

COL. R. H. McMASTER WRITES OF OLD FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Happy Hunting Ground of the Indians, Its White Men Love It and Long for It When Away—Sherman Found It Wealthy, Aristocratic and Best Cultivated of South Carolina—History of Elbow Hill, the Colonel's Farm. *State 1-13-35*

BY FITZ HUGH McMASTER.

Col. Richard H. McMaster, field artillery, Regular Army, now at Omaha, Neb., on the staff of the Corps area commander, has recently published a 16-page pamphlet, "Elbow Hill, the Annals of a Farm," which make delightful reading to those who have ever lived in Fairfield county, or who love Southern traditions and have an attachment for the soil.

It is the story of a farm of 472 acres which he now owns in Fairfield county and which is the remnant of a 2,000 acre and more plantation which an ancestor acquired there in 1798.

The motif of the pamphlet is found in a paragraph:

"When the owner (Colonel McMaster) was station in Columbia, he went to the farm quite often, and occasionally took his wife with him. She did not see much beauty or attraction in the old scarred hills. She wondered why he liked to go there so often. She said to him one day, 'When I go there with you, you don't do anything but walk around. I believe when I am not with you, you get down and pat the ground. She is a New England girl, descended from lines of manufacturing people, professors, preachers, sea faring men, etc. He could only grin and confess to himself that he hadn't words to explain the drag and pull of the generations of association with land and Negroes—good or bad as it may be."

Throughout the pamphlet there are touches of pretty sentiments and expressions of affection for dear old Fairfield, places in it, and her people.

Love Their Land.

He begins with: "The people whom the fortunes of life have placed on the high lands between the Broad and Catawba rivers have an unusual affection for their land. They hate to leave it, and when they are called away they look back to it with longing."

"The part called Fairfield is neither mountain nor plain, but a series of elevated ridges, undulating hills, and flowing vales, dropping in its lower reaches to the flat fields and swamps which form the point of the tongue between the water of the Wateree and Congaree rivers."

"Before the advent of the Europeans it was a country of forests in which the oak predominated, and of small prairies and valleys, with brakes of cane. It abounded in buffalo, bear, deer, elk, panthers, foxes and other small game."

"It was beloved by the Indians—a happy hunting ground to which came in turns various tribes. From the south, the Congarees, the Low Country Indian seeking health; from the east the Catawbas; from the west the warlike Cherokees. It seemed to be a pleasant no-man's land possessed of no particular tribe but enjoyed by all."

He then tells of the first settlements (about 1742) of the Lyles on the west along the Broad river, the Kirklands and Harrisons on the east,

by the Wateree, and of the Winns in the high middle ridges. The people came largely from Virginia.

Families and Their Seats.

"They brought along with them their local traditions and customs. They called their unpretentious and often crude farm houses 'seats,' and they referred to themselves as 'country families.' They built their family cemetery walls, with a place reserved outside for their slaves. They brought along the English pastime of fox hunting, and were delighted to find a plentiful supply in their new home. They rated their families somewhat on the length of time they had been established in America, and they looked with complacent attitude toward the comparatively recent English and French settlements on the Carolina coast."

"It took one or more generations of living in this hunting country of the Indians to teach the small farmer that he could not survive. He must expand his lands and his workers, or sell out and move on to the plains and more fertile lands of the West. With the turn of the century would come the cotton gin and the era of the cotton planter and the big slave plantation."

He tells of the establishment of the first school for boys in the up-country. Says he:

"The mutual needs brought together the educational leaders of Charleston and of the Camden district with a view to establishing a school for boys somewhere in the invigorating atmosphere of the hill country. The result was the organization of the Mount Zion society in 1777, with headquarters in Charleston, and the establishment of the Mount Zion college in Winnsborough in 1785."

Low Country Influence.

