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DR. WILLIAM PARKER, 1766-1838

by

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HISTORY 300

Dr. Warlick  
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### Dr. William Parker

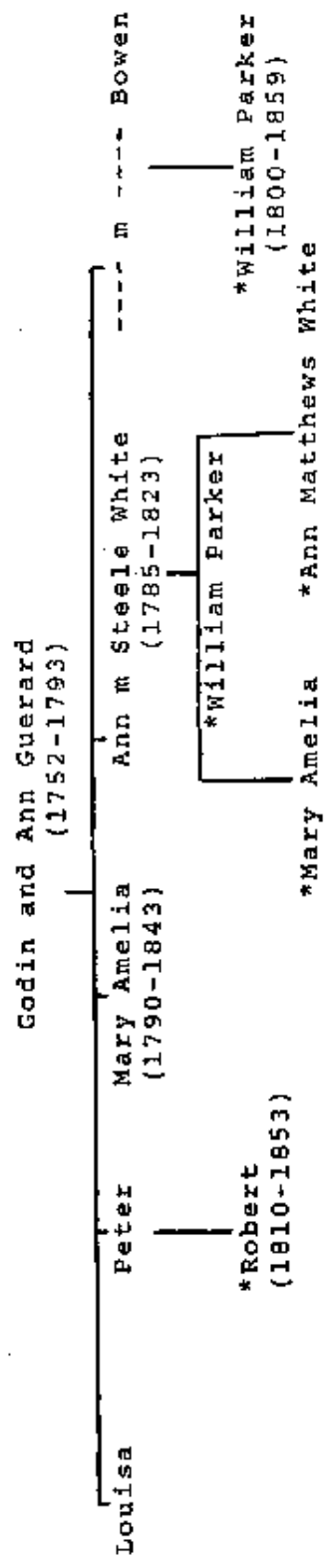
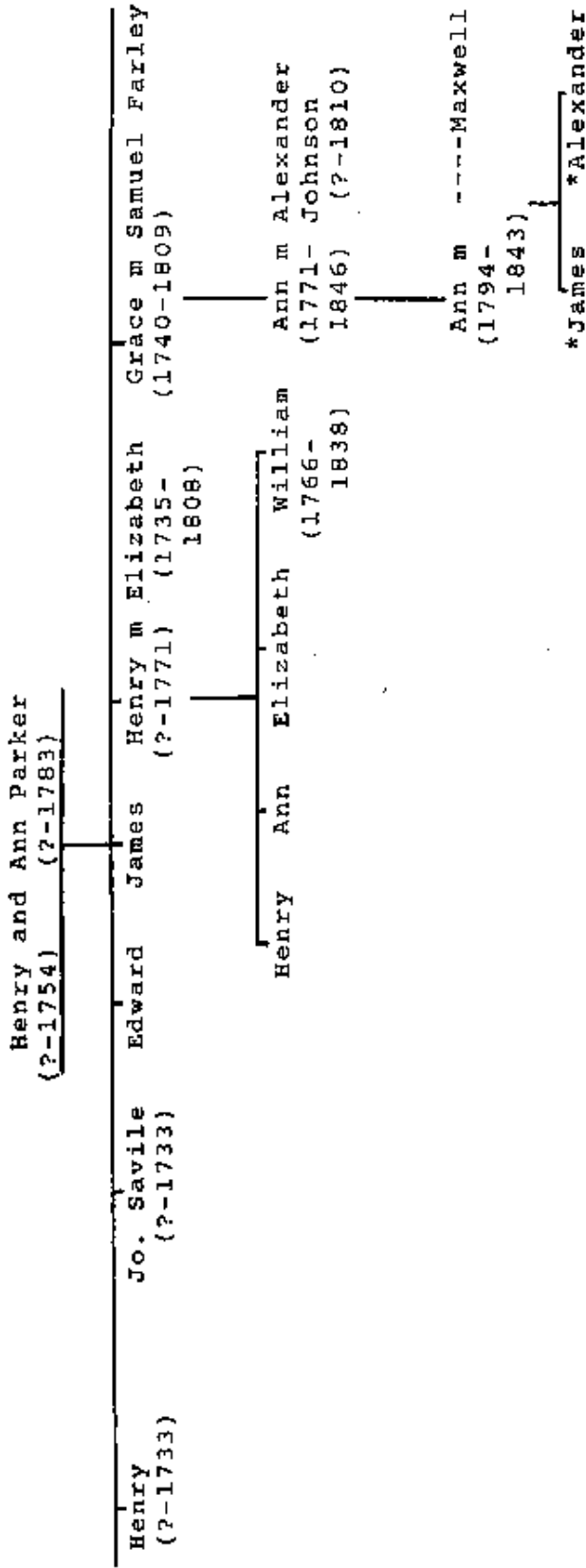
Dr. William Parker was born in the colony of Georgia in 1766 and achieved prominence as a physician and community leader. He was one of the original members of the Georgia Medical Society, which was established in Savannah in 1804. Additionally, he was a member of Christ Church and on the Board of Trustees for Bethesda Orphanage.

