

Martin Noxon: Silversmith, Jeweler, Clock and Watchmaker of Edenton, North Carolina

By Michael L. Marshall

Introduction

Edenton, North Carolina, located in Chowan County in the northeastern part of the state, has a long history, dating back to the seventeenth century. It was formally established in 1712 as "the Towne on Queen Anne's Creek," and laid out by colonial official and surveyor, Edward Moseley. Ten years later, in 1722, it was incorporated and renamed "Edenton" in honor of Governor Charles Eden, who had died in March of that year.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Edenton was a prosperous seaport, clearing ships for trade with Europe, the West Indies, and many other ports along the Atlantic Coast, including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Charleston, and Savannah. During the eighteenth century, Edenton also served as a political, cultural, and economic center of the state, and its accumulated wealth attracted craftsman of many types. A search of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) craftsman database (hereafter MCD) lists artisans of many types, including artists, blacksmiths, gunsmiths, nailers, cabinetmakers, clock and watchmakers, joiners, needleworkers,

shipwrights and boat builders, coach and riding chair makers, surveyors, sign and herald painters, trunk makers, Windsor chair makers, and others.¹

George Barton Cutten, in his *Silversmiths of North Carolina, 1696-1860*, list fifteen silversmiths for Chowan County (Edenton): Thomas F. Adams, Thomas Agnis, Anthony Castle, John Cleland, John Copeland, Edward Debruhl, William Faris, Jr., Everard Garrett, Nathaniel Howcott, Isaac Marquand, Henry Niel, Martin Noxon, Thomas Seaman, James Wallace [Jr.], and Joseph Whedbee.²

Cutten also lists several men who were apprenticed to Edenton silversmiths:³ John Wellwood to John Cleland (c. 1751); Everard Garrett, probably to Thomas Agnis; Joseph Leming to Joseph Whedbee (1778); and Bonaparte Allen to Martin Noxon (1812).

A search of the MCD, under the category “silversmith (or jeweler),” for Edenton yields the following entries: Thomas Agnes, John Copeland, Charles Delaplace, “M. Elaland,” Joseph F. Ferribault, John Foplace (Fopless), Frederick Greenwood, Isaac Marquand, Thomas Morong, Henry Niel, Martin Noxon, Thomas Seaman, James Wallace Jr., Joseph Whedbee, and Josiah Penfield. Of these, Delaplace, Marquand, Noxon, and Seaman are also listed as clock or watchmakers. The earliest

silversmith listed is James Wallace, Jr., who was working in Edenton in 1739. The latest MESDA entry is for Frederick Greenwood (from Germany), who worked in Edenton during the period 1850-1855.

It should be added that the evidence for some of the men mentioned either by Cutten or in the MCD actually being silversmiths, is rather meager. For instance, the only mention of the man called “M. Elaland,” by MESDA is an entry in the vestry proceedings of St. Paul’s Parish in 1750, where he was paid £1.11 for mending the Church plate. In a second transcription of these same vestry minutes, the entry is given as follows: “To bills pd. Mr. Clalard for Mending the Church Plate--£1.11.”⁴ This entry is given under the proceedings of the vestry meeting on 5 Jun 1750. Whether either of these names is correct is unknown. Another illustration comes from Cutten and involves the previously mentioned Edward Debruhl who, in a deed dated 24 Apr 1784, is identified as a silversmith of Duplin County, North Carolina; in this deed, he is called Edward Cornwallace Debrule.⁵ According to Cutten, this man is in all probability the Edward Cornwallis Debruhl who had been involved in a counterfeiting case in 1777. The only connection to Edenton is that it involved the counterfeiting bills of credit in the District of Edenton as described in detail in a letter sent by Judge Samuel Spencer to Governor Richard Caswell.

As will be seen, the evidence that Martin Noxon was, indeed, a silversmith is substantial. There is also support for the fact that he also advertised himself as a jeweler as well as a clock and watchmaker. Interestingly, at one point he also employed a gunsmith, but it is rather doubtful he actually practiced that craft himself.

Noxon and Related Families

In his entry on Martin Noxon, Cutten states that he was born 12 May 1780 at Oswego, Dutchess County, New York, the son of Pasco Noxon and Anna Harris, and that he was baptized in the nearby village of Hopewell.⁶ Unfortunately, he does not provide a reference for this information. Stephen Ensko, in his *American silversmiths and their marks*, says that Noxon was born in 1780 in Oswego, New York, the son of Pasco and Anna (Harris) Noxon but, he too, fails to document the source of this information.⁷ However, research by the author discloses that there was a Martin Noxon whose birth and baptism is recorded in the Dutch Reformed Church records of Hopewell, Ontario County, New York, not Dutchess County.⁸ This record states Martin Noxon was born 12 May 1780 and baptized 24 Sep 1780, the son of Pasco Noxon and Anna Harris, so this is almost certainly where Cutten and Ensko came up with some of the information they cite.

Another date of birth for Martin Noxon is given by France Forrester Walker Stenberg in her book, *The Noxon Family of North America*.⁹ She states that the silversmith Martin Noxon was born 7 Feb 1778 in Beekman, Dutchess County, New York, the son of Peter Noxon, and that this information came from a letter written by Martin Noxon's son, Robert Martin Noxon (of whom more later), to his cousin, James Noxon, "one of the judges of Syracuse." The latter individual would likely be James Noxon, who was born in Onondaga Hill, New York, in 1817, and died in Syracuse in 1881, a judge of the Supreme Court of the Fifth Judicial District of that state.¹⁰ Incidentally, there is a place called Hopewell Junction quite near Beekman as shown on an 1897 Rand McNally map of Dutchess County, New York.¹¹

Stenberg has also posted an extensive Noxon family tree on Ancestry.com that contains further details about Martin's line.¹² According to information contained there, Martin's mother was Elizabeth Bentley, born 26 May 1741 in Saratoga County, New York. She married his father, Peter Noxon, on 2 Dec 1762 in Dutchess County.

