

**FROM WHENCE WE CAME**

By

Thelma Floyd Durham

Updated in 2003 by Grace von Ehrenkrook Walker and Jenny Fallis Widmer

A History of the Watlington and Simpson Families

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### FOREWARD

The information contained herein on the Watlington and Simpson families is in no way to be regarded as an attempt at writing a formal genealogy. It is intended only as a written record for the enlightenment of the writer's children regarding their family heritage and it is hoped that it will be preserved for and updated by future generations. Any other interested relatives are welcome to share its contents, even as I have shared in the results of research of family members who have gone before, in some cases assisted by professionals in their field of genealogy. My contribution has been to compile their findings and add certain historical elements pertinent to the times in which our ancestors lived, as well as data not heretofore recorded on later family members whom I have known or been told about by those who remembered them.. It is my belief that this type of information projects a truer picture of our forebears than the stereotyped genealogy revealing only the names and statistics of those who have gone before.

Deep appreciation is felt for my first cousin, Mildred Chrisman Todd, for sharing so much information gleaned over a long period of years on the Watlington and Simpson families. Hers was a labor of love and dedication and she shared its fruits with complete unselfishness.

Grateful thanks are also due to A. L. Watlington, William H. Watlington, J. Aubry Cox, and Hereward T. Watlington for their records of the Watlington family. To Vance E. Swift of Raleigh, N.C., a distant cousin, the write is greatly indebted for his extensive research and detailed recording on the Simpson family.

This information is lovingly dedicated to our children, Guy Floyd Durham, and his sister, Gayle Durham Hannah, on their mutual birthday, July 16, 1983.

July 2003

Thelma Floyd Durham wrote this in 1983. Updates have been made to certain parts of the document to record happenings of the last 20 years by Grace von Ehrenkrook Walker, wife of Philip Walker, grandson of Fannie Willis Watlington Walker and Jenny Fallis Widmer, granddaughter of Sara Jane Watlington Chrisman.

## **A HISTORY OF THE WATLINGTON AND SIMPSON FAMILIES**

These two illustrious families, the Watlingtons and the Simpsons, were united when the grandparents of the writer, John Armistead Watlington and Jane Simpson were married at the home of the bride, the old High Rock Plantation in Rockingham County, North Carolina on May 6, 1851. The ceremony was performed by the Reverend John Stadler of the Primitive Baptist Church at Bush Arbor, which both families attended. The bride and the groom were both lineal descendants of fine old Virginia families, his having emigrated from Gloucester County, Virginia, and hers from Fairfax County, Virginia.

The writer's mother, Effie V May Watlington Floyd, was the thirteenth and last child of this union.

## DIRECT LINEAGE OF THE WATLINGTON FAMILY

1. Paul Watlington – born 1678 in Gloucester County, Va; married Elizabeth Reade
2. Paul Watlington – born 1706 in Gloucester County, Va; married Elizabeth Armistead
3. Francis Watlington – (1737 – 1774); born in Gloucester County, Va; married Rebecca Tatum
4. Armistead Watlington – born in Gloucester County, Va born 1766 or 1768 in Gloucester County, Va according to census records; married Mary Brooks
5. Jonathan Brooks Watlington – born 1791; married Dorothea Carlos Rice
6. John Armistead Watlington – born 1826; died December 13, 1906 in Guilford County, NC; married Jane Simpson
7. Effie V. May Watlington Floyd – born December 1, 1875; married Walter Scott Floyd native of Patrick County, VA in January 1900 in Reidsville, NC; died June 14, 1955 in Greensboro, NC; buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery
8. Thelma Floyd Durham – born July 6, 1906 in Reidsville, NC; married Guy Thomas Durham on November 3, 1934 in the Monument Ave. Presbyterian Church in Richmond, VA
  - 9a. Guy Floyd Durham – born July 16, 1937 in Petersburg, VA; married Dinah Wolverton in New York City, NY; divorced; later married Magi Compton in New York City, NY; divorced; married Melinda Papp in Bedford Hills, NY on June 18, 1983
  - 9b. Gayle Durham Hannah – born July 16, 1940 in Charleston, W VA; married Paul Hollander; divorced
  - 10a. Nathan Durham – born in New York City at Sinai Hospital on September 3, 1964; son of Guy Floyd Durham and Dinah Wolverton
  - 10b. Sarah Compton Durham – born in New York City at Sinai Hospital on March 4, 1970; daughter of Guy Floyd Durham and Magi Compton
  - 10c. Sarah Lydia Hollander – born in Amherst, MA on March 7, 1970; daughter of Gayle Durham Hannah and Paul Hollander

## THE EARLY WATLINGTONS

Lapses in continuity appear in all family research, yet in the case of the Watlington lineage this lack has been remarkably minimal. Even now various Watlington descendants are endeavoring to update records and uncover additional data that will bridge the few gaps that have appeared. These can easily be attributed to several causes: upheaval as a result of civil or other conditions, wars, destruction of vital records by fire and the failure of certain family members to maintain written records. In particular, the Great Fire of London on 1666 was the main factor in destroying such records as would have been available to writers of seventeenth century family histories.

The coat of arms of the family Watlingtons is the seal used by Jocene de Watlington (Pentecost 6 Edward 111 – 1313) red wax bearing shield of Arms Quarterly one and four a lion Rampant, two and three Fretty with legends S 10 reproduced by permission of the British Library, the British Museum EEF P/s 5/14968. Add. Charters 6549 (Permission of 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1980). The seal bears the family motto "Mens conscia recti".

When A. L. Watlington visited the town of Lynn in the County of Norfolk in the east of England in 1900, he researched and transcribed Court records of the family for posterity. He quoted Florence of Worcester who wrote that the "Watlings" were the sons of King Waelta (or King Watlae). Prior to Sir Robert de Watlington, who was the first of our recorded ancestors and who lived in the reign of King Stephen in 1135 A.D., Britain had been invaded by Celtic speaking people from the continent of Europe, the Romans led by Julius Caesar, the Picts, the Saxons, and the Angles. As a result, England was a conglomerate of a number of rival, independent kingdoms disturbed by successive wars.

As to the derivation of the name "Watlington", the prefix is Anglo-Saxon. "Watling" is a patronymia denoting that an Anglo-Saxon filial settlement was founding in the Count of Norfolk by the Waetlings, the descendants of a common father. "Ton" was for "town", "Wat" from "wattle" meaning "Thatch", hence the old thatched town of Watlington in the east of England. As in many families down through the ages, the spelling of their name has been changed even to this date. At one point, some families used the spelling "Whatlington", causing one researcher to conclude this was a reference to the wheatlands.

From the time the first Sir Robert de Watlington lived until the emigration of the two brothers, William and one supposedly named Francis, bound for the Colony of Virginia with their families, England underwent a period of great eventful history that surely must have affected the lives of the family Watlington.

The country was ruled in success by the Plantagenets, the Lancasters, the Yorks, the Tudors, and the Stuarts. The Watlingtons were there when the first of the Plantagenets, Henry II, transformed England into an imperial power. A new interest in learning spread from Europe to England, especially in literature and science. A number of schools were founded, including Oxford and Cambridge. Scholars the use of Latin and used their own language. The Crusades occurred during this period. The Magna Charta was signed, later annulled and even later reissued. The Hundred Years War was a period of great strife. There was a continuous struggle between the Pope and the royal houses. No doubt the Watlingtons were influenced by all this activity because of their status in Britain.

Hereward T. Watlington, as descendant of William Watlington of Bermuda, gives an unbroken line of the Watlingtons in England in his "Family Narrative", published in Canada, from the time of the first Sir Robert de Watlington in 1135 A.D. to the baptism of Thomas Watlington in October 1636. A genealogy by William H. Watlington of Toronto, Canada agrees with Hereward T. Watlington's record of lineage, but neither has connected with absolute authority the old English line with the two brothers who sailed from England circa 1611 and later founded the Bermuda and the America lines. Hereward explains that after 40 years of research, it has not been possible to determine definitely where his records on the Bermuda Watlingtons may be grafted on the recorded tree of the English family.

J. Aubrey Cox, an Indiana descendant of the Bermuda William Watlington, wrote in his "The Watlington's of Bermuda" that the first mention of the family name on public record now extant in Bermuda is that of William Watlington as Provost Marshall in 1625, who was confirmed in office, but no further mention is made of him in Lefroy's "Memorial of Bermuda". Since it is known that the American branch of the Watlington family was descended from the brother who elected to adhere to the original plan of settling in the Colony of Virginia, it is presumed that Francis Watlington, who after an interval of a few years came on to Virginia, was our ancestor in the United States.

Evidence of the prominence of the Watlingtons in old England is the fact that the famous Watling Street was named for this prominent family. It was one of the great Roman highways of Britain's commercial routes, beginning at Dover, passing through Canterbury and Rochester to London and then to Chester and York and northward in to branches to Carlisle and the Roman Wall. Traces of the ancient road are still to be found in many parts of its course and in some it is still an important highway. A street in London retains its name.

The island on which Christopher Columbus landed in the new world and discovered America was formerly called "Watling's Island" before Columbus renamed it.

## THE WATLINGTONS IN AMERICA

The brother, supposedly Francis, left Bermuda and came on to the Colony of Virginia with his family about 1625. Between that time and the birth of the first Paul Watlington in Gloucester County, Virginia, in 1678 of which we have proof, no written records have been turned up by research. One can assume but not prove that said Paul was the grandson of Francis. The write was informed by an employee in the Gloucester County Courthouse circa 1958 that a fire had destroyed all the Court records many years ago. It is possible that some church records may yet reveal the missing information.

At the time our ancestors settled in the Colony of Virginia, England was extremely interested in overseas expansion. The Colonies could provide raw material in exchange for finished products in England. The unemployed and overpopulation could be sent to the Colonies. The Virginia Company had been dissolved in 1624; the Colony reverted to the King because of inefficiency and political opposition. Virginia was ruled by the House of Burgesses elected by the Colony; the Governor and Council were appointed by the King. The land in Virginia was very fertile and agriculture was the leading occupation. Estates were large and tobacco was the great staple crop; in fact, tobacco was the legal tender, but large surpluses of flour, wheat and livestock were exported. The first shipment of Africans, brought over by Dutch traders who had bought them from their own chieftains, landed in Virginia in 1619, immediately prior to the arrival of Francis Watlington and his family. Eventually enslaved Africans replaced white, indentured servants, because their chieftains had selected only the strongest and brawniest of their young men for sale to the Dutch.

The Watlingtons came to settle in Caswell County, North Carolina when the widow of Francis Watlington, grandson of the first Paul Watlington, remarried to one Benjamin Shelton. Her maiden name had been Rebecca Tatum and her children by Francis Watlington were Nancy Ann, Armistead, Edward and Frances. Therefore, our first direct ancestor to settle in North Carolina was Armistead Watlington.

North Carolina, unlike Virginia and South Carolina, was not settled from the sea. Memories of "The Lost Colony" were still fresh in the minds of those seeking new homes in a new world and the North Carolina coastline was known to be treacherous. Even now it is known as "the graveyard of the Atlantic". Moreover, people from more northerly states chose to arrive by land when they sought more acreage. Land owners from Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania drifted down to North Carolina to take advantage of its virgin forests and fields, as well as for other reasons. The Moravian sect moved down from Pennsylvania and settled in Salem, North Carolina, where they established Salem Academy, still a flourishing institute of learning. Salem evolved into a thriving metropolis called Winston Salem, the tobacco manufacturing center of the South.

The first Watlington in America of which we have record was Paul (I), born in 1678, who married Elizabeth Reade. Research had not turned up any other information on them, although the Reades were a prominent family in Virginia history. Elizabeth had an Aunt Mildred, who married Colonel Augustine Warner. Their daughter, Mildred Warner, married Lawrence Washington and they became the grandparents of General George Washington.



## LINEAGE OF THE AMERICAN WATLINGTONS TO THE PRESENT

Our direct lineage from the first Paul Watlington recorded in America is listed in the following paragraphs:

### Paul Watlington

- Born 1678;
- Married Elizabeth Reade

### Paul Watlington

- Born 1706;
- Married Elizabeth Armistead;
- Moved to Halifax County, Virginia;
- Children: Armistead, Mildred, Francis, Elizabeth, Mary, Ann and Frances

### Francis Watlington

- (1737-1774);
- Married Rebecca Tatum;
- Children: Nancy Ann, Armistead, Edward, and Frances;
- After the death of her husband Francis, Rebecca married Benjamin Shelton and moved to Caswell County, North Carolina

### Armistead Watlington

- Born 1766 or 1768 according to census records;
- Married Mary Brooks in Caswell County, North Carolina on April 14, 1790;
- Children: Jonathan Brooks, Edward B, Rebecca, James, Thomas, Emanuel, Mary ("Polly"), Armistead, Paul, and Nancy

### Jonathan Brooks Watlington

- Born in 1791;
- According to the family Bible, "departed this life on Tuesday, August 6, 1844 at fifteen minutes before 4:00 PM;
- Married Dorothea Carlos Rice\*\* on June 12, 1823, when she was 18 years of age;
- Both are buried in the plantation graveyard which was the homeplace of his son, John Armistead Watlington, in Guilford County, North Carolina;
- Children: John Armistead (born in 1826 and the writer's grandfather-to-be), William P (born in 1828 and married to Jane Slade), Thomas Jefferson (born in 1830), Edward D (born in 1832 and married to Jennie Thompson), Alexander Rice (born in 1834) and Robert Henry (born in 1841, called "Jack", and married to Rosa Belle Moore)

\*\* I was told by my mother, Effie V. May Watlington, that her grandmother, Dorothea Carlos Rice Watlington, was "of Spanish blood". It is my personal belief that she was a widow when she married Jonathan Brooks Watlington, based on the fact that "Rice" is definitely not a name of Spanish origin. The exact date of her death is unknown; she was listed in the 1880 census as living in the household of her son, John Armistead Watlington, but the 1890 census records were destroyed by fire. My mother recalled that her grandmother, Dorothea, was confined to her bed for a considerable length of time during her last illness and had her burial robe made and stored in a chest at the foot of her bed. She also spoke of her "Spanish temper" which she considered I had inherited! Mother also mentioned that her mother had a brother, Don, who was an author.

