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Archibald Bulloch

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ARCHIBALD BULLOCH

Bulloch County was created in 1796. It was named for a man who was born in South Carolina and had been dead for almost twenty years.

Who was this man?? What did he do?? How did he get to Georgia and why did the legislature want to name a county after him. Just who was Archibald Bulloch??

In searching for these answers, I discovered that there are few sources that give details of the life of Archibald Bulloch.

One of my best sources was in a book written by Charles C. Jones in 1891, titled, "Biographical Sketches of the Delegates from Georgia to the Continental Congress".

In this Jones states that "of all the patriots who encountered peril and made strenuous exertion to deliver Georgia from kingly domination and pave the way for admission into the sisterhood of the confederated American colonies, no one was more earnest, self-sacrificing, valiant, or influential than the Honorable Archibald Bulloch!"

Jones states that Bulloch was "of irreproachable in character, firm in his convictions, brave of heart, bold in action, wise in counsel, jealous of individual and political rights...... at an early stage of the revolutionary proceeding he became an acknowledged leader of the rebels and was by them rapidly advanced to the highest post of danger and of honor."

This description gives one a feeling that Jones has placed Bulloch on a pedestal almost as high as many have placed George Washington.

Archibald Bulloch was the son of the Reverend James Bulloch of Wilton, Colleton Parish in South Carolina. The Rev. Bulloch had been born in Scotland where he received a liberal education and had become a clergyman. He came to South Carolina in 1728 at a time when King George I was enacting repressive measures against Scottish gentlemen and it is thought that he came here to seek peace from that conflict.

The elder Bulloch was active in the affairs of South Carolina and served as a King's Justice of the Peace, a Special Agent to the Creeks and as a member of the South Carolina Colonial Assembly. He was busy in the religious affairs and founded several churches as well as engaging in business and running his plantation called Pon Pon near today's site of Walterboro.
Jones said that perhaps the most decisive incident for the Bulloch family in America was the entertainment of General Oglethorpe at Pon Pon in 1733.

Rev. Bulloch was married to Jean Stobo, a daughter of the Reverend Archibald Stobo of South Carolina. They had several children however she died as a young woman. She was the mother of Archibald who was born in Charleston in 1730 (this was just three years before Oglethorpe's landing in Savannah). Rev. Bulloch was married four time but all his children were by his first wife.

It is interesting to learn how old Rev. Bulloch and his family came to Georgia. He married as his third wife, Mrs. Ann Cuthbert Graham in 1758. She was the owner of Mulberry Grove Plantation which was situated on the Savannah River and in Georgia. The new Mrs. Bulloch's family and connections were among the top leaders of the Georgia Colony. (Incidentally this is the plantation that was later confiscated from a Tory and was given by our State to General Nathaniel Green for his service in the Revolutionary War. This is where Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin. Today this is the present site of the Georgia Ports Authority in Port Wentworth.)

The elder Bulloch as in South Carolina became active in the affairs of his new home. Here he served as a Justice of the Peace. When trouble came with England, he sided with the Patriots. He had a seat in the Provincial Congress. He was at that time an old man of seventy-four years. It must have taken great courage to take up a public office which would have meant that he was in great danger. He volunteered and organized a company of Patriots to protect his district. Rev. Bulloch died during the Revolutionary War and is buried at Wormsloe Plantation. His fourth wife was Mary Jones a daughter of Noble Jones of Wormsloe. He had indeed allied himself with another important leading family.

Archibald Bulloch (our subject) was born in Charleston in 1730. He was educated as a lawyer and a planter. It is assumed that he moved to Georgia in the same year that his father came.

Archibald married six years later to Mary De Veaux at Argyle Island. She was the daughter of a successful rice planter whose Shaftesbury Plantation was located on Argyle Island in the Savannah River. James De Veaux was a Senior Judge, a Commissioner and a member of the General Assembly. (This plantation is situated in the Savannah River across from Mulberry Grove Plantation. The Coastal Highway, US 17, runs through Argyle Island.)
In Savannah, Archibald Bulloch was a successful attorney and was active in the public life of the colony.

In 1768, he was elected to serve in the Commons House of Assembly. Here he was named on the committee to correspond with Benjamin Franklin, Georgia's agent in London. Franklin had been appointed an agent to represent, solicit, and to transact the affairs for the Colony of Georgia in Great Britain.

The next year he was named to a commission to choose vestrymen for the parishes in the colony.

When James Wright the Royal Governor disapproved the election of Noble W. Jones, Archibald was chosen Speaker of the Royal Assembly. This was in 1772.

As more trouble with England came, he boldly took his stand against the crown. He served on a committee appointed to sympathize with the people of Boston who were under the ban of the Intolerable Acts. This was Boston's punishment for the Boston Tea Party.