In 1804 he married the widow Louisa Guerard Mc Allister who was originally from Prince William's Parish in South Carolina.

Dr. Parker was a descendant of Henry Parker, the second president of the colony of Georgia and one of the first settlers of the Isle of Hope. Henry Parker and his wife, Ann, arrived in Savannah in August 1733 with General James Ogelthorpe.

While visiting his country home on the Isle of Hope, Dr. Parker was paralyzed by a stroke and died two years later in 1838, at his residence on Bryan Street in Savannah.

GENEALOGICAL CHART



\* Heirs to the Isle of Hope Property.

The Georgia Historical Society on Whitaker Street in Savannah is in possession of a handsome oil portrait of Dr. William Parker. It was a donation of the Georgia Medical Society, of which Dr. Parker was an original member.<sup>1</sup> In June 1804, the local medical society in Savannah was given a charter by the State of Georgia.<sup>2</sup> The society was incorporated "for the purpose of lessening the fatality induced by the climate and incidental causes and improving the science of medicine."<sup>3</sup>

The origin of Dr. Parker's authority to practice medicine has not been fully established. A person of the same name was graduated from the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1788, at which time Parker would have been twenty-two.<sup>4</sup> However, his obituary in The Daily Georgian states that he received a liberal education and studied medicine under the celebrated English surgeon and physician Dr. Samuel Beecroft.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Beecroft was a practicing physician in Savannah.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Parker did not advertise his professional services and products in the newspapers as other physicians of that period did. This is an indication that he had a large, successful practice.

Dr. Parker could well have afforded the opportunity to earn a medical degree since his father was a successful planter. Parker's father Henry stipulated in his will that his estate

was to be used for the maintenance and education of his four children. William at age five received 250 acres as a result of his father's benevolence.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Parker was in partnership with Dr. Lemuel Kollock (1766-1823), a native of Wrentham, Massachusetts.<sup>8</sup> Dr. Kollock did not have a medical degree but practiced under the authority of a certification of qualification given him by Dr. Issac Senter under whom he had done a preceptorship.<sup>9</sup> Dr. Parker and Dr. Kollock had a large and prosperous practice in Savannah. Through their dedication to the medical profession, they trained Dr. Edwin LeRoy Mc Call who later graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School.<sup>10</sup> As a result of the efforts of the young Dr. Mc Call, Dr. Parker and Dr. Kollock were elected as honorary members of the Pennsylvania Medical Society.<sup>11</sup>

As a part of the program of the Georgia Medical Society, seven of the members, of which Parker was one, volunteered to make house visits to register births and deaths of both races.<sup>12</sup> Dr. Parker's area was designated to be Warren and Washington Wards. He lived on East Bryan Street which was located in Warren Ward. This activity was one of the many programs instituted by the Medical Society.

Dr. Parker was appointed to the board of managers of the

Savannah Poor House and Hospital Society in February of 1809.  
He was in attendance at the hospital two days a week. <sup>13</sup> These  
shifts were apparently rotated among all of the doctors in the  
organization.