### John Armistead Watlington

- 1826 – December 13, 1906;
- Married Jane Simpson, daughter of General Francis Lucas Simpson and his wife Priscilla Simpson, at the home of the bride, High Rock Plantation, in Rockingham County, North Carolina on May 6, 1851;

- Children:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Born</u>	<u>Died</u>	<u>Spouse</u>
William Douglas	Feb 21, 1852	Jul 3, 1854	
Francis Albert ("Dobbin")	Nov 28, 1853	Jul 28, 1854	
Jonathan Brooks	Jul 31, 1855	Feb 1937	Sallie Brown
Emma Gertrude	Mar 19, 1857	Feb 4, 1927	Jesse T Paschal
Thomas Jefferson	Jan 23, 1859	Jun 7, 1900	Dora Gilliam (later married Geo W Brooks)
Fannie Willis	Jan 23, 1859	Jan 21, 1945	Robert Walker
Lula P	Jul 9, 1861	In infancy	
Monroe Wade Hampton	Jul 31, 1864	Mar 9, 1898	
Anna Elizabeth	Jan 31, 1866	May 3, 1947	
Sara Jane ("Jennie")	Nov 14, 1867	Aug 7, 1964	John Riley Chrisman
Lewellyn Lucas	Oct 18, 1869	May 10, 1940	
Mary Sanford	Jun 18, 1872	Feb 12, 1901	Capus Elzevan Thomas
Effie V May	Dec 1, 1875	June 14, 1955	Walter Scott Floyd

### Effie V May Watlington

- Married Walter Scott Floyd
- Children: Wilbur Hastings, Walter McLaurin, Thelma and Reuben Reid
- Wilbur was married briefly, but was divorced and left no issue
- Walter McLaurin ("Mack") married Mildred Threadwell; became the father of James Carlos and Charles Michael; is buried in Guilford Memorial Gardens on the old High Point Road In Greensboro, North Carolina
- Thelma (the writer) married Guy Thomas Durham of Guilford County, North Carolina on November 3, 1934 in Richmond, Virginia; became the mother of Guy Floyd Durham of New York City and Gayle Durham Hannah of Route 1, Kennebunkport, Maine
  - Guy Floyd married Dinah Wolverton and became the father of Nathan; later married Magi Compton and became the father of Sarah Compton
  - Gayle married Paul Hollander of Amherst, Massachusetts and became the mother of Sarah Lydia

## DESCENDANTS OF JOHN ARMISTEAD WATLINGTON AND JANE SIMPSON

The first two children born to my maternal grandparents, John Armistead Watlington and Jane Simpson, were William Douglas and Francis Albert, both of whom died in July 1854. They were referred to as "Douglas" and "Dobbin" and are buried in the family cemetery of their parents' home place in Guilford County, North Carolina in the vicinity of Monticello.

Jonathan Brooks Watlington ("Brooks") married Sallie Brown and had one son Paul. Paul married Faye Adcock of Pleasant Garden, North Carolina who bore him two children: Priscilla who married a Marley and Thomas who married Sallie Noble. Thomas was a member of the armed services at the time of my mother's death in 1955, stationed in Texas. He and his wife attended my mother's funeral. He was killed in an automobile accident in Houston, Texas in 1972 and was survived by his wife and their two children, Timothy and Dana Watlington, who are the only living descendants to carry on the name of Watlington for John and Jane Watlington. I do not have the knowledge of whether Thomas's sister Priscilla has any children, but she is still living and in Texas.

Emma Gertrude Watlington married Jesse Paschal and became the mother of the following children: Robert E who died at the age of two and is buried at Lowe's Church in North Carolina; Jane Ellen ("Nellie") who married Walter Irving Metcalf and became the mother of John Raymond and Anna Paschal; Raymond Ernest who married Irene Spear and became the father of two children; Jessie Gertrude who never married and is now living in Florida; Mildred Armistead who married Byron Earl Campbell, became the mother of Douglas Earl and is a widow living in the Masonic and Eastern Star Home in Greensboro, North Carolina; Marion Armistead, twin of Mildred, married Rush Dewitt Richardson, became the mother of two children, and is living in Florida.

Thomas Jefferson Watlington ("Tommie") married Dora Gilliam and became the father of Clarence Lester ("Lester") who married his cousin Lelia Lewis and left no children; Lillian Blanche ("Blanche"); Dorothy J ("Dollie") who died of tuberculosis as a young lady; Tommie Elizabeth who never married.

Fannie Willis Watlington ("Fannie") married Robert Walker and became the mother of Robert and Aubrey (a daughter who died at the age of 6 and is buried in the Speedwell Presbyterian Church cemetery near Reidsville, North Carolina. Robert (the son) lived several years in Winston Salem, North Carolina after his retirement from the Shipping Department of the R J Reynolds Tobacco Company. Robert (the son) married Naomi Wurreeschke, is buried in the Moravian Cemetery in Winston Salem, North Carolina, and became the father of six children. Josephine married Fries ("Pat") Shaffner who died in 1975. Bobby lived in the West. David is deceased and was father of a judge in Florida and a daughter Fran. Phil retired from UNC Asheville; he married Grace von Ehrenkrook and had two sons and two daughters. Seth drowned at Nags Head, North Carolina when a small child. Nancy married Carl Wooten, a chemist with Eastman Kodak in Kingsport, TN and had three daughters. Fannie is also buried in the Moravian Cemetery in Winston Salem, North Carolina; her husband was buried in the Speedwell Cemetery near Reidsville, North Carolina, near his daughter, Aubrey.

Lula P Watlington was born July 9, 1861 and died in infancy. She is buried in the Watlington family burying ground in Guilford County, North Carolina where her parents lie.

Monroe Wade Hampton Watlington ("Monroe") remained unmarried until his death at age 34. He is buried in the family plot of his sister Mary Sanford Thomas in Green Hill Cemetery in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Anna Elizabeth Watlington ("Anna") remained unmarried until her death at 81.

Sara Jane Watlington ("Jennie") married John Riley Chrisman and became the mother of Rosa Mildred, John Aubrey, Allan Simpson, and Sara Jane. Mildred married James Gordon Todd ("Sandy") of Seneca,

South Carolina and became the mother of James Gordon Jr ("Jim") and Sarah Ellen ("Bebe"). Mildred was the historian of the family and died on May 18, 1980, the year after her husband died on June 18, 1979. Jim married Joanne Smith of Hickory, North Carolina, was a doctor, became the father of Susan Hope, Lizbeth Leigh ("Beth"), Jonathan Gordon ("Jon"), and Stephen. Jim and Joanne divorced; he married Lee Ann whom he divorced. Jim married Rebecca, and died from an accident in the house in 1988. Sarah never married, and died in 1995 of cancer. Susan married Mark Flynn, divorced, and married Mark Crumley. They live in Waynesboro, Virginia and adopted two children from Nicaragua, Nathan and Audrianna. Beth married Chris Matthews and became the mother of Nick, Emily, Peter and Samuel. Jon didn't marry. Stephen married Theresa Miller and became the father of Sara Chrisman and James. Aubrey married Alice Woodside, was the president of an elevator manufacturing company in Charlotte, North Carolina, and became the father of John Aubrey Jr ("Jack"), Mason Riley and Calvin Locke. Jack graduated from the Naval Academy, became a career Naval officer, married Donna Rouse, and became the father of Ashley, Mark, and Paul. Upon his retirement from the Navy, Jack attended the Divinity School of Cambridge University in England and became an Episcopal minister. He had a church in Newport, Rhode Island until his retirement in 2001 where he still lives. Mason married Sara Jane Wolfe, became the father of Linda, Cathy and David, owned a computer consulting company, and retired in Charleston, South Carolina. Linda married Edward St Amand and became the mother of Diana and Edward. Cathy married David Swanson and became the mother of Catherine, Sara and Charlotte. David married Louisa Biakak. Allan married Eleanore Krekeler, became the father of Caroline Matilda, Jane Watlington, and Allan Krekeler, was a doctor, retired first as the 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of all Naval doctors, and retired a 2<sup>nd</sup> time as assistant director of the American Red Cross in charge of the blood banks, and died in 1978. Caroline didn't marry and died as a result of choking on food as a young lady. Jane married Bert McBride, became the mother of Brian, Julie, Brett and Joy, and was a pediatrician. She lived first in San Diego and then outside Austin, Texas. Brian hasn't married. Julie married Rob Delgado and became the mother of Christopher, Anthony and Patrick. Joy married ??????. Brett married Gabby ???, and has a daughter Sophia. Allan married Polly Van de Velde, became an adolescent psychiatrist practicing in Boston, Massachusetts and then Durham, North Carolina, and became the father of Hillary ("Hallie"). Sara married Lewis Fallis of LaGrange, Georgia, became the mother of Sara Jane ("Jenny"), and died in 2002 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Lewellyn Lucas Watlington remained unmarried until her death in Greensboro, North Carolina at the age of 70.

Mary Sanford Watlington married Capus Elzevan Thomas and became the mother of Mary, Eva and Sanford. Mary married Charles Baker and bore him two sons, Charles and Philip ("Phil"). Mary divorced Charles Baker and married Paul Walker. Charles remained unmarried until his death. Phil married Connie Baker and became the father of Thomas and Ann. Eva married Mark McConnell of Gainesville, Georgia and became the mother of Merrill. Eva and Mark are deceased. Sanford married Dennis Wolff and became the mother of George, Jr. George married Betty Wolfe, became a doctor, and became the father of Dennis, Debbie, Diane and Tim.

Effie V May Watlington, mother of the writer, married Walter Scott Floyd, a native of Patrick County, Virginia and descendent of William Floyd of New York state, who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. She was the mother of Wilbur Hastings, Walter McLaurin ("Mack"), Thelma and Reuben Reid. All are now deceased. Wilbur and Reuben died in the service of their country and are buried in Arlington National Cemetery side by side, Plots 8181 and 8182. Wilbur held the rank of Master Sergeant and Reuben that of Captain.

## JOHN ARMISTEAD WATLINGTON, MY GRANDFATHER

My maternal grandfather, John Armistead Watlington, was born in Guilford County, North Carolina in 1826, the son of Jonathan Brooks Watlington and his wife, Dorothea Carlos Rice Watlington. His wife was Jane Simpson, born June 24, 1832, the daughter of General Francis Lucas Simpson and his wife, Priscilla Simpson. She was a native of Rockingham County, North Carolina. They were married May 6, 1851 at the High Rock Plantation, home of the bride's parents, by the Reverend John Stadler of the Primitive Baptist Church. The High Rock house is still standing; see "General Simpson and His Place in Piedmont History" by the author.

They lived their entire married life on my grandfather's plantation in Guilford County, which adjoined those of his widowed mother and his two brothers. Here they became the parents of thirteen children, including twins, which are listed previously. The old Watlington homeplace was located in northeast Guilford County out from Monticello in the Liberty Store community, known in the older days as "Busick's Store". My grandfather's will listed well over 700 acres at the time of his death on December 13, 1906. The house burned to the ground at some point after all the children had gone out into the world and my grandfather was living at the home of his son, Brooks, at the time, so it was unoccupied.

The family graveyard was located very close by and on the right of the house. There are buried Grandfather, Grandmother, his parents, and the three children who died in infancy and early childhood. It has been reported to be in a state of disrepair.

Their home was a sturdy wooden structure which stood on a slight rise above the road, of ample size to accommodate a large family, but not nearly as imposing as the 3-story brick Federal home of Jane's parents. At some point my grandfather's mother, Dorothea Carlos Rice Watlington, moved into his home and Grandfather bought her plantation and that of his two brothers, when they returned from the War Between the States before going on to Texarkana to live. She was still listed as a member of his household in the 1880 census with her age being shown as 75. It is not known when she died, as the 1890 census records were burned. My mother, who was very small at the time, could remember her only as being ill and confined to her bed. Some of the old papers left by my grandfather showed her signature marked by an "X" and witnessed; it is not known whether she could not write due to old age or illness or if she were illiterate. Mother always spoke of her as "having Spanish blood" and that she had a brother, who was an author, but there is no written record to that effect. By my mother's innuendo, I learned that her grandmother had the Spanish temperament inherited by me. She died of some lingering illness and had her burial dress made and stored in a chest at the foot of her bed long before she died.

Both of my grandparents were descendants of prominent and well-to-do Virginia families of pre-colonial times. My grandmother died on December 24, 1880, my grandfather on December 13, 1906, the year of my birth, so I did not know them personally. However, as a child I delighted in hearing about "olden times" and listened with great interest to my elders recounting their knowledge of their ancestors.

My grandfather never remarried after the death of his beloved Jane and devoted the remainder of his life to his motherless children and the operation of his farm. It is not on record where he obtained his education, but he was regarded as an intellectual and highly esteemed in his community. He left a sizeable number of old deeds and legal papers written by him and his father before him and was called upon by many to attend to their legal affairs. Some were dated as far back as 1794 and the legal tender mentioned in them was in English pounds.