When Jonathan Bryan and others were removed from the governor's council, Archibald along with Noble W. Jones, George Walton and John Houstoun boldly signed a notice in the Georgia Gazette, 14 July 1774, that urged Georgians to attend a meeting at Tondee's Tavern on 27 July to consider the critical situation in the colonies. These were truly bold stands and acts of defiance against the crown.

In January 1775 a Provincial Congress was convened in Savannah. This group represented five of the Georgia parishes. This body elected Archibald Bulloch, Noble W. Jones and John Houstoun all from Christ Church Parish (which was Savannah's district) as delegates to the Continental Congress which was to convene in Philadelphia in May. These members refused to serve because they were selected by a minority of the colony.

We should note that the first battle of the Revolution was on April 19, 1775 at Lexington-Concord in Massachusetts.

In July 1775 all Georgia parishes were represented when the Provincial Congress met. In this meeting Archibald was unanimously chosen President. George Walton was elected Secretary, and the group approved the American Declaration of Rights and the Continental Association. Three days later this body chose Bulloch, Houstoun, Jones, and John Zubly to join Lyman Hall, who was already in Philadelphia, to represent Georgia for the first time in the Continental Congress.

Responding to the trust placed in them Bulloch, Houstoun, and Zubly went to
Philadelphia and participated in the business of this Continental Congress.

The next year in January 1776, the Provincial Congress assembled again in Savannah and again elected Bulloch as president. In February Bulloch, John Houstoun, Lyman Hall, Button Gwinnett, and George Walton, were appointed delegates to the next Continental Congress. In this same session a temporary constitution was adopted and promulgated. With this they elected Archibald Bulloch as President and Commander-in-Chief of Georgia. He held this office until his death in 1777.

An amusing incident occurred while Archibald was serving as President. It seems that Colonel Lachlan McIntoch who was commanding Continental troops in Savannah thought to compliment Mr. Bulloch upon his high office by ordering a sentinel to be posted at his door. The democratic instincts of the chief executive rose up in rebellion. He ordered the removal of the sentinel stating that he himself was the servant of the people and that he wished to avoid in appearance of being ostentatious.

Bulloch, as President and Commander-in-Chief of the State was at the very forefront of the Revolution in Georgia. Because of this he was unable to go to Philadelphia and attend the Continental Congress of 1776. Therefore he did not have the honor of being one of the Georgia signers of the Declaration of Independence. He remained at home where he could attend to the affair of the State.

Archibald distinguished himself as a military leader. In the Spring of 1776 there were a number of Tories and British who had set up a base on Tybee Island. He led a party of militia men and Creek Indians down river to the island. There they destroyed the camp, burned all the houses except one house that sheltered women and children. A number of the enemy were killed and captured and the patriots return to Savannah without a single casualty.

The Declaration of Independence was sanctioned in Philadelphia on 4th July 1776. but it was not heard of in Georgia until the 10th of August. It was on that day that a messenger arrived and delivered a copy of it to President Bulloch. We are told that the Provincial Council was assembled at once and President Bulloch read it aloud to that assembly.

With that ceremony concluded, the President and members of the Council repaired to the public square where the Declaration was read once again to a large crowd of citizens. The grenadier and light infantry companies then fired volleys and a general procession was formed:

"The Grenadiers in front;
The Provost Marshal on horseback, with his sword drawn;"
The Secretary, bearing the Declaration;
His Excellency the President;
The honorable the Council, and gentlemen attending;
The Light Infantry;
The Militia of the Town and District of Savannah;
And lastly, the Citizens."

It was in this order that they marched to the Liberty Pole at Tondee's Tavern. Here the Declaration of Independence was read for the third time. Here thirteen volleys were fired from the field pieces and also from the small arms. Thence the entire parade proceeded to the battery at Trustees Garden, where it was read a fourth and last time and a salute was fired from the large siege guns posted at that point.

Then His Excellency, the Members of the Council, Colonel McIntosh, many gentlemen and militia dined under the cedar trees and cordially drank to the "prosperity and perpetuity of the United, Free, and Independent States of America."

In the evening the town was much illuminated. A funeral procession, consisting of many citizens, all the military companies and the militia with muffled drums marched to the front of the court house where his Majesty George the Third was interred in effigy. The burial service was read with great solemnity.

Now that Georgia had been formally recognized as a state they needed to order a general election in September to select representatives to meet in a convention to be held in Savannah in October 1776. During all this time President was carrying-on and administering to the affairs of the State.

On February 22, 1777 Archibald Bulloch was granted absolute executive powers. A few days later, he died at his residence. He was forty-seven years old.

He is buried in the Colonial Cemetery in Savannah. The inscription on his monument reads:

First President of Georgia 1776
Archibald Bulloch
Born in South Carolina 1730
Georgians! Let the memory of Archibald Bulloch live in your breast, tell your children of him and let them tell another generation.