Dr. Victor Bassett stated in his article that Dr. Parker <sup>14</sup>  
retired from his medical practice at a comparatively young age.  
Evidence shows that he was practicing as late as 1823. <sup>15</sup> Per-  
haps he retired to his country home on the Isle of Hope to farm  
and raise cattle.

Dr. Parker was a civic minded man and a member of Christ  
Church to which he willed ten acres of land at his death. This  
land was situated on the Isle of Hope. <sup>16</sup> He was also on the  
board of trustees for Bethesda in 1816 when lands were to be  
sold for Bethesda College or the Orphan House Estate. <sup>17</sup> The  
records for those transactions were lost according to The His-  
tory of Bethesda. <sup>18</sup> Parker's concern for the fatherless was  
also reflected in his obituary in The Daily Georgian. <sup>19</sup> Ac-  
cording to the 1830 census of Savannah, he may have had several  
nieces and nephews living with him. <sup>20</sup> Since Parker had no  
children, he felt a strong paternal feeling towards the child-  
ren and grandchildren of his cousin, Ann Johnston. He was  
equally as fond of some of his wife's nieces and nephews.

Parker's good standing in the community developed largely

because of his generosity and character but was also influenced by family, some of whom were the earliest settlers in Savannah. William Parker's grandparents, Henry and Ann Parker, arrived in Savannah with General James Ogelthorpe on August 29, 1733. Henry Parker, a linen draper, came with his wife and two sons both of whom died the following month.<sup>21</sup> He was also accompanied by his brother William Parker, a silversmith, who died the following year.<sup>22</sup> Henry Parker achieved prominence as a bailiff in Savannah and as the second president of the colony of Georgia.<sup>23</sup> He requested and received a grant of 500 acres on the Isle of Hope from the President and his assistants on June 9, 1750.<sup>24</sup>

Henry and Ann Parker had other children who were born in the colony of Georgia. The dates of their lives are incomplete with exact dates known only on a daughter, Grace, who was born in 1740 and died in 1809.<sup>25</sup> Their eldest son, Henry, father of Dr. Parker, began his career on an unsatisfactory tract of land which his father had leased from the colony. The younger Henry petitioned the President and his assistants for a more desirable tract of land upon which he would have more luck in cultivating. The President of the Colony, citing his pleasure at young Henry's industriousness, granted him 500 acres adjoining his father's land.<sup>26</sup>

Henry became a successful planter and was survived at his death in 1771 by his wife, Elizabeth, and four children -- William, Henry, Elizabeth, and Ann. <sup>27</sup> He bequeathed the 500 acres to his two sons. <sup>28</sup> His wife, Elizabeth Parker, died October 11, 1808 during one of the Yellow Fever epidemics that so frequently were visited upon Savannah. She was buried in the yard of Dr. Parker's home. <sup>29</sup> Born in London, England in 1735, she lived in and around Savannah for 66 years. She was especially noted for her pious attitude and well-informed mind. <sup>30</sup>

None of Dr. Parker's brothers and sisters played so large a part in his life as did his first cousin, Ann Farley Johnston, daughter of Grace and Samuel Farley. <sup>31</sup> Upon Dr. Parker's death, Ann Johnston was designated as the heir of his estate which was eventually to pass to her grandchildren. Dr. Parker had a deep affection for Ann and looked upon her as a sister. <sup>32</sup> Since Ann's husband, Alexander, died in 1810, she may have gone to live with Dr. Parker. <sup>33</sup> In the census of 1830, three adult women were listed as residing in Dr. Parker's home. Two females listed their ages as being between 40 and 50. This may have been Ann Johnston and Louisa Parker, even though Ann would have been older. <sup>34</sup> The female in the 30 to 40 bracket is assumed to have been Ann Farley Maxwell with her children James and Alexander, ages between 10 and 15 and 15 and 20. <sup>35</sup>



