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S.C. - Homes, Historic - York County

House Built In 1818 Still Stands Sturdy

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Many Generations Of Sturgis Family Occupied Cottage

By ELIZABETH REED

The old Sturgis home, standing on a winding road back of the Celanese plant, was built by members of the Sturgis family in 1818, according to the inscription on the chimney. And you may well believe that the house is that age when you view the pegs that pinned the mammoth logs in place. Daubed with mud, the house from 1818 until about the turn of the century was the home of succeeding generations of the Sturgis family, the forebears of the many York county descendants who today bear that name.

In 1902 the house and adjoining acres of land were bought from Sam Harris by Mrs. Mary Wilkerson and her two sons, Bob and Will Wilkerson. They are now dead, and today the home and 40 acres of adjoining land belong to Miss Maggie Wilkerson, a niece of Bob and Will and an employe of one of the Fort Mill textile plants.

Miss Wilkerson lives in the home which has apparently been changed very little in the passing years.

In all likelihood a Sturgis home stood on the same site or very near it before 1818, as members of the Sturgis family owned the land certainly as early as the Revolutionary War.

In the late 1700's the family owner a tremendous amount of land in York county, including much of the lands around Ebenezer. The fact that way back in the late 1700's and early 1800's they marked the graves of even their two and three-year-old dead, marks them as people of some wealth.

The Sturgis Family History

Mrs. Sarah Sturgis Frew is the oldest member of the Sturgis family living in this section. She also is the oldest member of the First Baptist Church in point of service.

Sturgis family legend has it that a number of Sturgis brothers came to America from Wales in the 1740's. Daniel Sturgis came to York County, built a log house near the present old home and died May 14, 1787. He was buried in the graveyard adjoining the present home and his grave is the oldest marked grave in the cemetery. Daniel died at 56 which would put his birthdate at 1731, one year before the birth of George Washington. The date from his birth to the present has bridged the whole life of the American nation.

The Sturgis House



Built in 1818 probably by Daniel Sturgis, second, this old mud-daubed log house is still sturdy and strong. Daniel Sturgis' grave in the nearby cemetery is marked with this inscription: "In memory of Daniel Sturgis, born February 17, 1768, died April 7, 1828, aged 60 years, one month and 20 days." (Herald Staff Photo).

Family legend also says that the parents of Daniel came to the opposite side of the river, built a home and died there.

Mrs. Frew's family Bible gives the genealogy of her father and grandfather's family.

Her father, James Armstrong Sturgis, was born February 5, 1814. Her mother was Margaret Susan Strain.

These are the children of James A. and his wife as recorded in the huge Bible.

The War

John Zadok was born August 9, 1846. When the War Between the States came on in 1861 he was too young to enlist, but toward the end conditions for the South became so desperate that he joined the Army. Although only a boy and a sick one at that, Zed shouldered a gun with the best that was left of the Confederate Army. At the battle of Spottsylvania in May 1864, W. G. Reid, also a member of the 12th South Carolina Regiment, reported that Zed went into the battle with his gun on his shoulder. That was the last seen or heard of him and the supposition is that he was killed in battle and his body never identified.

James A. Sturgis also served in the War. He was too old for active service but was called out for guard duty in and around Charleston.

Amelia Pride Sturgis, oldest daughter of the couple, was born April 23, 1848, and died at the age of nine months and 14 days. She was buried in the family graveyard and today the inscription on her tomb can be plainly read.

The second son was Benjamin, who was born June 23, 1850 and went to Tennessee to settle as a young man. James N. was born October 23, 1852. Joseph H. was born June 21, 1855 and settled in Texas when a young man. Samuel Crider was born October 9, 1857, became a teacher and went to Maryland to live. Atlanta was born October 2, 1859 and died at 19. Gustavus B. Sturgis was born December 26, 1861.

R. L. Sturgis, one of Rock Hill's mayors, was born November 16, 1864 and his widow now lives on Stonewall street. Sarah Elizabeth, now Rock Hill's beloved "Miss Sally" was the youngest of the brood of 10 having been born January 29, 1867.

(This is one of a series of articles on York County's old homes and families. The story above is the first of two installments on the Sturgis Home. The second installment will appear next Thursday.)