If Martin Noxon were born in 1778 as stated by Stenberg, then he would have been fourteen in about 1792 and if he served a seven-year apprenticeship beginning that year to learn the craft of the silversmith, he would have finished his indenture by about 1799 or 1800. As the

following will show, it is probable that Martin served his apprenticeship in Poughkeepsie, New York, also in Dutchess County, and about fifteen miles distant from Beekman. There were several silversmiths working in Poughkeepsie during the eighteenth century, including Peter Van Bomell.¹³ On 1 Aug 1792, Van Bomell placed a notice in the *Poughkeepsie Journal* that he was opening a business there as a watch and clock maker and noting that he also “makes all kinds of gold and silver work,” including lockets, rings, silver tankards, tea pots, spoons, etc. He concluded his advertisement by stating that he wanted an apprentice “to the above business.” (Fig. 1, Peter Van Bomell notice in the 1 Aug 1792 *Poughkeepsie Journal*.)

PETER VAN BOMELL,

Watch and Clock Maker,

RESPECTFULLY informs his friends, and the public in general, that he has commenced business in the town of Poughkeepsie, a few rods from the Court house, where all commands in his line will be punctually attended to.

He makes and sells warranted eight-day clocks, common ditto, and time-pieces of every description—cleans and repairs clocks and watches on the most reasonable terms—makes all kinds of gold and silver work, such as lockets, rings, jewels, silver tankards, tea pots, spoons, &c. and ladies and gentlemen's buckles of the most elegant and newest fashions.

He flatters himself, that his steady attention to business, and constant endeavours to please, will be deemed a sufficient recommendation by those who shall please to honor him with their favors.

He has for sale, an assortment of
Steel and gilt watch chains,
Silk strings,
Seals, keys, and trinkets,
Ladies gilt lockets and pins,
Gilt and jet necklaces,
Beaded, gilt, and agate ear rings,
Gilt and silver sleeve buttons,
Mens and womens shoe buckles,
Elegant paste knee buckles,
Thimbles and hat buckles,
Hat pins, &c. &c.

W A N T E D,

An Apprentice to the above business.

Figure 1

What makes this more interesting is that Martin Noxon is listed in the 1801 and 1802 tax assessments of real and personal property for Poughkeepsie. In fact, Martin is seen residing with “P. V. Bomell” in the 1801 tax list.¹⁴ (Fig. 2, Extract from 1801 Poughkeepsie, New York, tax assessment.) In 1802, he was still in Poughkeepsie, but residing with someone else. His name does not appear on the 1803 tax list suggesting he may have left Poughkeepsie by that date, probably for Edenton, North Carolina.

<i>Names of Persons</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>man & woman</i>	<i>Real Estate</i>	<i>Personal Estate</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Feb 1804</i>
<i>Marshall Stephen</i>	<i>Sutherland</i>		300	—	300	— 7
<i>Mr County Hallen</i>	<i>Peters House</i>		— 42	100	100	— 2
<i>Mr W^m near Halsequest</i>	<i>G. V. Black</i>		300	—	300	— 72
<i>Mason Joseph</i>			300	—	300	— 72
<i>Miller George</i>	<i>He Thomas</i>		1100	1100	2200	5 20
<i>Murray Henry</i>			—	100	100	— 24
<i>Nelson H^c</i>			4000	100	4100	9 04
<i>Nelson John</i>			475	50	525	1 26
<i>Newcomb Christian</i>			5000	500	5500	13 20
<i>Nash Daniel</i>			400	400	800	1 92
<i>Norris Isaac</i>			1000	100	1100	4 56
<i>Newhouse Jonathan</i>			350	—	350	— 04
<i>Nagle John</i>			1950	800	2750	6 60
<i>North Robt</i>	<i>G. B. Everson</i>		560	000	1360	3 26
<i>North Robt</i>			2450	100	2550	6 12
<i>North Thomas</i>			—	400	400	— 46
<i>Nafes Gatrude W^d</i>			60		60	— 14
<i>North Martin</i>	<i>P. B. Burrell</i>		60	70	130	— 31
<i>Ostrom John H</i>	<i>Mathew Myer</i>		300	50	350	— 04

Figure 2

The exact date when Martin arrived in Edenton is uncertain as is his reason for choosing that location to set up work. What is clear is that he must have been in Edenton some time before 28 Feb 1804, on which date a Chowan County bond was issued for his marriage to Hannah Carpenter.¹⁵ Hannah was the daughter of Captain Stephen Carpenter, a

mariner, and is mentioned in his Chowan County will along with her siblings, Mary and Thomas.¹⁶ Mary Carpenter married in Chowan on 14 Apr 1819 (date of bond) to Thomas Waff, whose full name was Thomas Edward Smith Waff.¹⁷ Thomas Carpenter died unmarried and without issue in 1811. His obituary appeared in the 20 Dec 1811 *Weekly Raleigh Register*: “DIED. On the 5th of October, in Point-Petre, Guadaloupe (sic), Mr. Thos. Carpenter, only son of Capt. Stephen Carpenter, of Edenton.” According to Stenberg, Martin and Hannah Noxon had five children: Peter S. C. Noxon (2 Jan 1805 – 9 Sep 1811), Emmeline Miriam Noxon (9 Apr 1807 – 28 Oct 1822), Elizabeth Jain (sic) Noxon (3 Sep 1809 – 5 Sep 1817), Thomas C. Noxon (9 Feb 1812 – 10 Oct 1816) and Robert Martin Noxon (4 Nov 1815 – 31 May 1848) mentioned earlier.¹⁸ However, there was another son named Stephen she did not record. The *Edenton Gazette*, in its 17 Sep 1811 issue, mentioned his passing: “On Monday, the 9th instant, very suddenly, STEPHEN, the infant son of Mr. Martin Noxon, of this place, a fine promising youth, in the 7th year of his age.” Before proceeding further with the discussion of Martin Noxon and a new discovery of his work, a few words will be said here about Stephen Carpenter.

