

CHAPTERS IN TRINITY'S HISTORY

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CHAPTER III - TRINITY'S FOUNDERS

The eleven founding members of what would become Trinity Church, Columbia, were William Branthwaite, Warren Ransome Davis, Edward Fisher, Theodore Gaillard, James Sanders Guignard, John Gabriel Guignard, William Harper, William Marshall, Samuel Percival, Robert Stark, and Benjamin Waring. The backgrounds of these individuals reflect the frontier nature of the Carolina back country. Five of the eleven were South Carolinians. Davis was a native Columbian, while Gaillard, the Guignards, and Waring were from the low country. Stark and Fisher had been born in Virginia and came to the state about the time of the American Revolution. Harper had emigrated from Antigua. The birthplaces of Branthwaite, Marshall, and Percival are not known. From what is known about these individuals, they certainly were respectable and many of them played prominent roles in the life of the city and the state.

William Branthwaite was a partner in the firm of Means and Branthwaite, which operated a drug store. In 1816 he was elected one of the wardens of the city. He also served as one of Trinity's first wardens.

Warren Ransome Davis was born in Columbia in 1793 and graduated from the South Carolina College in 1810. He read for the law and after being admitted to the bar moved to Pendleton District. He was elected to Congress in 1824 and served until his death in 1835.

Edward Fisher, M.D., was one of the first wardens of Trinity and represented it in diocesan convention. He was the first member of the congregation named to a diocesan committee. Both he and his wife, Mary, were active in civic affairs. Both are buried in the churchyard.

Theodore Gaillard, a native of St. Stephen's Parish, was educated at the Middle Temple in England. Returning home he represented St. Stephen's in the General Assembly and served two terms as Speaker of the House of Representatives. In 1808 he was elected to the South Carolina Court of Appeals. One of Trinity's first vestrymen, he is buried in the churchyard.

John Gabriel Guignard moved from Stateburg to Columbia about 1796 after surveying the streets for the original town plan. In 1800 he was elected Treasurer for the Upper Division of South Carolina and the following year was named Surveyor General for the State. He established two plantations across the Congaree River from the city: Rising Hopes and Still Hopes. He is buried in the churchyard.

James Sanders Guignard was the son of John Gabriel Guignard and Elizabeth Sanders. His family moved to Columbia at the turn of the 19th century. He succeeded his father as Treasurer for the Upper Division of South Carolina. Later he was clerk and ordinary for Richland District until his death. He is buried in the churchyard.

William Harper, the son of a Methodist missionary, was born in Antigua. He emigrated to South Carolina with his family and they settled in Columbia. After graduating from the South Carolina College, he read law and was admitted to the bar. He was a trustee of the South Carolina College. He served one term as Speaker of the House and as a member of the Court of Appeals. In 1835 he moved to Fairfield District.

William Marshall. Other than being listed as a founder of Trinity, there is no information available.

Samuel Percival was a pharmacist whose drug store was at the corner of Richardson (Main) and Lady Streets. He also owned several mills in the county. He is buried in the churchyard.

Robert Stark was born in Petersburg, Virginia, and moved with his parents to what would become Edgefield District. During the American Revolution he saw action at Cowpens and Eutaw Springs. After the war he was admitted to the bar and represented Saxe Gotha District (Lexington) in the House. He served as Speaker of the House, trustee of the South Carolina College, and Secretary of State. He was one of Trinity's first vestrymen and a lay reader. He is buried in the churchyard.

Benjamin Waring was a planter in St. George's Parish and represented it in the colonial Commons House of Assembly. During the Revolution he served with Francis Marion. After the war he moved to Columbia where he established a cotton seed mill and a paper mill. In 1791 he was elected Treasurer of the Upper Division of South Carolina and later Surveyor General. He was one of the founding members of First Presbyterian Church before moving his membership to Trinity.