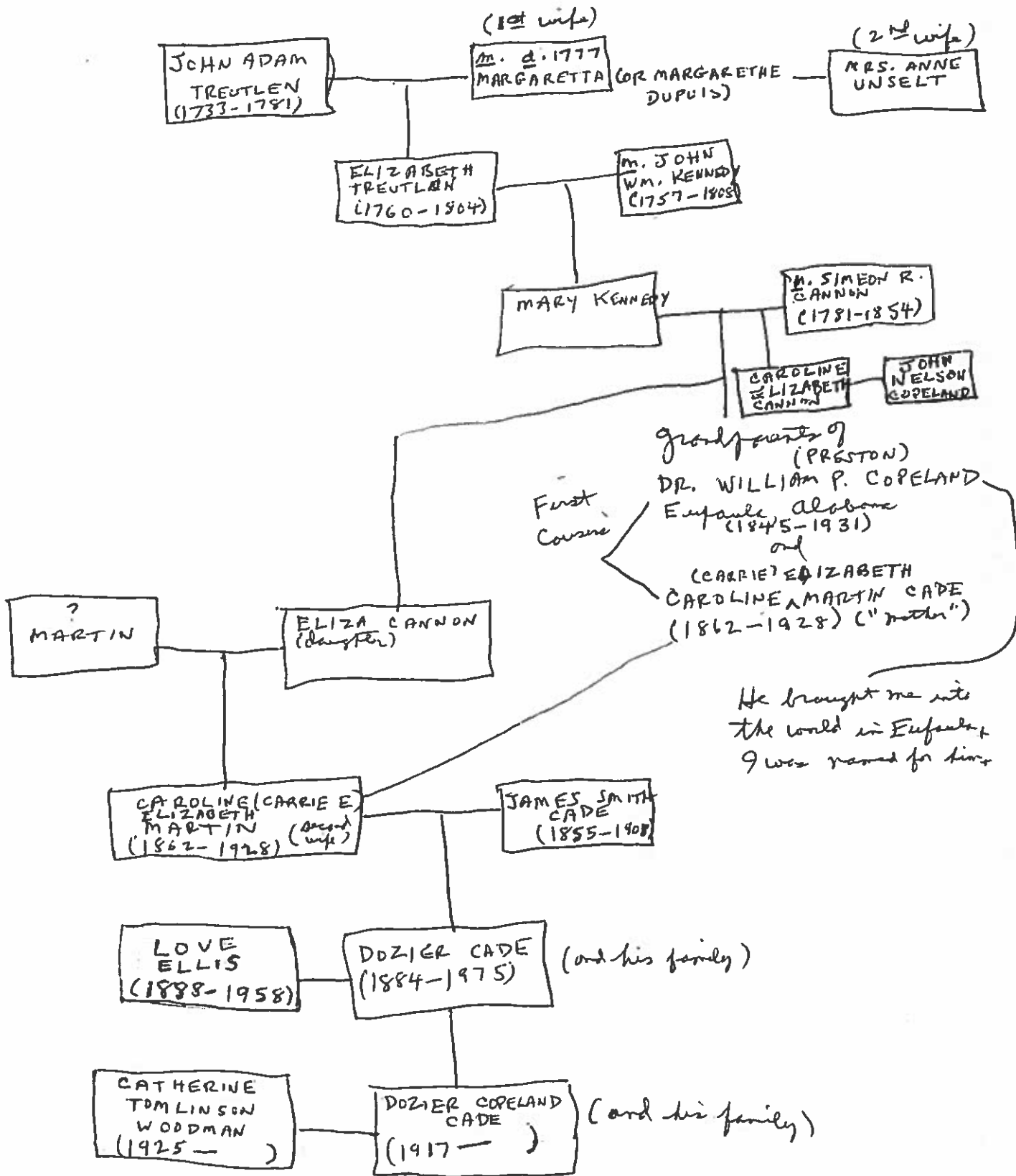


(John)
 John Adam Treutlen (1733 - 1781)
 First Governor of Georgia (1777)



Compiled and written by Dozier Copeland Cade, Hilton Head Island, S.C.

John Adam Treutlen (1733-1781), the first Governor of Georgia (1777), defected Britton Swinnett, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence from the governorship. Under the state's new ^(and first) Constitution adopted earlier that year, ^(Treutlen helped draft it) the ^(first state) legislature ^(Georgia assembly) elected Treutlen over Swinnett on May 8, 1777, the day after it convened.

Treutlen was a staunch Salzburger. He was born in 1733 near Berchtesgaden in Austria, a place later to become infamous as Adolf Hitler's retreat.

He and his family, members of a ^{Protestant} religious group being persecuted in Austria, left ^{England} for their new home in the American colonies when Treutlen was 6 years old. One story is that the ship was captured by pirates, who took his father prisoner but allowed the family to continue their journey.

The boy John, his mother and his brother came with the other Salzburger to Georgia. They joined the Salzburger who had settled about 25 miles from Savannah on the Savannah River on a site they named New Ebenezer. It is in what is now Effingham County, near Springfield. There is a monument to Treutlen in the churchyard center of the Jerusalem Church built there by the Salzburger. Treutlen was a

Treutlen grew up to be a prosperous farmer. Once he was a school teacher. His first political office was as justice of the peace in Matthew's parish.

His people elected him to represent them in the Assembly of Georgia in Savannah. When the Revolutionary War started, the Salzburger were divided about what they should do: remain

on the side of the British, or join in the protest against Britain's tyrannies. Trentlen was on the side of the protesting Patriots.

[He was a member of the Council of Safety and later of Georgia's Provincial Congress. His term of governa^(8 months) was very short, since he was elected May 8, 1777 and the state Constitution provided that a new governa should begin his term each January. Because of the dangerous times and the threat of trouble with England, the Georgia Assembly was in session practically all of Trentlen's term.

[He vigorously resisted the pressure of South Carolina to absorb Georgia into the state. Moreover, on recommendation of his Council he offered a reward of 100 pounds for the arrest of William Hays, whom South Carolina had sent to press its proposal. He fled to South Carolina, and from that safe haven ridiculed Trentlen, calling him a "buffoon".

[Trentlen strengthened the defenses of Georgia, just in case of a war with England. After the war started, he mortgaged his home to the British army. (at one time, before the war, he had served in the British army.) This made the British angry, so they burned his house. The British were terrorizing the South Georgia border, and Trentlen did what he could to protect the Georgians there.

[When Trentlen's brief term as governa was finished, he took his family to Orangeburg, S.C., where he mysteriously disappeared from history as if he had been a ghost. Mysteriously surrounded his last days. A marker in the Orangeburg area tells his story. Accounts of his disappearance differ. One says that he was lured by some Tories. Another says, "A few Tories came to his home, took him into the woods, and cut him to pieces with swords, after burning his home." At any rate, no trace of him was ever found. #

* At Wells Crossroads in the Orangeburg district of South Carolina there stands a granite shaft 8 feet high, erected in 1914 in honor and memory of Governor Trenton by chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Children of the American Revolution. The inscription reads:

John Adam Trenton
Governor of Georgia

and a stern Revolutionary Patriot
Born at Barchtestaden^①, Austria 1726^②
and brutally murdered by Tories
about 1782^② near this spot.

Erected by
William Thompson Chapter D. A. R.
and Emily Seizer Chapter C. A. R.

St. Matthews, S. C.,

1914

- ① Note spelling differs from accepted spelling
② Note birth and death years differ from generally accepted date.