An extensive history of the Carpenter family compiled by Amos B. Carpenter and published in 1898 states that Stephen Carpenter was born in Providence, Rhode Island, the son of Gersham Carpenter, who was

born 13 Aug 1727 and died 6 Sep 1793, and his wife, Hannah Cook.¹⁹ Gersham and his wife lived in Providence, where their seven children were born: Joseph, John, Stephen, Mollie, Nancy, Hannah, and Martha. Gersham was a cabinetmaker as were his sons Joseph and John. The only further information in this book concerning Stephen Carpenter is a note that he was a mariner who, “went to North Carolina.” A notice of Gersham’s death appeared in the 7 Sep 1793 issue of the *Providence Gazette*: “DIED. Mr. GERSHOM (sic) CARPENTER, of this Town, an honest Man, a worthy Citizen, a tender Husband, and a kind Parent. His Funeral will be attended Tomorrow, in the Afternoon, to the Rev. Mr. Snow’s Meeting House. The Friends and Acquaintances of the Deceased are required to meet at his late Dwelling House, at Half past One o’Clock.” This same paper carried a notice of the passing of Stephen’s mother in its 5 Sep 1809 issue: “Mrs. Hannah Carpenter, widow of Gersham Carpenter and sister of the late Governor Cooke (sic), died at Johnston, R.I. in her 79th year, Sept.5, 1809.”

According to information in the British National Archives, Public Records Office (PRO), during the American Revolution Stephen Carpenter had command of a privateer called the *Jenny*.²⁰ Other PRO documents provided the following additional information. The *Jenny* was seized by *HMS Charleston* during an engagement with British naval forces in the James River of Virginia on 30 Dec 1780. Among

documents captured aboard the ship was a letter of marque written by John Jay, president of the Continental Congress, to Stephen Carpenter, “commander of the *Jenny*.”²¹ Dated 13 May 1779, it described the *Jenny* as a brigantine of about 80 tons, mounting eight guns, and manned by a crew of twenty-five men. The ship belonged to Joseph Westmore and John O’Conner. At the time the *Jenny* was captured, she was running American goods between Petersburg, Virginia, Norfolk, Virginia, Portsmouth, Virginia, Edenton, North Carolina, Roanoke, North Carolina, Teneriffe, Canary Islands, and St. Eustatia (Eustatius), West Indies in the period May through December 1780. Also, preserved in this PRO collection of documents is a letter from Gersham Carpenter to his son Capt. Stephen Carpenter in Petersburg, Virginia, mentioning that he had recently visited Uxbridge, Massachusetts, and sharing news about the family.

It seems this bit of bad luck did not deter Carpenter from continuing to contribute to American war efforts during the Revolution as documented in a 2 Sep 1782 letter from Matthew Ridley to Benjamin Franklin.²² The letter mentions a bond dated 26 Aug 1782 in the amount of 20,000 Spanish milled dollars for the brigantine *Resolution* owned by Nathaniel Allen of Edenton and is signed by the ship’s captain, Stephen Carpenter, as well as by Joshua Johnson and Nathan Kelso. The letter dated “Monday Morning Sept. 2d. 1782,” reads as follows: “Mr. Ridley has

the honor to present his respects to Mr. Franklin. — The inclosed (sic) obligation was Sent Mr. Ridley by Mr. Johnson for the purpose of procuring a Letter of Marque for a Vessel at Nantes — As Mr. Johnson is very pressing with Mr. Ridley to forward it, he will think himself obliged to Mr. Franklin if he will Send it to his Apartments so soon as possible. Mr. Ridley sincerely hopes Mr. Franklin is better than when he had the Honor of Seeing him yesterday. Mr. R left some Bills of Exchange for acceptance which he would be glad could be forwarded at same time.” Nathaniel Allen, who lived in Edenton, was a planter, promoter, and legislator. He was also a nephew and business partner of Joseph Hewes of Edenton, one of North Carolina’s signers of the Declaration of Independence. From 1794 until 1805, Allen lived in what is now known as the “Disbrowe-Warren House,” more commonly called the “Hewes House” that still stands on West King Street in Edenton.²³

It is not certain from the evidence when Stephen Carpenter came to Edenton to live, but it may have been some time before 1785. There is a notice in the 13 Dec 1783 issue of the *Providence Gazette* that reads: “Capt. Jeremiah Clarke, who arrived at Newport (Rhode Island) last night from Dominica Lat. 35 Long. 72:39 spoke with Capt. Stephen Carpenter, of this place, in a Brig. From Ireland, bound to South-Carolina with passengers.” From this, it would seem Carpenter was still resident in Providence as of the date of this newspaper notice; however,

Carpenter was on a tax list for Chowan County, North Carolina, in 1785, suggesting he was probably living there in that year, or a little before.²⁴ A search of the Chowan land records shows a deed recorded during the September term of court in 1786 by which Chowan Sheriff Edmund Blount conveyed to Stephen Carpenter, mariner, one lot or half acre in Edenton, Lot 14, formerly belonging to William Savage.²⁵ When Carpenter paid the £501 purchase price of the lot, one of the witnesses was his father-in-law, Stephen Miles. According to a map of lots in Edenton on the west side of present-day Broad Street, the so-called “New Plan” of the town, Lot 14 extended from West King Street through to Eden Alley, which is now that part of West Eden Street lying between Broad and South Granville Streets.

