Primary Source: A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina, [1]

Robert Hornes’s ‘A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina’ is one of the earliest published descriptions of the Carolinas. Published in 1666 in London, the purpose of pamphlet was to attract English emigrants to the new colony. Home did this by not only singing the praises of the natural features and prospects of Carolina, but also by discussing the challenges being faced by other colonies and England itself. A transcription of the pamphlet is below.

Carolina is a fair and spacious Province on the Continent of America: so called in honour of His Sacred Majesty that now is, Charles the Second, whom God preserve; and His Majesty has been pleased to grant the same to the certain Honourable Persons, who in order to the speedy planting of the same, have granted divers privileges and advantages to such as shall transport themselves and Servants in convenient time; This Province lying so near Virginia, and yet more Southward, enjoys the fertility and advantages thereto; and yet is so far distant, as to be free from the inconveniences of the climate, which is a great cause of the unsuitableness thereof; also, being in the latitude of the Bermudas may expect the like healthfulness which it hath hitherto enjoyed; and doubtless there is no Plantation that ever the English went upon, in all respects so good as this: for though Bermudas be wonderful healthy and fruitful, yet it is but a Prison to the Inhabitants, who are much strengthened for want of room, and therefore many of them are going to Carolina, and more intend to follow; There is seated in this Province two Colonies already, one on the River Roanoke (now called Albemarle River) and borders on Virginia; the other at Cape Fear, two Degrees more Southernly: of which follows a more particular Description...

The Particular Description of Cape Fear.

In the midst of this fertile Province, in the Latitude of 34 degrees, there is a Colony of Englisheaters, who Landed there the 29 of May anno 1664, and are in all about 800 persons, who have overcome all the difficulties that attend the first attempts, and have cleared the way for those that Come after who will find good houses to be in whilst their own are in building; good forts to secure them from their enemies; and many things brought from other Parts there, increasing them in small advantage. The entrance into the River, now called Cape Fear River, the situation of the Cape, and trending of the Land, is plainly laid down to the eye in the Map annexed. The River is barred at the entrance, but there is a Channel close aboast the Cape that will carry in safely a ship of 300 Tons, and as soon as a ship is over the Bar, the River is 5 or 6 fathom deep for a 100 miles from the Sea; this Bar is a great security to the Colony against a foreign Invasion, the channel being hard to find by those that have not experience of it, and yet safe enough to those that know it.

The Earth, Water, and Air.

The Land is of divers sorts as in all Countries of the world, that which lies near the Sea, is sandy and barren, but beareth many tall Trees, which make good timber for several uses; and this sandy ground is by experienced men thought to be one cause of the unhealthiness of the place: but up the River about 20 or 30 mile, where they have made a Town, called Charles Town, there is plenty of as rich ground as any in the world. It is a blackish mud upon a red sand, and under that a clay, but in some places is rich ground of a greyer colour, they have made brick of this Clay, which is very good, and lime they have also for building.

The Woods are stored with Deer and Wild Turkeys, of a great magnitude; with a great many oaks, and a very pleasant sort of wood; the English tongue hath no name for this kind of wood. They have four sorts of Fish: the Striper, the Puffer, the Sturgeon, Salmon, Bass, Plaice, and Trout, and Spanish Mackerel, with many other most pleasant sorts of Fish, both flat and round, for which the English Tongue hath no name.... Last of all, the Air is very agreeable, which is not the least considerable to the well being of a Plantation, for without a wholesome Air all other considerations avail nothing; and this is which makes this Place so desirable, being seated in the most temperate Climates, where the neighbourhood of the glorious Light of Heaven brings many advantages, and his convenient distance secures him from the Inconvenience of his scorching beams. The Summer is not too hot, and the Winter is very short and moderate, best agreeing with English Constitutions...

If therefore any industrious and ingenious persons will be willing to take part of the Facility of this County, let them imbrace the first opportunity, that they may obtain the greatest advantages.

The chief of the Privileges are as follows.

1. First, There is full and free Liberty of Conscience granted to all, so that no man is to be molested or called in question for matters of Religious Concern; but every one to be obedient to the Civil Government, worshipping God after their own way.

2. Secondly, There is freedom from Custom, for all Wine, Silk, Raisins, Currance, Oyl, Olives, and Almonds that shall be raised in the Province for 7. years, after 4 Ton of any of those commodities shall be imported in one Bottom.

