



# **Greenwood County Historical Society**

P.O. Box 49653, Greenwood, SC 29649

September 2013

## **President's Report Chip Tinsley**

- At this writing we have the opportunity to celebrate two events in our country; Patriots Day and Constitution Day. One is a reflection to honor those that have given something of themselves to honor the heritage and mission of our country. Constitution Day is a time to honor the document and the framers that developed the government that has held this great country together for over 230 years. Both seem to be under attack at this time in our history. Let's do our part as local historians to recognize both our Patriots, founders and the Constitution by promoting the integrity of these efforts.



- We welcome Mrs. Charlotte Ross and Mr. Rob Jones to the board of the Historical Society. Mrs. Ross is a retired longtime educator from Greenwood whose homeplace, the Anderson House, was honored this past year as an award winner in our APRA. Rob is well versed in local history and ready to use his experiences and contacts to update our local society. We look forward to having both heavily involved in the future. If you are any member is interested in becoming a board member please contact me at any time.

- **CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS!!** It is time for any and all nominations for the 2013 nominations for the 5th annual GCHS Architectural Preservation and Restoration Awards. We will take nominations through mid-October before beginning our visitations process. Award winners will be announced at our January awards meeting. Please send your nomination today. [ctinsley63@yahoo.com](mailto:ctinsley63@yahoo.com)

- Sunday November 3...Abbeville County Historical Society will hold a Calhoun Day event. We plan to support this event with our attendance and promotion. Please place this on your calendar. More information at our September meeting.

- **SEPTEMBER MEETING:** Sunday, September 29, 2013, 3:00 at the Greenwood Library. The main topic will be My Calhoun Heritage by Chip Tinsley. We will be partnering with the Abbeville Historical Society to help promote their November Calhoun event. Please come and support your local historical society and be a part of something good.

*Architectural Awards Nominations now due. Nominate your favorite historically preserved home or building. It is easy to do. Registration forms are on our website [www.greenwoodcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.greenwoodcountyhistoricalsociety.com)*

# GREENWOOD HISTORY: OUR OLD ROADS

By Harry Legare Watson

These sketches about the early travel routes in the area that is now Greenwood County and early families who lived along the old roads were written by the editor of The Index-Journal of Greenwood, and were published weekly in this newspaper from August 18, 1940 (with an occasional break) until February 1950, numbered 1-428. They include considerable family history information as well as local and area history. They will be reprinted here in following issues with the permission of the editor of The Index-Journal.

No. 68

Saturday, December 6, 1941

Of the leading merchants and business men of the village of Old Cambridge in 1820 and for some years previous, James McCracken was outstanding. It was the opinion of Dr. R. C. Griffin that in Mr. McCracken, Cambridge was indebted for its prosperity, as much perhaps, or more, than anyone for building up a large trade not only with the surrounding country but with North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Mr. McCracken was not only a successful merchant but built up a large trade in carriages, buggies, wagons, etc., employing a large number of men under his own personal supervision.

James McCracken was a native of Scotland, and was born in Ctarriaca. He came to this country as a young man and settled in Old Cambridge where he found several families of native Scots, including the McKellars, the McBrydes and the McLennans. He married, in 1804, Elizabeth Wilson, a daughter of James Wilson (1753-1812) and Tabitha Beal Wilson, a daughter of Captain William Beal, the Revolutionary patriot. James McCracken succeeded his father-in-law, James Wilson, as postmaster of Cambridge, receiving his appointment on July 1st, 1801. James McCracken died in Cambridge in October 1818, at the age of forty-eight. After his death, his widow married second, the Reverend Richard M. Todd, previously mentioned as pastor of various Baptist churches in this section, and also a schoolteacher. The children of James McCracken and his wife, Elizabeth Wilson McCracken were Mary Ann McCracken, born April 13, 1806, married Major Wm. Eddins (1792-1863); Rebecca McCracken, born October 27, 1808; James McCracken, Jr., born February 9, 1811; William A. McCracken, born August 8, 1813, died in 1828; Elizabeth McCracken, born November 13, 1817, married Benjamin F. Eddins (1813-1865).

