

Arnoldus Vanderhorst II, 1748-1815

The Vanderhorst family first immigrated to South Carolina in 1686 when John Van der Horst, a former Dutch soldier, settled in the Lowcountry. By the time of his death in 1717, Van der Horst owned a large plantation on the Wando River in Christ Church Parish (present-day Mount Pleasant) and two lots in Charlestowne. In the ensuing years, the Vanderhorst family went on to amass vast amounts of land in Christ Church, including Lexington Plantation, Richmond Plantation, and Point Plantation, along with Vanderhorst Island (modern-day Dewees Island).¹

Arnoldus Vanderhorst II was born to Elizabeth Simons and Arnoldus Vanderhorst on March 21, 1748, in Christ Church Parish. He inherited Lexington Plantation in 1765 upon his father's death. In 1771, he married Elizabeth Raven and the following year inherited the Kiawah Island plantation of her grandfather, James Stanyarne. During this time, Vanderhorst entered politics as a member of the Royal Assembly representing Christ Church Parish. Between 1772 and the start of the Revolutionary War, he served four terms in the Royal Assembly, served on the Committee of Ninety-Nine and represented Christ Church Parish in the First and Second Provincial Congresses.²

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Vanderhorst joined the South Carolina 1st Regiment as a captain. He served for a time at Haddrell's Point and eventually rose to the rank of colonel under the leadership of General Francis Marion. In 1780, the British commander, Lord Cornwallis, ordered the seizure of estates owned by patriots and those who took part in the Continental Congress. British troops subsequently occupied and burned Vanderhorst Mansion on Kiawah Island.³

In the post-war period, Vanderhorst began the process of rebuilding his wealth. He planted indigo on Vanderhorst Plantation and rebuilt his mansion, although it would not be complete until 1802. Sometime around 1796, Vanderhorst acquired a large wharf, formerly owned by Ann Graemes, located close to the base of Longitude Lane. He built some of the City's first tenement buildings, later known as Vanderhorst Row, on either side of the wharf in 1804. One of the structures still stands while the 1886 earthquake destroyed the other.⁴

¹ Hacker, Debi and Michael Trinkley, "History of Kiawah Island," in *The History and Archaeology of Kiawah Island, Charleston County, South Carolina*, Trinkley, Michael, ed., (Columbia, SC: Chicora Foundation, 1993), 57. "South Carolina Probate Records, Bound Volumes, 1671-1977" images, Family Search, (<https://familysearch.org>: 14 June 2016, Citing South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia.

² Sobel, Robert and John Raimo, eds., *Biographical Directory of the Governors of the United States, 1789-1978*, Vol. 4, (Westport: CT: Meckler Books, 1978).

³ Clark, Walter, ed., *The State Records of North Carolina published under the supervision of the Trustees of the Public Libraries, by order of the General Assembly*, v. 17, (Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, 1899), 536-537, 558-559, 568. Moss, Bobby Gilmer, ed., *Roster of South Carolina Patriots in the American Revolution, v. 2, K-Z*, Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1983. Hacker and Trinkley, "History of Kiawah Island," 57 61.

⁴ Butler, Nicholas; Poplin, Eric; Pemberton, Katherine and Martha Zierden, "Archaeology at South Adgers Wharf: A Study of the Redan at Tradd Street," *Archaeological Contributions*, no. 45, The Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina, October 2012, 30-31. Cobb, Ashton, *Kiawah Island: A History*, (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2006), 45-47. Smith, Alice R. Huger, *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston*, Philadelphia: PA: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1917), 159-160.

Vanderhorst continued his political work during the war and its immediate aftermath, first as a member of the South Carolina General Assembly from 1776-1780 and, starting in 1782, as a member of the South Carolina State Senate. He served two terms as intendant of the City of Charleston, first from 1785-1786 and later from 1790-1792. As intendant, Vanderhorst oversaw the establishment of the Charleston Orphan House in 1790 and welcomed President George Washington in 1791.⁵

Vanderhorst ran for Governor of South Carolina on the Federalist ticket in 1794. His political connections to Charles Pinckney and Edward Rutledge helped secure the election. As governor, he supported the establishment of public schools, improvements to the condition of state jails, and criminal code reforms. Vanderhorst served just one term as governor, after which he focused primarily on mercantile and agricultural pursuits. He likewise continued working with local militias, gaining the rank of general by 1799.⁶

In his personal life, Vanderhorst fathered at least six children with his wife, including Arnoldus, John, Jane, Harriett, Elias, and Maria. There is also evidence that Vanderhorst had a relationship with an enslaved woman, Hagar Richardson, who bore him two children, Eliza (b. 1805) and Peter (b. 1807).⁷ In the years leading up to his death in 1815, Vanderhorst manumitted seven slaves including Hagar, her father, and her three children (the eldest daughter most likely resulted from a previous relationship). Vanderhorst determined that his sons, Elias and John, should act as trustees of Hagar and the children. He also conveyed a house in the City, personal property, and several slaves for their use and care. Moreover, Vanderhorst stipulated that his estate pay for the care, education, and apprentice of the children during their lifetime and that of their issue. Vanderhorst's will divided the majority of his estate between his white children, but made their inheritance contingent upon upholding the manumission of Hagar and her children. While John died in 1816 and Hagar in 1820, Elias continued to act as trustee to the children, even serving as a witness when Peter legally adopted the Vanderhorst surname in 1835.⁸

Citation Information:

Schultz, Rebecca. "Arnoldus Vanderhorst II, 1748-1815." City of Charleston Records Management. 30 January 2020. <https://www.charleston-sc.gov/2354/Intendants-and-Mayors>.

⁵ Initially City Intendants served only one-year terms. In 1786, City Council extended the term to two years and in 1879 to four years. "Legislative Acts/Legal Proceedings," *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina), October 21, 1790, 4. Snowden, Yates, ed., *History of South Carolina*, v. 1, (Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1920), 497-500.

⁶ Lockhart, Matthew A., "Vanderhorst, Arnoldus," in *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2016), accessed December 19, 2019 at <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/vanderhorst-arnoldus>. "[Calvary; Artillery; Infantry; Cound [sic]; Excellency; Governor; Brigadier; General Vanderhorst]," *South Carolina State Gazette*, (Charleston, South Carolina), October 25, 1799: 3.

⁷ Kennedy, Cynthia M., *Braided Relations, Entwined Lives: Charleston, South Carolina Women at Work and Leisure and the Social Relations of Slave Society, 1780-1860*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 114. Smith, Katy Simpson, *We Have Raised All of You: Motherhood in the South, 1750-1835*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 386-387.

⁸ "South Carolina Probate Records, Bound Volumes, 1671-1977" images, Family Search, (<https://familysearch.org>: 14 June 2016, Citing South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia. Hacker and Trinkley, "History of Kiawah Island," 64-65.