eleazer Allen apparently took out a substantial mortgage on his property from Thomas Frankland, based on Sarah Allen’s renunciation of her marriage rights to the property (S.C. Department of Archives and History, Renunciation of Dower Books, 1743, pg. 104).

Whether Allen’s financial distress was the result of poor management at his plantation or perhaps were related to his duties as Receiver

General cannot be determined. We do know, however, that Eleazer Allen died on his plantation in January 1750. At the time of his death, it is reported that he owned 1,285 acres of land and 55 enslaved Africans, sizable holdings of silver and china, as well as an extraordinary library with books ranging from classics to surveying to philosophy (Powell 1979; Wood 2002:83).

Allen's will, written in 1742, perhaps before his economic problems, ordered that his debts be "Satisfied out of my Estate" and that "rest & residue . . . both real and personal" should go to his "dear & well beloved wife Sarah Allen" (Grimes 1912:8-9). Allen fails to mention the mortgage held by Frankland.

The inventory of Eleazer Allen's goods at his death provide an exceptional opportunity to understand how he and his wife lived in the first half of the eighteenth century. This inventory is reproduced here as Table 1 in the same order as found in the original document.

At his death, Allen possessed 50 enslaved African Americans.

The inventory reveals that Allen was raising horses, cattle, and hogs, but he might have especially proud of his inventory of 90 sheep. While most are simply listed as "sheep," there are others identified as "Holland," "narrow crown Holland," "Douglas," "Pillow Beard," and "Gaelic." Only the last is still recognized today; the Galician sheep are relatively small in stature, with a coat that is either all black or all white. They are valued for meat and milk production.

That at least some wool was produced is likely indicated by the presence of a "great spinning wheel" in the inventory.

Crops being raised included both rice (evidenced by the rice scythes, rice mortars, and wind fan) and indigo (evidenced by the indigo knives and bars of indigo present on the plantation). Associated with both were his two sets of cooper's tools.

Allen was also owned some watercraft. A "large canoe" is inventoried, along with items such as "some cypress plank," "jute," and "oakum." He also owned several books on navigation, as well as Hardington's *The Accomplished Shipwright and Mariner* (1706), as well as several books on navigation.

Evidencing his participation in establishing the boundary between South and North Carolina was "a compleat set of surveying instruments," as well as the book *Country Surveying*.

Like all gentlemen of the period, his interests included gardening ("1 pr. pruning shears," as well as the books Miller's *Gardening Dictionary* (1731), *History of Gardening*, and Evelyn's *The Compleat Gardener* (1693)). This extended into commercial pursuits, based on his copy of *Pocket Farmer*, and Bradley's *Treatise on Husbandry and Gardening* (1721); and especially his desire to ensure that he was recognized as a true Englishman, reading Rapin's *History of England* (1743), books on the peerage of England, Defoe's satirical poem *The True Born Englishman* (1701), as well as a variety of other histories.

His books reflect the eighteenth century intellectual, with classics from Milton, Ovid, Bocace, Virgil, Seneca, and Shakespeare; abundant books of all descriptions on religion, including those dealing with "popery," Presbyterians, Quakers, and of course, the Church of England; and a wide variety of legal books, including Hill's *Young Clerk's Guide* (1649), Nelson's *The Rights of the Clergy* (1709), *A Treatise of Common Law*, Jacob's *The Compleat Attorney's Practice in English* (1737), Mallory's *The Attorney's Pocket Companion* (1741), Pearce's *Compleat Justice of Peace*, and Swinburne's *Treatise on Spousals* (1686).

Allen not only had a two-volume copy of *Gulliver's Travels*, but also Swifts *Tale of a Tub* (1704) which many consider his best, and most difficult satire.

Wood explores the James Murray papers

HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF LILLIPUT PLANTATION

Table 1.  
Inventory of Eleazer Allen  
(N.C. Department of Archives, Secretary of State, Probate Records, Series XIX, Vol. 34, pp. 52-58, S.108.239)

plate tea kettle	1 cotton quilt
plate coffee pot	3 gauze musterler [mixed gray woolen cloth]
large waiter [tray]	4 bolsters [pads]
2 small waiter	China
1 tankard	3 pr of coloured dishes
2 small mugs	3 pr of blue & white dishes
3 casters [vessel with perforated top for condiments]	1 doz of soop plates [soup]
pepper box	1 doz of platt plates [platter]
small strainer, teapot	11 platt plates [platter]
3 punch ladles	11 platt plates [platter]
extinguisher [conical cap of candle snuffer]	9 gilt dishes
small pool to put fish in at cards	5 blue & white soop plates [soup]
sauce pan	1 large gilt gallon punch bowl
milk pot	2 small gilt punch bowls
2 pr tea tongs	2 old bue & white punch bowls
large soup spoon	4 small bowls
11 table spoons	1 doz of wash hand bowls for the table
17 tea spoons	4 small china bowls
marrow spoon	5 quart mugs
Negroes 32 tithables	1 pint mug
Negroes 18 younger	pr tea pots
2 chaise horses	1 doz of breakfast cup & saucers
2 saddle horses	2 doz afternoon cup & saucers
2 cart horses	6 old cups & saucers
horses & cattle at Lilliput	10 coffee cups
75 head cattle at Springfield	5 chocolate cups
36 cows Hereford & yearlings	18 half pint chocolate cups
17 steers	6 saucers for butter
8 calves	4 tart pans
Hoggs: 5 sows & 7 shoats	3 sugar dishes
Sheep: 58 sheep & lambs	9 pr flower-potts
4 pr Holland sheep	antique china ginger jars - Lisner pottery
5 pr Doulas sheep	Glass
1 pr narrow crown Holland sheep	3 decanters
1 pr Gaelic sheep	3 pr cruets small glass bottle with stopper, eg. Vineger]
5 pr Pillow Beard sheep	3 pr salts
6 large fixed table cloths	1 doz of whip sillibub glasses
5 large Huckaback table cloths [specific weaving pattern]	6 jelly glasses
3 middling sized tables cloths	1 doz tumblers
4 Breakfast small table cloths	1 doz wine glasses
2 old Damask table cloths	1 pr glass lights
2 dozen tea napkins almost new	2 pr & 1 odd candlesticks
9 bird eyed napkins half worn	8 ale glasses
7 old Damask napkins	3 glass lanthorns [lanterns]
8 small Huckaback napkins	spy glass
18 Huckaback towels new & old	3 peer [opera] glasses
2 Huckaback Walleter [valet or bag]	3 swinging dressing glasses
4 Indigo sheets	2 (ordinary) hanging glasses
1 cotton counterpin [counterpane; coverlette or quilt]	sixty one dozen bottles
Bedding, etc.	2 large 3 gal jugs
4 bedsteads	Earthen Ware
4 cots to put beds upon	8 wash hand basons
3 suits of cutrains one new and 2 old	1 barber bason
4 beds & 4 mattresses	5 small brown bowls
2 small mattresses	5 small pottery pans
5 pr blankets	8 chamber-potts
4 pr pillows	1 large & 1 small marble mortar
6 bed quilts	7 tea-potts
2 cotton counterpen [counterpane; coverlette or quilt]	1 white coffee Pott
1 cotton counterpen [counterpane; coverlette or quilt]	7 brown & 2 white mugs

## HISTORY

Table 1.  
Inventory of Eleazer Allen, cont.

