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Cabe, John [1]

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1752–21 Apr. 1818

John Cabe, planter, miller, and politician, was probably born in Pennsylvania, the son of Barnaby and Elizabeth Perkins McCabe, later Cabe. The family moved into Orange County [2] in the late 1750s. They seem to have been identified with the Presbyterians [3] of the New Hope Church area, though their names do not appear in the surviving church records. However, four of Barnaby's children, including John, married into families who belonged to that congregation.

John was educated at home at the Piper-Cabe schoolhouse located on his father's land on the Eno River. Though his education must have been somewhat limited, it nevertheless seems to have been solid. Both John and his brother William were among the contributors who gave twenty pounds toward the establishment of The University of North Carolina [4] when funds were being raised.

Though his father became prosperous as a wagoner (working on Governor William Tryon [5]'s side during the Regulator [6] troubles and on the American side during the Revolution [7]), John attained a real affluence before his death in 1818, when his estate included over three thousand acres of land. This land was worked by sixty enslaved people, whom John owned. His mill on the Eno River, built before 1779, was the source of his prosperity; he was also half owner of a second mill downstream from his own, which he had built for his son-in-law.

Cabe must have shown an unusual capability for leadership, for he was elected delegate to the last provincial congress [8], which met in 1776 in Halifax [9], when he was only twenty-four years old. The confusion and near-riots that attended that election resulted in a second election, in which Cabe was again victorious, the only one of the candidates to be elected both times. Delayed by these disturbances, the delegates nevertheless arrived in Halifax in time to participate in the adoption of both the Bill of Rights [10] and the Constitution [11] itself. Cabe was elected to represent Orange County [2] in the General Assembly [12] in 1796, 1797, 1798, and 1800. He was appointed justice of the peace in 1801 and continued to serve in that office until his death. He thereby officiated in the legislative, judicial, and administrative affairs of the county.

Cabe was married at least twice: in 1786 to Gilbert Strayhorn's daughter Mary, with whom he had nine daughters; and in 1802 to Nancy Moreland. His daughters were Elizabeth (b. 1787), who married Benjamin Rhodes; Ann (b. 1788), married first to John Latta and second to Major Robert Donnell; Sarah (b. 1789), married to Joseph Latta; Mary (b. 1791), who married Mann Patterson; Rachel (b. 1792), married first to Moses McCown and second to Herbert Sims; Catherine (b. 1795), who married Benjamin Rogers; Lydia (b. 1797), who married Charles W. Johnston; Margaret (b. 1799), married to John W. Caldwell; and Jane (b. 1802), married to William T. Shields. Cabe was buried in the family graveyard on his Eno River plantation.

References:

Hugh Conway Browning, *The Descendants of Barnaby Cabe (McCabe)* (1967).

Hugh T. Lefler and Paul Wager, eds., *Orange County, 1752–1952* (1953).

Additional Resources:

Section 2: Cates Creek to Stone's Creek, Eno River: http://www.enoriver.org/fishdam/markham2.htm [13]

Stones Creek to Roxboro Road (US 501), Eno River: http://www.enoriver.org/fishdam/markham3.htm [14]

Description of Eno River State Park, NC Parks: http://www.ncparks.gov/About/plans/gmp/enri/2005/desc.pdf [15]

"A Community of Men and Mills," Eno Journal, Volume 7, Papers from the seminar on Water Wheels and Windmills, July 1978, By Jean Anderson: http://www.enoriver.org/store/journals/volume-7-special-issue/community/ [16]

Craig, D. I. (David Irwin), 1849-1925. *Historical sketch of New Hope Church : in Orange County, N.C.* Reidsville, N.C. [N.C.]: [s.n.], 1891. 1891. https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/historical-sketch-of-new-hope-church-in-orange-county-n.c./500321 [17] (accessed April 15, 2013).

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