It is not necessary in this writing to go into detail as to the hardships all Southerners were forced to submit, for they have been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Somehow Grandfather, affectionately called "Paw" by his children and grandchildren alike, managed to hold on to his acreage and add to it throughout it all, the War Between the States and the horrible years following.

"Paw" was noted for his hospitality and shared it with any travelers who came by his home. Every year during the hunting season he hosted a group of Yankee hunters from the vicinity of Jersey City, New Jersey for whom bountiful meals were served. In those days Jewish peddlers traveled on foot with enormous bags of household needs on their backs and Paw always insisted that they spend the night. He and the children were greatly interested in their news and tales of the outside world recounted by the fireside after a hearty meal. His patience, however, was sorely tested by the prolonged visits of one cousin, "Old Bill" Watlington, a highly educated relative who evidently had no home base, as he made a career out of spending long visits with all his relatives. He delighted in long conversations but made no effort to share the work load during his sojourns. At last, Paw's frustration with Cousin Bill surfaced and he was ordered to get on his horse and never return. He complied with the request, although in later years he was known to search out the children in their subsequent homes but he was "persona non grata" with them as he had been with their father previously.

The Watlingtons were of the Primitive Baptist faith; some followed that religion until their deaths, while others became members of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches in their later lives. The Primitive Baptist churches of the entire area had joint annual meetings, called "associations", which were held out-of-doors usually in August under an arbor, and usually lasted for several days. Each family provided a tent for sleeping and dressing accommodations. Meals were served on long tables in the church yard, placed end to end, and food prepared days in advance was bountiful and delectable; choice "receipts" were exchanged between the womenfolk. It was an annual social event for the young people, courting abounded and the young men were not above taking a swig of corn "likker" behind a convenient tree. Several sermons, all lengthy, were preached under the arbor in the mornings and again in the afternoons, which tested the endurance of the very young. It was not a part of their beliefs to have Sunday Schools in their churches; religious education was left to the parents and by dint of determination the church has survived. Musical instruments were not allowed in the church; there were no choirs, only singing by the congregation, started by a tuning fork. Hymns were mostly the type sung in Presbyterian churches today; indeed the Presbyterian and Primitive Baptist tenets are similar in some ways; e.g., predestination.

As for politics, Paw was a dedicated Democrat much like all Southern gentlemen of his time, although not as active in the Party as his illustrious father-in-law, General Francis Lucas Simpson. Lincoln's Republicans were without exception referred to as "black Republicans" and "nigger lovers".

In Paw's farming career, tobacco had not yet become the big money crop it later was. He sold only the excess of his cotton and wool; the daughters spun and wove clothes from those, beautiful "coverlets" for the beds, colorful stockings for all the family. Sheep were very important; Mother told of Paw bringing a lamb to spend the night in his bedroom during severe weather. He also raised corn, wheat, oats and fodder for the livestock; pigs, chicken and vegetables were raised in abundance.

Paw was a devoted father but brooked no deviation from his rules. He allowed no card playing nor dancing in the home but he allowed his children to entertain their friends and relatives. There were, of course, no telephones; people maintained communication by letter or visiting. Travel was limited to horseback or horse-drawn vehicles, thus a host must not only attend to the needs of their guests but to their horses as well. In order to justify a visit, one stayed for extended times, especially a relative and a "courting" young man a long weekend or more. Usually, a courting couple were not alone but in the company of all the guest until the announcement of an engagement, and a courtship consisted of a lot of flirting and whispered endearments. Marriages between cousins were not unheard of; as in old England, marriages between cousins often occurred to consolidate estates or preserve the bloodline but marriages of cousins were not the general rule among the Watlingtons. Only occasionally is there record of anything closer than a second or third cousin.

Like all Southern gentlemen, Paw enjoyed his toddy taken early in the morning to "give him strength" for his tasks. After the War Between the States, it was legal to manufacture whiskey on one's property, providing a licensed Government agent was in residence there to inspect the spirits. Paw took advantage

of this privilege to increase his income. A copy of his agent's appointment as "storekeeper and gauger for the Internal Revenue Service" is still in possession of a member of the family. It reads "Treasury Department, Office of the Secretary, Washington, D.C., February 4, 1887. These present witness: that Joseph P. Albright is the duly appointed Storekeeper and Gauger, Internal Revenue Service, for the fifth Collection District of North Carolina and that he is hereby authorized, after having filed his bond and taken the prescribed oath, to execute and perform all the during of said office, during the pleasure of the Secretary of the Treasury, and is entitled to receive the compensation of Storekeeper only. Signed: D. Manning, Secretary of the Treasury."

Few people trusted banks in those days; on his return from selling his crops Paw would stroll off about twilight to bury the gold he had received, it is thought in the vicinity of the graveyard. On his deathbed his children said he kept waving his arms in the general direction of the home place, as if to finally let them know where his gold was buried, but his speech was so unintelligible at that point, he could not be understood. If ever it was found, it has been a well kept secret unto this day.

At some point prior to 1863 Paw was conscripted into the State Militia but was excused when he paid a substitute to serve in his place, a common occurrence at the time. However, in 1863 he was called up again; this time a petition was circulated and signed by more than twenty prominent citizens of Guilford County to Governor Zebulon B. Vance, requesting that he be excused from military service. The reasons for this request were set forth as follows: he was 38 years of age, had charge of and oversaw a total of 45 slaves belonging to his widowed mother, his two brothers, William P and R. H. Watlington who were already in service, and himself, that he was responsible for the business of all three plantations owned by them and the large crops would be lost or greatly diminished if he were taken into the military. This document was dated July 6, 1863 and returned from the Executive Department of North Carolina, Adjutant General's Office, Raleigh, North Carolina, dated July 10, 1863 and signed by Daniel G. Fowle, Adjutant General with the notation, "This man is exempt from the military service according to law". This original document I have placed in the hand of my daughter, Gayle Durham Hannah for preservation.

Paw passed away on December 13, 1906 after the birth of the writer on July 6, 1906. Being the astute businessman that he was, he left a will, in which he divided his estate into what he considered a fair and equitable manner among his living children, of which there were seven. In it, he named George Washing Brooks, second husband of Dora Gilliam Watlington Brooks who was the widow of his son, Thomas Jefferson Watlington, John Riley Chrisman, husband of his daughter "Jennie" and Walter Scott Floyd, the writer's father as executors. In it, my mother, Effie V May Watlington Floyd was left the home place. However, it was felt that the girls who had no husband, Fannie a widow, Anna and Lewellyn who were unmarried, did not receive equal shares. All the heirs signed a petition to have the will broken and the property redistributed; as a result, the home place was given to Emma Watlington Paschal, who lived in the North, and my mother received only two lots in Reidsville near the old racetrack, a fact that was a great disappointment to her dying day.

Paw's death in his 81<sup>st</sup> year was due to pneumonia; Grandmother Jane's at 48 to "consumption" or tuberculosis as it is now called, which was very prevalent at that time. A family of portrait of her, probably taken in her declining years, shows a careworn face and an air of resignation about her. I know of no family portrait of Grandfather; however, I understand that the Watlington men were tall and slender with light brown hair shading to almost auburn and blue eyes, a typical English appearance.

## MY MOTHER AND HER SIBLINGS

The first two of the thirteen children born to my grandparents, John Armistead Watlington and Jane Simpson Watlington, were William Douglas and Francis Albert, called "Douglas" and "Dobbin". Both of these little boys died in July of 1854 and are buried in their parents' plot at the old home stead. They had attained the ages of only eighteen and eight months, respectively; the loss of the two babies in one month must have been very grievous to the young parents. I do not recall that anyone ever told me the cause of their death, but diarrhea was rampant among young children in those days when medical knowledge was so little advanced.

John and Jane were rewarded a year later by the birth of a son, whom they called Jonathan Brooks, on July 31, 1855. He was to live a long and healthy life over 81 years. He chose for his bride Sallie Brown, a tall brunette, with whom he shared a long and happy marriage and who bore him one child, a son named Paul. I remember Uncle Brooks and Aunt Sallie very well, as our families visited frequently. At first they lived on a farm near that of his father, but later bought a large white home on the main street of Pleasant Garden, North Carolina, south of Greensboro. Here they operated a home away from home for the teachers of the community and named it "The Teacherage". Uncle Brooks tended a large vegetable garden and raised hogs to supply the table. Aunt Sallie prepared the food with lovely care, employing her numerous culinary arts for which she was famous. Unlike his parents, who were very hospitable, the son Paul was a very "retiring" boy who disappeared at the approach of any "company". I never actually saw him in person until his place of employment, Armstrong's Garage, had him respond to my request for a mechanic and he saw my name on the AAA Card I presented. He was a nice looking, brunet young man resembling his mother'; his father had sandy colored hair and wore a mustache. Paul married Faye Adcock, a blonde young lady of Pleasant Garden, North Carolina, who was already the mother of a child. She and Paul had two children, Priscilla and Thomas Brooks. I met Thomas in Greensboro, North Carolina, in June of 1995 at my mother's funeral, when he was home on leave from the Army with his wife, who had been Sallie Nobles. Later they became the parents of Timothy and Dana Watlington, who are the only living descendants of John Armistead Watlington and Jane Simpson Watlington to carry on the Watlington name. Thomas Brooks Watlington was killed in an automobile accident in Houston, Texas in 1972. His sister, Priscilla, was named in his obituary as a survivor, and her married name given as "Marley".

The first daughter of the family arrived March 19, 1857 and was named Emma Gertrude; she lived most of her married life in Jersey City, New Jersey, and Bayonne, New Jersey. She was 18 years older than my mother and taught the neighborhood school. According to Mother, Aunt Emma always considered herself "the lady of the manor", sharing none of the household duties and requiring the younger ones to carry out her orders and wait on her. She married Jesse T Paschal from a neighboring plantation; the northern hunters who spent the season every year at Grandfather's persuaded them to move to Jersey City and they accepted; Uncle Jesse worked for the telephone company until he retired. They became the parents of the following children: Robert E, Jane Ellen ("Nellie"), Raymond Ernest, Jessie Gertrude, Mildred and Marion, the later being twins. (See page 10 for more on her children.) When my mother was 17, she was persuaded to visit Aunt Emma and Uncle Jesse and "help out" with their children. According to my mother, the "helping out" turned out to be a slavery job with her doing all the heavy chores of the household. She was given neither pay nor allowance and allowed only Sunday School attendance on Sunday afternoons. At the Sunday School young people were to go on a moonlight cruise on the Hudson River but Aunt Emma refused Mother permission to attend. Uncle Jesse, who was, of course, henpecked but very kind, "put his foot down" and allow her to go. Mother would remember that trip always. On the morning of her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, December 1, 1893, her year of servitude over as agreed, she boarded the train for home. Evidently my mother and Aunt Emma never made up their differences, as Aunt Emma chose not to visit with us when she came to Greensboro to see her son, Raymond, in later years. He was living on our street at the time and in passing she stared at our home but we were indoors and she did not stop by. That was my only glimpse of her and I remember she was reasonable thin and of average height; I never saw her husband, Uncle Jesse. As a child I met her daughter, Jessie, who was visiting at



Aunt Jennie's and enjoyed her dancing, which she later taught in her own studio. Her son, Raymond, I saw once or twice when he came to Greensboro to live; he looked much like the Watlington men. I met one of her twins at my mother's in Greensboro; Mildred was a brunette and apparently took her looks from her father's side of the family. Aunt Emma died February 4, 1927 and is buried in the north beside her husband who preceded her in death while visiting his brother, Will Paschal, in Altamahaw, North Carolina in 1933 (??).

My mother's twin siblings, Thomas Jefferson Watlington and Fannie Willis Watlington, were born January 23, 1859. Uncle Tommy lived only until June 7, 1900, dying 6 years before my birth, so I never knew him. He married Dora Gilliam, who family owned and operated Gilliam's Academy only a few miles from the Watlington home place and where all the Watlington children got their high school education after completing the one-room log schoolhouse for their elementary education. Uncle Tommy and Aunt Dora lived in the old Moses Simpson house on the plantation he bought in 1899 and where General Francis Lucas Simpson was born. They were the parents of Clarence Lester, Lillian Blanche, Dorothy J, and Tommie Elizabeth Watlington, the last of who was only four years old at her father's death. As a growing girl, I spent a part of every summer at Aunt Dora's place and remember them all well, including her second husband, George Washington Brooks, who was a distant cousin on the Watlington's side of her first husband's family.

Aunt Dora was not only beautiful with curly hair and soft brown eyes, but she was kind, patient and hard-working in her role as mother and farm wife. She saw to our every need when my brothers and I visited in two-week turns and made sure that we enjoyed all the pleasures the farm offered. Food was abundant and she prepared it lovingly; I liked her "graham" (whole wheat) biscuits and milk gravy most of all. At wheat threshing time, the neighboring men came to help with the harvesting and the womenfolk assisted with the chores of cooking, but Aunt Dora did as much in advance as possible. It was my job to snap the beans, which seemed an endless chore to a child, but mixed with corn they were their own reward. To go with them and the other vegetables in season, Aunt Dora always made her famous chicken pie "than which there was no whicher" and of course cakes and pies of every denomination. They raised strawberries and English peas in such quantities there seemed to be no end of them and the honey comb from the many hives of bees out by the graveyard made the tastiest of afternoon snacks. As a super treat we sometimes had homemade ice cream from ice Lester bought by the block in nearby Altamahaw and hand turned in an old timey freezer. Milk, cream and homemade butter abounded and was kept cool in the spring house, a distance down a path from the house. It was so much fun to go to it, and dangle my bare feet in the little spring. I delighted in gathering Queen Anne's lace and wild larkspur, my birth flower, from underneath the apple and pear trees in the orchard in front of the house. I remember playing in the graveyard and was impressed by the very well preserved gravestones, one for "General Francis Lucas Simpson" who was my great grandfather even though at that point in my life I had no real insight into the engrossing aspects of family history. The graveyard, my mother once told me, had originally been enclosed by a stone fence, but Uncle George had used them in building the abutments for the bridge on Haw River close by.