3 blue & white mugs	3 pr bellows
2 blue & white jugs	1 pepper mill
2 small [ ] cups	1 pot
2 mustard pots	1 large pestle to grind chocolate
3 sugar dishes	4 pr brass candlesticks
2 milk pots	3 pr snuffers
2 sauce boats	2 sets physician scales and weights
30 large & small butter plates	2 sets scales and weights for silver
29 milk pans	1 set scale and weights for gold
18 plates & 6 dishes	2 pr scale and weights for house, etc.
<b>Pewter</b>	1 complete set of surveying instruments
2 doz plates quite new	1 tin funnel
5 small dishes new	1 trivet
17 dishes of various sizes	<b>Table Chairs</b>
3 doz plates	1 large oak & 1 cedar table
6 water plates	1 square mahogany table
1 tureen	2 small round tables
3 basons	1 tea, 1 dressing & 2 card tables
4 dish covers	1 marble & 1 Dutch tables
2 cullenders	5 sundry small oak tables
2 funnels	1 round large oak table
2 crains	1 square tea table
1 bed pan	2 doz old cain [cane] chairs
1 gallon, ½ gal & pint pot	15 leath [woven] cotton chairs
26 candle molds	1 easy chair
<b>Utensils in Brass, Iron &amp; Tin or Copper</b>	1 joint stool
2 large gritters [griddles]	2 close stools with pewter panes to them
4 small gritters [griddles]	4 desks 2 good & 2 old
4 pots	1 chest of drawers
2 pots with hooks and hangers	1 walnut clothes chest
3 sauce pans	1 white chest
2 skillets	2 hair trunks
2 stew pans	3 gilt & 5 black leather trunks
3 frying pans	3 small gilt trunks
1 gridiron	1 doz lignum vitae [ <i>Guaiacum</i> sp.] egg crates
1 dripping pan	1 large & 1 small tea box
2 chocolate pots	1 Japan waiter
2 mortars	3 mahogany waiters
1 flesh fork	1 dum [African] mahogany waiter
2 spittoons	2 corner cupboards
Crains & hangers	1 pr wood screens
Lint [ ] and	1 pr old wood screens covered osnaburg cloth
1 flour & 2 pepper boxes	2 pails
4 tea trivet	2 piggins
1 tin dish	2 churns
dish covers	7 coolers
1 tin kettle	2 wash
1 coffee mortar	2 tubs
13 mince pye pans	2 bowls
1 brass plate warmer	1 chaise
1 knife basket	3 hens saddles [protective cover for chickens]
2 [ ] tin boxes	2 pr pistols
24 cannisters	5 guns
1 brass tea kettle	2 womens saddles
1 lamp	3 portmanteaus [large traveling bags]
1 small chafing dish	1 male pillion [pillion-mail, a valise suitable for carrying on a pillion]
1 pr [ ]	1 press for linen
6 pr iron dogs	1 large canoe
6 pr tongs	<b>Pictures &amp; Maps</b>
3 fire shovels	6 maps in frames

Table 1.  
Inventory of Eleazer Allen, cont.

6 fruit, fish & flower pieces	The Accomplished Shipwright
6 pieces Alexanders Battles The Harlot's Progress [art prints]	Rembys Miscellany
6 other small pieces	<b>Vol Small Quartos &amp; Octovas</b>
9 ordinary maps & prints	Rapin's History of England
family pictures not set down	5 vol Eckard's Roman History
<b>Plantation Tools</b>	4 vol Rawleigh's History [of the World]
1 grind mon	Salmon's Modern History
3 corn mills	2nd vol. of Rapins History of England
10 spades	History of the Islands
1 set of rice mortars & wind fan	History of Gardening
1 ox cart and anything belonging to it	Suetonius' Roman History
horse cart implements	3 Bibles
1 plow	3 Common Prayers
9 rice [sickles]	Beveridge's Private Thoughts [Upon Religion]
10 indigo knives	Modernation of the Church of England
8 indigo bars	Markley's Apology
5 bars iron [ ]	Tilly's Sermons
[ ] hoes	Chaucy Upon Religion
18 axes	Popery Truly Stated
12 baskets	2 Sherlock [Practical Discourse] Upon Death
2 sets coopers tools	Discourse Upon the Sacrement
1 hand & 1 crosscut saw	A Book for the Ages
1 whip saw	The Family Instructed
1 pr pruning shears	Government of the Tongue
2 barrels	Collection of Psalms
1 parcel of jute	Human Prudence
1 parcel of oakum	No Cross No Crown
some cypress plank	Marcus Antoninus
1 great spinning wheel	Devine Companion
<b>A Catalogue of the Books thick folios Vols by Chamber</b>	The Rights of the Clergy
4 State Tryals	Boyd's [ ]rphick
2 Harrisons Travels	Love Devine
Taylor's Life of Christ	Poems Epitetas
Caves Lives of the Fathers	Master Key of Popery Mass Book
Whole Duty of Man	Regeneration
Josephies Ecclesiastical Laws of America	Rise and Progress of the Quakers
Wood Institutes	Word Upon the Resurrection
Laws of Virginia	5 Plutarich Lives
Virgil [ ] Collections	4 Peerage of England
2 Drudens Fables	History of the Royal Family
Millers Gardening Dictionary	2 Gillivers Travels
1 Drydens Plays	Plutarch's Lives, Abridged
<b>Thin Folios</b>	Charles the Twelfth of Sweden
Wheatleys Life of Christ	The Independent Whig
Willocks Memoris	Memoirs of the Duke De[ ]esperda
Cowleys Works	[ ] Justin
British Apollo	Arithetrical Treatise
Ovids Metamorphosis	2 Da[ ] Travels
Bocace's Novels	Compleat Gardener
Horrid Conspiracy	2 Theophratus Macha[ ]
Darius Font	2 Seneca The Art of Soquitor
<b>Large Quartos</b>	Precident in Clerkship
History of the Bible	Ovid Treversty
Six vol Natural History of England	Little Venus Unmask'd
three anatomy	Rhetoric Unveiled
three Littleton's Dictionary	[ ]
Lawson's Journey Thro Carolina	Artificial Clockmaker
Swinburne Treatise on Spousals	History of Justin
The True Born Englishman [Defoe]	Present State of France
Thadwells Plays	Instruction for a Young Nobleman

Table 1.  
Inventory of Eleazer Allen, cont.

Cato Plays	1 odd volume of Joseph Andrews
A Mock Poem	Vol:
A View of the Religion of Europe	Tom Jones
Setters & Prayers	Handmaiden to Devotion
Virgil [ ]	Terence's Commedies
Militia Discipline	A New System of Georgraphy
Pocket Farmer	The Court of James the First
Young Clerks Guide	An Epitome of Navigation
Essay on Trade and Navigation	Walingers Manual
Country Surveying	Persian Letters
Life of Don Olympio	Characters of the English
Virgil & Horace in Latin	Dramatick Poems
Lord Grasses Love Letters	Treatis on Trigonomy
The Life of Alexander	Compleat Attorney
Devil Upon Two Sticks [Lesage]	Government of England
Vol:	Government of the Turks
The Triumph of Love & Constancy	Commenwealth of Utopia
Art of Improvement	The Modern Critick
Dialogues	The Wise & Storick
Plato's Dialogues	The Navigator's Magazine
Foundation of Horace	Langenius
A Treatise of Common Law	Discourse of the Pluralism of [ ]
Architecture	Horace His Odes
Art of Thinking	Observations Upon Homer & Virgil
2 Atlantis	Foreigners Guide
Works of Mr. Haywood	Essay Upon Virgil
2 Pillar to Purge	Classical Geographical Dictionary
Melancholy	Adventures of Persistant Spirits
The Olive	Gentlemen Instructed
The Torch	Defence of the Female
Home Collection of Poems	6 Attorney's Pocket Companion
[T ] of Painting	Cato His Letters
Hatman Poem	The Virgil old
Journey to England	Vol:
The English & French Governors	Compleat Justice of Peace
Juvenals [ ]	Reflections on the Roman People
Reflection upon Learning	The Art of Printing Saurekises
Poems by Several Hands	Lockarts Memoirs
Phedra	2 Pliny's Letters English
The Amusing Instructor	9 Shakespeare's Plays
Duncan Campbell's Life	18 collection plays
2 Prioix Poems	5 Spencers Fairy Queen
The Art of Teaching French	4 Falkers
Observations on the United Provinces	2 Harron Upon Wisdom
Norris Poems	Vol:
Ward's [ ]	Essay on the Animal
A Practical Grammer	Oconemy
The Humorist	Meeds Account of Poisons
Rudiments of Geography	Shaftburry's Life
Freeholder Description of Carolina	A Body of Prescrip[ ]
Occasional Reflections	Rochesters Poems
Law Against Bankrupters	2 Tom Brown's Works
Cryder a Poem	Life of Monsieur De St Evermont
Archbishop Cambray Upon Pure Love	Addison's Travels
Bradley Upon Husbandy	Lockes Essay on Human Understanding
Fortune in the Wits	Ovid's Epistles
The Oracle of Reason	Titus Petronius Arbiter
Advice to a Son	Memoirs & Life of the Count Garmont
Letters Upon Several Subjects	2 Guardian
2 Joseph Andrews	2 Voiheres Setters

Table 1.  
Inventory of Eleazer Allen, cont.

