
For about two years after leaving Northumberland, Durant explored the Albemarle region, to which he later moved. At that time the area was part of Virginia and was known as Roanoke. It had recently begun to interest Virginians who were seeking land, and several had bought tracts from the Indians and moved into the region. In his explorations Durant was associated with Nathaniel Batts, a longtime explorer and fur trader in Roanoke, who was then living in Lower Norfolk County. In that period he also was associated with Richard Batts, a wealthy sea captain and merchant of Barbados who traded with Virginia and is thought to have been a brother of Nathaniel. As Durant was a mariner by occupation, he may have been employed in that capacity by Richard. In 1660 and 1661, however, he was devoting much time to the exploration of Roanoke, in which he may have been an employee of Nathaniel. Possibly he worked intermittently for both.

On 24 Sept. 1660 Durant and Richard Batts served as witnesses to a deed in which Kiscutanewh, king of the Yeopim Indians, sold to Nathaniel Batts all land on the southwest side of Pasquotank River from the mouth of the river to the head of New Begun Creek. The deed is the oldest for North Carolina land known to be on record. As the land conveyed was then in Norfolk County, Va., the deed was recorded there.

The following year Durant bought land in Roanoke. On 4 Aug. 1661 Cisketando, as king of the Yeopims, sold to Durant a tract on Perquimans River. On 1 Mar. 1661/62 Durant obtained a second deed, in which Kilcocanen, as king of the Yeopims, conveyed a point of land projecting into Albemarle (then Roanoke) Sound and lying between Perquimans River and Little River (then Katotine River). The second deed may have been a clarification and confirmation of the August deed, in which the description of the land was not so precise as in the later one. The land conveyed, then called Wilicome but now Durants Neck, is in present-day Perquimans County, where both deeds were recorded in 1716. They are the earliest deeds on record in North Carolina. Although the deed to Nathaniel Batts was earlier, it was recorded in Virginia, not North Carolina.

Durant probably began living on his Roanoke plantation as early as 1661, perhaps before the actual signing of a deed. In 1662 he already had built a house there and had cleared part of the land. Soon after he moved, however, complications arose regarding title to his land, which were not resolved during his lifetime.

Title page from the New Testament in the Durant Bible, 1599. The upper part of the page was torn by an early reader of the book. North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library.

Apparently by request, Durant, while selecting land for himself, also chose land for a fellow Virginian, George Catchmaid, of Nansemond County, to whom he recommended a tract adjacent to his own. In 1662, when Catchmaid came to view the land and arrange for settling it, he informed Durant of recent changes in governmental requirements for title to land in Roanoke, which no longer could be established by purchase from the Indians but instead required a patent from the Virginia governor. On learning of the new requirements, Durant determined to go to Jamestown and take out a patent, but Catchmaid offered to handle the matter for him and Durant accepted. Instead of securing a patent in Durant's name, however, Catchmaid had Durant's land included in his own patent, thereby obtaining for himself legal title to Durant's land. Although Durant obtained from Catchmaid a paper in which Catchmaid acknowledged Durant's right and promised to have the land patented in Durant's name, Catchmaid never obtained the patent. After Catchmaid's death Durant tried to get clear title through the general court of Albemarle but the court, although recognizing Durant's right,
George Durant and Ann Marwood were married by an Anglican minister in Northumberland County, Va., 4 Jan. 1658/59. Although some writers have identified Durant with other males, no evidence has been found indicating that either he or Ann subscribed to any but the Anglican faith. The couple had nine children: George, Elizabeth, John, Mary, Thomas, Sarah, Martha, Penhenna, and Ann. All except George lived to adulthood. At least six of the children married. John, the elder of the two surviving sons, married Sarah Cooke, daughter of Thomas and Ann Cooke. He became a council member and a justice of the general court. Thomas, the other son, married Elizabeth Gaskie; he appears not to have entered public life. The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married Thomas Walter. Both she and her husband died about 1687, leaving two daughters, Elizabeth and Ann, who were brought up by the Durant grandparents. Of Durant's remaining daughters, Sarah married Isaac Rowden, Ann married William Bartlett, and Penhenna first married Joseph Sutton and subsequently John Stevens. Most if not all of the couples had children.

In his later years Durant appears not to have been active politically, although it is likely that his influence was felt in the actions resulting in Sothel's overthrow and in later developments. His will, dated 10 Oct. 1687, was proved 6 Feb. 1693/94. In it he named his heirs, who was associated with the six children then living; a brother, John Durant, who was then living in London; and three nephews—George, Henry, and John Durant—who were sons of his brother John. Durant's wife survived him only a year. She died 22 Jan. 1694/95. The two no doubt were buried on their plantation, but the location of their graves is now unknown. Indeed, the exact location of their house has been lost.