

Peter Durr and Descendants,
Province and State of South Carolina, 1752-1810

The first record pertaining to PETER(1) DURR appears in the Council Journal of the Province dated 2 January 1753, it being Durr's petition for 300 acres of land (6 persons @ 50 acres per person) written on board the brigantine, JOHN and MARY, ... 'bound from Rotterdam to this place', Charles town, 20 Dec 1752. His family included a wife, name not recorded, and four children: CATHERINE, 7 years; MARY ANNE, six; MICHAEL, aged three; and JOHN, one year.

'The said Petition being considered and the Petitioner appearing and swearing allegiance to his majesty, and to the truth of the allegations in his said Petition, the prayer thereof was granted and the Deputy Secretary ordered to prepare a warrant and the Surveyor General lay out the 300 acres of land...that a grant map issue to the Petitioner for the same. Ordered also that the Commissary General do pay the Charges and the Bounty.' [Council Journal, 1752-1754, pgs. 157-158]

The land was surveyed, the plat drawn and certified on 13 June 1753. The grant to Peter Durr, his heirs and assigns, was described as 'a Plantation or tract of Land containing three hundred acres on Indian field Swamp in Berkeley County bounded on all sides by Vacant Land'. The title was dated 13 June 1754 and recorded on 30 June 1754. A notation on the margin of the document states, 'Deed delivered this 15th August 1758 to the proprietor', indicating Durr had paid his annual taxes and complied with the requirements for ownership during the previous four years. [Memorials Bk 5, pg. 441]

Peter Durr fathered four children before 1752. Another son, LEWIS, was the first-born in South Carolina, c1753-54, as evidenced in a later record. ANN MARGARET, was born 20 Jan 1758 and baptized during Nov 1758, 'daughter of Peter and KATHERINE Durr' [History of Orangeburg County: pg. 180]. Previously, Rev. Giessendanner, minister of the German Lutheran Church at Orangeburgh, made an entry relative to Peter and MARGARET Durr as sureties upon the birth of Jacob Frederick, 20 June 1758, the son of Andrew and Margaret Frederick [ibid, pg. 178]. Did the Reverend err in recording the name, Margaret, instead of Katherine Durr? Whatever, Katherine, the given-name, was traditionally endowed on Durr daughters unto the fifth generation.

Peter Durr probably was born in the vicinity of the Rhine River in Germany during the 1720s. He is assumed to have died intestate at his plantation near Indian Field Swamp, St. George Parish, South Carolina after 1758. A search of the German parish records has not yet revealed his baptismal date, marriage, or the christenings of his children. However, extant parish records indicate the given-names, JACOB, MICHAEL, and PETER DUERR (as DURR is written without umlauts), date to the 1570s in these areas: Landau in Phalz; Bayern (Rhenish Bavaria); Jagstkreis and Schwarwaldkreis in Wurtenburg on both sides of the Rhine River.

JACOB Durr (Durr) also obtained a land grant in the Province of South Carolina, 150 acres in Orangeburgh, 3 Sept 1754 [Memorials Bk 6, pg. 117]. Jacob 'of Amelia' married in Orangeburg township, 22 Dec 1755, Eva Catherine Keyser [The History of Orangeburgh, pg. 119]. Jacob may have been related to Peter Durr. The given-name, Jacob, was carried into the third generation by MICHAEL Durr, son of Peter.

[Note: I have no knowledge of any relationship to NICOLAS Durr of Orangeburgh, or others by the similar surnames of Derr-Dorr-Doerr.]

MICHAEL(2) Durr (1749-1794)
Second Generation

In 1772, MICHAEL(2) Durr was about 23 years of age. He obtained a royal land grant in his own right and received '100 acres situated on PeeDee Branch of Four Holes', St. Georges Parish, Berkeley County" (near Indian Field Swamp). The survey made, the plat was drawn and the title recorded on 14 August 1772.

Michael married MARY ABERLY just before the onset of the Revolutionary War. She was the daughter of John and Anna LANG Markley Aberly. His allegiance and sympathies, either for or against continued British rule, remains unknown. However, LEWIS Durr enlisted as a private in a Loyalist regiment that served in the southern campaign from Colleton County [Loyalists in the Southern Campaign, Vol 1: Colleton County Militia].