2 Hidibras	Les Amours de Madame Marie Leur
Life of Mr. Bonnel World	Histore et les adventure de Keminki
Milton	Agyplienne ou la amours de donpiein
Twist Gazeteer	Remainder of French books not included
Mathematical Dictionary	
5 Madame Caciars	
Homer	
2 An Introduction to the Claricks Agriculture	
Tale of a Tub [Swift]	
The Lutrin	
Reflections Upon Learning	
Sir William Temple	
Aesops Fables	
Croald Fables	
Aeneas	
Pilgramage to the Grand Jubilee	
Accurate Accountant	
British Curiosity	
2 odd plays	
Merchant's Companion	
2 Art of Cookery	
Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence	
Art of Complavance	
Pliny's Letters in Latin	
The Lover	
Thompson's Sermons	
Oldham's Works	
Congraves	
The Fable of the Bees Sermon	
<b>Vol:</b>	
A Dialogue	
6 John Sucking's Workes	
Ovido Epistle in Latin	
Family Physician	
Lydnalin Materia Medica Physical	
Dictionary	
Quincy	
A Book of Physick	
Salmon Upon Physick	
British Apollo	
English & Latin Dictionary	
8 Turkish [ ]	
8 Spectators	
Doctor Taylo's Holy Living & Dying	
Sherlock Upon Devine Providence	
<b>thin Vol:</b>	
Drydens Virgil	
Milton	
Floria	
Book of Logarithims	
3 Charles Gormici's Travels	
<b>French Books:</b>	
Bible	
Common Prayer	
Books and [ ]:	
Icle maque Virgil Iliade D'Homer	
De La Science	
DuMond Gelation Du Voyage D'Espagne	
l'histoire de la guerre romaine	
La Marque de Diable	

at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Although Murray early opposed Eleazer Allen and his ties to "The Family," he developed a close friendship with Sarah Allen and helped to manage her plantation (see, for example, Tiffany and Lesley 1901:54).

Murray provided Sarah Allen with news concerning her slaves, such as the "wench Hanna" who died in spite of treatment by a local doctor in February 1757. Murray explained that the doctor immediately announced the case hopeless, but "Mrs. Dry's humane good heart overruled this forew<sup>t</sup>. She is not afraid of being Condem<sup>d</sup> by you" (Massachusetts Historical Society, James Murray Letterbook).

He also provided accounts of her plantation, which seems to have focused on corn, indigo, and tar. In February 1757, Mrs. Allen's plantation had produced 290 barrels of tar, with the expectation of at least 200 more.

Murray was apparently also helping her dispose of her husband's estate, reporting that the remaining books were to be sold at the opening of Supreme Court. Subsequently, however, he had to report, "we have Tried to Sell your books at Vendue this County but the People have been so taken up & Drained by the Sales of Mr Ferrness goods & Lands" that little could be disposed of. Further, Murray had to report that he had been unable to settle the accounts of Hasell, Haw, Gardner or Merrick, making it sound as though legal action would be required (Massachusetts Historical Society, James Murray Letterbook, March 4, 1757).

Murray also had the unenviable duty of informing Mrs. Allen that the ship carrying her indigo was not insured by him and attempted to soften the blow by informing her that his own losses were even greater than hers were. He then told her that her overseer, Ben Hyrne had been "temped by high offers from Mr. Maurice Moore (who you hear is married to Mrs. Moore of Orton) is going to leave your Employ." Worse, it seemed that it would be difficult to find a replacement and warned, "we must take the best we can get." We also learn that with Moore, the overseer expected

to clear £100 "which your number of hands cannot afford" suggesting that pay was in some manner associated with production (Massachusetts Historical Society, James Murray Letterbook, undated letter). It seems that even Murray was unable to obtain an overseer "to his liking."

Murray also explained that the barn had been shingled and the "burying place" was soon to be, "pail'd in."

Repeatedly Murray emphasized how poorly the economy in the area was doing – tar was at a very low price and even then it would be paid for "in goods at most exorbitant rates" and corn "will not fetch money."

It seems that Sarah felt very isolated upon the death of husband. She turned first to Charleston, attempting to re-establish social ties, but found that her tenure in the Cape Fear had severed those bonds. In an April 1756 letter to Thomas Frankland, Henry Laurens reported,

By what we can learn Mrs. Allen makes no great hand of her Plantation at Cape Fear. She seems determin'd to go for London this Spring to finish her days with your Lady [her niece] (Hamer et al. 1970:173-174).

Although she did go to London, Sarah Allen returned to Lilliput by 1761. During her time in London, she wrote a letter concerning, "the caprices & inconstancy of the Low minded penurious herd – be they the great, vulgar, or the small" (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 6, pg. 556).

Through Murray's letters, however, we learn that the plantation was actively engaged in the cultivation of indigo, corn, and turpentine. For example, in one letter, Murray reported that the Lilliput overseer "made 8 & 900 lb of Indigo 1800 bushels of Corn & 300 bushels of pease" (quoted in Wood 2002:202). Considering the tar production, Murray reported that Allen's overseer was "on his



second kiln [and] from the first he expects about 200 barrels” (quoted in Wood 2002:203).

While Murray himself was apparently planting some rice at his own Lower Cape Fear plantation, Point Repose, there was no mention of rice from this early period at Lilliput (Wood 2002:203). This seems consistent with Eleazer Allen’s 1945 advertisement that mentioned marsh that could be improved, but made no mention of rice lands.

Sarah Allen died in February 1761 at Lilliput, less than a month after writing her will, dated January 28, 1761. Sarah had no choice but to acknowledge the financial condition created by her husband’s mortgage to Frankland,

It is my Will that all my Just Debts and Funeral charges be paid and satisfied as soon as conveniently may be after my Decease, hoping that Thomas Frankland, Esquire, my said Niece’s husband, (whose Mortgage on the said Eleazer Allen’s Estate may perhaps go near to Swallow the whole) will not avail himself of that mortgage so as to cut off the just Demands of my other Creditors. For his and their Benefit, however, and to avoid the tedious process of Law and to express the Regard I have for some other Friends and the Justice I would do them, I think it incumbent on me to make this will (Grimes 1912:10).

She then directs her estate, except for the specific legacies mentioned, to be sold. This would include,

the Labour of my Negroes, such as tar, Turpentine, Corn, and the like, all my remaining household Furniture . . . and all the plantation stock of Cattle, horses and hogs, or such of that Stock as can be spared

from Carrying on the Business of the plantation (which I would have continued until advice arrives from Mr. Thomas Frankland with Direction to my Executors (or his Attorney if he appoints one), how they are to proceed (in regard to the Mortgage) to be sold by public Sale to the highest bidder, allowing for enhancing the Sale a proper Credit not exceeding twelve months upon bond and Security for Sums exceeding twenty pounds. But as to the Real Estate and Negroes it is my Will that they shall not be sold but at such Time and such place, either here or in South Carolina, and in such manner as shall be directed by the said Thomas Frankland, Esquire, his Executors or Administrators having left a Letter of Advice to him on that Subject, Duplicates of which I desire may be forwarded to him by my Executors immediately after my decease, as also a Copy of my Will (Grimes 1912:10).

She even specified that if there were no surplus, then her legacies would depend on Frankland’s permission. One has to be impressed with the fortitude, courage, and thought that Sarah Allen gave in developing her will.

She further stipulated, “One Acre round the Tomb of my said dead husband be reserved sacred for the use of our Cemetery or burying Ground by my Executors when the rest of the plantation of Lilliput shall be sold” Grimes 1912:12). Anonymous suggests that Eleazer Allen’s tomb, provided by his niece, Sarah Frankland, “appears to have been made in England” (Anonymous 2010:1-8). While possible, it seems far more likely that it was created by one of Charleston’s skilled stonecutters. And although that source indicates the graves have been

destroyed (i.e., box tomb . . . which formerly stood on the Lilliput Plantation), this is incorrect. Although damaged by years of neglect, the tombs are all still present.

Her inventory, dated June 3, 1762 by John Murray, identified enslaved African Americans, 800 bushels of corn “in cribs,” 23 head of cattle, three horses, 15 pigs, and one cart. Cash crops appear limited to 110 barrels of tar and 146 barrels of turpentine on-hand. The inventory specifies that the household furniture “and several utensils” were disposed of by Sarah Allen during her lifetime, which we suppose means in his will. As a result, they were not incorporated into the inventory. She had only £78.13.1 as cash on-hand or as debts owned (North Carolina Department of Archives, Secretary of State, Series 19, Box 23).

We know that immediately after her will was proved on April 1, 1761 in Wilmington, Frankland’s power of attorney to Benjamin Heron and John Rutherford was entered into the Council minutes (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 6, pg. 549-551). This document gave his attorneys the power to,

Enter into and upon and take possession of all and Singular the Lands, Houses, Plantation or Plantations Negroes Chattels Estate and Effects whatsoever . . . Mortgaged to him the said Thomas Frankland by Eleazer Allen late of Cape Fear . . . for the Sum of Fifteen hundred pounds Sterling and to foreclose the deed or Indenture of Mortgage Given and Granted as aforesaid in order to Secure the payment of the said Sum (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 6, pg. 550).

We have previously mentioned that the mortgage is evidenced by Sarah Allen’s renunciation of dower in 1743. The mortgage itself was never filed in either South or North Carolina. Of course, it may have been held or even lost.

However, there is some suggestion that Frankland did not immediately seek to take possession of Lilliput. In fact, we cannot find any evidence that he ever did so.

## John Davis, the Younger

We do know that in April 1765 – four years after Sarah’s death, her executors sold the 640-acre Lilliput plantation to John Davis, the Younger (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB A, pg. 71).