The old house is gone now but in my mind's eye I can see it still, not grandiose like the High Rock Place General Simpson bought for his wife and children, but a sturdy wooden structure that withstood the ravages of time for many years. Great grandfather's father, Moses Simpson, had moved his family there from Fairfax County Virginia to land bought from one Henry Brannock and built the house, this being in 1799 when great grandfather was ten years old. Now in 1983, I am told that the house has been demolished for a period of only two or three years, but until its demise it was the oldest house still standing in Guilford County. (See later.)

It was a two-story house with a porch across the front with a slight gingerbread trim. There was a center hall with the parlor on the right and Aunt Dora's bedroom, where the family sat, on the left, and an enclosed stairway to the upper hall and two large bedrooms. Behind the lower hall a "dog trot" or breezeway led to the dining room and there was a path going by the well with its "old oaken bucket" to the

kitchen in the back yard. A large farm bell mounted on a tall pole stood beside the kitchen door to summon the men from their work in the field. The graveyard was to the right read of the house, the bee hives and the "back house" in the rear center.

Aunt Dora's parlor with its lace curtains and horsehair furniture was used only on special occasions like when the preacher visited or some unusual event took place. There was an ornate golden pump organ which was replaced by a piano when the youngest daughter, Tommie, launched her musical career. A wire rack displaying picture postcards received from relatives and friends in their travels graced the front window. A small square table stood in the center of the room, bearing the family Bible and photo album. A thick and luxurious drugget, or carpet, covered the floor and many an afternoon I would sneak in there for an afternoon nap and dream for an hour on its rose-patterned surface. Aunt Dora's bedroom was cozy with its open fireplace and her little what-not fashioned from spools left over from her sewing fascinated me.

Most kitchens in the South were separate and apart from the main part of the house as a preventive measure against fires. There was a fireplace in the kitchen on which slaves had cooked in former years, but Aunt Dora cooked on a wood burning stove, which made it an uncomfortable warm chore in the summer.

The rural mailbox was in a cluster of like ones atop a huge wagon wheel a mile away at the intersection of the "big road". Tommie walked this distance every day and I liked to tag along with her and the white shepherd dog "Shep" but I was not always allowed this privilege. She was 10 years older than I and did not always prefer having me join her. I remember the horse "Prince" and falling off him when I was four, breaking a bone in my nose. There were the usual farm cats, one black and white called "Thomasina".

The big barn across the road fascinated me with its stalls and earthy smells; I enjoyed sliding down the hay stacks and wearing out my pants and going barefooted. The low point of the day was having to wash my feet before going to bed and I would have probably not done so, but Aunt Dora insisted, which is about the only "rule" she enforced. We were used to having a lamp burn until we fell asleep and although Tommie protested, Aunt Dora saw that one burned in the upstairs hall so we would not be afraid of the dark.

The girls did the house and yard chores, rarely being called upon to do any field work, but when they were outside, they wore bonnets and long cotton mittens to protect their skin. They attended to the milking, the churning and Tommie "robbed" the hives for the honey, which Aunt Dora kept in the dining room in big dishpans.

The children attended Monticello High School; Dollie, who was a blonde and curly haired, developed tuberculosis and was sent to Southeastern North Carolina for treatment, but when it became evident that she would not recover, she was brought home to die. Her brother, Lester, a very handsome young man, and George, his stepfather, carried on the work of the farm. As far as I knew, never a cross word passed between them nor for that matter anyone else in the family. It was a quiet and peaceful existence. Church was a must on Sundays, an occasion not entirely looked forward to by me. The Primitive Baptists do not sanction Sunday School for the young and their sermons seemed well nigh endless. There was no music except congregation singing, nothing at all to tempt me so I spend the church hours in a constant round of squirming.

The girls, Tommie and Blanche, seem destined to become the old maids they did become as no young men ever seemed to come courting. Blanche, the elder of the two, taught school after she graduated until they moved to town. She was a sweet, shy person, overshadowed by the young Tommie and dominated by her in later years. Tommie studied Piano and Expression at Shenandoah Collegiate Institute in the valley of Virginia and later at the Conservatory in Boston, later teaching in Alabama. There is an

expression "those who can, do; those who can't, teach". Tommie was that kind, she knew music but could not project her knowledge and she had no more "expression" than a dead pussycat.

My cousin Lester was a fine person, a credit to the Watlington, Simpson, and Gilliam families. A hard worker and a dedicated farmer, a devoted son and husband. A soft spoken gentleman of impeccable character, greatly admired and respected in the community. He married Lelia Lewis, daughter of Columbia Roberta, Duella Herbin and Sam Lewis, a cousin on the Simpson side of the family, and the granddaughter of "Polly" Simpson and Robert Herbin. It was a long and extremely happy marriage for the two; Lester died a year or so following the death of his sisters in the 1960s.

Lester married and the rest of the family moved to Greensboro so the two sisters could change their careers, both having decided the time was ripe. They lived on North Cedar Street in a rented place until they could get more permanently settled and shortly thereafter purchased a home on Spring Garden Street near the fairgrounds. Blanche completed a business course and worked as a secretary at Phil R Carlton Insurance Company for many years. Tommie tried teaching Music and Expression but failed to secure enough pupils, so she followed in Blanche's footsteps and took a business course. For a number of years she worked as secretary at the O Henry Hotel until she and Blanche retired. Uncle George and Aunt Dora died, he preceding her, within a few years. Tommie died circa 1963 and Blanche the following year; Lester was the last of the children to go.

Lester, upon his marriage, built a home across the road on the same side as the barn. Aunt Dora's will provided him some acreage on that side; the home place and acreage on the other side of the road were left to Tommie and Blanche. While they lived in Greensboro, the home place was leased to tenant farmers, black and white, down through the years and no effort was made to keep the place in repair. When the neighbors circulated a petition to get the road paved, they refused to sign. In their last years the home place stood vacant and fell into great disrepair. I visited Lester and Lelia in 1955 and 1956 and the sight of the old place was extremely depressing. Wisteria vines were growing through the walls and the graveyard so overgrown that it was impossible to see the gravestones, much less inspect them, for fear of snakes.

Tommie and Blanche spent their last years in a state of seclusion except for church attendance and baby-sitting for the neighbors. They had built a new brick residence in Greensboro near the high school and puttered around in their wild flower garden. Tommie preceded her sister in death by one year, and their wills provided that all their property, both real and personal go to Kenneth Key, elder of the Primitive Baptist Church.

It was the end of an era. I have written at length on this old farm home to which my great grandfather, General Francis Lucas Simpson came with his family from Fairfax County, Virginia in 1799, because it meant so much to me in terms of my happy childhood.

Uncle Tommy's twin, Fannie Willis Walker, outlived him by 45 years, dying just two days before her 86<sup>th</sup> birthday. She married Robert Walker of the Speedwell Presbyterian community west of Reidsville, North Carolina and bore him two children, a daughter Aubrey who died at the age of six and is buried along side her father in the church cemetery, and a son, Robert. Both husband and daughter died in 1891. Left with a son to raise, Fannie moved to Reidsville and with her crippled, unmarried sister, Lewellyn, ran a boarding house and sewed for the ladies of the town. After a time she moved to Oak Ridge, North Carolina where she boarded the military cadets in her home before dormitories were built. This junior college is operating until this day, and has always enjoyed a good clientele of native and foreign students, although its facilities are fairly well limited. It is now a co-educational institution and enjoys an enviable reputation.

Aunt Fannie's son, Robert Walker, got into his share of "scrapes" as many a boy did without a father's firm hand, but upon his marriage he settled down and worked until his retirement for R J Reynolds

Tobacco Co. in Winston Salem, North Carolina as head of the Shipping Department. He married Naomi Wurreeschke, daughter of Moravian missionaries from Kleinwelke, Germany. They were sent to the East Indies where her mother contacted yellow fever and was told if she did not leave the tropics she would die. They were transferred to Old Salem, NC where he headed the Boys School and she taught French at Salem College. Naomi had two unmarried sisters who were a great steadying influence on Robert's career. One held a position of trust in the City Court; the other acted as secretary to Mrs. R J Reynolds. She also worked for the police department and was the first woman police Lt. in NC and maybe the country. Robert joined the Moravian Church, the faith of his wife, and played an active role as an officer of the Church. His mother, my Aunt Fannie, lived with Robert and Naomi until her death. They are all three buried in the Moravian Cemetery in Winston Salem, North Carolina. Aunt Fannie was never a member of any church; she explained that to be a member of the Primitive Baptist Church, one had to have had a "vision" and she had never experienced one; however, in spirit she was a Primitive Baptist to the end.

Robert and Naomi died in 1972 and 1975, respectively, in a nursing home in Kernersville, North Carolina. They had six children: Josephine, who married Fries (Pat) Shaffner whose death occurred in 1975; Bobby, David and Phil; a little son Seth was drowned at an early age at Nag's Head, North Carolina, while the family was on vacation there. They also had a daughter, Nancy. Josephine died in 1997 in Winston Salem, North Carolina, where she is retired from the Forsythe County Public schools and was responsible for the integration of the schools there. The oldest son Bobby died in the West. After graduation from high school and a short time at UNC Chapel Hill, Bobby ran away from home because his parents objected to his burning desire to be just a plain dirt farmer and wanted him to complete his education. He was not heard from for a very long period of years as he wandered the West as a migrant farm worker; however, he did finally turn up at home for a brief period. His parents were, of course, delighted but the wanderlust surfaced again. Bobby again took off for the West, but kept in touch with his family and sent home money to be saved for him. David is now deceased. He married Mary Perryman and had a son who is living in the St. Petersburg where he was a judge before his retirement. He remarried and had a daughter, Fran, with Frances Callahan Shaw. Philip was a History Professor at Emory University in Atlanta, Univ. of So Mississippi, where he met his wife Grace von Ehrenkrook, Louisiana Polytechnic Institute in Ruston, Louisiana and then moved to Asheville, NC in 1963 where he helped start the Humanities program at UNC-Asheville and retired Professor Emeritus in 1992. The youngest daughter, Nancy married Dr. Carl Wooten, a chemist with Eastman in Kingsport, TN. When he retired they moved to Chapel Hill, NC where they are living now.

Aunt Fannie was 21 when her mother died; her oldest sister Emma taught school and played the role of grande dame, so Aunt Fannie took over the role of housekeeper and mother to the younger children. We always looked upon her as our maternal grandmother, as she was so much older than our own mother. She visited us at frequent intervals for a period of two weeks and we visited her in the home of her son with whom she always lived. I remember her very vividly for she was a favorite aunt and her visits brimming with enjoyment for all of us. She was a superb expert at Southern cooking, our favorite dishes prepared by her being homemade mayonnaise, biscuits and gravy. Aunt Fannie shared my bedroom on her visits with us and we exchanged in detail our latest adventures in reading. She was an incurable romanticist and had me read her to sleep. Aunt Fannie was the first to advocated layered clothing and it was highly amusing to watch her undress at night, because she was cold-natured and wore layers upon layers of blouses, sweaters and petticoats, or so it seemed to me. Most of all we liked to hear her talk of "olden times" as she vividly remembered growing up during the War Between the States. She was a slight lady who wore small gold hoop earrings in her pierced ears. Mother told us that Aunt Fannie was considered very pretty when she was young and Paw gave her quite a big wedding when she married. My life was much richer because she passed my way.

The child born to John and Jane after the twins was a daughter, Lula P born on July 9, 1861, according to her gravestone in the family burying grounds. On it was noted "died in infancy".

Monroe Wade Hampton Watlington was born 3 years later and died at 34 unmarried. He was a hotel clerk for Will McAdoo in Greensboro at the time of his death due to heart failure. He lived in the home of his sister, Sanford, who was married to Capus Elzavan Thomas. I believe he is buried in the Thomas family plot in Green Hill Cemetery in Greensboro, North Carolina. Mother said Monroe had sandy hair, bordering on auburn; shortly before he died, he raised himself in the bed and said he felt better than he had in a long time, then collapsed immediately.

Next was born Anna Elizabeth who lived to be 91 and never married. I always thought she and my mother looked more alike than any of the Watlington girls. Aunt Anna was a talented seamstress and supported herself by her needle, working first in Reidsville and later in Richmond and Baltimore. In the two latter cities she lined fur coats with gorgeous silks and satins. During the off seasons she visited in her sisters' homes and those of her numerous church friends who called each other "sister" and "brother", and attended various "associations" of her Primitive Baptist Church. I was enthralled with all the beautiful scraps of silk and satin which she produced from her trunk and had collected for my doll clothes. She was the first person I ever knew who dyed her hair; she explained it was necessary to keep a job as older looking people were turned down in those days. There were no beauty salons in those days so she did her own hair and it was not always perfect, once coming out a vivid blue. Aunt Anna was a stately woman and had a generous share of the Watlington pride. My mother remarked that Anna never married because she never found anyone good enough for her; however, she was popular, especially among her Primitive Baptist "brothers" and "sisters" and was a dedicated member of that Church. Along toward the end of her life with her funds dwindling and no home of her own, she prepared for the inevitable. Her nephew, Aubrey Chrisman, offered to submit her application for residency in the Masonic and Eastern Star Home in Greensboro, as he was a member of the Masonic Order. However, she refused to go through with it when she learned she must reveal her age on the application. She deposited sufficient funds with a Reidsville mortician to cover her funeral expenses and made her home during her last years with "Sister Reid", a fellow member of the church on a farm near Winston Salem, North Carolina. She is interred in the church cemetery at Gilliam's Academy.

