

Ferrand, William Pugh, Sr. ^[1]

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Ferrand, William Pugh, Sr.

by Tucker Reed Littleton, 1986

24 Apr. 1789–28 Oct. 1847

William Pugh Ferrand, Sr., merchant, exporter-importer, [naval stores](#) ^[2] manufacturer and dealer, public official, postmaster, and large landowner, was born in Swansboro. He was the second son of Guillaume (William) Ferrand, who was born in France in 1755 of [Huguenot](#) ^[3] descent and first appeared in [Carteret County](#) ^[4] about 1785; he bought a large farm on Pettivers (Pettifords) Creek and promptly anglicized the spelling of his given name. William Pugh Ferrand's mother was Mary Williams Backhouse Ferrand, the widow of [John Backhouse](#) ^[5] and the daughter of Colonel John Pugh Williams of Fort Barnwell, [Craven County](#) ^[6]. Like his elder brother, [Stephen Lee Ferrand](#) ^[7], William lived with his parents in Swansboro until it was time for him to receive college preparatory instruction in New Bern. From there he went to [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[8] and received the A.B. degree in 1808.

After his graduation, Ferrand seems to have returned to New Bern for a few years, acquiring land in Craven County in 1810 and 1813 by deeds that indicate the grantee was "of New Bern." By 1816, however, he was back in [Onslow County](#) ^[9], for in that year he was named one of the managers (incorporators) of a company formed to improve the navigation of the [New River](#) ^[10].

On 21 Jan. 1817 Ferrand married Leah Yates Cobb of [Jones County](#) ^[11] whose grandfather, Daniel Yates, had represented Onslow County in the North Carolina House of Commons, the state senate, and the North Carolina conventions of 1788 and 1789. In the year of his marriage, Ferrand was appointed by the county to take the list of taxables for the Swansboro District and to receive the district's congressional votes. On 9 Sept. 1817 he was named the fifth postmaster of Swansboro, a position he retained until 7 Dec. 1836.

In January 1819 Ferrand bought from Captain [Otway Burns](#) ^[12] lot number six in the town of Swansboro where he evidently located a store, for in May of that year he was licensed to retail spirituous liquors at his store in Swansboro. This store was burned on 14 Apr. 1838, and in late 1838 and early 1839 Swansboro's "Old Brick Store" was built to replace the earlier one. Despite heavy losses from the fire, Ferrand continued to expand his mercantile enterprises, becoming one of the county's wealthiest merchants, with stores, warehouses, and [taverns](#) ^[13] at both Swansboro and Onslow Court House (later Jacksonville). He also owned several sailing vessels, a watermill at what is now Hubert, N.C., and a windmill and turpentine distillery at Swansboro.

In 1821 Ferrand was again appointed to take the congressional votes for the Swansboro District. In 1823 he was made a commissioner for the town of Swansboro and in 1824 was named one of the incorporators and trustees of the Swansboro Academy. In 1826 he successfully ran for the Onslow County seat in the North Carolina House of Commons. When Dr. [Elisha Mitchell](#) ^[14] visited Swansboro in 1827, he remarked in his diary that William P. Ferrand was "the principal man of the place."

Long identified with the Democratic Party in Onslow County, Ferrand was elected on the Van Buren ticket to represent the New Bern District in the electoral college in 1836. On 22 Dec. 1840, he was appointed to a second term as postmaster of Swansboro; he remained in the position until 31 Oct. 1845, bringing his total years as postmaster to slightly less than a quarter of a century. In addition, he appears to have become increasingly involved in local port activities. He was appointed the wreck master for the Port of Swansboro in 1838 and again in 1845. There is also record of his appointment as one of the commissioners of navigation for the port of Swansboro in 1842, 1843, and 1845.

Returning to politics after his wife's death on 1 Apr. 1843, Ferrand was elected a state senator from Onslow County in 1846. His career was terminated by his death in Swansboro at the age of fifty-eight. He and his wife were buried in the Ferrand family cemetery on Pettivers Creek, Carteret County, across the White Oak River from the town of his birth. Their children were [William Pugh, Jr.](#) ^[15], who was born in Swansboro on 20 Aug. 1819, attended The University of North Carolina (1835–36), and was last heard from while residing at Richmond, Va.; Stephen Lee, who was named for his uncle in Salisbury and died in 1826 at the age of five; and Eugene, who studied at The University of North Carolina (1849–51) and died in 1859. At the death of his brother in 1830, William Pugh Ferrand, Sr., became the guardian of Stephen's two daughters.

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