Sprunt claims that, “the name of Davis, both in early and later times on the Cape Fear has always been associated with all that was highly respectable and honorable” (Sprunt 1916:74). We also know that Mary, George Moore’s eldest daughter, married Thomas Davis (son of Jehu Davis, Sr.) while George’s daughter Margaret married Col. William Davis (South Carolina Historical Society, File 30-4, Moore). Almost nothing is known of these individuals and, given their names, it is even difficult to be certain that we have the correct individuals when records are found.

Nevertheless, we know that on October 16, 1765 George Moore and his wife at the time, Sarah, sold “John Davis, the Younger,” Kendal Plantation (situated immediately south of Lilliput) for £400 current money. In 1769, this same John Davis sold six acres of the Kendal tract to Governor William Tryon for 5 shillings. The description of the parcel indicates that it joined “the tract His said Excellency Purchased of the said John Davis called Lilliput” (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB A, pg. 104).

The tax list for 1769 shows John Davis reporting only himself, 11 African American male slaves and 16 African American female slaves. All must have been on Kendal (Brunswick County Tax List, 1769, North Carolina Department of Archives).

John Davis, Jr. is mentioned occasionally in various North Carolina records. One of the earliest is in September 1748 when he served with Capt. William Dry’s militia unit to counter the Spanish

attack of Brunswick (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 22, pg. 280; *South Carolina Gazette* October 31, 1748). In 1754, he was an individual exempt by law from bearing arms except in case of invasion (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 22, pg. 385). In 1754, he also signed a petition concerning roads (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 5, pg. 185). In 1760 and again in 1764 he was named on the Commission of the Peace and Dedimus for New Hanover (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 6, pg. 335, 1070). In 1764, he also took out a bond to ensure the orphan Richard Spaight would be cared for (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol. 6, pg. 1043).

A John Davis wrote his will on July 21, 1765 (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB A, pg. 37). The will mentions his “beloved kinsman John Davis, Jr.” as an executor in addition to his son Thomas, and wife Jane.

## Governor William Tryon

While we do not have a deed conveying Lilliput to Tryon, we do have the reference previously mentioned when Davis sells Tryon a few acres of Kendal in 1767, adjacent to Lilliput already conveyed.

In addition, we have the June 8, 1768 deed from Sir Thomas Frankland to William Tryon in which for five shillings Sterling, he releases his claim to Lilliput. Of some consequence is this deed’s recital,

Originally Granted by the proprietors of Carolina to Eleazer Allen deceased and by the said Eleazer Allen in his lifetime Mortgage to the said Thomas Frankland and at the decease of the said Eleazer Allen devised by his Last Will to his Wife Sarah Allen, which said tract of Land has been conveyed by the Executors of the said Sarah Allen to John Davis Esq. by deed bearing the date of the 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 1765 and by the said John Davis sold

and conveyed to the said William Tryon by deed bearing date the 29<sup>th</sup> day of April 1767 (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB A, pg. 71).

Thus, contrary to previous claims, there is no evidence that Frankland took control of Lilliput or ever resided there. He held his mortgage, seemingly showing great restraint in not seeking restitution and eventually releasing his claim to the Royal governor. Of course, there may have been various, unrecorded, payments to Frankland.

The 1769 tax list identified what must be Tryon’s Lilliput Plantation. It itemizes eight “chain wheels,” perhaps associated with pumps or other agricultural activities, the presence of six white men, eight African American men, and two African American women (Brunswick County Tax List, 1769, North Carolina Department of Archives). This does not sound as though Tryon was engaged in much agricultural activities at Lilliput. He is absent in the extant 1772 list.

We know that during the American Revolution the Confiscation Acts resulted in his loss of various properties, including Tryon’s Lilliput Plantation. Itemizing his losses in 1783, he included that, “very valuable tract of Land containing Six hundred and forty Acres, called Lilliput, pleasantly and eligibly situated on Cape Fear River between the Towns of Wilmington & Brunswick.” Valued at £20 an acre, he claimed loss of £640 Sterling (Powell 1981:876, 881).

Unfortunately, we know nothing about what Tryon was doing with the property. A plat created in 1785 shows the property, although it is identified as only 492 acres (probably just high ground) and shows no structures (Figure 5). While this plat suggests Robert Howe acquired the property for £3,080, we know that it was actually sold to Griffith John McRee in 1788.

Dunaway (2011:173-175) also reveals that considerable property along the north side of Lilliput or Allen’s Creek was owned by Thomas





Figure 5. Plat of Tryon's confiscated Lilliput Plantation in 1785 (adapted from Dunaway 2011:151).

Hooper. This may include some additional Lilliput acreage – it is simply impossible to determine with the existing records. In any event, one of the plats does show the presence of a mill dam, almost certainly what is today known as McKenzie's Pond, located about 2.3 miles west of Lilliput.

## Griffith John McRee

On July 10, 1788, the State of North Carolina, in Confiscation Certificate 431, sold the 492 acre Lilliput Plantation (the same acreage as

shown in Figure 5) to Griffith John McRee for £2,505 (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB 13, pg. 348). He apparently also acquired 300 additional acres from Confiscation Certificate 435 on the same date. These additional lands were simply described as “on the west side of Cape Fear River and upper of Allens Creek” (N.C. Department of Archives Shuck 261, Book 62, pg. 256).

In 1790, McRee listed eight slaves in the census. This seems like a very modest number and he may have leased at least some of his lands out to others. It certainly was significantly less than the 55 being used by the Allens earlier. Nevertheless, he and his wife must have been living at Lilliput since his son, Dr. James Fergus McRee, was born at Lilliput in 1794 (Wood 1892:10).

McRee was born on February 1, 1758 and wed Ann Fergus (born March 9, 1765) on July 21, 1785. He was a captain in the Wilmington District Minutemen from 1775 to 1776, the 6<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Regiment from 1776 to 1778, and the 1<sup>st</sup> North Carolina Regiment from 1779 to 1781. He was serving in the defense of Charleston when it fell in 1780 and he was captured. He was exchanged in 1781 and resumed service with General Greene until 1798, by which time he had been promoted to major (Babits and Howard 2004:185; McCrady and Ashe 1892:2:479).

In 1784, McRee was appointed a commissioner to sell confiscated Tory property (Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, vol. 25, pg. 658). In the process, he acquired not only Lilliput, but also some interior portions (pinelands and mill lands) of Kendal.

McRee was appointed a captain in the corps of artillerists and engineers in December 1794 and was placed in command of Fort Johnson. By 1798, he was appointed customs collector for the Wilmington district. Serving as an agent for the War Department, in 1799, he contracted with Benjamin Smith to perform work at Fort Johnson (National Archives, RG 94, June 1, 1799, contract between Smith and McRee).

He died at either Lilliput or Smithville (accounts vary) on October 30, 1801, but no will has been identified for either him or his wife, Ann Fergus McRee. McRee’s Memoir of Major Griffith J. McRee, which claims the death occurred in Smithville, reports that

His body was attended to the water’s edge by a military escort, from which it was taken to Lilliput plantation, where it was interred upon a parcial [sic] of land, that projects far out into the river, commanding a fine view of the ocean & covered with a dense growth of live oak (McRee’s Memoir of Major Griffith J. McRee, Southern Historical Collection, No. 479).

He was buried in the same cemetery established by Sarah Allen in her will.

## George Mackenzie

George Mackenzie was the son of William Mackenzie (1729-1773) and Christina Campbell (1732-1800). He was born in 1761 and married Susannah Rowan (1767- ). The couple had only one child that we have identified, Anna Jane (1790-1848), who married Samuel B. Johnson (1786-1863).

By uncertain means, the McRee property was acquired by George Mackenzie. We know, however, that Mackenzie was at the property by 1801 when he offered a Wilmington town lot for sale and specified that those interested could contact him, “George Mackenzie, at Lilliput, in Brunswick county (*The Wilmington Gazette*, May 14, 1801, pg. 3). This advertisement suggests that Mackenzie was residing at Lilliput even before McRee died in October.

Certainly by 1803, property “late the residence of George McKenzie, Esq.” known as the Mill Lands, containing 300 acres, were being put up for sale. It may be that Mackenzie moved from this smaller and more interior plantation to Lilliput





Figure 6. Early maps showing Lilliput Plantation. At the top is the 1770 Collet *Compleat Map of North Carolina*. Below is the 1798 Price and Strother *A Map of Cape Fear River and Its Vicinity*.

(*The Wilmington Gazette*, May 26, 1803).

This is further confirmed by a news article that reported.

