

Warrenton, NC : Origins

The origins of Warrenton, NC, can be traced back to well before the Revolutionary War, even before the initial settling of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. Native American Indians, the Tuscarora, populated this area prior to the first incursions of white explorers who came to the North Carolina region, in and around present day Warren County, as early as the late 16th and early 17th centuries. From the early 1700's to around 1730, more and more settlements were created. One of the first known settlers to what would eventually become Warren County was William Raleigh Duke in 1735. (His grandson George Washington Duke was the founder of Duke University in Durham, NC)

Born in 1709, William Raleigh Duke, was the youngest son of Raleigh Duke, Esq. of Hayes (Barton) Farm, Dovershire, England. Hayes Farm is still owned by the descendants of Williams older brother. It was the birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh in 1552 (Raleigh's father leased the estate from the Duke family of Otterton, England) and a picture of it can be seen in the first volume of Hawk's History of North Carolina.

The familial relationship between the Dukes and Raleighs is not completely clear [but Mr. Raleigh Daniel, of Virginia, is a descendant of Sir Walter Raleigh] says that he always understood that Hayes Farm ascended from the Duke family by intermarriage with the Raleighs. Although marriage records cannot be located, some favor is lent to this supposed marriage by the fact that William Fever's father was named Raleigh Duke.

Williams parents died when he was a small child, and the estate passed, according to English law and custom, to his oldest brother. William Duke was left poor and brought to the Virginia Colony by his relative Col. William Byrd, of Westover on James River, who reared him and gave him the rudiments of a good business education and better than all taught him to work. {NOTE: It is said that William Raleigh Duke was a grown man and well educated when he came to Virginia with Col. Byrd and had an interest in the Virginia estate.}