Sara Jane, always called "Jennie", was the next child in the family, born November 14, 1867, just 19 months after the close of the War Between the States. After finishing the local log house one-room school, she was educated at Gilliam's Academy. She taught first at her home school, later at another country school where she boarded with the Swift family to whom she was related on her mother's side. Later she taught school in Greensboro and boarded with her cousin Eliza Lynch at 222 E Washington St. Aunt Jennie married John Riley Chrisman, who had been raised in her country neighborhood. He was engaged with his brother, Robert, in the grocery business in the first block of West Market Street. Here they did a thriving business. Most grocery orders were received via the telephone in those days and deliveries were made by horse and wagon or drays. Orders were very carefully filled and customers paid their bills at the end of the month. The Chrisman brothers spelled their names a bit differently, with Riley spelling it "Chrisman" and Robert "Chrismon". The Chrisman brothers lived with their mother until Riley and Jennie married; Robert remained a bachelor until after his mother's death. I remember "Aunt" Polly Ann distinctly, her sister, "Aunt" Jane Thomas, who was a widow, and their home on East Market Street. Both were fantastic cooks and they set most bountiful tables at every meal. Aunt Polly Ann had beautifully naturally curly hair and was a slight little lady; Aunt Jane was not so well endowed as to looks but both were beautiful people.

Aunt Jennie and Uncle Riley lived at 671 Percy Street in Greensboro, North Carolina and had four children: Mildred, Aubrey, Allan and Sara Jane. Visiting in their home was the high point of my childhood and teenage years. Not only was I of their age group, but we were all very compatible and enjoyed the same games and way of life. Aunt Jennie and Uncle Riles were of like temperaments, both gentle, kind and loving. Aunt Jennie had a positive knack with children and her house was where the neighborhood children played. Altercations among them were practically non-existent. She was an excellent seamstress and her culinary talents unequaled; I remember especially her light and dark fruit cake and

her blackberry cobbler most of all. At about the beginning of World War I the Chrisman brothers dissolved their partnership; Robert went with the Morrison-Neese Furniture Company, the largest furniture store in North Carolina at that time, as Vice President and Riley moved his family to Charlotte, where he ran the concession stand in the Stonewall Hotel. I continued to visit as often as I was allowed and enjoyed every moment with them.

Mildred was the oldest of the Chrisman children and following her graduation from high school in Charlotte, North Carolina was educated at St Mary's in Raleigh, North Carolina where she took a commercial course. For many years she was secretary to Mr. Poag a prominent businessman in Charlotte. The writer was present at her wedding when she married James Gordon Todd ("Sandy") of South Carolina; she bore two children, James Gordon Todd, Jr, ("Jimmy") and Sara Ellen ("Bebe"). Jimmy became the father of four children by his wife Joanne. He married twice more before his untimely death of an accident in the house in 1989. He was a doctor, practicing in Brevard, Hendersonville and Asheville, North Carolina. Bebe never married. She, too, took a business course at St Mary's. Her work took her all over the world – working in Japan, Korea, Chile and Costa Rica. She settled in Statesboro, NC, working for a doctor. She died in 1995 as a result of cancer. Their father died in a Charlotte Nursing Home in June 1979, and in May 1980 Mildred passed away. Mildred became intensely interested in the genealogy of her mother's family on both sides as a young girl and it continued to be her hobby until she died. A very unselfish person, she very happily shared her findings with any family member who was interested and to this writer, who shared her interest, she was most helpful in seeing that her labor of love is being perpetuated.

John Aubrey was the next to be born to Riley and Jennie Chrisman; he was given the first name of his father and "Aubrey" for his Aunt Fannie's little daughter who had died at the age of six. He attended the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland until the middle of the junior year, when he resigned to marry his high school sweetheart, Alice Woodside, of a prominent Charlotte family. Aubrey was president of his own elevator business, a member of the Masonic Lodge and a very prominent churchman of the Presbyterian faith. He and Alice resided in Sharon Towers, a Presbyterian retirement home in Charlotte until their deaths in 1993 and 2000, respectively. They were the parents of three sons: John Aubrey, Jr, Mason Riley, and Calvin Locke. Jack attended the Naval Academy where he met his future wife, Donna Rouse. He was a career Naval officer, living all over the world. After retiring from the Navy, Jack attended divinity school at Cambridge, England. He was ordained as an Anglican priest, and returned to the United States to become the priest at St Georges Parish in Newport, RI. He has retired. Jack and Donna had 3 children, Ashley, Mark, and Paul, and 6 grandchildren. Mason became a business man, owning his own computer company, and later becoming president of a small oil company in Texas. He and his wife, the former Sara Jane Wolfe of Charlotte, currently reside in Charleston, SC. They are the parents of 3 children, Linda, Cathy, and David, and the grandparents of 6. Calvin worked in the financial world, and lives just outside of New York City. He married the former Elizabeth Robinson of Charlotte, and they have 2 children, Alexander and May.

A second son, Allan Simpson, was born to the Chrismans July 18, 1906, a handsome fun-loving kid with his father's brown eyes and a like temperament. His lifelong ambition was to become a doctor and surgeon, which he more than fulfilled. He began saving money by selling newspapers on the streets as a small lad. After graduating from the high school in Charlotte, North Carolina he entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; after graduating there, he went on to the Harvard School of Medicine and was graduated there. He then entered the United States Navy and later married Eleanore Krekeler; the family saw service in many parts of the world. Their children were: Caroline, who died of internal hemorrhaging while still a young lady; Jane who was a pediatrician in San Diego and now owns a farm in Texas, divorced, the mother of four (Brian, Julie, Brett, and Joy), and the grandmother of 4; and Allan, a pediatric psychiatrist who lives in Chapel Hill, NC with his wife, Polly, and daughter Hallie. Allan retired from the United States Navy circa 1964 as Rear Admiral and immediately joined the Red Cross International as second in command of the blood banks, for whom he traveled extensively. He died in

1978 after a lingering illness and is buried in the National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia. His wife, Eleanore, continues to live in their home in Bethesda, Maryland.

Sara Jane was the second daughter and last child born to Aunt Jennie and Uncle Riley Chrisman. She lived in Charlotte, North Carolina with her husband, Lewis Fallis, a native of Georgia, a retired businessman who is greatly interested in the family histories of the Watlingtons and the Simpsons. Their only child, a daughter named Sara Jane ("Jenny") graduated from Duke University, and then pursued a career in Data Processing, first at J. P. Stevens & Co. and currently at Duke Energy. Jenny married Kemble Widmer, but was divorced without having any children. After graduating from high school in Charlotte, Sara majored in Home Economics at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina, now known as UNC – Greensboro. Upon her graduation she returned to Charlotte and taught Home Ec in the junior high school therefore a number of years until her marriage. Her husband served in the U S Army during World War II and they were stationed in several localities during that period, returning to Charlotte to make their home after the War was over. Sara was very proficient in the culinary arts and most adept with her needles, hobbies she continued to enjoy until her death in March 2002.

Lewellyn Lucas Watlington was the next child born to John and Jane Watlington after the birth of Aunt Jennie. She was born October 18, 1869 and nine months later was struck by infantile paralysis, which made it necessary for her to wear heavy iron braces on both legs for the rest of her life and use a cane to support herself. Aunt Lewellyn had brilliant blue eyes and a vast amount of courage throughout her life of seventy years. She was an indomitable character and a devout Primitive Baptist with a firm belief in the fundamental tenets of that faith. I remember Aunt Lewellyn very well; after leaving home when she was grown, she went to live with her sister Fannie, who had been widowed in Reidsville, North Carolina and supported herself by sewing for others and a most talented seamstress she was considered. She later moved to Greensboro, North Carolina and lived with her sister Jennie for a while, later taking an apartment with her nephew, Raymond Paschal, son of her sister Emma, who moved down from the North. When he married, she took an apartment on her own to and continued her self support by sewing. At the time of her death due to a cerebral hemorrhage, she lived in a duplex at 320 Tate Street near the college which she had purchased some years before. Aunt Lewellyn was very popular among the members of her Church and attended regularly at her home church on the same street as well as the associations held annually at other locations, particularly Gilliam's where she was interred. Her most outstanding characteristic was her independence and took great pride in being able to take care of herself. Upon the death of her sister Sanford, she took over the care of Sanford's youngest daughter who was then only 3 weeks old and mothered her until the child was nine and her father resumed her care.

Mary Sanford was the next Watlington child after Lewellyn and was born June 18, 1872. This was an aunt I never knew, as she died in 1901 five years before my birth, but I remember her husband and their three daughters very well. My mother told me that Sanford died of some menstrual problem she had suffered since young ladyhood. She married Capus Thomas who was a land auctioneer and her children were Mary, Eva, and Sanford; she is buried in Green Hill Cemetery in Greensboro, North Carolina. Her husband did not remarry until many years later when her daughters were grown and had no children by his second wife who preceded him in death. Aunt Sanford's oldest daughter, Mary, married Charles Baker and had two sons, Charles, Jr and Philip, both of whom survived her and lived in Greensboro, North Carolina. Charles died in 1997. Mary divorced their father, a tobacco auctioneer and married Paul Walker, but there were no children of this union. Phil married Connie Hock, and had 2 children. Eva, the second daughter, attended Converse College and married Mark McConnell, by whom she had one daughter, Merrill, who now lives in Georgia. Sanford, youngest of Aunt Sanford's three daughters, married a doctor, Dennis R Wolff, who was killed in his own plane's crash in the early years of their marriage. The only child, a son George, is a retired doctor, living in Greensboro. George married Betty Wolfe, and had 4 children.

The thirteenth and last child of my grandparents, John Armistead Watlington and Jane Simpson Watlington, was my mother, Effie V May Watlington. Grandmother Jane died when my mother was only

five, so she was raised by her father and her older sisters and in a very strict manner. Children in those days were taught to adhere closely to a sense of duty. Following in the footsteps of her older sisters, she attended Gilliam's Academy and upon finishing that, taught the one-room neighborhood school and spent a year in Jersey City, New Jersey "helping out" her oldest sister Emma which is detailed in other paragraphs. Mother then went to live in Reidsville, North Carolina in Rockingham County where he sisters Fannie, Anna and Lewellyn lived. She boarded with Mrs. Shreeves on the corner of Scales and Settle Streets and worked for a while as a clerk in the store owned by the Bearman family, later working for Mrs. Mollie Hancock who ran an exclusive dress shop comparable to the present day modiste shop. She became an excellent seamstress and followed trade most of the rest of her life. In Reidsville she met an attractive and very handsome young man, Walter Scott Floyd, a house painter who later became a painting and wall papering contractor, whom she married in January of 1900. Daddy was born November 16, 1872 in the Southwest Virginia mountains in Patrick County, Virginia. The wedding took place in Reidsville, North Carolina in the Methodist parsonage. They became the parents of Wilbur Hastings, Walter McLaurin ("Mack"), Thelma (the writer) and Reuben Reid Floyd. My father died August 15, 1929 and my mother on June 14, 1955. More details of the writer's birth family on pages 6 and 8.)



FRANCIS WATLINGTON

June Court, 1788 Halifax County, Virginia

An Inventory and appraisement of the Estate of Francis Watlington, Dec'd taken the 7<sup>th</sup> day of December 1774 (Viz.)

The following slaves are named: Jacob, Primus, Doll (very old and of no value), Betty, Dinah, Mary, Gloucester, Page and Hannah. There are 5 pages in all listing household goods, farm animals, tools, etc.

Total Value: 475 pounds 7 shillings

Signed: Armistead Watlington

At a Court held for Halifax County the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June 1788 the within written inventory and appraisement of the Estate of Francis Watlington, Dec'd was returned to the Court by Armistead Watlington, his administrator, and ordered to be recorded. Teste: Geo. Carrington CHC  
Truly recorded

Teste: Berry Green DCHC

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June Court, 1788

An acct of Sales of the Estate of Francis Watlington, Deceased December 7, 1774

Viz to –

There are 3 pages listing the sale of various household items, farm animals, tools, etc. to Armistead Watlington, Rebecca Watlington, and several other persons –

Total Value shown: 174 pounds 9 shillings 9 ½ pence  
Signed: Armistead Watlington

At a Court held for Halifax County the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June 1788. The within written account of sale of the Estate of Francis Watlington, Dec'd was made and returned to Court by Armistead Watlington, the administrator and ordered to be recorded. Teste: George Carrington CHC  
Truly recorded Teste: Berryman Green, DCHC

(Above copied by Mildred C. Todd from copy of Halifax Court Records on July 30, 1970)

## **GENERATIONS AND LINEAGE OF THE THOMAS SIMPSON FAMILY**

1. Thomas (1) Simpson – wife's name not included in any records
2. William and Mary Simpson
3. Thomas and Mary Simpson
4. Moses A and Mary Lucas Garrett Simpson
5. Francis Lucas and Priscilla Simpson
6. Jane Simpson and John Armistead Watlington
7. Effie V. May Watlington and Walter Scott Floyd
8. Thelma Floyd and Guy Thomas Durham
  - 9a. Guy Floyd Durham
    - 10a. Nathan Durham
    - 10b. Sarah Compton Durham
  - 9b. Gayle Durham Hannah
    - 10a. Sarah Lydia Hollander

## GENERATIONS AND LINEAGE OF THE JOHN SIMPSON FAMILY

1. John (1) Simpson ("Scotchman") – wife's name not included in any records
2. Rixchard (1) and Sarah ("Sary") Simpson
3. George (2) and Susannah Wheeler Simpson
4. Aaron and Charlotte Wiseheart Simpson
5. General Francis Lucas and Priscilla Simpson
6. Jane Simpson and John Armistead Watlington
7. Effie V. May Watlington and Walter Scott Floyd
8. Thelma Floyd and Guy Thomas Durham
  - 9a. Guy Floyd and Dinah Wolverton Durham
    - 10a. Nathan Durham
  - Guy Floyd and Magi Compton Durham
  - 10b. Sarah Compton Durham
  - Guy Floyd and Melinda Florian Papp Durham
  - 9b. Gayle Durham Hannah and Paul Hollander
    - 10a. Sarah Lydia Hollander

## THE SIMPSON FAMILY DIRECT LINEAGE

### Foreward

As far as the writer can ascertain, my generation of the Watlington and Simpson descendants knew little, if anything of their Simpson forebears preceding our great, great grandparents, Moses and Mary Lucas Garrett Simpson, until Vance E Swift of Raleigh, North Carolina published his book "William Swift, Clergyman, His Ancestors and Some of His Descendants and Connections" in 1890.