This morning a little before daylight, my Houfe was fet on fire by Negroes; the flames had reached about 12 feet high when the fire was difcovedred by a Negro girl, who fortunately had gone out for fome light-wood to mend the fire in the room in which my children flept – fhe faw four Negroes juft retiring from the fpot, and on calling out they immediately ran off towards the river and made their efcape. As my kitchen door was open and every appearance of their having been in it, and nothing miffing either out of the kitchen or from the plantation, I have very ftrong fufpicions that they were employed by a moft malicious rafcal for this purpofe (*Wilmington Gazette*, February 3, 1807, pg. 2).

A reward of \$100 was offered and the notice was signed G. Mackenzie, Lilliput, January 28, 1807.

Wherever Mackenzie was living, the 1800 census reveals that he owned 67 enslaved African Americans and there were 11 whites in his household. By 1810, when it is more certain that he was at Lilliput, the census identified 12 free whites, and 45 African American slaves. The plantation included one loom, cloth was identified as 150 (whether yard or value is unknown), and three wheels for spinning.

In 1810 and 1811, we have identified a list of items purchased by Mackenzie from James Orme, a general store proprietor. After his death, these items went into collection and Orme was given a judgement for \$103.19. These included “shingling nails;” a skillet; Ravens duck, a type of

heavy work cloth; nine Number 1 hoes and seven Number 0 hoes; a number of bandanas, almost certainly for his slaves; salt; flannel; cotton shirting; a set of knives and forks; a hat; a pair of scissors; and cut nails (North Carolina Department of Archives, Wills and Estate Papers, 1663-1978).

Mackenzie’s will, filed in October 1813, specified that he wanted his,

stocks of Cattle, Negroes be kept together on my plantation called Lilliput to be worked to the best advantage for my family until my youngest Son is of the Age of twenty one Years, during which time my Will is that all my unmarried Children should be maintained equally from the proceeds of my Estate and my younger Children who require Schooling may also be provided with property tutors at the expense of my said Estate (Brunswick County Will Book A, pg. 60).

The estate of George Mackenzie is identified in the Brunswick County tax list. It appears to identify the 640 acre Lilliput “on Cape Fear” assigning it a value of \$8,000 (Brunswick County Tax List, 1815, North Carolina Department of Archives). To provide some context, Benjamin Smith’s Orton Plantation, with 3,680 acres, is valued at \$8,500 – suggesting that Lilliput was once again well managed and productive.

In 1816, the estate was attempting to dispose of the property. Maurice Moore was advertising the property,

#### FOR SALE

The valuable plantation called LILLIPUT, late the residence of G. Mackenzie Esq. deceased. It contains 640 acres of Land, about one hundred and twenty of which are Tide Swamp and Marsh,

admirably adapted for Rice or Cotton, about sixty acres are under a high state of cultivation for Rice. On the plantation is a good two story dwelling House, with out buildings, Houses for Negroes &c. Its situation is undoubtedly the handsomest on Cape-Fear River and the Place is beautifully ornamented with live Oak groves of the natural growth . . . A more particular description is unnecessary as those inclined to purchase will of course view the premises. The price will be moderate & the terms accommodating (*The Wilmington Gazette*, January 13, 1816, pg. 7).

This advertisement provides sound evidence of rice cultivation by the early antebellum on Lilliput and also confirms that the Allen house (in spite of the fire reported by Mackenzie in 1807) had been repaired and was in presentable condition with no need to suggest work might be wanted.

## John Swann

On October 29, 1831, McKenzie's executors and heirs, Maurice and Susan Moore, Hopkins W. and Margaret Brewer, Samuel and Anna Johnson, Mary Mackenzie, Adelaide Mackenzie, Christian Mackenzie (a sister), and Samuel Mackenzie sold "Mackenzie or Lilliput" plantation of 652 acres more or less to John Swann for \$3,500 (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB K, pg. 192). Thus, the plantation was likely operated by the estate until that time.

There are multiple Swann families and many names are used in multiple generations. However, we believe this may be the Swann line that begins with the union of John S.J. Swann (1758-1824) and Sarah Moore (1760-1845), the granddaughter of Maurice Moore (1683-1743). John Swain, Jr. (1783-1856) was the son of John and Sarah and he married Francis M. Waddell. The family had perhaps 12 children, although eight are

specifically mentioned in John Swann's will.

The 1820 census identifies John, Jr. as living on a plantation with six whites and 43 African American slaves. By 1830, there were 59 slaves, but John and his family were living elsewhere. The same condition was found in 1840, when the number of slaves had increased to 60. We cannot find Swann in the 1850 census.

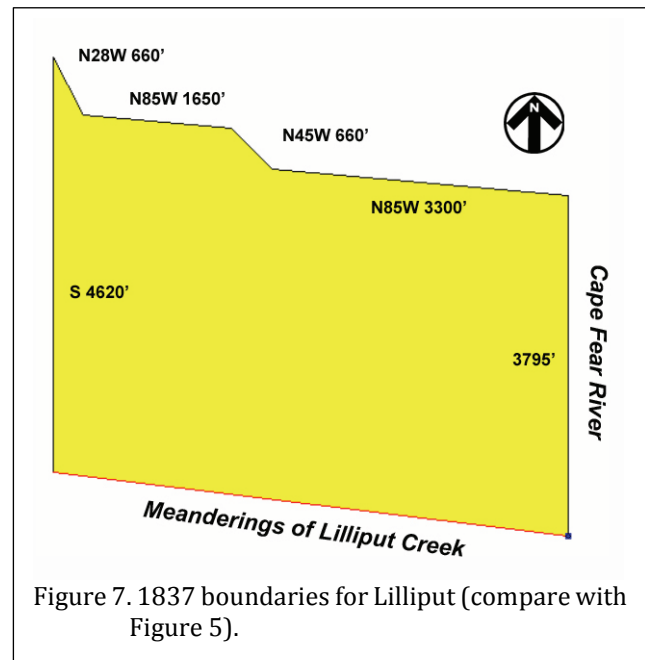


Figure 7. 1837 boundaries for Lilliput (compare with Figure 5).

Swann's 1856 will mentions a great deal of property, most especially enslaved African Americans, but it does not name his home plantation (Brunswick County Wills, Case 242).

## James Moore

Swann kept the plantation only two years, selling it for \$2,000 (representing a loss of \$1,500) to James Moore on May 29, 1833 (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB k, pg. 300).

James Moore (1809-1889) was the great-grandson of Maurice Moore and James married Sarah Swain (1815-1866), the daughter of James M. Swann (1783-1866) and Rebecca. We did not find



him in the 1830 census, although by 1840 he is identified with 20 slaves.

Although Moore apparently accumulated several tracts in the area, he sold Lilliput in August 1837, so we have virtually no information concerning his activities on the plantation. We do know that James Moore, in the 1850 census, was identified as a 36-year-old Town Creek Township farmer with \$75,000 in real estate and 66 enslaved African Americans. By 1860, he had left the Town Creek area and was found in the North West Township cultivating rice with 56 slaves.

## John H. Hill

The Lilliput Plantation (and four other tracts) were sold to John Hill in 1837 for \$6,000 (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB P, pg. 281). “McKenzie or Lilliput Plantation” was estimated to contain 652 acres and the boundaries, based on the calls in the deed, are shown in Figure 7.

The very next year a news article reported that “the growing rice crops at Lilliput, Kendal and Orton” commenting “we have never seen a richer promise or the prospect of a greater yield” and the rice on Lilliput was the “finest on the river” (*The People’s Press and Wilmington Advertiser*, August 3, 1838, pg. 3).

Dr. John Hampden Hill was the son of Thomas and Susannah Hill, born in 1807. He married Mary Ann Holmes (*Raleigh Register*, May 27, 1830). In a slim volume, Hill comments that he inherited Pleasant Hall Plantation, where,

he [speaking in the third person] resided a few years most happily, until occurred the great calamity of his life, the death of his beloved wife. The property not being very productive, it was sold in 1837, and the writer purchased Lilliput, in Brunswick County, where he resided and cultivated rice until the close of the war [the Civil War] (Reminiscences of Some Old Cape

Fear Families, pg. 10, in the John Hampden Hill Papers #335-z, Southern Historical Collection).

In the 1840 census, Hill is identified in Brunswick County, having taken residence at Lilliput. He and two children are the only whites identified, with seven male slaves and 16 female slaves. While this was a modest workforce, it grew considerably since, by 1850, he reported owning 48 slaves. Hill reported \$20,000 in real estate. The agricultural census for that year reveals that Lilliput had a water powered (tidal) rice threshing machine costing \$350, employing seven female slaves and processing 5,540 bushels of rice, valued at \$4,432.

Also present at Lilliput was Moses W. Bowen, identified as the 31-year-old overseer who claimed \$25 in real estate. We have not been able to find Bowen in the 1840 census, but we know he died intestate about 1856 and court papers revealed that his personal estate of \$688.14 was insufficient to pay his debts, over \$1,800. He did, however, own a tract of land on the northwest side of the North East River, near White Oak Branch, New Hanover County, containing about 640 acres. Moses’ brother and four sisters, his heirs, sought court permission to sell this land, which they received. It was sold to an adjacent property owner for \$2,012, which did little more than clear the estate of its debts (North Carolina Department of Archives, Wills and Estate Records).