Waff family Bible records show that Stephen Miles, who was also a mariner, was born 15 Jan 1733 possibly in eastern Virginia.²⁶ His wife was Jean or Jane (the name appears in both spellings in the records) Watlington, born 1 Nov 1738, whom he married 27 Apr 1757. She was born in Bermuda, the daughter of Francis Watlington and his wife, Jehosheba Albouy.²⁷ Stephen Miles and his wife had issue: Thomas, born 31 Jan 1759; Rhoden (daughter), born 11 Oct 1760; Miriam, born 15 Jul 1762; Easter, born 15 Apr 1778; Frances (twin daughter), born 15 Apr 1778; Jane, born 10 Dec 1779; Mary, born 16 Feb 1780, and Jehosheba, born 22 Sep 1782. Stephen Miles first appears in the Chowan

County land records on 4 Sep 1777, when Joseph Blount conveyed to Miles for £250 current money Lot 198 in the “New Plan” of Edenton.²⁸ This lot is located today where the Edenton Baptist Church is located, at the northwest corner of West Eden and South Granville Streets. This would be in the next block over from Lot 14 that belonged to Stephen Carpenter. Stephen Miles died some time before 26 Jun 1787, when his wife Jean submitted an inventory of his estate to the court. Among the several items listed was Lot 198 with a dwelling house and other out houses on it and a schooner named *Francis*.²⁹ Jean or Jane Miles died some time before 15 Sep 1808 when her daughter, Miriam Carpenter, executed the following notice: “I hereby release to Mr. Benjamin Whedbee my right to administer the estate of my deceased mother Jane Miles.”³⁰

In later years, Stephen Carpenter had a half interest in a sloop called the *New York Packet*, while James Hathaway was the owner of the other half interest. This and other information comes from a suit tried before the Court of Claims in Washington, D.C., on 24 Mar 1892.³¹ From the facts in the case it appears that on or about 29 Aug 1799, the sloop *New York Packet* with Carpenter as master sailed from Edenton bound to St. Vincent, laden with a cargo of fish and lumber. While pursuing this voyage, she was captured on the high seas by a French privateer called *L’Ocean*, Capt. Triot, master. She was taken to St. Martin, where on or

about 9 Nov 1799 both vessel and cargo were libeled, condemned, and sold by the French tribunal of commerce and prizes established in the island of Guadeloupe and sitting at Basseterre. This resulted in a total loss to the owners of both the vessel and her cargo as there was no insurance. During the proceedings, the Court of Claims determined the value of the vessel to be \$2,370, that of the cargo \$2,576, and that of the freight earnings \$1,216, making the total loss \$6,162. The case was filed under the provisions of an act of Congress of 20 Jan 1885 and brought by Joseph T. Waff, administrator of the estate of Stephen Carpenter, and James R. B. Hathaway, administrator of the estate of James Hathaway; Thomas T. Waff was a son of Thomas Edward Smith Waff, who married Mary Carpenter. According to the court, the claim had not been allowed under previous conventions or treaties between the United States and France. The court concluded that the seizure and condemnation were illegal and that the claimants were entitled to compensation from the United States in equal amounts of \$3,081.

Stephen Carpenter died in Edenton some time before 13 Apr 1805 on which date a notice of his passing appeared in the *Providence Gazette*: "Died. At Edenton (N.C.) Capt. Stephen Carpenter, formerly of this town, aged 57 years". His will, dated 21 Jan 1805, left each of his children, Mary Carpenter, Hannah Noxon, and Thomas Carpenter, a Negro slave as well as a bed and its furniture. All the rest of his estate,

both real and person, he devised to his wife, Miriam, who was also named as executrix of his estate.³²

As mentioned earlier, Martin Noxon married Hannah Carpenter in Chowan County in February of 1804, so it can be assumed that he was already working in Edenton as a silversmith at that time. In the 26 Feb 1806 issue of the *Edenton Gazette*, Noxon advertised himself as a gold and silversmith: "MARTIN NOXON, GOLD and SILVER SMITH, Edenton, keeps constantly for Sale, a handsome assortment of Articles in the above line consisting of the following, viz. Gold ear and finger rings, set and plain do. Locketts and breast Pins, silver Table and Tea Spoons, Sugar Tongs, Salt Spoons, Thimbles, Scissar (sic) Chains, Sleeve Buttons, &c. &c. &c. N. B. Old GOLD and SILVER will be taken in exchange for any of the above Articles, if wanting, if not, Cash will be advanced. WATCHES repaired as usual. TWO BOYS about 13 or 14 years of age, that could come well recommended, would be taken as apprentices to the above business. Also to LET, An Elegant HORSE and CHAIR. Edenton, Jan. 15, 1806."

In another issue of the same paper, this one dated 17 Sep 1807, he mentioned that he would be leaving the state for a short time and asked those indebted to him to make speedy payment, noting that "Those who do not settle their accounts in the course of two months from this date,

must excuse him for putting them into the hands of the proper officers for collection--Those who may have demands on him are requested to present them for adjustment." The notice also offered his "respectful acknowledgements to a generous public for past encouragement," and begged leave to "inform them that in consequence of some additional assistance, he shall be enabled to serve them with more punctuality, in future, in all the various branches of his business." Finally, it mentioned that he cleaned, repaired watches, and warranted his work.

It has been said that Stephen Carpenter, Noxon's father-in-law, died in early 1805, leaving his estate, including Lot 14 in the "New Plan" of the town, to his wife, Miriam. She must have continued living in the house that had belonged to her husband until the end of the year 1807, when she placed the following notice in the 25 Nov 1807 *Edenton Gazette*: "The subscriber intending to break up housekeeping at the close of the year, will expose for Sale, at public vendue, at her dwelling-house, on the 2d day of Chowan County Court next, at 3 and 6 months credit, sundry Household and Kitchen FURNITURE, viz. 1 Bed Bedstead and Furniture, 2 Desks, Tables, Chairs, and Beaufat, a quantity of Books, and a number of other articles too tedious to enumerate. Notes and security will be required, for all sums over Forty Shillings."

In January of the following year, Edenton cabinetmaker William Manning moved into the house vacated by Miriam Carpenter announcing his relocation in the 13 Jan 1808 *Edenton Gazette*:³³

“WILLIAM MANNING, Cabinet Maker, Begs leave to inform the public, and his friends in particular, that he has taken the house of Mrs. Miriam Carpenter, in King-street, nearly opposite the late residence of Col. N. Allen, where he carries on his business as usual, and keeps on hand all kinds of Furniture, which he will sell low for cash . . .”