"In education and culture this was of far-reaching influence to Fairfield. It brought the young boys of Charleston and vicinity to Winnsborough, with the resulting friendly contacts. It brought Charlestonians to summer

homes in the hills—including General Moultrie, the Vander Horsts, and Gadsdens. Later it brought an inflow of permanent residents from the Low Country, among them representatives of the families DuBose, Dwight, Gaillard, Hanahan, (the beloved physician), Whaley, Bacot, Campbell, DesPortes, Thomas and Porcher. It brought the manners and social amenities of the Low Country, and the politeness and love of flowers of the French people who had largely settled that section. Also there came in time schools for girls—Miss Winn's school, Mrs. Ladd's school, and Mr. O'Bear's school. Furman college came for a while, later moved to Greenville. The railroad came; the plantations and slavery flourished; wealth accumulated."

"When the Union army passed through in 1865, the correspondent of the New York Herald reported that Winnsborough was a wealthy and aristocratic town, containing much that was dear to Rebel hearts."

"Sherman's medical director (Surgeon John Moore) wrote: 'The country was high and rolling, with occasional outcroppings of the granite formation, a more fertile region and better cultivated than any passed over in South Carolina.'"

The Devil's Elbow.

He now comes to the personal part of his narrative. He tells of the crooked winding road to Rocky Mount, of it crossing Beaver Dam creek (now Johnston's), of the elbow in the hill, and of the accidents and deaths there, and of its being named "Devil's Elbow." James Barber, with his wife, Sarah Gunning, came here in 1798 and bought 545 acres of land, to which they later added 650 acres more. His prayer was: "God give me hills and strength to climb them." His prayer was answered, and the lands remained in possession of his children and his children's children, part remaining this day to Colonel McMaster.

Heirs succeed heirs and in 1829 Sarah Richmond married Benjamin Boulware. "They lived all of their married life at their Elbow Hill place. It was high tide in the lifetime of this plantation, as well as in that system of slavery. They enjoyed all the pleasures of the regime of slavery and suffered none of the consequences. She died in 1858 and he in 1860. It was left for their children to suffer the deluge."

Confederate Soldiers.

One son, Dr. James Richmond Boulware, was a surgeon in the Sixth regiment, C. S. A. The other son, Frank, was a private in the same regiment and was captured at Trevillian station. Sallie, the youngest, married Richard Nott McMaster, the father of Col. R. H. McMaster. He was a member of Hampton's Legion in Capt. James Macfie's company. He was often selected for dangerous enterprises. "Somewhat of a dandy in dress—he was fond of dancing and society; he became an expert horseman, fencer, and shot, and had his fish pond, chickens and dogs."

Sherman's army passed by Elbow Hill, and camps were made there. When they were gone the "big house" had been burned with many of the outbuildings, the great oaks were scorched and withered, the cattle, hogs and chickens were killed and consumed or left to rot, and desolation reigned until stout and devoted hearts took up the burdens of life—but the old ways and days never came back. (Sherman had three distinct lines of march through Fairfield, more than in any other county in the state, and the width of the desolation was wider there than elsewhere.)

"The people of Elbow Hill attended the old Presbyterian church (Mt. Olivet, Wateree, Presbyterian church), up the ridge, and just across the road from the northern end of their place." In the cemetery the graves of Revolutionary soldiers are marked by granite slabs and boulders. The first inscriptions came only in 1790. Succeding generations sleep there, many of them Confederate soldiers.

The last pastor of the church, and he was pastor for 40 years, was Dr. James Douglas, father of Dr. Davison Douglas, the late president of the University of South Carolina.

There is considerable genealogical matter and personal reminiscence which will make the pamphlet of great value to the descendants of those mentioned. It is a decided contribution to the history of Fairfield county.

Elbow Hill still retains its name. Its owner moves from place to place, as army orders direct, but his heart is still at Elbow Hill.

Low-Country Families Influence Fairfield

Edward Gendron Palmer of St. James, Santee, Parish Went to Ridgeway in 1824—Thomas, Gaillard, DuBose, Porcher, Courturier and Others Follow. Vanderhorst, Drayton and Moultrie Owned Lands There—Healthfulness and Mt. Zion College Drew Them *State 7-31-38*

BY FITZ HUGH McMASTER.