Dr. Parker married Mrs. Louisa Guerard Mc Allister, the widow of Richard Mc Allister of Mc Intosh County, December 23, 1804. Dr. Parker and his partner Dr. Kollock, were the physicians who frequented the Mc Allister plantation in 1802 and 1803.<sup>37</sup> They attended the slaves as well as family members. Mrs. Mc Allister had a daughter, Louisa Carolina, who was born in January 1801 and died March 23, 1803.<sup>38</sup> Dr. John Irvine was in attendance prior to the child's death.<sup>39</sup> Mrs. Mc Allister had suffered a great deal in those few years by losing her husband of four years in November 1802 and her only child the following March.<sup>40</sup>

Louisa was one of 15 children born to Godin and Ann Matthews Guerard of Prince William's Parish in South Carolina. They owned a large plantation of 1,114 acres near Cambahet.<sup>41</sup> Louisa's mother, Anne, lived only to attain the age of 41, dying a few days after the birth of her 15th child.<sup>42</sup> Godin and Ann Guerard had married in South Carolina, August 24, 1769.<sup>43</sup> When Louisa married Richard Mc Allister in 1798, it is possible that some of her motherless brothers and sister went to live with her on the Mc Allister plantation.<sup>44</sup>

Dr. Parker's land on the Isle of Hope was eventually divided

among seven nieces and nephews. It appears that Dr. Parker died without any direct heirs and was also a widower. As specified in his will and designated on a map of 1800 which was re-surveyed by John Mc Kinnon Suvy, his Isle of Hope property was received by William Parker Bowen, William Parker White, Mary Amelia White, Ann Matthews White, Robert G. Guerard, James Maxwell, and Alexander Maxwell.<sup>45</sup> The latter two were the grand-children of his beloved cousin, Ann Farley Johnston.<sup>46</sup> The three White children are thought to have been the children of Steele and Ann Guerard White, sister and other-in-law of Louisa Parker.<sup>47</sup> Robert G. Guerard, son of Peter Guerard, was a favorite of Louisa's. He died in 1853 at the age of 43.<sup>48</sup>

William Parker White built a lovely home on the Skidaway River around 1850. The foundation of this home is thought to be the original tabby foundation laid by the elder Henry Parker.<sup>49</sup> The land upon which this home was built was not kept in tact after the death of Mrs. Ann Parker.<sup>50</sup> It was to be divided among her grandchildren when the youngest attained the age of twenty-one. Parker must have felt strongly about keeping that tract of land together since he bought a parcel of land on the Isle of Hope containing 264 acres. That area called the old Isle of Hope and Parker's Bluff was adjacent to land already in his possession.<sup>51</sup> That contract was signed on May 10, 1824 between Vincent Thomas Matthews (probably a grand-

son of Ann Parker) and Dr. William Parker.

Dr. Parker also purchased a large tract of land in the White Bluff district called Beach Hill. This transaction between Parker and Hampden Mc Intosh in April 1816 exhibits his financial success. The price of the 159 acres was \$4000, a considerable sum.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, Parker had a country seat on the Skidaway River<sup>53</sup> as well as a lovely home in town.

The exact date of the erection of Parker's home on 324-326 East Bryan Street is unknown. He began paying rent on lots 13 and 14, Warren Ward,<sup>54</sup> in May 1806. The origin of the property can be traced back to 1791 at which time Louisa Parker's brother-in-law, Mathew Mc Allister, was paying the city tax. Louisa's first husband's name appears on the city ledger in 1795.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the property became Dr. Parker's through his marriage to Louisa. In 1845, Ann Johnston sold the property to Patrick Duffy for Parker's estate for the amount of \$5,500.<sup>56</sup>

As reflected in his obituary, Dr. Parker led an active and productive life. Even though he had no children, his life was devoted to his family. All of his undertakings reflected a kind and compassionate man. In his will, he saw fit to remember his fond attachment for his slaves and to request that they

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be treated with kindness. It is indeed unfortunate that a man dedicated to his family, his slaves and the art of healing was stricken with paralysis. For two years he endured much suffering and eventually died of apoplexy at the advanced age of 72.<sup>58</sup> He was buried on Sunday morning, January 7,<sup>59</sup> 1838.

It has been said that most of the Parkers, beginning with Henry,<sup>60</sup> were buried at Grimal Point on the Isle of Hope. It is appropriate that they should be buried there since they were among the first to settle in that area. Unfortunately, there are no grave markers or any other designation of a cemetery.