Mr. Swift, who was born January 22, 1898, is a direct descendant of William Simpson (1757 – 1820), son of Thomas (1) Simpson, who came from Warwickshire, England prior to 1649 and who settled in Maryland. He is a great, great grandson of William on both his father's and his mother's side.

Mr. Swift has not seen fit to copyright his book and has been entirely unselfish in sharing his information with any interested parties. He states in his preface that he has attempted insofar as is possible to substantiate the statements recorded in his book by proof or competent evidence obtained from authentic family records, such as family Bibles, graveyard markers, marriage bonds and certificates, land grants and deeds, wills and estate records, tax and census records, County and State Court minutes, newspaper obituaries, birth and marriage records compiled by qualified genealogists, military and pension records and other sources of information too numerous to mention.

Mr. Swift has included in his book an extensive and detailed portion on the genealogy of the Simpson family and rightly deserves the highest commendations and appreciation of all those benefiting by his work. This author hereby heartily extends to him the gratitude which he so rightly deserves.

## THE SIMPSONS IN AMERICA

Helen Simpson in her "Early Records of the Simpson Family" writes that after the Norman Conquest in the eleventh century, many Normans came from their native Province in France and settled in the lowlands of Scotland. The Simpson family claimed descent from one Simon de Fraser, a Norman nobleman. John ("Scotchman") Simpson, born in Scotland, died in Stafford County, Virginia circa 1698, was supposedly a descendant of the Norman nobleman. The writer's great grandmother, Priscilla Simpson, wife of General Francis Lucas Simpson, was a direct descendant of John ("Scotchman") Simpson. Her husband was a direct descendant of Thomas Simpson of Warwickshire, England.

"Colonial Families of the United States of America" in Volume III, page 493, states that the Simpsons are an old English family of Warwickshire, England; that they settled there in the thirteenth reign of Henry IV of France, who founded the House of Bourbon and who issued the Edict of Nantes, granting religious toleration to the Huguenots. The publication goes on to say that Thomas (1) Simpson was a man of means and was in Maryland 2 July, 1649; that he and his wife, Elizabeth, settled in that part of St. Mary's County which later became Charles County, where in 1652 he received from Lord Baltimore a grant of 450 acres called "Simpson". Land patent records in the Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland, include among others a grant of 450 acres to Thomas (1) Simpson, recorded in Book Qff 182-183 dated 2 September, 1658.

Land patents preserved in the Hall of Records at Annapolis, Maryland include 9 grants totaling more than 3,000 acres of land granted to Thomas (1) Simpson over a period of 14 years, beginning 2 September 1658 with a grant by Cecilius Lord and Proprietary of the Province of Maryland and Avalon, Lord Baron of Baltimore of 450 acres to Thomas (1) Simpson on the north side of the Potomac River near Lindsey's Creek in the Manor of St. Marie's Province of Maryland.

The first land patent to Thomas (1) Simpson was issued by Cecilius Calvert (Lord Baltimore) under the 1649 "Conditions of Plantation" Authorization, where in 1649 a colony was being developed in St. Maria's Manor on the north side of the Potomac River on the banks of St. Mary's River. The Colony was being developed by Cecilius Calvert, the second Baron of Baltimore, as a religious Sanctuary where Catholics who were being persecuted in England could worship in peace.

Thomas (1) Simpson left his home in England, probably to escape religious persecution and in 1649 he registered with the Colony, then being formed by Cecilius Calvert in St. Mary's Manor, Maryland which colony, under the "Toleration Act", was becoming a sanctuary not only for the Catholics, but for all Christians.

Before the Colony could be firmly established under Calvert, the Puritans in a civil war gained control of the Colony, repealed the Toleration Act of 1649 and it was not until 1657 that a compromise was reached with the Puritans returning the proprietorship to Lord Baltimore. It was following the return of the proprietorship to Lord Baltimore that the first land grant to Thomas (1) Simpson was actually executed.

One of the plantations granted to Thomas (1) Simpson was called "Liverpool"; his son William lived on this land and in his will probated 18 March 1700-1 in the Maryland calendar of Wills bequeathed the property to his son Thomas (2) Simpson. His wife, Mary, was named a legatee in his will.

According to the All Hallow's Parish Records, the following children were born to Thomas (2) Simpson and his wife, Elizabeth, all in Anne Arundel County, Maryland:

1. John Simpson, born February 11, 1687/8; died young
2. Amos Simpson, born December 9, 1690; married (1) Elizabeth Dowell 24 April 1716, married (2) Lovina
3. Richard (a) Simpson, born February 28, 1692; married Rebecca, born circa 1696

4. Rachal Simpson, born March 27, 1696
5. Elizabeth Simpson, born circa 1698; married January 17, 1720 to Elliott Brown
6. Mary Simpson, born December 26, 1700
7. Sarah Simpson, christened June 1704
8. \*Moses A Simpson, born circa 1705 (probably the Moses who died 1779-80 in Fairfax County, Virginia and whose wife was Margaret)
9. John Simpson, born December 21, 1707, married November 11, 1730 to Elizabeth Rawlings (Writer notes this child was named "John" after the first child born in the family)
10. Gilbert Simpson, born circa 1709, died 1753 or 1773 in Fairfax County, Virginia; married Elizabeth

The Moses A Simpson (1), son of Thomas (2) Simpson and wife, Elizabeth, had a son Moses (2), born April 20, 1748 in Fairfax County, Virginia. He married Mary Lucas Garrett, widow of William Garrett with one son, Thomas Garrett. He died in Guilford County, North Carolina and his will probated in 1844. In Book C on page 207, the will of Moses Simpson is recorded, naming his heirs as his son, Francis Lucas Simpson; his grandson, Sanford Monroe Simpson; his grandson, Nathaniel Henry; his daughter-in-law, Priscilla and four granddaughters, Mary Simpson Herbin, Elizabeth ("Lizzie") Simpson, Priscilla Emmaline ("Em"), and Jane, who was the writer's grandmother. Moses and Mary Lucas Garrett Simpson are buried at the old Simpson homeplace on the southwest side of the Haw River in Guilford County, North Carolina. They had moved there from Fairfax County, Virginia in 1798/9 where they purchased 150 acres from one Henry Brannock (See Deed Book 7, page 392). This property is the place the writer refers to as "Aunt Dora's place" where she spent so many happy childhood hours. It remained in the possession of the Simpson descendants until the death of Lillian Blanche Watlington, who bequeathed all her property, both real and personal, to Elder Kenneth Key personally, not to the Primitive Baptist Church of which he was the official local head.

Moses Simpson and his wife, Priscilla, had a son, Francis Lucas Simpson, born June 6, 1789 in Fairfax County, Virginia. He died July 22, 1873 at his home, High Rock Plantation in Rockingham County, North Carolina. (A special chapter on his illustrious citizen and his home is included in this writing.) One of his daughters, Jane, married John Armistead Watlington. They were parents of the writer's mother, Effie May Watlington who married Walter Scott Floyd of Patrick County, Virginia. My mother was their thirteenth and last child.

John (1) Simpson, called "Scotchman", was the founder of the other line of the Simpson family in America. He was born in Scotland before 1645 and died circa 1698 in Stafford County, Virginia. Following is a list of his children of which there may have been more:

1. John (2) Simpson, born circa 1680 in Stafford County, Virginia; married first Elizabeth Naylor of Brunswick Park, according to the Register of St. Paul's Parish, Stafford County, Virginia, on August 6, 1735; married secondly Silent Johnson on August 17, 1740
2. Thomas Simpson, born circa 1682 in Stafford County, Virginia; died 1734 in Prince William County, Virginia; married Jane
3. George Simpson, born 1687 in Stafford County, Virginia; died circa 1750 in Loudon County, Virginia
4. Ann, born circa 1689; married John Gist; died circa 1775 in Loudon County, Virginia
5. \*Richard (1) Simpson, born circa 1692 in Stafford County, Virginia; married Sarah \_\_\_\_\_; died circa 1762; will probated in Fairfax County, Virginia on December 21, 1762
6. Elizabeth Simpson, born July 27, 1695; died March 14, 1698 in Stafford County, Virginia

Records in the Virginia State Library, Genealogical Section, Richmond, Virginia, state that John (1) Simpson, "Scotchman" received three land grants from Margaret Lady Culpepper and Thomas Lord Fairfax: 117 acres in Stafford County, Virginia on July 26, 1695; 200 acres in Stafford County, Virginia on July 17, 1698; and 100 acres in Stafford County, Virginia on November 8, 1698. In addition to these three

grants, John (1) Simpson received a grant of 627 acres of land on the northwest side of Great Hunting Creek. This grant is registered in Patent Book #3, page 110, in what is now Fairfax County, Virginia. The Registry of Overwharton's Parish, Stafford County, Virginia, states on Page 107-108 that John (1) Simpson settled on Acquia Creek, Stafford County, Virginia and received land grants there and on Great Hunting Creek. This grant is registered in Patent Book #3, page 110, and is dated January 28, 1694/5. Footnote: the land described in this grant is located in what now is Fairfax County, Virginia.

\*Richard (1) Simpson, youngest son of John (1) Simpson, "Scotchman", was born circa 1692 in Stafford County, Virginia, and died 1761/62 in Fairfax County, Virginia. He married Sarah ("Sary"); he left a will dated September 19, 1761, probated December 21, 1762, recorded in Will Book B-1, 1752-1767 Fairfax County, Virginia Wills. Richard (1) named his wife, Sarah, and the following children and grandchildren as beneficiaries in his will:

1. #Son, George (2) Simpson
2. Son, Moses (1) Simpson
3. Wife, Sary or Sarah Simpson
4. Daughter, Elizabeth Simpson Halley
5. Daughter, Mary Simpson Canterbury
6. Daughter, Sarah Simpson Windsor
7. Granddaughter, Caron Happack; grandson George Windsor
8. Son, Richard (2) Simpson

Richard's (1) daughter, Elizabeth, married James Halley, whose father James Halley was a collateral descendant of Edmund Halley, noted mathematician and astronomer, who first correctly calculated the orbit of the comet that bears his name.

Richard's wife, Sary, died circa 1765/6 in Fairfax County, Virginia. Her will was dated May 1766 and probated August 10, 1766 in Fairfax County, Virginia.

George (2) Simpson, son of Richard (1) and Sarah (1) Simpson, grandson of John (1) ("Scotchman") of Stafford County, Virginia, was born circa 1730 in Fairfax County, Virginia and died there in 1782. (Will was probated in 1782 in Fairfax County, Virginia.) He married Susannah Wheeler, daughter of Richard (2) and his wife, Rebecca (1), of Fairfax County, Virginia. George (2) and his wife, Susannah Wheeler Simpson, had the following children:

1. Richard (4) Simpson, born circa 1755 in Fairfax County, Virginia, married Ann Johnston, sister of Mary Johnston who married Richard 's (4) brother, George (3) Simpson
2. William (1) Simpson, born September 23, 1757 in Fairfax County, Virginia; married Jane Keene, Fairfax County, Virginia; died October 6, 1820
3. \*Aaron Simpson, born January 2, 1759 in Fairfax County, Virginia; married Charlotte Wiseheart of Loudon County Virginia; died December 11, 1832 in Caswell County, North Carolina
4. George (3) Simpson, born circa 1765 in Fairfax County, Virginia; married Mary Johnston, sister of his brother Richard's wife, Ann Johnston; died 1803
5. Joseph Simpson, born circa 1763 in Fairfax County, Virginia; died 1795
6. James Simpson, born circa 1767 in Fairfax County, Virginia; died 1818 in Caswell County, North Carolina; married Sally \_\_\_\_\_
7. Mary Simpson
8. Sarah Simpson

Ref: Will of George (2) Simpson, dated October 14, 1782, probated November 18, 1782, and recorded in Will Book "D.1", 1776, 1782, in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Aaron Simpson, born January 2, 1759 in Fairfax County, Virginia, son of George (2) and Susannah Wheeler Simpson, married Charlotte Wiseheart (1763-1846), daughter of Henry Wiseheart, late of Loudon County, Virginia. Ref: in Will Book 1742-1801, page 32, abst. of Wills Fairfax County, Virginia.

Aaron Simpson served as a private soldier from Fairfax County, Virginia in the American Revolution. He moved to Caswell County, North Carolina, sometime between the period of 1790 and 1800 and settled on the headwaters of Stoney Creed in St. Daniel's District. He acquired several tracts of land, both in Caswell County and Orange County, by deed and by land grant, dating back to 1797. He listed 1046 acres of land in St. David's District, Caswell County, North Carolina for taxed in 1800. Ref: Caswell County Tax Records (1800-1803). He died December 11, 1832 in Caswell County, North Carolina and was buried in the Simpson burying ground near the Aaron Simpson homesite in southwestern Caswell County, North Carolina.