It came as a distinct shock to me when a meditative, well informed man said in effect that the evil outweighed the good done to Fairfield county by the migration of low-country planters, principally of Huguenot descent, in the 1830s and 1840s. The wholly accepted theory has been that the coming of these gentle, cultivated folk in softening the frank, and fearless outspokenness of the Scotch and Scotch-Irish had had only beneficial effects, and had made Fairfield county, in some respects, distinctive in the up-country.

The whole thing came about as a result of a visit to "Valencia," Ridgeway, which had been builded about 1834 by Edward Gendron Palmer, who was one of the first, if not the very first, of low-country planters who founded estates in Fairfield. Mr. Palmer owned over 6,000 acres of land and 400 slaves.

A story of "Valencia" is to follow in a later article. It is one of the loveliest homes in the up-country—in location, manner of building and in historic and romantic associations.

But the disturbing remark of the meditative gentleman caused a diversion, and this article will deal somewhat in detail with a number of the estates which were settled in Fairfield by low-country planters.

Large Plantations, Many Slaves.

The meditative gentleman went on to say that one had only to look at the population statistics and physical conditions of the county previous to 1860 to see that these low-country planters did the county no good economically, however much good they may have done socially and spiritually.

In 1830, about when the migration began, the population of Fairfield county was 21,546, of which 9,705 were whites and 11,841 were Negroes (slaves). In 1860 the population was 22,111, of which 6,373 were whites—3,332 less than 30 years before—and the Negro population was 15,738, two and a half times as great as the white, making Fairfield the one black spot in the up-country, and ever since, the third county in the state in proportion of Negro to white population.

Besides this, soil surveys show that denuded, washed-away lands in Fairfield far exceed those of any other county in the state, and indeed, it is of the three or four worst denuded counties in the United States.

The planters from the low-country affected the conditions out of proportion to their numbers because, generally, they had large plantations, large number of slaves, and were accustomed to the level coast country, and not the rolling hills and valleys of Fairfield.

Drove Out Small Farmers.

The general effect of the whole policy of planting in Fairfield was to buy out, and practically drive out, the small white farmer, and make living unpleasant generally for the white man who had to work with his hands.

This recalls the remark of an old lady now living, whose father had been a tailor, patronized by the rich planters of Fairfield. "My father told me that Fairfield was no place for a poor white man. The rich white man would not associate with him, and he could not associate with the Negroes."

These small white farmers went to the Southwest and helped develop Alabama, Mississippi and Texas, and to the Central West, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and "the sons and grandsons of the latter came back in 1860s in blue uniforms to lick the stuffing out of us," said the commentator.

The meditative gentleman may not be wholly correct, but his ebullition makes a good story worth thinking about.

It may be that this movement started much earlier, as stated by McCrady. "It is a curious and interesting fact in the history of South Carolina that the very first instance in which the names of the English churchmen, and the Huguenots of the coast, and of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the upper country are commingled is in the establishment of a school. The Mt. Zion society was established in the city of Charleston, January 9, and incorporated February 12, 1777." The school was in "Wynnesborough."

Vanderhorst and Drayton.

County records show that low-countrymen owned lands in Fairfield long before 1830. One record shows that Arnoldus Vanderhorst and Thomas Wearing (Waring), executors of John Vanderhorst, made a conveyance to John Winn in 1789. In 1798 Minor Winn gave a mortgage to Arnoldus Vanderhorst.

In 1791 Stephen Drayton made a conveyance to Isaac Molle, and in 1793 John Winn made a conveyance to Stephen Drayton.

A plat of the streets of Winnsboro of 1787 shows one street named "Vanderhorst" and another, "Drayton." So both of these names were honored during the early settlement of Fairfield; but there is no evidence that either lived in the county.

Also, Mills' map of Fairfield, 1826, shows a plantation, and supposedly a residence of Governor Moultrie several miles southwest of Winnsboro, but there is no evidence of his having lived there any length of time.

But this story began with "Valencia," about one mile from the heart of Ridgeway. It is closely connected with "Quinine Hill," about three miles from the center of Columbia.

Quinine Hill and Valencia.