The following year Miriam Carpenter executed a deed, dated 20 Apr 1808, to Martin Noxon for the sum of \$700, Lot 14 in the “New Plan” of the town.³⁴ The deed was witnessed by Benjamin Whedbee and William Manning. On the same date, she sold to Martin Noxon for \$300, 3 Negro slaves: Jean and her two children Penelope, “commonly called Penny,” and George.³⁵ She disposed of additional slaves named Kitty and a child called Shubar in November of that same year.³⁶

In another advertisement in the *Edenton Gazette*, this one in the 14 Apr 1809 issue, Noxon informed the public that “in addition to his usual business of repairing Clocks and Watches, making gold and silver work, &c. he has furnished himself with everything necessary for Repairing and touching the Mariner's Compass.” Touching a mariner's compass refers to adjusting a magnetic compass aboard a vessel to compensate

for errors caused by nearby iron or steel objects such as those in a ship's construction, machinery, canons, etc. This is typically accomplished with iron rods, bars, balls, etc., one type of iron bar used for that purpose being a Flinders bar.³⁷ (Fig. 3, Flinders Bar. Courtesy, Jim Melchor.)



Figure 3

In a notice placed by Noxon in the 22 Jun 1810 *Edenton Gazette*, he called himself a clock and watch maker and stated that he had received from Baltimore a fresh supply of articles in his line of business, “which, with those already on hand of his own manufacture, forms a handsome assortment—all of which he will sell very low for Cash.” He again added that cash would be given for gold and silver.

Later that same year, in a 10 Oct 1810 advertisement in the *Edenton Gazette*, Noxon offered for sale a house and lot with all improvements, “. . . lying on King Street, the property of Stephen Carpenter, dec’d.” He added that “Attached to the house is a small building calculated for a retail store,” and noted that if the property was not disposed of by the second Tuesday in December, it would be exposed to public sale to the highest bidder. In fact, a search of the Chowan County land records indicates that Noxon did not sell this property as there is no deed from him conveying it to anyone. In another notice in the same paper, this one dated 16 Nov 1810, a James Cunningham offered for sale or rent a house “next door to Mr. Noxon’s Shop, which will answer very well for a retail store, or shop of any kind.”

It is not uncommon for a silversmith such as Martin Noxon also to act as a jeweler and as a clock and watch maker; but it is less common to see them also offer gunsmithing services. Noxon did just that in an

advertisement he placed in the 8 Feb 1811 *Edenton Gazette*: “MARTIN NOXON, BEGS leave to inform the public, that he has employed a man at the Gun-Smith Business, who is a professed workman; and he flatters himself that general satisfaction will be given. All work at the above business will be thankfully received and punctually executed.” Noxon is not, however, the only North Carolina silversmith to offer gunsmithing-related services; John Vogler of Salem (Winston-Salem today) did the same.³⁸ John B. Mills of Fayetteville, North Carolina, also held himself out as a gold and silversmith and advertised that he also repaired gun locks.³⁹

On 8 Jun 1812, Noxon took Bonaparte Allen (aged 12, Dec 1811) “as an apprentice to the silversmith’s trade.”⁴⁰ Bonaparte was a son of Nathaniel Allen, mentioned earlier, and is named in his father’s will, which is dated 11 Nov 1805.⁴¹

Records also reveal that Martin Noxon was a member of Unanimity Lodge, No. 54, in Edenton during the year 1813, when he is listed in the *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina* as “S. D.” or Senior Deacon.⁴² Joseph B. Skinner is listed as Worshipful Master in this same enumeration of officials and lodge members.⁴³ Interestingly, during the administration of Noxon’s estate, among the Sales Papers there is one that lists several books he owned, including one titled *Masonic Monitor*.

At the sale, this volume was purchased by John W. Littlejohn, another Mason listed in 1813 as a member of Unanimity Lodge.

The next reference found for Martin Noxon comes from a list of muster rolls of the detached militia of North Carolina organized in August 1814; his name appears on the list for Chowan County, James Iredell, Captain.⁴⁴ Interestingly, Noxon must have died soon after the organization of the Chowan County militia because a notice of his death appeared in the 9 Nov 1814 issue of the *Republican Herald* of Poughkeepsie, New York.⁴⁵ Whether his military service had anything to do with his death is unknown, but this seems a possibility.

Noxon died intestate, but the administrative files connected with his estate contain an extensive number of documents pertaining to its settlement. Among the Petition Papers is a request by Hannah Noxon to the court asking for a jury to lay off her dowry out of Lot 14. In its wording, she mentions that Martin Noxon died seized of certain real estate in the town of Edenton including a house and lot on Eden Alley “in which he resided at the time of his death, and also a part of a lot with a house on it on King Street.” In another Petition Paper dated 13 Nov 1815, it is stated that agreeable to an order of the court “we allot and lay off unto the said Hannah Noxon the northern half of Lot 14 commencing on Eden alley and running south to an apple tree supposed to be near the

center of this lot together with the mansion house and all other out houses on said lot relinquishing her right of dower to the part of the lot on King Street.”

At the October 1815 term of the Chowan County Court of Equity, Nathaniel Bond, guardian of Martin and Elizabeth, orphan children of Martin Noxon, deceased, late of Edenton, asked permission to sell “a lot of land on King St. occupied by the deceased as a silversmith shop.”⁴⁶ From this and other information, it appears Martin Noxon and his wife occupied a dwelling on the northern half of Lot 14, the part of the lot bounding on Eden Alley, while Stephen and Miriam Carpenter had lived on the southern part of Lot 14 bounding on what is today West King Street. Noxon’s silversmith shop must have also been on King Street, possibly in the small building Noxon mentioned as “calculated for a retail store.” Interestingly, there are several old photos taken in 1890 that show what may have been Noxon’s shop. (Fig. 4, View from Broad Street looking west along West King. Courtesy, Samuel B. Dixon) (Fig. 5, Detail of April 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Edenton. Courtesy, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.) (Fig. 6, Enlargement of detail of Fig. 4. Courtesy, Samuel B. Dixon.)