FRANCIS ASBURY (1743-1816), born in England, became the first bishop and pioneer leader of American Methodism. He is credited with more than 200,000 converts in his lifetime. In St. George, local history and tradition state that Methodist campmeetings at Indian Field began very soon after 1785. [Rev. A.D. Betts: St. George (SC) Methodist-Episcopal Church South. 1935.] There is no doubt that Asbury played an important role in the conversion of Michael Durr, for his name does not appear among those who signed the Corpus Evangelicum in 1788 as members of the St. George Lutheran Church at Indian Field.

Michael(2) Durr and wife, Mary, had nine children born between 1775 and 1790: John, Elisabeth (Durr) RODE, Jacob, Mary, Nancy, 'and the four youngest' Peter, MICHAEL(3), Catherine, and Margaret. The adjoining households of Michael and Lewis Durr were enumerated in St. Georges Parish, Dorchester County, Charleston District at the time of the 1790 Census.

In August 1793, Michael(2) received title to a state land grant of 300 acres 'situated on the waters of Indian Field Swamp, running into Four Holes'. His last will and testament was written December 1793 and recorded Charleston, 20 May 1794, naming his children and declaring 'my brother LEWIS', son John Durr, and wife Mary Durr sole executors of his estate [Charleston, SC Will Book C, pg. 123].

Rev. MICHAEL(3) Durr (c1784-1860)
Third Generation

Bishop Asbury's dynamic influence played some role in the lives of two contemporaries, LOVICK PIERCE (1785-1872) of Barnwell County, and MICHAEL(3) Durr (1784-1860) of Colleton County. Both young men committed themselves to the ministry of what was then the Methodist-Episcopal Church. Pierce, ordained in 1805, was assigned to a circuit ministry among the remote settlements of eastern Georgia.

DURR, ordained in 1810, also was assigned by the South Carolina Conference to eastern Georgia, replacing Pierce at Selueda in 1810. Thereafter, the Reverend Durr served in what is now Hancock County, Washington County, and ultimately was 'located' at an established church in Greene County, Georgia [Rev. Harold Lawrence: Methodist Preachers in Georgia, 1793-1900].

Rev. Michael Durr married in 1812, ELIZABETH PINCKARD, daughter of James and Judith (Smith) Pinckard who moved from Pittsylvania County, Virginia to Greene County, Georgia before 1790. Eleven children were born during the family's migration across Georgia: Lewis M. Durr born 1814, m. Eliza Ragland; James Pinckard Durr born 1816, m. 2) Mrs. Martha Nicks Mizell of Russell Co., AL; Mary Ann Durr bc1818, m.1) George Wilson, m.2) Eucratus Roland; Martha H. Durr bc1820, m. John M. Cranford; Jane H. Durr bc1821-22, m. Thomas Jones; Elizabeth Pinckard Durr bc1823, m. Allen Flemming; Michael Asbury Durr bc1826, m.1) Julia Allen, m.2) Mary V. McGehee; Lovick H. Durr bc1828, m. ---; Peyton Thomas Durr bc1830, m. Virginia Barrow; Catherine Charlotte Durr bc1832, m. James Floyd; John Wesley Durr born Warm Springs, Meriwether County, 23 June 1835, m. Rebecca Hart Holt. [Family notes]

John Durr of Conecuh County, Alabama [1850 Census, pg. 346] was enumerated as aged 75 years, a farmer, born South Carolina (about 1775); wife Elsey, 73 years, born South Carolina (about 1777). John is conjectured to have been the eldest brother of Michael(3) Durr.

Elizabeth Pinckard Durr died in Notasulga, Alabama on 12 Dec 1856, age of 64 years.

Michael(3) Durr married 2) Mrs. Adeline Popille on 12 March 1857. He died at Notasulga, Alabama on 22 May 1860, age of 76 years, leaving a will naming his children, some grandchildren, and wife Adeline [Macon County, Alabama Probate record - no volume number, pg. 235-236?].

Death notices of both Elizabeth Durr and Michael(3) Durr were published in the Southern Christian Advocate, Vol. 1 (compiled by Brent H. Holcomb).