"Quinine Hill," now home of James H. Hammond, was the summer home

of Dr. James Davis, "eminent physician" of his day and superintendent of the "Lunatic Asylum" (the inscription on his tomb in the First Presbyterian churchyard is worthy of read-

ing), and was so named by him because of its freedom from malaria, a plague of the lowlands. Caroline, the daughter of Doctor Davis, had married Edward Gendron Palmer of St. James, Santee parish, Charleston district, about 1824. Doctor Davis persuaded his son-in-law to move from the "sickly" low-country, and buy a plantation, "Bloomingdale," on Dutchman's creek, several miles from "New Lands," as Ridgeway was then called. But "Bloomingdale" did not prove to be healthful, so he moved, temporarily, to a house on what is now Palmer street, Ridgeway, and while there, on a high hill of another plantation, built "Valencia," meaning "good health," having the same thought of his father-in-law, Doctor Davis who had named "Quinine Hill." It was at this home of his father-in-law that his second son, John Ramsay Davis Palmer, who afterwards became a famous physician in Ridgeway, was born July 29, 1833.

This Doctor Palmer is the ancestor of the Palmers of Ridgeway, and of the R. A. Meares family of Columbia. His home was "Cedar Tree" plantation, on the road to Winnsboro from Ridgeway.

Palmer and Thomas.

Leaving the romantic story of "Valencia," for a later article, in the letters and books of Edward Gendron Palmer, accounts are had of his efforts to bring other low-country folk to Fairfield.

One of the first to follow Mr. Palmer was S. Peyre Thomas of St. Stephen's parish, Charleston district, who made a home at "Valley Grove," not far from Ridgeway, on the waters of Dutchman's creek.

Then came Dr. John P. Thomas, who had been a practicing physician in St. John's parish. In 1836 he purchased lands near Ridgeway and soon thereafter built "Mount Hope," which stands to this day, in Big Cedar creek area.

From these two early settlers of Fairfield come the families of that name in Ridgeway, John P. Thomas, Jr., and others in Columbia, and Bishop Thomas and the Rev. Harold Thomas of Charleston.

It is natural for this family to run to ministers, as their earliest American ancestor, the Rev. Samuel Thomas, was sent to this colony in 1702 to be a missionary to the Yemassee Indians by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, of the Church of England. Governor Johnson would not let him go to the Yemassee but retained him as his private chaplain, when governors had and needed, as they need now, spiritual advisors.

Gaillard and DuBose.

About the same time, in 1834, there came from Pineville, St. John's parish, Charleston district, David Gaillard, Samuel DuBose and Theodore S. DuBose. They stopped to see E. G. Palmer in Ridgeway, but went on to Winnsboro and soon established themselves on plantations near that town.

David Gaillard called his plantation, near White Oak, "Springvale." Later he bought another place near Winnsboro, to which village he moved and lived in a hired house for several years. He died in 1855 at the age of 56, leaving a widow and 11 children.

Two of his sons were killed in the Confederate war, one of them, Col. Frank Gaillard, at Fredericksburg. His monument may be seen near the entrance to the cemetery there. It is interesting to note that a short time before that battle, while at home on a furlough, Colonel Gaillard confided to a friend that he had a premonition that he was soon to be killed by a shot through the head. The premonition was fulfilled.

From David Gaillard come many descendants. A. S. Gaillard of Columbia, the late Col. D. D. Gaillard of the Panama Canal zone and others.

Samuel DuBose owned a place near White Oak, and so did his son, Theodore, but the names of these places are not known. His son, Samuel, owned the "Dove Cot," plantation on the east side of Wateree creek.

Birthplace of Dr. DuBose.

Theodore S. DuBose for a time lived in a rented house in Winnsboro, and here his distinguished son, Dr. William Porcher DuBose, was born. Afterwards he lived at "Farmington," a plantation about eight miles from Winnsboro, and later bought "Rose-land," about two miles from Winnsboro.

Farmington subsequently passed to Gen. John Bratton, who married the daughter of Mr. DuBose. "Rose-land" passed into the hands of the Refo family who lived there for a number of years. From these two DuBoses come the family of that name in Columbia and elsewhere, and Bishop Bratton of Mississippi, and others.