By 1860, Hill was 54-years old. His real estate value had risen to \$19,500 and his personal estate was reported to \$63,795. His 27 enslaved African Americans were residing in 15 houses at the time.

Although Hill, in his Reminiscences, reported growing rice until the end of the Civil War, this seems improbable given the turmoil in the region. We do know that Lilliput appears in the Freedmen’s Bureau records in September when 87 individuals on Orton, Kendal, Lilliput and The Oaks were allotted rations. By mid-April 1865 Orton,



Figure 8. Mid-nineteenth century maps of Lilliput Plantation. At the top is the 1856 Cape Fear River from Reeves Point to Wilmington. Below is the 1863 Topographical Map Showing the Fortifications and Roads in the Vicinity of the Cape Fear River.



Kendal, Lilliput, and The Oaks, apparently with no white occupation since at least February, were confiscated as abandoned by General Joseph R. Hawley, commander of the eight-county Military District of Wilmington. General Order No. 7 specified that the property was to be “set apart for the use of the freedmen, and the destitute refugee colored people” (*The Wilmington Herald*, April 15, 1865, pg. 2).

Lilliput “occupied by freedmen as a home,” was restored to Hill as a result of Special Order No. 56, dated September 29, 1865 (North Carolina Freedmen’s Office Records, 1863-1872, Wilmington, Roll 78, Applications for Property, September 1865-May 1866, pg. 217-218). No mention was made, however, of any lease or agricultural activities by the Freedmen on the plantation.

We believe Hill had moved his family to Clinton in Sampson County, where the 1870 census listed the 64-year-old physician who claimed \$100 in person property and \$20,000 in real estate. Almost immediately after the restoration, Hill placed an advertisement in local newspapers,

Lilliput Plantation for Sale or  
Rent

Situated on Cape Fear River, 12 miles below Wilmington, in Brunswick county, containing 175 acres cleared rice land, a large part of which is in good planting order; 100 acres of good corn land, and produces ground peas finely; some prime swamp land cleared and ditched, will produce 10 bbls corns per acre; 6 crops of turpentine, cut, will also be rented with the place or separately. There is also a large tract of unboxed PINE LAND attached to the place. Apply to the subscriber, or to John L. Holmes, Esq. (*The Daily Journal*, Wilmington, NC, January 23, 1866, pg. 1).

This reveals a good bit about how Lilliput was being used and emphasizes the importance of rice, corn, peas, and turpentine to the area’s economy. We also believe that Hill was successful in finding, at least occasionally, renters. In 1867, it appears that Francis Henry Whittier was living at the plantation, where he died in October 1867. The remains were eventually returned to his home in Massachusetts for burial. Whittier was a Colonel (although the news article claims he was a Brevet General) with the 30<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteers, serving between 1861 and 1865. It seems likely that he was one of the many Union men who stayed behind to try their hand at rice production or farming. Unfortunately, Whittier died of malarial fever (American Ancestors, Massachusetts, Vital Records, 1841-1910; *The Wilmington Post*, October 16, 1867, pg. 2).

The following year, in 1868, a news article reported that a “Mr. Dunklee” was “working” the plantation and battling the rats that invaded the rice fields – killing 10,000 (*The Morning Star*, Wilmington, NC., May 5, 1868, pg. 3). There were several Dunkley individuals in the 1860 census, but we cannot determine which one may have rented Lilliput.

Regardless, by 1869, the plantation was again being advertised for rental. It reported, “the lands, both Rice and Upland, are in good condition” as was the “Threshing Machine.” In addition, there were “two crops of Turpentine in fair working condition” available with or without the plantation with instructions to apply to Petteway & Moore (*The Wilmington Morning Star*, May 7, 1868, pg. 3). This was a firm of commission merchants in Wilmington. The principals were J.T. Petteway and Roger Moore. This ad ran weekly through June 15, 1869.

The last mention we have of the tract while Hill was the owner is the 1870 death of Moses Willis, a black about 17-years old, who was killed on the plantation “by timber from a bridge falling against him as it was being thrown from a wagon” (*The Daily Journal*, Wilmington, NC, July 22, 1870, pg. 3).

Hill died in Goldsboro, North Carolina after disposing of the Lilliput, but his lengthy obituary in Wilmington papers made mention of his rice planting prior to the Civil War,

His energy and good management soon converted that plantation into a state of development and productiveness far beyond its supposed capacity and his vigilance, forethought and sagacity made him one of the largest, and perhaps the most successful planter of the Cape Fear. After the war he sold out his plantation and outfit, and retired from active business to the town of Clinton in the county of Sampson, which he considered healthy, and where living was cheap, and the society good (*Wilmington Messenger*, March 3, 1893, pg. 4).

## Walter G. Curtis

Finally, in 1871, Hill found a purchaser for these Brunswick County properties, selling Lilliput and the five additional parcels, to Walter G. Curtis (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB U, pg. 199). Curtis purchased Lilliput for \$1,750 in cash and a series of four notes payable over 24 months, to bring the total purchase price to \$7,000.

Walter G. Curtis was a native of Massachusetts, graduating from Dartmouth College in 1842 and subsequently attending Harvard for his medical training. By 1847, he arrived in Southport where he began an extensive medical practice. In 1852, he was appointed acting assistant surgeon in the United States Army. He was the “citizen physician” at the Smithville post hospital in at least 1868 and was the state quarantine officer for the port of Wilmington, from 1868 through 1895 (Julian 1910:87; W.G. Curtis Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

He first appears in the IRS Assessment List

of 1864 when he claimed a salary of \$265 and a gold watch. The 1870 federal census identified Curtis as a “Doctor of Medicine” with \$3,000 in real estate and \$750 in personal estate. In his household were his wife, Sarah and two African American house servants, Elizabeth Davis, 16 years old, and Bena Wescott, 10 years old.

By 1880, at which time Curtis owned Kendal (in conjunction with Ann M. Holmes) as well as Lilliput, the census still lists him in Smithville and that year information on wealth was not collected. Sarah was no longer listed and his new wife, Marjane J. was 30 years old and had borne him a son, identified as C.W. (later as Howard C.).

In spite of his northern roots, his third wife, Margaret Coit Curtis, wrote in her diary during reconstruction, “God help us if the Negroes get control; but they never will while a Southern white man lives to help prevent it (Diary of Margaret Coit Curtis, October, 1896, W.G. Curtis Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

An account book exists, but it often does not distinguish between Lilliput and Kendal plantations. For example, in April 1871, it reveals that 14 head of cattle, 23 sheep, a mule, and pigs were purchased; lumber for the trunks was purchased; as were tools such as scythes, rakes, pitchforks, and a plow point – but were they for one or the other, or both plantations? A few items are clear, such as the \$78.87 1871 tax bill for Lilliput. This is over \$17 more than the tax bill for Kendal, yet the value of Kendal was \$4,000, while that of Lilliput was only \$3,000. In 1872, the Kendal tax was \$60.36, while the tax for Lilliput was only \$38.68. By 1883, the Lilliput tax was only \$23.20.

The accounts reveal that provisions (groceries, fruit, pork, meal, and tobacco) were being acquired – almost certainly for the African American laborers on one or both plantations. Curtis and Holmes were also purchasing small quantities of crops from the laborers, such as sweet potatoes from Robert Hoops (which we believe

was actually Hooper) and Tom Clark. Some of the laborers included not only Hoops and Clark, but also Jane, Kali, Dick, Charles, Bob, Scipio, and Elias. Only Tom Clark and Robert Hoops, however, appear to have been paid a regular wage (Account Book, Walter Gilman Curtis Papers, #200, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

More information is obtainable from the tax records. For example, in 1873 the Kendal and Lilliput plantations were taxed for one horse, four mules, 35 cattle, 36 hogs, and 32 sheep. Other personal property, not specified, was valued at \$320, and the two parcels had an aggregate value of \$9,752. The property at Lilliput, alone, was valued at \$4,000 (Brunswick County Tax Scroll, 1873).

In 1874, the destruction of the Lilliput house by fire was reported occurring early on the morning of Saturday, November 14. The article reported that “the house was occupied at the time by a family by the name Harrison and they lost much of their furniture” and that no insurance was being carried on the house (*The Daily Journal*, Wilmington, NC, November 15, 1874, pg. 4; *The Wilmington Morning Star*, November 17, 1874, pg. 1).

There are several farmers by the name of Harrison in surrounding counties in the 1870 census, but without additional information, we cannot narrow down the possibilities.