3. Thirdly, Every Free-man and Free-woman that transport themselves and Servants by the 25 of March next, being 1667, shall have for Himself, Wife, Children, and Servants, for each 100 Acres of Land for him and His Heirs for ever, and for every Woman-servant and Slave 50 Acres, paying at most 1/2d per Acre, per annum, in lieu of all demands, to the Lords Proprietors: Provided always, That every Man be armed with a good Musquet full bore, 10lbs Powder, and 20lbs of Bullet, and six Months subsistence shall be imported in one Bottom.

4. Fourthly, Every Man-Servant at the expiration of his time is to have of the Country a 100 Acres of Land to him and his Heirs for ever, paying only 1/2d per Acre, per annum, and the Women 50 Acres of Land on the same conditions; their Masters also are to allow them two Suits of Apparel and Tools such as he is best able to work with, according to the Custom of the Country.

5. Fifthly, They are to have a Governor and Council appointed from among themselves, to see the Laws of the Assembly in due execution; but the Governor is to rule but 3 years, and then to have a new Governor elected with a small change Here are as brave Rivers as any in the World, stored with great abundance of Sturgeon, Salmon, Bass, Place, Trout, and Spanish Mackrel, with many other most pleasant sorts of Fish, both flat and round, for which the English Tongue hath no name... Last of all, the Air is very agreeable, which is not the least considerable to the well being of a Plantation, for without a wholesome Air all other considerations avail nothing; and this is which makes this Place so desirable, being seated in the most temperate Climates, where the neighbourhood of the glorious Light of Heaven brings many advantages, and his convenient distance secures him from the Inconvenience of his scorching beams. The Summer is not too hot, and the Winter is very short and moderate, best agreeing with English Constitutions...

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These are the chief and Fundamental privileges, but the Right Honourable Lords Proprietors have promised (and it is their Interest so to do) to be ready to grant what other Privileges may be found advantageous for the good of the Colony.

Is there therefore any younger brother who is born of Gentle blood, and whose Spirit is elevated above the common sort, and yet the hard usage of our Country hath not allowed suitable fortune; he will not surely be afraid to have his Name to advance his Fortunes equal to his Blood and Spirit, and so he will avoid those unlawful ways too many of our young Gentlemen take to maintain themselves according to their high education, having but small Estates; here, with a few Servants and a small Stock a great Estate may be raised, although his Birth have not entitled him to any of the Land of his Ancestors, yet his Industry may supply him, as to make him the head of as famous a family.

Such as are here tormented with much care how to get wealth to maintain themselves and servants of the quality of this Province, and who have no parents to help them along, may accustom themselves to this way of life, and be in a way to raise his fortunes far better than he could ever hope for in England. Let no man be troubled at the thoughts of being a Servant for 4 or 5 years, for I can assure you, that many men give mony with their children to serve 7 years, to take more pains and fare better than they could have done at home; but yet honest and industrious Servants are necessary to the plantations, and therefore I will not forbid the young gentlemen to take employment here, if it is not to their peril or destruction.

There is an opportunity offers now by the Virginia Fleet, from whence Cape Fear is but 3 or 4 days sail, and then a small Stock carried to Virginia will purchase provisions at a far easier rate than to carry them from hence; also the transport of the said Provisions will be saved, and be more fresh, and there wanteth not conveyance from Virginia tillibrer. If any Maid or single Woman have a desire to go over, they will find themselves in the Golden Age, when Men paid a Dowry for their Wives; for it be they but Civil, and under 50 years of Age, some honest Maid or other, will purchase them for their Wives.

Those that desire further advice, that Servants would be entertained, let them repair to Mr. Matthew Wilkinson inn Holder, at the Sign of the Three Feathers, in Bishopsgate Street, where they may be informed when the Ships will be ready, and what they must carry with them.

Thus much was convenient to be written at present, but a more ample Relation is intended to be published in due time.

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A wild turkey "of a great magnitude."

Flower of the indigo plant, which became a cash crop in South Carolina in the 18th century. The leaves of the plant were processed to produce a dye for fabrics.
Although the flower of the indigo plant is light purple, the dye produced by the plant is a rich, dark blue color.

Coopers at work making barrels. Coopers were among the tradesmen Horne encouraged to move to Carolina.

Primary Sources:
In John Speed’s 1676 map, Virginia appears to be much closer to Bermuda than it actually is. But the map does illustrate that Carolina and Bermuda are equal in latitude. In fact, the nearest landmass to Bermuda is Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

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