

Benjamin Grayson History

BY

Peter and Lund Washington

(Lund Washington was a distant cousin of George Washington and was manager of Mount Vernon)

The history of the Graysons in America of which there is any record is Benjamin Grayson. He came from England or Scotland to Westmoreland County Virginia. His family history previous to his coming here is not known to his descendents. He was a man of fine address.

This history was copied by a grandson of Spence Grayson at Baltimore Maryland in 1876 and typewritten by Susan Washington Edwards, great granddaughter of Spence Grayson.

Benjamin Grayson married the widow, nee Susannah Monroe, sister of Spence Monroe who was the father of President James Monroe, a Scotchman. Susannah first married a Mr. Tyler, then Mr. Linton.

Benjamin Grayson's sister married Mr. Harrison ancestor of Cal. Burr Harrison of the Revolutionary army and of Matthews Harrison, lawyer and relative of Benjamin Harrison, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and a great grandfather of President Benjamin Harrison. 1888.

The name of Spence was introduced into the family of Monroe by the marriage of a woman *named* Spence.

After Susannah's death Benjamin Grayson married into the Ewell family of the same family as that of Lt. Gen. Ewell of the Confederate Army.

Benjamin Grayson died in 1757 in Prince William County Virginia,

The children of Benjamin and Susannah Grayson were named Benjamin, Spence, William and Susannah Monroe Grayson.

Upon marriage with Miss Ewell he had no children.

The family of President Tyler was of the Susannah Monroe's first husband as was President Harrison of the same stock that married Benjamin Grayson.

Most at this data came from Col. Peter Grayson Washington and Frederick William Grayson.

After the death of Benjamin Grayson in 1757 his estate was left to his son the *Reverend* Spence Grayson of the Church of England, the oldest son of Benjamin and Susannah Grayson who then married Miss Osborne and had one son Benjamin the II. After Rev. Spence Grayson died his widow married a Maree.

Benjamin the II became involved financially. His half brothers Linton and Tyler and his brother Rev. Spence' Grayson became his security for large sums of money and lost heavily. His sister also lost heavily. William being at college of Law in England was not a loser. His widow received a valuable land belonging to the Rev. Spence Grayson in Virginia.

Benjamin the 2nd's widow married a Mr. Maree. Her son her son Benjamin III married a Miss Brough of London County Virginia. Ben. III. Sons were Dr. William Grayson of New York, Dr. Robert O. Grayson (Osborne), and Dr. Richard Grayson. Two daughters— Mrs. Betty Lewis Carter and Mrs. Stevensen. Some are in Virginia and some emigrated to the west since the Civil War. Alexander and Richard were officers in the Confederate Army.

Betty, daughter of Benjamin Grayson III married William Lewis who died. She then married Mr. Carter and had two sons Benjamin Grayson Carter and George Carter.

In 1881 the cousins Betty Carter, Josephine Stevenson, and Mary Grayson were living at Belle Aire Virginia.

Owing to the great increase in the families of the sons of the first Benjamin Grayson, with emigrations of the descendants to various parts of the south, the descendants have inherited reasonable kinship.

The emigrations had a tendency to darken the memory as to the direct tracings of Benjamin I but it has never been upon the name or blood chilled that to or with warmth of fraternal feeling between the three sons of Benjamin I., the great grand father has ever been evident in that spirit of clanship which has been marked characteristic of the Grayson family. The same with John and Lawrence Washington, ancestors of Gen. George Washington and Lund Washington.

Spence Grayson II, son of Benjamin and Susannah Monroe Grayson was born in 1734. He inherited and resided on the Belle Aire estate, former residence of his father in Prince William County Virginia. He married Mary Elizabeth Wagener, daughter of Dr. Peter Wagener, son of the Reverend Peter Wagener of the Episcopal Church. The mother of Mrs. Wagener was the sister of Speaker John Robinson so graphically described by Wirt as presiding officer of the House of Burgesses where she received General, then Colonel Washington upon his return from his campaign in 1759. She was also the sister of Colonel Beverly Robinson, Loyalist of New York.

The name Beverly came from Catherine Beverlyn the grandmother of Elizabeth Wagener. Dr. Wagener was an Englishman.

Peter Wagener is mentioned by Bishop Meade as a member of the vestry of the Parish and uniting with George Washington in a deed to the Reverend Lee Massey for a pew in' the Pohick Church. From this gentleman the name of Peter Wagener was established in the Grayson family; son of Dr. Wagener was clerk of Fairfax Court house. Captain Wagener appears in the annuals of the Revolution,

Spence Grayson after marriage studied for the ministry. Bishop Meade states that Spence Grayson was chosen minister of Dettinger Parish, Prince William County 1784. His sermons were masterpieces of composition. He was a personal friend and great favorite of General Washington. When General Washington's nephew Major George Washington was married there were three clergymen present. General Washington chose Rev. Spence Grayson to perform the ceremony and gave him a fee of \$100 dollars in gold.

There was no family in closer communion or more fraternally regarded by General Washington than the Grayson family. (This is Copied from the paper of uncle Lund Washington.) En passant, we mention as we know the Graysons are fond of a good table that it is. said the Rev. Spence Grayson had a special penchant for the table for in a lease of land detached from the Belle Airs estate the seat reserved 70 pairs of canvas back ducks to be delivered between November 15 and December 1st.

The old Christ Church in Alexandria Virginia still stands where he often presided, the same church of which General Washington was a vestryman. The writer of this paper visited the place in 1876.

The Reverend Spence Grayson died at his Belle Aire residence In 1798, age 64. His widow died at the residence of Lund Washington her son in law in Washington in 1810.

The issue of Rev, Spence Grayson will be given in the closing part of this record.

William Grayson III, son of Benjamin Grayson and Susannah Monroe, was' born in 1736. Like his brother Spence he received a classical education and practiced law at Dumfries, Prince William County Virginia.

Having a good education William exerted all his power for the esteem of General Washington no doubt the General was much influenced by William Grayson in bringing improvement of his cousin James Monroe and as he enjoyed the esteem of General Washington no doubt the General was much influenced by William Grayson in bringing James Monroe forward in the arena of the worlds notice in the favorable manner.

At the commencement of the Revolution General Washington appointed William Grayson Captain and he entered into the Washington military family. In 1776 he was appointed Colonel in a Virginia regiment.

In the battles of Brandenburg, Germantown and Monmouth, the regiment was destroyed and Col. Grayson was appointed to Gen. Washington's staff. He was twice a member of the Board of War and a member of the Continental Congress, a member of the Virginia Convention that ratified it and was the first senator elected from the state of Virginia. He was Senator when he died in 1790 at 56 years,. He was a large and handsome man of noble appearance and manners and was certainly one of the most amiable, honorable and popular man in the day in which he lived. Uncle Lund Washington expressed the above. Hemet with and dined in the company of Colonel Grayson in 1786 at Belle Aire.

William Grayson married the Governor of Maryland's sister. (General Smallwood) Their children were Alfred William who married Miss Breckinridge, sister of the ? of John Cabel Breckenridge Vice president of the U.S. under James McGannon???