END NOTES

1. The Georgia Republican and State Intelligencer, October 20, 1805, p. 2.
2. Victor A. Bassett, "A Georgia Medical Student in the Year 1801," Georgia Historical Quarterly, 22 (Dec. 1938) 331-369.
3. John Grimes, "Eulogy on the Life and Character of Dr. Noble Wymberly Jones," Georgia Historical Quarterly, 4 (March 1920) 17-32.
4. Bassett, p. 342.
5. The Georgian, January 31, 1938, p. 2.
6. Abstracts of Wills, Chatham County, Georgia, p. 11, Dr. Samuel A. Beecroft, died in 1800.
7. Wills Collected by Mrs. Howard H. McCall, Vol. II, Copied and Bound Under the Direction of Louisa F. Hays, State Historian and Director of Department of Archives and History of the State of Georgia, 1938, p. 9.
8. Bassett, p. 341.
9. Bassett, p. 341.
10. Bassett, p. 349.
11. Bassett, p. 349.
12. Georgia Republican and State Intelligencer, August 13, 1805, p. 2.
13. Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger, February 11, 1809, p. 3.
14. Bassett, p. 343.
15. Death Certificates, Dept. of Vital Statistics, Chatham County Health Dept. Several death certificates record Dr. Parker's attendance in 1823. He was 57 at the time.
16. Will of Dr. William Parker, No. 94, Chatham County Court of Ordinary, Savannah, Ga.
17. Columbia Museum and Savannah Advertiser, August 2, 1806, p. 4.

18. Thomas Gamble, Jr., The History of Bethesda, (Spartanburg, S. C.: The Reprint Publishing Co., 1958), p. 125.
19. The Georgian, January 31, 1838, p. 2.
20. The 1830 Georgia Census, p. 519.
21. E. Merton Coulter and Albert B. Saye, A List of Early Settlers of Georgia, (Athens, Ga.: The University of Georgia Press, 1949) p. 39.
22. Coulter and Saye, p. 39.
23. The Story of Georgia, Bio. Vol., (New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1938) p. 701.
24. Allen D. Chandler, The Colonial Records, (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Co.) VI, p. 321.
25. Death Certificate of Grace Farley, Chatham County Health Dept.
26. Chandler, p. 321.
27. Mrs. Howard H. McCall, p. 9.
28. Mrs. Howard H. McCall, p. 9.
29. Death Certificate of Mrs. Elizabeth Parker, Chatham County Health Dept.
30. Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger.
31. Will of Grace Farley, Chatham County Court of Ordinary.
32. Will of Dr. Parker.
33. Mary Bondurant Warren. Marriages and Deaths, 1763-1820, (Danville, Ga.: Heritage Papers, 1968) p. 63.
34. Death Certificate of Ann Johnston, Chatham County Health Dept. This document states that she died October 29, 1846 at the age of 75. In 1830, she would have been 59. The life span of Louisa Parker is unknown.
35. Death Certificate of Ann Farley Maxwell, Chatham County Health Dept. She died June 27, 1843 at the age of 43. The address listed was Bryan Street, Warren Ward, which was in the possession of Parker's estate. This leads me to believe that she was on the 1830 census as living with Parker. She was 36 at the time.