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

The photograph illustrated in Fig. 4 was taken from Broad Street looking west along King. The right side of King shown in this view is the north side of the street. The large two story building at the near right of the photograph is probably the drug store shown in Fig. 5. The small one story building immediately behind the drug store (labeled 309 in Fig. 5) is called a dwelling. This is the building shown in more detail in Fig. 6. It appears to have two tall windows and a transom over the front door, and from its overall look, this structure could date to c. 1800, and it may have been Noxon's King Street shop. The structure to the immediate

west of it (labeled 308 in Fig. 5) is called a shanty, but it seems to have been taken down before the photo was taken in 1890. The L-shaped dwelling to its immediate west (labeled 309 in Fig. 5) is what is today called the “Edmund Hoskins Store” or “James Iredell, Jr., Law Office.” It dates to c. 1802 with enlargements in c. 1810 and c. 1817. The dwelling on the opposite or south side of King (labeled 325 in Fig. 4) is the Disbrowe-Warren or Hewes House, where Nathaniel Allen lived from 1794 until 1805. It is not visible in Fig. 4 except for one of its chimney stacks on the east side of the house.

Returning to a discussion of Martin Noxon, it can be seen from an examination of the inventory and account papers in his estate that he had an extensive assortment of personal property associated both with his own household and with his silversmith/jewelry business. In fact, the list of items sold runs to sixteen pages. Also included is a list of gold, silver, and gilt watches owned by Noxon at the time of his death. (Fig. 7, List of watches in the possession of Martin Noxon at the time of his death.)

List of Watches in possession of Martin Dixon at his Decease

Silver	Gold	Makers Name	No. of Watch	
1		George Allen	315	2 Old Silver Watches & 4 Cases.
1		Rd Dolphin London	7003	
1		Thomas Pyle "	935	
1		George Goodman	16726	
1		Aubois Paris	700	
1		St. L.	509	
1	5	IF	24157	- A number of Book debraced
1		LG	9188	the Am. of which are not ascertain
1		Chapman & Co. Stockh.	9273	ed -
1		E. W. L. London	9879	© Denton
1		Wm. Elliott	3995	
1		Chas. Raynolds Lond.	6886	
1		J. Van Lieron "	337	
1		"	4300	
1		Le Pantin	1639	
1		Tamir Waine "	19077	
1		Lebrun "	640	
1		Jno Simmons "	1402	
1		Richd. Wallis, J.O.		
1		on the Backs	1755	
1		Jos. Kingham Lond.	521	
1		Jno Moore "	147	
1		W. Ranson "	4060	
1		Alex Warfield "	5487	
1		Wm. Ranson "	3360	
1		Jachoch Stockholm	12967	
1		"	8495	
1		"	830	
1		Timson London	16853	
1		Liton "	4606	
24	5	Gold		
1		C. A. L.	220818	
1		Buquet Paris	3154	

Household property included a bedstead and furniture, a dozen green Windsor chairs, a walnut table, mahogany table, mahogany candle stand, bottle case, brass and iron fire tongs and shovel, four small pictures and four large pictures (prints and/or paintings), a desk and bookcase, gilt looking glass, books, guns, swords, a riding chair, and an “eight day” clock, just to mention a few items. Among those things purchased by his wife, Hannah, at the sale were a bedstead and furniture, half-dozen green Windsor chairs, a flag chair (rush bottom chair), two small chairs, a mahogany table, mahogany candle stand, brass and iron fire tongs and shovel, brass candlesticks, carpet, desk and bookcase, as well as a Dutch oven and assorted cooking and dining items.

The estate also included all manner of jewelry and silver and gold items as well as those associated with the watch and clockmaking business he carried on at his shop. Examples include salt spoons, tea spoons, table spoons, mustard spoons, skimmer spoons, sugar tongs, pencil cases, rings of all sorts, locket, breast pins, sleeve buttons, silver thimbles, toothpicks, seals, watch chains, watch ribbons, earrings, and many other objects. (Fig. 8, Page from sales papers in Martin Noxon estate.)

		Shrimps		363 92
6 Table Spoons	x	William Offield	x	15
1 Seimmer Spoon	x	James Lague	x	2 5
1 Log Tea Spoon	x	Wm. L. Medias	x	9 05
1 pr Sugar Tongs	x	do	x	1 55
1 " Salt Spoons	x	do	x	1 55
2 " Sugar Tongs	x	P P Lawrence	x	90
1 Pencil Case	x	Thomas Lopp	x	1
1 pr Salt Spoons	x	Sas R. Burt	x	90
2 Pencil Cases	x	John Populston	x	40
1 do do	x	J. M. Roberts	x	65
1 do do	x	P P Lawrence	x	55
1 do do	x	John Populston	x	50
10 Knives	x	do	x	2
4 Sugar Tongs	x	Thos. Charlton	x	1 10
5 pr Silver Buttons	x	A. Small	x	1 1
1 Silver Watch Key	x	Wm. L. L.	x	50
1 Mustard Spoon	x	J. M. Roberts	x	50
1 Nickel Case	x	Jos. Thornblow	x	10
1 Butte breast Pin	x	A. Small	x	63
2 do do do	x	do	x	10
2 do do do	x	do	x	40
1 do do do	x	J. Populston	x	90
1 do do do	x	J. M. Catter	x	30
1 do do do	x	Jos. Thornblow	x	40
2 do do do	x	do	x	65
1 do do do	x	A. Holtz	x	80
1 do do do	x	J. M. Roberts	x	85
1 do do do	x	J. M. Catter	x	38
1 do do do	x	John Nixon	x	80
1 do do do	x	Carb	x	50
2 do Knives	x	Invlos	x	32
1 do do	x	Jos. Thornblow	x	30
1 do do	x	A. Habarrus	x	75
1 Bill Seal	x	C. Batten	x	20
1 do do	x	A. Lottjohn	x	31
3 Silver Thimbles	x	Wm. Lottjohn	x	30
				435 24