In 1875, Lilliput’s value fell to \$3,000, perhaps reflecting the loss of the house. Stock on both Kendal and Lilliput included one horse, two mules, 26 head of cattle, 30 hogs, and 31 sheep. Other personal property was valued at \$800 and Curtis reported cash on hand of \$200 (Brunswick County Tax Scroll, 1875). The following year, Lilliput’s acreage is under the name of P. Prioleau, Jr. and it was valued at \$3,000. In the 1870 census, Philip Prioleau was a Smithville merchant with \$500 in personal property and \$1,800 in real estate. We assume he was serving as an agent.

By 1879, if not earlier, Curtis seems to have had enough at attempting to make rice cultivation profitable. Several advertisements appear announcing that Lilliput would be sold at auction, without further details (*The Wilmington Morning Star*, December 10, 1879, pg. 1). There was apparently no interest, since the announcement was repeated later in the month (*The Wilmington Morning Star*, December 22, 1879, pg. 1). That also brought no bidders.

In the subtle racism of the time, a news article the following year reported the “unparalleled [sic] brutality” of a father supposedly allowing his child to be burned alive in a house fire at “Lilliput Farm” (*The Daily Review*, Wilmington, NC, December 24, 1880, pg. 1). The individual, Sam Hurst, is found in the 1880 census as a 37-year old laborer. The article reports that his wife, Polly Anne, had apparently deserted him and his 3-year-old child, James, days before.

In 1881, Curtis is again identified in the tax records, although Kendal and Lilliput are again lumped together. Their combined value was identified as \$6,500, representing it seems a steady decline. The plantations included one horse, two mules, 15 cattle, and 15 sheep (no hogs were reported). Personal property was valued at \$500 and “other” personal property included an additional \$500 (Brunswick County Tax Scroll, 1881).

## Frederic Kidder

On February 2, 1882, Curtis and his wife were able to sell both Kendal and Lilliput plantations to Frederic Kidder for \$15,000 (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB AA, pg. 266).

An interesting history of Frederic Kidder has been compiled by Susan Taylor Block (2011). Born on November 12, 1847, Block reports that he was educated at Harvard before returning to Wilmington. In 1870, at the age of 22 he was living with his parents and his three siblings, in a household with a white seamstress, a white housekeeper, and no fewer than six African

American “domestic servants.” His father, Edward Kidder, a wholesale lumber dealer, reported real estate valued at \$127,000 and a personal estate of \$246,000. Frederic’s older brother, George, already claimed real estate valued at \$12,000 and was in the lumber business with his father. Frederic was listed as having “no occupation.”

Frederic’s father Edward and his uncle Frederic were born in New England, the sons of Isaiah and Hepsey Kidder. Isaiah Kidder was a merchant, farmer, and cotton mill owner. In the late 1820s, Edward and Frederic moved south, opening a mercantile business in Wilmington. Edward eventually found a position with a much larger firm and Frederic returned north to become an antiquarian and author (Dean 1887).

In August 1878, young Frederic Kidder took a trip to England, returning from Liverpool via New York on the *Egypt*. In 1880, Frederic Kidder, now 32, was still living in Wilmington with his father and two older brothers, by this time all listed as mill owners. Present in the household was George’s wife, as well as eight African American servants. Frederic’s occupation was listed as “rice.” Since he had not yet purchased Kendal this may indicate that he was renting a plantation and planting rice ahead of his purchase – and if he was renting Kendal, this would certainly explain his very good “first” year showings in terms of acreage and rice production.

Edward and his son George were owners of the Cowan Saw and Planing Mills in Wilmington, which covered 10 acres of ground. They exported about 8,000,000 feet of timber to the West Indies and South America yearly (Reilly 1884:113-114).

In 1890, Frederic Kidder took his second overseas voyage, this time to France and in a party of four.

Kidder lived in the frame house at Kendal and a great deal more of his activities can be found in Trinkley and Hacker (2016a), although most concern Kendal. Nevertheless, we know that almost immediately after acquiring Lilliput, a

storm hit, although relatively little damage was done to the banks (*The Wilmington Morning Star*, October 15, 1893, pg. 1).

In 1882, Kidder was identified as the new owner on the tax list. Lilliput continued to be combined with Kendal, for a total value of \$12,000. There was one horse, four mules, and 10 head of cattle. The aggregate value was \$13,225 (Brunswick County Tax Scrolls, 1882). Two years later, in 1884, the value dropped by \$2,000, although the number of mules increased to seven. Cattle declined to only four head, but Kidder reported owning 100 hogs. Personal property totaled nearly \$1,700 (Brunswick County Tax Scrolls, 1884).

In 1898, Lilliput and Kendal produced 10,500 bushels of rice, just behind the 13,000 bushels raised at Orton (*The Wilmington Morning Star*, March 5, 1898, pg. 1). But Lilliput seems to have been remembered for its association with Eleazer Allen and there were several articles concerning his grave (*The Semi-Weekly Messenger*, Wilmington, NC, January 24, 1899, pg. 8; *The Wilmington Messenger*, January 29, 1899, pg. 5). For whatever reason, Kidder placed multiple “Tresspass [sic] Notices for Kendal and Lilliput (*The Southport Leader*, December 27, 1894, pg. 4).

The stock continued to vary from year to year so that in 1895 there was one horse, six mules, six head of cattle, but no hogs. There was \$250 in farming utensils, and \$300 in household and kitchen furniture – all at Kendal. Kidder’s library was valued at only \$30. Other personal property amounted to \$300, and the aggregate value was \$13,290 (Brunswick County Tax Scrolls, 1895). Five years later, farming utensil value declined to a mere \$75.

Frederic Kidder died on October 27, 1908 in a Litchfield, Connecticut sanitarium where he had been “for some time,” but was brought back to Wilmington to be buried in Oakdale Cemetery (*The Wilmington Morning Star*, October 29, 1908, pg. 1; *Wilmington Morning Star*, October 30, 1908, pg. 1). Perhaps one of the most beautiful comments was

written by "A Friend,"

During the many months of his long illness his mind often turned to the old plantation, which he longed to see again as he had seen it when he looked out upon the wide expanse and watched the white winged vessels sailing by, or when, after a busy day, he had sat far into the quiet night and gazed into the great arch above, resplendent with the tranquil glory of the stars (*Wilmington Morning Star*, October 29, 1908, pg. 4).

After Kidder's death there was little additional news reported from Kendal.

Kidder's will was prepared a little over two years prior to his death, being signed on March 30, 1906. It was probated in Brunswick County on November 5, 1908 (Brunswick County Record of Wills, WB A, pg. 235).

With no wife or children of his own, Kendal and all of its associated items not otherwise bequeathed were given to his nephew, George E. Kidder, and his three nieces, Annie K. Smith, Florence Kidder, and Elise Kidder.

If we base our judgment on the inventory of the estate, the Kendal Plantation (Lilliput was not significant enough to mention) was Spartan. The furniture at Kendal was valued at only \$124. Twenty-six etchings were valued at \$614, the Dresden china was valued at \$100, a student's chair was valued at only \$1, a bookcase and books were valued at \$100, and a sideboard was valued at \$10. The silver at the plantation, identified as "mostly plated," was valued at only \$10.

The four mules on the plantation were characterized as "old" and given a value of only \$25 each. The farming implements were equally as old and were worth only \$41.

The current year's rice crop, apparently not yet harvested, was valued at \$2,500. Kidder's total personal estate was valued at only \$12,579 (NCDAR, Brunswick County, Frederic Kidder Estate, 1908).

As the 1908 crop was harvested, it brought \$3,095.43, although we have no information on the acres planted or the size of the harvest. The estate papers do tell us that the cost of maturing, harvesting, and selling this rice and straw was \$1,460.15, resulting in a return to the estate of only \$1,635.28. Factoring in the cost of the seed, planting, and tending, it seems that by 1908 rice was only a marginally profitable crop.

There is nothing in the inventory or estate records to suggest that Kidder was involved in any other plantation activities. For example, there was no corn on hand, there was no evidence of turpentine or tar production, and there was not even evidence that the plantation had its own threshing machine for rice. Coupled with the limited contents of the plantation house, such as the silver plate, it seems that Kendal was a "flower-crowned waste" in the words of Henry James and that Frederic Kidder was, in the words of Peter Coclanis (1989), living in the "shadow of a dream."

In the final accounting, Kidder's estate was worth \$18,352.68. Of this, 25% was his share of the estate of his father, Edward Kidder. An additional 51% included stocks and bonds. Possessions at Kendal accounted for only 7% of the total estate.

The heirs attempted to rent out Lilliput, but we have no information on the success of this effort. There was apparently a prospect for the sale of Kendal and Louis T. Moore, attorney for the heirs, granted an option on the property to James N. Bryant, a manager of a lumber company. The option was to expire on May 30, 1918 and Bryant paid \$20,000 to Moore, although no deed was ever delivered (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB 29, pg. 390).