Charlotte Wiseheart Simpson, his wife, died October 2, 1846 and was buried beside him. Their graves are plainly marked by marble headstones. Nearby is the marked gravestone of Jane T. Simpson (1793-1832), first wife of Aaron's brother, Moses. They were the great, great grandparents of this writer, Thelma Floyd Durham, and the great grandparents of Vance E Swift to whom we owe so much for his genealogy of the Simpson family.

Children of Aaron and Charlotte Wiseheart Simpson were:

1. Moses S Simpson, born March 17, 1784 in Fairfax County, Virginia; died November 18, 1818 in Caswell County, North Carolina; married Delphi Florence on October 22, 1804
2. Katherine ("Kitty") Simpson, born April 27, 1786 in Fairfax County, Virginia; died \_\_\_\_\_; married October 5, 1808 to John Boswell in Caswell County, North Carolina
3. Roger Simpson, born November 2, 1788, probably in Fairfax County, Virginia; died \_\_\_\_\_; married Margaret ("Peggy") Williamson in Caswell County, North Carolina
4. Haydon Simpson, born September 10, 1790; died \_\_\_\_\_; married \_\_\_\_\_
5. Penelope Simpson, born August 28, 1793; died \_\_\_\_\_; married Azariah Graves in Caswell County, North Carolina on May 10 or 16, 1809
6. \*Priscilla Simpson, born August 10, 1795 at High Rock Plantation, Rockingham County, North Carolina; married General Francis Lucas Simpson on December 16, 1815, who was the son of Moses and Mary Lucas Garrett Simpson. (These were the writer's great grandparents.)
7. Enoch Simpson, born November 1, 1797; died \_\_\_\_\_; married Elizabeth Carter, Caswell County, North Carolina on December 29, 1815
8. Susannah Simpson, born July 12, 1799; died October 1805 in Caswell County, North Carolina
9. Bailey Simpson, born October 15, 1801; died January 18, 1803 in Caswell County, North Carolina
10. Nancy Simpson, born July 28, 1803; died \_\_\_\_\_; married James Boswell in Caswell County, North Carolina
11. Joseph Simpson, born April 7, 1805; died circa 1856; married Susan Byrd Anderson on December 12, 1843 in Caswell County, North Carolina

Ref: Will of Aaron Simpson, dated December 6, 1852, probated January Court 1833 and recorded in Book "M" at page 280 Caswell County, North Carolina Registry. (Copy of Aaron Simpson's will is included in this writing.)

\*Priscilla Simpson married General Francis Lucas Simpson, her cousin. They were the parents of my grandmother, Effie V May Watlington Floyd. For more detailed information on the, see separate chapter on the General and his High Rock Plantation. Their children were:

1. Mary "Polly" Simpson, born October 3, 1816; married Robert Herbin; died July 1894
2. Nathaniel Henry ("Nat") Simpson, born 1818, went out west circa 1850



3. Sanford Monroe Simpson, born August 9, 1820; married Mary A. E. Watlington March 28, 1844; died November 10, 1875; Mary was born August 15, 1824
4. Elizabeth ("Lizzie") Simpson, born August 8, 1828; died February 25, 1899; never married
5. \*Jane Simpson, born June 24, 1832; married May 6, 1851 to John Armistead Watlington; died December 24, 1880; she was my grandmother; more information in the Watlington history
6. Priscilla Emmaline ("Em") Simpson, born May 22, 1834; married Joseph Henry Rich; died January 15, 1917; Joseph was born December 19, 1830 and died March 16, 1890
7. \*Joseph Hawkins Simpson, MD, born February 4, 1838; married Margaret ("Mag") Faucette Brannock, widow of a Confederate soldier killed at Gettysburg. Mag was the daughter of Jacob and Catherine Summers Faucette and died February 12, 1930. Dr. Simpson, my great uncle, died February 4, 1893

Thus the two lines of the prominent Simpson families in America were united in marriage when Priscilla Simpson was wed to her cousin General Francis Lucas Simpson. They were my great grandparents.

\*Uncle Hawkins was educated at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, graduating in the class of 1861 on March 6. After passing the examination to practice medicine, he became a general practitioner, taking care of the physical needs of the residents of Rockingham, Alamance, Caswell and Guilford Counties of North Carolina. His account book still in the possession of a descendant reveals that he delivered 436 babies during his career and noted the date of birth, sex, race, and mother's name of every one of them. Near the close of the war when the urgent need of physicians was so great, he was called into service in the medical unit of the Confederate Army and was commissioned Captain in Company H, 45<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Upon discharge, he resumed this practice in his former location. His last delivery he noted in his account book was a boy born November 2, 1892; he died February 4, 1893 and is buried in the old Simpson burying ground located on the property his grandfather, Moses (2), purchased in 1799 and where he was born.

At the time Uncle Hawkins practiced medicine, physicians enjoyed a great deal of respect and adulation, which was accorded Dr. Simpson. No call was too distant, no hour of day nor night to inconvenient for him to respond, no matter from whence it came nor from whom. He treated everyone one of his patients with the same expertise and respect regardless of race, color and creed. Much of his practice was non-paying, particularly the colored patients who had belonged to his family and who remained faithful to the end of their lives. He was know for his medical knowledge and skill, his droll sense of humor and walking in his sleep. Recollections of his wit have been passed down by word of mouth to family members throughout the years with resulting quotes as befit the occasion. This somnambulism persisted even in adult years and on one occasion, while attending a medical convention in Danville, Virginia, he walked out of a second story hotel room while in the arms of Morpheus. Fortunately, he suffered no broken bones, but forever afterward walked with a limp. Uncle Hawkins was fond of his "toddy", especially after a difficult case, but fortunately his horse knew the way home and always brought him home safely in his buggy.

Dr. Hawkins Simpson's oldest brother, Nathaniel Henry, was born circa 1818 according to the family Bible and there is no other record of him other than he "went West" about 1849. Family members have said the was wrongfully accused of abducting or assisting a slave to escape, this accusation having me made by one Ludwick Summers who lived on a nearby plantation. Dr Simpson's other brother, Sanford Monroe, married Mary E. Watlington, daughter of Edward B. Watlington and they had no children.

"Polly", the daughter who married Robert Herbin and had moved form her parents' home before they bought the High Rock Plantation, has descendants but the writer knows only one personally; she is "Billy" Herbin Coltrane, wife of Jack Coltrane, nephew of the writer's husband, who has two grown sons and lives near Brown Summit, North Carolina.

Great Aunt "Lizzie" and her sister "Em" remained with their parents at High Rock Plantation throughout the war years during which time they remained unmarried. Their mother, Priscilla, died April 16, 1865, the day following the end of the War Between the States. A few years later, Em married Joseph Henry Rich and moved to Reidsville, North Carolina in the same county. Their only child, a son, is buried at Camp Springs Church in Caswell County. Em was the sole remaining heir; she sold two tracts of land she had inherited, one of which included the High Rock Plantation's ancestral manor. She died January 15, 1917; Lizzie had preceded her in death, having passed away February 25, 1899, unmarried. The writer know only Aunt Em of Grandmother Jane's siblings, as all the others had died before my birth. I remember as a small child having spent a day with her once when we lived in Reidsville. Her little cottage was "all spit and polish" and she prepared a big Sunday dinner especially for me, she stressed, fried chicken and all the trimmings.

## GENERAL FRANCIS LUCAS SIMPSON – HIS PLACE IN PIEDMONT HISTORY

The name of General Francis Lucas Simpson, my great grandfather, is mentioned in North Carolina history books only briefly, but research into State archives and County records has evinced considerable information that confirms him as one of the most forward thinking and astute politicians of his era.

General Simpson was a native of Fairfax County, Virginia, where he was born to Mary Lucas Garrett and Moses Simpson on June 6, 1789. His parents were members of prominent Shenandoah Valley families where vast land holdings had been surveyed by none other than the young George Washington, who became a licensed Colonial surveyor at the tender age of 16.

When Francis was only ten years old, his parents sold their holdings in Virginia and moved their family to property they purchased on the banks of the Haw River in Guilford County, North Carolina. This property was to remain in the family until the death of Blanche Watlington, a great granddaughter, in 1965.

As a young man of 23, Francis Simpson participated in the War of 1812 and attained the rank of General in the Militia. Three years later he married his cousin, Priscilla Simpson, who was also a native of Fairfax County, Virginia, whose family had moved to neighboring Caswell County, North Carolina. To this union were born 3 sons and 4 daughters, of whom Jane, my maternal grandmother was the fifth child.

Although Francis was born under the sign of Gemini, he was not a “twin personality”, a trait generally attributed to those born under that sign. His entire life was one of singular purpose and determination. At the very beginning of married life he set about acquiring land in nearby Rockingham County and at the age of 59 purchased the plantation and mansion that was to be the home of his family for the ensuing 52 year period. It has been known as “High Rock” from the time it was build circa 1807 until the present day and stands proudly defying the passage of years and the sad fate suffered by a majority of fine old Southern homes of the plantation era. Its name is derived from the enormous boulders to be found in the Haw River area.

By the age of 36, General Simpson had earned the respect and confidence of his fellow citizens because of his sterling character and outstanding political acumen and they elected him to the North Carolina State Legislature at Raleigh as Representative from Guilford County in 1825-1829 and again in 1836. His political career continued through the years and the various and sundry serious problems presented by them. His last term began in 1862 when he was re-elected at the age of 73 for the ninth time as a State Senator.

During the intervening years, his interest in the military never wavered; in 1851 he organized an artillery company in Greensboro know as the “Guilford Greys” and so notified Governor Davie Reid.

While he was serving in the State Legislature, he fought a bitter campaign to charter the Greensboro and Danville Railroad Company, finally winning with the combined efforts of John Motley Morehead, his fellow legislator, and Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. The Railroad was granted the desired charter in North Carolina and Virginia, and headquarters for the sale of its stock was at High Rock Plantation, the home of General Simpson.

The Piedmont section of North Carolina was served wisely and well by this transplanted scion of a Colonial Virginia family. His expertise and determination earned him the greatest respect and admiration of his constituents; his persuasiveness and dedication were invaluable in his political career as well as in his personal life. A member of the Masonic Order, General Simpson was a highly successful gentleman farmer, a compassionate and fair-minded proprietor of an expansive plantation, where his “people” were treated with understanding and the best of care; a devoted father and husband, he provided his family the best that the times afforded. He expected and received their dutiful and devoted regard in return.

General Simpson had chosen his beautiful blonde cousin Priscilla for his bride with great discernment as well as intense devotion, and she fulfilled his every expectation to the letter. A gentle, loving wife and mother, she lived up to the standards set for the matriarchs of the South, ministering to her family and the "people" on the plantation meticulously and untiringly, especially during illness. She herself enjoyed excellent health, living until age 70, which was considered a ripe old age in those days. The General had no qualms about being absent to attend to his political and military commitments with his capable helpmate in charge of the children, the plantation, and their devoted people.

The General and Priscilla had been married 33 years and parented their 7 children at the time he purchased High Rock. Two of the older children had married and moved to homes of their own and a third son had gone West. It was not until Christmas of 1848 that the General bought the High Rock Place with its surrounding 985 acres; by 1866 he had added 495 more acres to the original tract by purchasing surrounding properties, making their plantation a sizable one of 1480 acres.

Prior to the General's ownership of High Rock, written accounts of life there describe a carefree culture in which the gentry enjoyed the "finer things of life". As in other localities in the South of yore, the Spare Water Springs, particularly Lenox Castle, sometimes called the "Thundertontrench", 2 miles north, drew wealthy residents of eastern North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama to drink its healing waters, believed to be a cure-all for a miscellany of ailments. Activity centered around the tavern; cabins were erected for the accommodation of guests and many families pitched their own tents on the grounds. Nowhere in the South could there be found more abundant and delectable food than around the "groaning boards" at Lenox Castle. Children of all ages romped on its grounds; ladies, dressed "to the nines" in silks and satins that had taken months of stitching and fitting, gossiped while doing their needlework. Social life abounded; many of the gentlemen who desired more exciting pleasures rode down to High Rock Plantation where good fellowship was king and spirits flowed freely. High Rock at that point in time was a "publick house" and served as a stage coach stop. Gentlemen engaged in cock-fighting, card playing and horse racing. Evidence of the old race track was still visible a few years ago, but the spot has been converted into a fish pond.

Upon the purchase of the plantation by the General and his wife, life at High Rock took on a much more meaningful and sedate manner. Riotous living was not characteristic of this family oriented gentleman, farmer, and representative of the people nor of his dutiful and devoted wife. The dwelling itself provided ample space for gracious living for the family; house and field servants were provided with comfortable quarters in the rear yard of the mansion. The home proper, in addition to rooms usually found in houses of this culture, had an "ordinary" room which had formerly accommodated stage coach travelers for brief rests and refreshments, 2 "virgins'" rooms accessible only by a back stair, and a "bornin" room.

High Rock is a 3-story brick edifice of Federal style and presents an impressive façade enhanced by Palladian windows and doorways. Two stately columns support the porticoes on the top and middle floors, the latter serving as the main floor. A curving stair flanks both sides of the entranceway and twin chimneys crown the top of the venerable mansion, suggesting a royal aura to passers by. The place retains all its original grandeur in today's world and because of its architecture and General Simpson's contribution to history, High Rock rightly deserves its listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior. It is said to be one of only 5 or 6 places that is actually maintained as a private residence at the present time. The original roof was of copper, but the metal was sold during World War I and replaced by the present roof.