Figure 8

Of Martin Noxon's children, his daughter, Emmeline Miriam, married Joseph F. Faribault of Edenton. A notice of the marriage appeared in the *Edenton Gazette, and North Carolina General Advertiser* on 11 Jun 1821: "MARRIED, On Thursday evening last by the Rev'd John Avery, Mr. Joseph Faribault to Miss Emmeline Noxon, daughter of Martin Noxon, dec'd, both of this town." Regrettably, she did not live long following her marriage as a notice of her death appeared in the 13 Nov 1822 issue of the *Hillsborough recorder*: "At Edenton, on the 28th ult. Mrs. Emmeline M(iriam) Faribault, aged 15 years and 7 months, consort of Joseph F. Faribault and only daughter of the late Martin Noxin (sic)." Martin's other daughter, Elizabeth Jain, had died in September of 1817. It should be added that prior to his marriage to Emmeline, Joseph F. Faribault had been married on 15 May 1819 (date of bond) to Ann Hassell.⁴⁷ Following Emmeline's death, Faribault married for the third time on 19 Dec 1825 (date of bond) to Chloe L. Young.⁴⁸ According to an entry in the MCD, Faribault was another Edenton silversmith. Evidence for this cited there includes a payment made 22 Feb 1817 by James Bozman to Faribault for making a pair of sugar tongs. Also mentioned was a notice in the 25 Aug 1820 issue of the *American Beacon and Norfolk Portsmouth Daily Advertiser* alerting all Sheriffs, Bailiffs, and Constables, within the State, that a Mulatto named Leon Cabarrus lodged in the Chowan County jail upon a charge "of having

broken open the shop of Joseph F. Faribault, in the night time, and stealing, taking, and carrying away, diverse articles of Jewellry (sic),” had escaped.

Hannah Noxon, Martin’s widow, survived her daughter by a few years before passing away in Edenton on 25 Feb 1826. A notice of her death appeared in *The North-Carolina Star* on 17 Mar 1826: "DIED, At Edenton, on the 25th ultimo, in the 43rd year of her age, Mrs. Hannah Noxon, relict of the late Mr. Martin Noxon.”

The following year a legal notice appeared in the 13 Mar 1827 *Edenton Gazette* regarding the sale of the property on Eden Alley where Hannah Noxon had been residing prior to her death. This was a notification by Joseph F. Faribault, as guardian of the infant heirs of Martin Noxon—Joseph F. Faribault, Martin Noxon (Robert Martin Noxon) and Thomas Francis Faribault—that, in pursuance of an order of the Chowan Court of Equity, he intended “to sell at public Auction before the Court House door in the Town of Edenton, on Monday the 12th day of March next, at 12 o’clock That valuable and well improved lot situated on Eden Alley, known and distinguished in the new plan of said town, by No. 14, at present occupied by Mr. J. F. Faribault.” It would appear from this notice that Joseph F. Faribault and Thomas Francis Faribault were likely sons of Joseph F. and Emmeline Faribault.

Joseph F. Faribault died in Edenton in 1841 leaving a will dated 12 Nov 1839 and proved at the August 1840 Term of Court.⁴⁹ The will divided his property between his two sons Thomas Francis and George Faribault when they attained the age of twenty-one. He also specified that if either son died before that age, his share was to go to the children of Thomas Waff, viz: Sarah Emeline (sic) and Joseph Thomas Waff. Thomas Waff was named executor.⁵⁰ Joseph F. Faribault's other son, Thomas Francis Faribault, also died testate in Chowan County leaving a will dated 25 Jul 1843 that mentioned his maternal grandmother, "the late Mrs. Noxon."⁵¹ Most of his property was devised to Robert M. Noxon, Martin and Hannah's son. Robert M. Noxon married Mary Small in Chowan on 22 Dec 1840 (date of bond).⁵²

Examples of Martin Noxon's Work

To date, only a few examples of work by Edenton silversmiths have been documented, including work by Noxon. A search of the MESDA objects database yields only one entry for Edenton, a pair of silver spoons made by Martin Noxon.⁵³ One of these spoons is in the MESDA collection while the other is in a private collection. The MESDA spoon is described as a nine-inch, silver, serving spoon with coffin-shaped handle and single triangular drop on back of bowl base. What is presumably the Noxon spoon mentioned by MESDA as in a private

collection is pictured in Cutten along with the following description:⁵⁴

“The initials 'FRL' in script with a single 'S' beneath are engraved on the hand. The bowls are oval with a shallow drop.”

The only other documented piece of Edenton silver is pictured in Cutten and is by the previously mentioned John Copeland.⁵⁵ Cutten’s description of Copeland, who died in 1773, reads as follows: “Virtually his sole claim to repute as a silversmith is represented by a surviving toddy ladle and a bill (fortunately preserved) that he rendered to Thomas Jones late in 1769. Apart from these items, there is an undated record that St. Paul’s Parish ran survey lines between Copeland’s property and that of James White, presumably in Edenton, and that both men were present and in agreement with the actions taken. In his will, dated April 7, 1773, Copeland left all his property to his wife, Sarah, and appointed her as executrix. His estate papers indicate that he was affluent; in addition to fine furniture, books, flat silver, and slaves, the inventory of his estate included silversmith’s tools and 40 pounds of silver and gold.” Cutten has a picture of the toddy ladle made by Copeland, as well as a photo of the itemized bill from Copeland to Thomas Jones. At the time the toddy ladle was photographed, it was in the possession of a Mrs. John G. Wood of Edenton. (Fig. 9, Example of a silver punch or toddy ladle. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art.)