The following are quotations from an account given her son, Capt. Henry Gaillard, one-time state senator from Fairfield, and clerk of the state senate, by the widow of David Gaillard, who came from St. John's parish in 1834:

"Several families, principally widows, with their sons, came up to Winnsboro to live in preference to boarding them at the school, for the advantages of health, as well as this most excellent school. Mrs. Isabella Porcher, with four sons and two daughters, rented a house in Winnsboro and settled herself in Winnsboro until her sons had all been prepared for college by Mr. Hudson. . . . Mrs. Sarah Couturier, with one daughter, who married Dr. T. T. Robertson, and two sons, the sons scholars at Mt. Zion. . . . Mrs. Mary Gaillard, widow of Dr. Edwin Gaillard of St. Stephen's parish, with one son, Edwin, a scholar at Mt. Zion, and four daughters. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Sims Lequex came also. They kept house in Winnsboro until their deaths. Mr. Isaac Dwight, with his wife and five children, for several years spent their summers with T. S. DuBose—the sons at Mr. Hutson's.

"In May, 1840, Mr. Josiah Obear, an Episcopal clergyman from Vermont, who came South for his health, was sent by our bishop to this place, at the request of members of the church settled here, there being a respectable number of church members at that time. Being without a church, services were held in the courthouse. . . . Mr. Obear was married in November, 1840, in Charleston. In 1841, January, Mrs. Obear, an accomplished lady, opened a school for girls."

The foregoing story, while not pretending to cover the whole ground, gives an idea of the extent to which Fairfield came to know the influence of as gentle, cultured and refined people as live anywhere.

NINETY YEARS AGO

From "Geography of South Carolina," by William Gilmore Simms; Published in Charleston in 1843.

State 5-16-33 Fifty Installments.

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Fairfield District.

Fairfield was first settled by emigrants from Virginia and North Carolina. It derives its name, most probably, from the grateful appearance which it made, in the eyes of wanderers, weary with long looking for a resting place. It is bounded on the north by Chester district; on the south by Richland; on the west and southwest by Broad river, which divides it from Union, Newberry and Lexington; southwest by Lexington; and on the northwest by the Wateree and Catawba rivers, which separate it from a part of Lancaster and Kershaw. Fairfield is, on an average, 32 miles in length, 23 in width, and contains about 471,040 square acres.

In Granite Region.

With the exception of a slip of sandy pine land, on its southeastern limit, Fairfield is within the granite region. In its general aspect the country is much diversified, justifying its name, lying now in level plains, rising into slopes and gentle undulations, and sometimes swelling into rugged surface and imposing mountain. The soil is very various, combining the best and worst of the upper country. The lands on the water courses are rich and inexhaustible; the uplands are perhaps too hilly for safe cultivation in a season of much rain. Cotton, of the short staple, is much cultivated; the small grains grow well in Fairfield; corn and wheat in particular. Of these, with rye, oats, barley and potatoes, the crops are usually abundant.

The chief rivers are the Broad, or Eswawpuddenah, which is navigable the whole length of the district; as also the Catawba and Wateree (which, being one river, becomes, in this district, one in name also). Little river, which empties into the Broad, is only partially navigable. It has numerous branches, and is a stream of much importance. Wateree creek, the entrance of which, into the Catawba, imposes upon the latter its name, is the next considerable stream. This union takes place three and a half

miles above the line of Lancaster and Kershaw. The lands on the banks of this stream are noted for their fertility.

Site of First Settlement.

Dutchman's creek, which empties into the Wateree; and Beaver, which empties into Broad river; are both valuable, the one being a creek, the other a beautiful stream, noted, also, as the first place of white settlement in the district. There are other streams, the Suwannee, Rocky, Morris, Fox, Bear, etc., which find their way into the Wateree. The tributaries of the Broad, in Fairfield, are Wilkinson, Terrible, Rock, Gooacon and Cool Branch. In these two main rivers, the Broad and Wateree, are numerous islands, all fertile and some of them in cultivation.

The fish are the shad and sturgeon, the trout, pike, perch, eel, gar, red-horse, sucker, carp, etc.