37. Will and Estate Folder of Richard McAllister, 95A & 95B, Chatham County Court of Ordinary. Contained in these folders are medical bills from Kollock and Parker to the estate of Richard McAllister. Additionally, McAllister was spelled three different ways in the will -- McAllister, McAlister, McCalister.
38. Tombstone of Louisa Carolina McAllister, Colonial Park Cemetary. It is attached to the East wall.
39. Will and Estate Folder of Richard McAllister. Dr. John Irvine sent a receipt to the estate of McAllister stating that he visited and consulted with Mrs. McAllister concerning her daughter.
40. Warren, p. 68. Louisa married Richard McAllister in South Carolina in early 1798. According to his will, he became ill in Baltimore, Md.
41. The Georgia Gazette, May 12, 1785, p. 2. Louisa's father, Godin Guerard, advertised for two overseers for his plantation.
42. Tombstone of Ann Guerard, Colonial Cemetary, Section A. She was born in 1752 and died July 11, 1793. This gives some indication of when Louisa was born.
43. Marriage Notices in the South Carolina Gazette, 1732-1801. Compiled and edited by A. S. Salley, Jr., Baltimore Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965., p. 40. Louisa's father was the son of the late Hon. John Guerard, Esq. and her mother was the daughter of John Matthewes, Esq.
44. Will and Estate Folder of Richard McAllister, 95A & 95B.
45. Interview with Dr. Julian Kelly, present owner of the home, 27 Island Dr., Savannah, Ga., July 22, 1978.
46. Will of Ann Farley Johnston, Will No. 83, Chatham County Court of Ordinary.
47. Columbia Museum and Savannah Advertiser, February 8, 1810, p. 3. Steele White married Ann Guerard on February 7, 1810. Ann Guerard was probably the sister of Louisa since that was also her mother's name. This explains why William Parker White was named as one of the heirs to Dr. Parker's property.

48. Tombstone of Robert Guerard, Lot 126, Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Ga. The relationship of Peter and Robert Guerard was established in Dr. Parker's will.
49. Interview with Dr. Julian Kelly.
50. Will of Ann Parker, Folder 6 & 17, Chatham County Court of Ordinary.
51. Deed Book 2N, Chatham County Superior Court, Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga., p. 138. The land in his possession at the time of this purchase was willed to him by his grandmother, Ann Parker, as stated above.
52. Deed Book 2F, Chatham County Superior Court, p. 462.
53. Charles E. Waring and Elizabeth S. Waring. Savannah and Its Environs, 1773-1897, Album 2, 1970, Georgia Historical Society. A copy of this map is <sup>now</sup> in the possession of Dr. Julian Kelly. John McKinnon Sury conducted a resurvey of the Isle of Hope by using a map published in 1800. The resurvey date is incomplete in that one of the numbers is left out -- 18 2. A road is drawn on the map leading to a settlement on Grimbald Point. It is designated as the road to Dr. Parker's. His obituary in the newspaper also states that he had a country seat.
54. City Ledger of Ground Rents, Warren Ward, Lots 13 and 14, Chatham County Superior Court, Savannah, Ga. There are also ground rent receipts paid by Louisa McAllister for this property in the Will and Estate Folder of Richard McAllister. Deed Book 2H, cited in this bibliography, gives an account of Matthew McAllister's buying a piece of city property from Noel Faming on June 16, 1790. I was unable to determine if this was lots 13 and 14.
55. Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia, Vol. II, Compiled by Howard H. McCall, Baltimore Genealogical Publishing Co., 1968, p. 84. The relationship between Matthew McAllister <sup>and Col. 1757</sup> is verified by a list of the children of Col. Richard McAllister who was born in Pennsylvania in 1725. Among his children were Matthew, born in 1758, and Richard, born in 1765.
56. City Ledger of Ground Rents, Warren Ward, Lots 13 & 14.
57. Will of Dr. Parker. Dr. Parker acquired five slaves from his wife. He requested that the executors of his will consult the slaves as to their desires in the selection of their new masters.



58. The Georgian, January 31, 1838, p. 2. His obituary discussed his paralysis. His death certificate gives apoplexy as the cause of death and states that he was 72. The obituary maintains that he was 73.
59. Parish Register of Christ Church, 1822-1851, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga., p. 90.
60. Interview with Dr. Julian Kelly. Dr. Kelly acquired his information from the late Mr. Funk, a life long resident of the Isle of Hope.

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Deed Book 2F, Bill of Sale between Hampden McIntosh and Dr. William Parker, April 2, 1816, p. 462, Chatham County Superior Court, Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga.

Deed Book H. Bill of Sale between Noel Faming and Maxwell McAllister, June 16, 1790, p. 164, Chatham County Superior Court, Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga.

Deed Book 2N. Bill of Sale between Vincent Thomas Matthew and Dr. William Parker, May 10, 1824, p. 138, Chatham County Superior Court, Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Ga.

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