Sixteen months after the Simpson family took possession of High Rock, their 5<sup>th</sup> child, Jane, became the bride of John Armistead Watlington, son of Jonathan Brooks Watlington and Dorothea Carlos Watlington. The Watlingtons were an illustrious pre-Colonial Virginia family, whose ancestors had come from England by way of Bermuda and settled in Gloucester County, Virginia, around 1625. Their genealogy has been researched and authenticated as far back as 1135 a.d. John and Jane were to become grandparents of the writer, Thelma Floyd Durham and their own children numbered 13.

## DENNIS SIMPSON AND HIS SON, HENRY

It is the writer's belief that no record of the Simpson families would be complete without reference to Dennis and Henry Simpson. Dennis was a young colored lad at the time of the War Between the States, "Grandpappy" Simpson's "waiting boy" (General Francis Lucas Simpson). A waiting boy in the old South was an absolute necessity to men of the General's station in life, a person at their every beck and call. Despite his youth, Dennis was very proficient in this capacity and there was great support between the man and the boy.

There is no record of any harm suffered when the Union Army came through nor any damage done to High Rock Plantation so far as I know. The Northern soldiers did, however, take a liking to the young lad, Dennis, and commandeered him to accompany them to Fayetteville to help in the building of breastworks. Undoubtedly the General was in Raleigh, North Carolina at the time or he would have somehow prevented such an abominable seizure. Upon his return home, he was appalled to discover the his "boy" was in the hands of the Union Army and immediately took off by wagon for Fayetteville, North Carolina where he secured the release of Dennis by the payment of \$300.00

Dennis, faithful servant that he was, grew up at High Rock Plantation and was dutifully grateful for the devotion that his Massa had demonstrated in securing his release from the Yankee horde. He married and was the father of Henry Simpson, equally as loyal as Dennis had been to the General and his family. Dennis lost his first wife by death and remarried, this time to Angeline, called "Ange".

When the slaves were given their freedom, General Simpson deeded a small acreage to Dennis, who continued to work for him until the General's demise, along with his son, Henry. They raised tobacco for a money crop and made a go of it raising their own vegetables and meat for the table. They were never to lack for anything, thanks to the Simpson descendants. As long as my own family lived in Reidsville, North Carolina, Dennis, Henry and Ange spent the night with us on the occasions they came to see their tobacco at the warehouse there. I remember so clearly Ange rocking my baby brother to sleep and her sweet voice crooning "Away in a Manger"; also her filling our stockings with homegrown peanuts on "Christmas Eve Eve", a holiday she invented for us.

After our family moved to Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1914, our "love affair" with Dennis and Henry continued. Periodically we took them clothes discarded by my Daddy and my three brothers but acceptable and gratefully accepted by Dennis and Henry. Ange had died meanwhile and they continued to live on their little place. We would add some goodies and occasionally a bottle of spirits, for Dennis was known to enjoy his "toddy" and even had his own little still at one time.

I remember one Sunday along about 1929 when my brother, Mack, drove down and brought Dennis and Henry up to our house in Greensboro to spend the day and have dinner. We lived in a large 14-room house at the time and Dennis and Henry were in awe of all the space, as their home was a one-room log cabin. I remember how impressed they were with their first sight of a bathroom and how they marveled at the way it was operated. Mother prepared her usual large meal of fried chicken with all the trimmings; it was quite a treat for Dennis and Henry to have food prepared for them especially.

My final remembrance of the two was during World War II when my two brothers were home on leave, having been in Trinidad and before going to Europe for further service. I drove down to Greensboro with my children and together with my Mother and oldest brother, Wilbur, we visited Dennis and Henry at their little farm cabin. My husband was in the tobacco business and I took them samples of snuff and cigarettes among other treats. I was "Little Miss" to them, my mother being called "Mistis" as always. They were delighted with the tobacco, telling me they would enjoy the snuff during week days at home and save the cigarettes for meetings on Sundays.

I returned to my home in West Virginia and heard no more of Dennis and Henry. I do not know when they died, but am sure they were buried in the yard of their neighborhood Church, as they were ardent church-goers. I have a snapshot of them on that last visit and shall retain forever in my mind an image of them that is engraved with a permanence of love, faith and devotion throughout eternity.

## HIGH ROCK HISTORY A Continuation

The land on which the High Rock Mansion stands was steeped in history for many years before Joseph McCain, Junior built the house itself. Exhaustive research has not established the exact date of its construction, but it is reasonable to assume that McCain built it before or soon after his marriage on June 25, 1807. The name is derived from the high rocks overlooking the north prong of the Haw River and that of an early water grist mill referred to in a land grant from Lord Granville to one Aaron Pinson and described in the survey plat dated December 17, 1753 by William Churton, proprietary surveyor as Pinson's Mill. (The name of the Mill was in later years changed to High Rock Mill.) A North Carolina State historical marker at the river crossing reads "HIGH ROCK FORD. General Nathaniel Greene maintained headquarters here February 28 – March 12, 1781 before meeting Cornwallis at Guilford Courthouse. Ford is 100 feet wide." Only two identified sites in the present Rockingham County appear on the 1768 John Collet map of North Carolina, the settlement of Lower Sauratown and Pinson's Mill (later called the High Rock Mill).

In December 1857, Aaron Pinson, the first owner (by grant) sole 67 acres, including the grist mill, to Richard Simpson of Orange County (now Caswell County), who conveyed the property on April 18, 1770 to his son-in-law, Zaccheus Tate, for "natural love and affection, which I bear for my Son-IN-Law, husband of my daughter, Lydia Simpson". (Deed recorded in Book 3, p. 211, Orange County Registry, North Carolina Archives, Raleigh North Carolina)

For the next eight years, some deeds were apparently lost during which the Revolutionary War was being fought. High Rock Ford continued to be a military supply depot and campground throughout 1781. Even before the Revolution in the years 1765-1771 High Rock Ford was an important military rendezvous, supply center and camp during what was called the "War of Regulation". This was a period of serious civil uprising when the "Regulators", mostly small farmers from the western part of North Carolina stormed the Court at Hillsborough, then the capital of the state, in protest of high taxes and government corruption and ran the Judge out of town. High Rock Ford was in the path of the Regulators as well as that of Governor Tryon's forces who pursued them and defeated the Regulators at the Battle of Alamance.

During the last year of the Revolutionary War, High Rock Ford was a focal point in the "race to the Dan", when Cornwallis attempted to catch General Nathaniel Greene and his able subordinate, Brigadier General Daniel Morgan and defeat them if possible. During this part of the campaign both armies passed High Rock Ford on their way to the famous Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

Between 1794 and September 21, 1805 the High Rock Mill property changed hands several times when it was bought by Peter Byson. Nathaniel Scales in November 1811 bought 600 acres of land and the High Rock Mill from Peter Byson for the sum of \$8,000 (Rockingham County Deeds, Book M, p 16). Scales's daughter, Mary ("Polly") married the neighbor, Joseph McCain, Jr., who had inherited land upon the death of his father in 1805. On March 4, 1823 Nathaniel Scales, a prominent State legislator himself and grandfather of Governor of Alfred M. Scales, willed to his daughter, "Polly" the High Rock property. Her husband, Joseph McCain, Jr., died April 29, 1930 at High Rock Mansion and is buried on a knoll southwest of the house.

According to Rockingham County Deeds, Book 2<sup>nd</sup> I, 20; 2<sup>nd</sup> V, 185; 2<sup>nd</sup> R, 152, 2<sup>nd</sup> X 156 on April 7, 1836 the High Rock Property, which had been advertised in the Raleigh Register, was sold to John Brent. After the sale of the property, the widow McCain made her will in Greensboro and moved to Tallahatchie, Mississippi to live with some of her children and died there on September 14, 1848.

On December 25, 1848 High Rock Plantation, now 985 acres, was sold to General Francis Lucas Simpson, the writer's great grandfather. High Rock Mansion and the acreage on which it stands

remained in General Simpson's family until 1900 when his daughter, my great Aunt Em, his last surviving child, sold it to R. P. Richardson and Jonathan Robinson.

The property changed hands twice between 1912 and 1939, being owned by J. H. Hamlin and Hugh Reid Scott, the latter a prominent Reidsville, North Carolina attorney and friend of my father. (Rockingham County Deed, Book 125, 102; Book 271, 287; Book 283, 115) During this period the writer visited the Mansion on at least two occasions with her parents. The house was then occupied by renters, or squatters from their appearance, but they allowed us to explore the premises, which were direly in need of repair, although the original French wall paper still covered most of the main hall.

In 1939 the High Rock Plantation was purchased by Sidney Rhodes Prince, Vice President and General Counsel for the Southern Railway Company with headquarters in Washington, D. C. It was a wedding present for his bride, the former Temperance Harris, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alvis Harris of Reidsville, North Carolina. Mr. and Mrs. Prince installed her parents in the mansion as overseers and caretakers of the property and the work of restoration began. The Princes continued their residence in Washington until the death of Mr. Prince on March 20, 1948. As none of the furnishings of the Simpson family remained at High Rock Mansion, Mr. and Mrs. Prince collected antiques in Georgetown and Washington, D. C. in keeping with the period of the Simpsons' occupancy of the house. Mrs. Prince paid monthly visits to her parents and supervised the restoration of the house. Mr. and Mrs. Harris lived until 1847 and 1953 respectively and upon the death of her husband in 1948 Mrs. Prince came to take up residence at High Rock Plantation. Here in the Williamsburg community she has taken a very active part in all phases of its life and is highly regarded by the residents for her devotion to the farm and the area in general. She turned High Rock into a working farm again, raised highly bred cattle and quail on it.

High Rock Farm is on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior. Mrs. Prince has always been unusually hospitable to the Simpson descendants and most helpful in the research involved in their genealogy but the Mansion has never been open to the public in general. At last reports, Mrs. Prince who is now elderly was in failing health. She has a son by her first husband named John Nichols, who resides in New York.



Will Book M, pages 280, 281  
Aaron Simpson's Will

In the name of God Amen, this 6<sup>th</sup> day of December in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty two, I, Aaron Simpson, being in common health, of sound mind and memory, and knowing the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of life, do hereby make, constitute and appoint this my last Will and Testament. And fir of all I will and bequeath my soul to God that gave it and my body to the earth to be decently buried at the discretion of my Executors, without pomp, ceremony or parade, with a firm belief of the resurrection of the same and as to worldly affairs which the Lord hath lent me here, I mean to dispose of in the following manner Viz.

First I wish all my just debts to be paid and my just dues collected.

Item 2d. I will and bequeath to my beloved wife Charlotte seven Negroe slaves viz. old Sampson, a boy (young Sampson), Jerre, Stephen, Rebecca, Lina and Matilde to have and to hold during her natural life, together with what of my household and kitchen furniture she may think proper to choose, also the land and plantation whereon I now live, also four work horses of her own choosing out of my stock that I may die seized and possessed of, also my wagon, three cows and calves and as many of the plantation tools as she my think proper to keep and her decease I will all the above named property to be sold; (the land excepted) and equal distribution be made among all my children their, theirs.

Item 3d. I will and bequeath to my son Joseph the tract of land on which I now live to have and to hold at the decease of his mother. I also now give him a Negro man John, and his smithing tools, a bed a furniture, one cow and a calf, six sheep and six hogs in order to make him equal with my other children.

I will and bequeath to the heirs of my son Moses decease the ninth part of the Estate that I may die seized and possessed of not otherwise devised. I will and bequeath to my daughter Kitty Boswell the ninth part in like manner as above stated.

I will and bequeath to my son Roger the ninth part as above mentioned after paying to the Estate the sum of Sixty Dollars, it being a sum received over and above his equal part with my other children.

I will and bequeath to my son Haydon the ninth part of my estate not otherwise devised after paying to the Estate the sum of three hundred dollars, which has been received by him in property.

I will and bequeath to my daughter Penelope Graves the ninth part of the Estate as above stated after paying the sum of three hundred dollars to the Estate, it being for a Negro girl which she now has in possession named Jemima.

I will and bequeath to my daughter Nancy the ninth part of my Estate as above mentioned (except the tract of land which I purchased from her husband James Boswell Sen) which is to be sold and equally divided among my other children their heirs and assigns.

I will and bequeath to my daughter Priscilla the ninth part of my Estate as above named.

I will and bequeath to my son Enoch the ninth part of my Estate as above stated with the addition of two hundred dollars to be received out of the above names estate, it being due to him in consequence of his having received no land.

I will and bequeath to my son Joseph the ninth part of my Estate as before stated making it equal to them all.

Furthermore before the division takes place among my children, I will and bequeath to Subrena Graves my niece out of the above mentioned estate one hundred dollars, a good bed and furniture, the divisional part of Estate that I may die seized and possessed of not otherwise devised.

All the property not particularly divided to be sold by the Executors and divided as I before divided and do here appoint my son Joseph and my son in law Francis Simpson Executors of this my last Will and Testament revoking and annulling all other Will and Wills heretofore made by me. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Seal this day and date before mentioned.

Aaron Simpson Seal

Test: Azariah Morton  
William Hastin

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COURT OF PLEAS AND QUARTER SESSIONS  
JANUARY COURT 1833

The Execution of the foregoing last Will and Testament of Aaron Simpson deed was duly proved in open Court by the oaths of Azariah Morton and William Hastin the subscribing witnesses thereto, and on motion ordered to be recorded.

And at the same time Joseph Simpson and Francis L. Simpson the Executors named in same Will came into Open Court and duly qualified to execute the same and Letters Testamentary were ordered to be issues to them which did issue accordingly.

Test: Paul A. Haralson CLK

(Copy)