Fairfield has the finest granite for building; soapstone, sandstone, slate-stone, gneiss and hornblende, are occasionally to be seen. A remarkable rock on the road from Columbia, and four miles from Winnsboro, is called, from its appearance, the Anvil rock. Rock crystals are common; also crystallized quartz; iron is abundant, and pyrites. A valuable mineral spring, good in dyspeptic and cutaneous diseases, is found within ten miles of Winnsboro.

The forests of Fairfield contain the finest timber and in great variety; among which are, the poplar, hickory, walnut, pine, beech, birch, oak (black, white and red, Spanish, post and Turkey), ash, elm, linden, gum, sugar, maple, cherry, dogwood, sassafras, papaw, iron wood, cotton, cedar, etc. The wild fruit trees are crab apple, chinquapin, mulberry, persimmon, haw, hazelnut, walnut, hickory-nut, cherry, chestnut, etc. The cultivated fruit trees are peach, quince, apple, pear, apricot, fig, pomegranate, cherry, plum, almond, etc. The shrub and bush fruits are strawberry, raspberry, whortleberry, gooseberry, etc.

The game are deer, turkey, foxes, raccoons, opossums, squirrels, etc. Of birds, migratory and domestic, there are, the martin, swallow, duck, snow bird, robin, mock-bird, cat-bird, humming-bird, snipe, wood-pecker, whippoorwill, plover, kingfisher, etc.; jay, red-bird and sparrow; turkey, partridge, dove, woodcock, crow, owl, hawk and blackbird. The wild pigeon occasionally appears, and sometimes the bald eagle.

Large Slave Population.

The population of Fairfield, by the census of 1840, is 20,165; of these 7,660 are free; 12,505 slaves. The district is entitled to one senator and four representatives in the legislature. The employments of the people are chiefly agricultural; domestic manufactures are carried on to considerable extent. The water courses furnish numerous mill seats, but these works are chiefly used for sawing lumber, ginning cotton, or grinding corn.

Winnsboro is the seat of justice, and the most importance in the district. It is a healthy and pleasant spot, 30 miles from Columbia, and 150 from Charleston. It is placed on the dividing ridge between the rivers Wateree and Broad. A main branch of the Wateree creek heads near the village. This and other streams furnish excellent springs of water. The town stands on an elevation of more than three hundred feet above the Wateree river, and about five hundred feet above the ocean. The lands around are fertile, undulating and greatly improved. The population is near 500.

Mount Zion College.

It has a handsome courthouse and jail, an academy, five churches, two or three large and elegant hotels, a Masonic hall and market-house. Mount Zion college was established here prior to the Revolution, and received a charter in 1777. Some of the dwellings in Winnsboro are handsomely built. In 1780, Lord Cornwallis made this village his headquarters. The cotton gins manufactured in Winnsboro have a high reputation throughout the state.

There are some other villages in the district. Monticello, lying between Little river and Wilkinson's creek, contains an academy, a few houses, and occupies the center of a healthy, rich and populous neighborhood. Rocky Mount or Grimkeville, stands on the Catawba river, of which it commands a beautiful view; and Longtown, situated on a high sand ridge, 20 miles east of Winnsboro, is the resort of the planters of the Wateree during the autumn season.

This district lies in a salubrious region. The climate is pleasant and healthy. Fevers occur in the fall, along the rich bottoms and the water courses, but there are few portions of the upper country more healthy than this. The instances of longevity are numerous.

A considerate regard is paid to education in Fairfield. The academies and schools are numerous. The free

schools receive \$1,200 from the state annually. A decent sense of religious duty is prevalent, and Sunday schools are efficiently exercised. The religious sects are Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian and Dutch Reformed. Fairfield is prominent, indeed, for its high sense of religious and moral obligation. It has also made some advance in literature, and there are many excellent private libraries.

The territory of Fairfield was once a part of the heritage of the Catawbas. They received the whites kindly, and were affectionately true to them through all periods.

The First "Regulator."

Fairfield has furnished to the state her full share of distinguished men. Among these were Gen. Richard Winn, who was a prominent leader in the Revolutionary war. Thomas Woodward has the reputation of having instituted the sort of forest-justice—in the absence of regular laws and officers—which went by the name of Regulation. He is claimed to have been the first Regulator.