One of the last records we have is the tax list for 1915, when it was listed under the heirs.



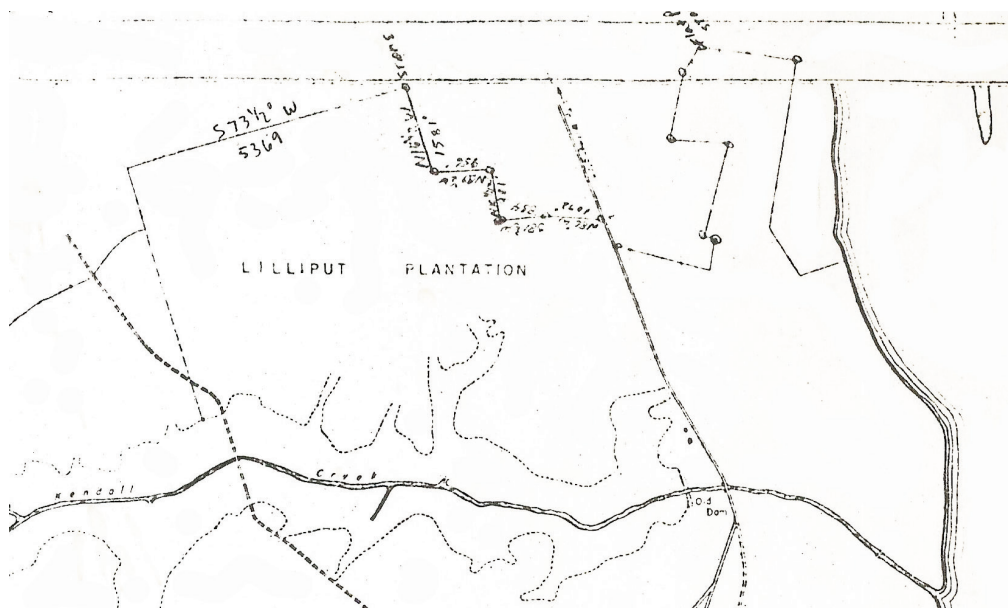


Figure 9. Lilliput Plantation in the early twentieth century. At the top is the February 1921 C.R. Humphreys *Kendall and Lilliput Plantations* (Kendall Creek is Lilliput Creek). The House is shown standing, although the map post-dates the fire. Below is the 1939 (traced) *Orton and Kendall Plantations and Part of Mr. Sprunt's Lilliput Plantation*. While no structures are shown, the plat does illustrate the plantation boundaries.





Figure 10. Aerial of Lilliput Plantation in 1938 (AOQ-39-65).





Figure 11. Aerial of Lilliput Plantation in 1949 (AOH-1F-57), showing the fields and the extant structures (circled in red). Note also the extensive remnant rice fields along Lilliput Creek and along the Cape Fear River).

The two plantations were valued at \$28,000 – far more than ever before. However, there was nothing else listed – no stock, no farming implements, not even the value of the Kendal house (Brunswick County Tax Scrolls, 1915).

## James Sprunt

In spite of the still in force option, Kendal and Lilliput were sold by the Kidder heirs on May 16, 1918, to James Sprunt for \$10,000 “and other valuable considerations” (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB 29, pg. 388). It appears that this additional “consideration” may have been an extra \$10,000 not listed in the deed, since the Sprunt account book listed the purchase price at \$20,000 (Sprunt Account Books, Belvedere Property Management, New York, New York).

Because of this sale, it became necessary for Sprunt to clear the title by payment of an additional \$1,500 to Bryant for his option on the tract (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB 29, pg. 390).

While we have found no evidence of how Sprunt intended to use Lilliput, we know that he hired a “superintendent” and placed him in the Kendal house to the south. On Saturday noon, February 15, 1919 the wood shingle roof of the attached kitchen caught on fire. High winds spread the fire to the main portion of the building, likely through walls, since the main house had a metal roof. It was reported that “very little of the furniture of the residence was saved” (*The Wilmington Morning Star*, February 16, 1919, pg. 5).

The article reports that “the loss is only partially covered by insurance” and that Sprunt was “as yet undecided as to whether he will rebuild Kendal.” We know, of course, that the mansion was not rebuilt, but Sprunt’s Kendal account identifies three insurance policies, all held by “J.H.B. & Son” or J. H. Boatwright and Son in Wilmington, paid a total of \$8,250 for the loss (nearly as much as the entire Kendal and Lilliput tracts cost). The funds were transferred to Sprunt’s private ledger.

We have been unable to identify Rudwick Fields, the superintendent living in the Kendal house when it burned, in any census record or in local newspapers before or after this incident.

We also know that Lilliput was used for the production of Orton Nursery flowering bulbs during the 1940s – and there are still fields where daffodils have naturalized. Some of these fields can be readily identified in the 1938 and 1949 aerial photographs of the plantation (Figures 10 and 11).

As late as 1960, there were 11 structures at Lilliput, 10 of which were occupied by workers, including Herman Ellis, Cora McKoy, Andrew McMillian, Johnny Edge, Clarence Jones, John Henry Brewington, Ida Ellis, Jenkins Brewington, Susan Smith, and Josephine King. There was also a barn on the property, reported as vacant. The 1948 aerial shows the location of six of these structures and we assume the remainder were hidden by vegetation.

The structures we can identify are clustered in one area, but are very loosely arranged. There is nothing approximating the “street” of slavery. Instead, we see a neighborhood. Many of these structures have nearby gardens and a few appear to have out buildings.

Lilliput Plantation was passed through a variety of hands in the second half of the twentieth century. James Laurence Sprunt sold the plantation to his children (James Laurence Sprunt, Jr., Kenneth Murchison Sprunt, Samuel Nash Sprunt, and Laurence Gray Sprunt) in 1947 for \$1, natural love and affection (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB 89, pg. 626). The Orton properties, including Kendal and Lilliput, were next transferred in 1984 by Kenneth M. Sprunt and others to Orton Plantation for \$10 and other valuable consideration (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB 600, pg. 931). In 1989, Orton Plantation conveyed what was called “First Tract” (which was Lilliput) to Samuel N. Sprunt for \$10 and other valuable consideration (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB 791, pg. 472). Finally, a 97.86% interest in Lilliput was conveyed by

## HISTORY

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Samuel Nash Sprunt, Jr., as trustee of the Clare Fleming Sprunt Marital Trust to Lilliput Interests in 2007, for “good and valuable consideration” (Brunswick County Register of Deeds, DB 2686, pg. 203).

Lilliput Interests is a North Carolina limited liability company formed in October 2007. The manager is identified as Samuel N. Sprunt, Jr. in Houston, Texas.



# Conclusions

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Lilliput, historically, is as significant as its neighbors, Orton and Kendal. Eleazer Allen, its founder, was as significant a character in early North Carolina history as Roger Moore – Moore has simply had a more effective promoter in James Sprunt.

The brick Lilliput house was certainly as significant an architectural feature as Kendal or its successor, Orton. None of the Lower Cape Fear plantations evidence a great wealth of historical documents; but there are certainly no fewer associated with Lilliput than with Kendal or Orton. From an archaeological perspective, should investigations ever be possible, Lilliput is without question as rich a resource. Once burned, the house was lost to the wilderness as it remains today. It was never cultivated (as was Kendal) and it was never repeatedly remodeled and relandscaped as was Orton. Like Orton, Lilliput is known to possess an intact African American cemetery and an intact white burial ground. There are standing historic structures at Lilliput, just as there are at Orton. Thus, there is no legitimate reason that Lilliput should not be regarded as significant and worthwhile a historical site as either Orton or Kendal, although both have received the bulk of attention.

This brief historical synopsis, coupled with other recent Chicora research on the Lower Cape Fear should provide a foundation on which future investigations can be built. Further and more intensive historical research is likely to produce additional documents and leads. Perhaps photographs, similar to those identified for Kendal or Orton, can be found in local collections and photo albums. It is likely that there is still some oral history concerning the plantation left in the local African American and white communities. And of course archaeological investigations will be of

extraordinary significance in helping us to reconstruct the Lilliput house – providing a comparison to the brick structure at Kendal and another view of the incredible wealth of a colonial North Carolina planter.

Lilliput likely also offers an unprecedented opportunity to examine the rice fields, water control structures, and other remains preserved in the wet, muddy fields. There seems to have been little effort to modify the rice fields, as has been done at other plantations.

Lilliput also offers an excellent opportunity to search for, and likely recover, evidence of the plantation's enslaved African American occupants. Certainly there are several standing postbellum structures that can be used to compare and contrast lifeways with slavery.

Lilliput is a rare jewel on the Lower Cape Fear, worthy of protection and further investigation.

## CONCLUSIONS

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