Figure 9

The itemized bill from Copeland lists, among other things, charges for making tea spoons and a punch ladle, mending and cleaning “earrings,” a pair of “Necklis rings,” mending a pair of tea tongs, and making a pair of “Salt Shovels.” (Fig. 10, Example of a silver salt shovel.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

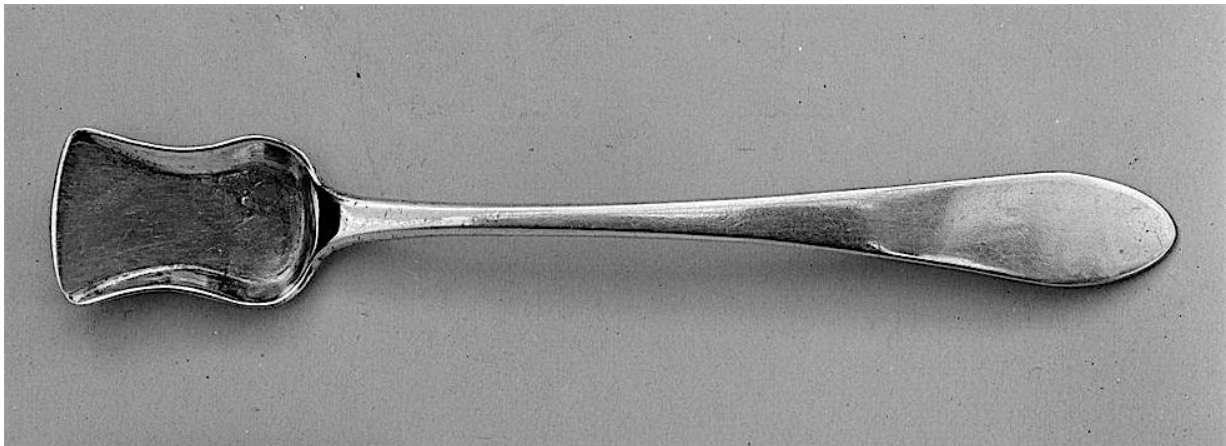


Figure 10

A few pieces of silver by Noxon have also passed hands via Internet sales. For example, Twickenham Antiques, Inc., in Huntsville, AL, sold a spoon by Noxon, and described in their online advertisement:⁵⁶

“Edenton, North Carolina serving spoon, marked Noxon. Martin Noxon was born in 1780 at Oswego, Dutchess County, N.Y. He came to Edenton, N.C. at the age of 20 in 1800 and continued to work there until 1814 when he died. Length is 8½ inches and is in excellent condition. Monogram is 'CPW'.”

Another example of Noxon’s work comes from Worthpoint.com, an online database of antiques and collectibles used by collectors and dealers to help value their items. They exhibited another Noxon spoon described as follows:⁵⁷ “Offered for auction is a Southern coin silver teaspoon crafted by Martin Noxon in Edenton, North Carolina in about 1805. The spoon is approximately 5 and 1/4 inches in length. It is marked ‘NOXON’ in Roman block letters in a rectangular punch (snip). The spoon is monogrammed with a script 'CB'.” The four images of this spoon can be viewed online. Research by the author found other examples of Noxon spoons in two other private collections in Edenton, but they were not photographed for this study.

It is clear from what has already been said that Noxon made a range of silver items, including sugar tongs. Fortunately, an example of silver

sugar tongs made by Noxon has come to light, Fig. 11. (Fig. 11, Pair of Noxon sugar tongs. Courtesy, Tom Newbern.) (Fig. 12, Noxon mark on sugar tongs. Courtesy, Tom Newbern.) (Fig. 13, Script initials “JR” to the elbow of the sugar tongs. Courtesy, Tom Newbern.)

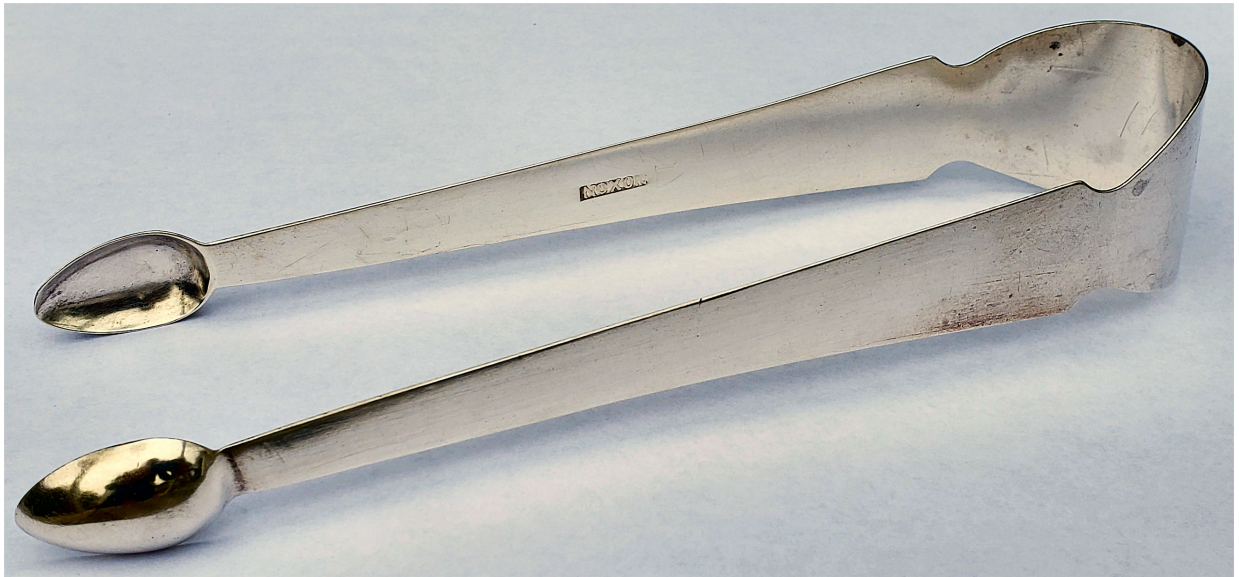


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

They are stamped with Noxon's usual mark in Roman block letters in a rectangular punch, Fig. 12. There is no other decoration, except for script initials "JR" applied to the elbow of the tongs, Fig. 13.

It would seem that Noxon was well trained by his mentor in Poughkeepsie, New York, before arriving in Edenton and that his years in Edenton were prosperous. There is every indication he was an industrious and upstanding citizen and well liked in the community. It is hoped that the research documented in this study will bring deserved attention to him as a skilled artisan and, perhaps, even help bring to light additional examples of his work.

Endnotes

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6. Cutten, p. 114.
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