The widow of James McCracken had two children by her marriage with the Reverend R. M. Todd. These were Sara Todd (1823-1847), married Capt. Robert Child; Harrietta Tabitha Todd, married Patrick Henry Eddins, brother of Benjamin F. Eddins.

Apparently the first settler of the place known as "Poplar Hill" was James Wilson, as he was living there in 1796, where his fourth child, Nancy Wilson, was born, according to the family record. According to this record the first child of James Wilson and Tabitha Beal Wilson was William Wilson, born December 20, 1783, elected Judge of the Court of Ordinary in Newberry County in 1829. He married Charlotte Higgins, the daughter of Francis Higgins, and had two children, James Wilson who removed to Spartanburg and Sara Ann Wilson who became the wife of Burr Johnstone Ramage, Esq. Mr. Ramage was a native of New-

berry County, born December 2, 1817. He was the oldest son of John Ramage who had married a widow, Mrs. Lucy Kelly Henderson. According to Chapman's Annals of Newberry, a continuation of the book of that name by Chief Justice John Belton O'Neall, Mr. Ramage read law under Col. Simeon Fair and after admission to the bar became a partner of Col. Fair and the two had a large and extensive practice. Upon the death in 1850 of Young J. Harrington who had been clerk of the Court since 1808, Mr. Ramage was elected to that office. He was re-elected for several terms and it was said that he was the most popular man who ever lived in Newberry County. As an example of the condition of the courts during the War Between the States, Mr. Ramage resigned as Clerk of Court because there was practically no business, and he accepted the position of depot agent of the Greenville and Columbia railroad at Newberry. He held that position until 1870, when he retired to private life. He married Sara Ann Wilson in 1845. They had eight children, four of whom survived him at his death October 28, 1890. He was buried in the family burying ground within half a mile of the spot where he was born. The late Circuit Judge C. J. Ramage of Saluda was of this family.

In addition to William Wilson, native of Cambridge who became Judge of the Court of Ordinary of Newberry, and Elizabeth Wilson who married James McCracken, James Wilson and his wife Tabitha Beal Wilson had four other children: Mary Wilson, born August 3rd, 1789, married first Isham Robertson, and second, a Brown; Nancy Wilson, born March 5, 1796 near Cambridge at "Poplar Hill", married first Robert Pool, second, James Anderson (1793-1827), third Daniel Ghent. Died February 18, 1872 at Caldwell, Texas. Rebecca Whitfield Wilson, born February 20, 1800. James Henry Thomas Wilson, born July 6, 1805, married Elizabeth Harrington of the Newberry family of that name.

Returning to the village of Cambridge in 1820. According to contemporary records, the village in addition to its ten or twelve stores, boasted of having four of the best kept hotels located in the up-country. The best of these, according to Dr. Griffin, was located about half way from the McBryde corner and the branch, opposite to the jail, and was known (rather an uncouth name, he says) as the "Buzzard Roost", which name recalls a place of entertainment by the same name on the Five-Notch road where it is crossed by the road from Hodges to Abbeville. There is a tradition that there was once a "Buzzard Roost" church at or near this same

*(continued on next page. . .)*

## OUR OLD ROADS *(continued from previous page)*

crossroad, the denomination being unknown.

Among the many industrious and enterprising mechanics in Old Cambridge in 1825 was John Linton, the blacksmith, an upright and hard-working man, and it was said that no matter what time of the day you would pass his shop you could always hear the sound of his hammer. He lived up town on the corner lot next to and adjoining the lands belonging to the Cambridge Library Association.

According to another record, the village of Cambridge in the early part of the nineteenth century was a lively place socially. Saturdays were always a sort of holiday and almost everybody, men at least, on that day went to Cambridge to enjoy a social game of whist, or a game of billiards, or to witness a horse race or two, or (though last, not least) to see some half dozen fights, especially by those who had imbibed a little too much of the "critter" (mountain whiskey). The Martin Town road was a great funnel through which the "critter", with apples, chestnuts and venison hams flowed in abundance into the laps of merchants and citizens. It was not at all surprising late Saturday afternoons to find a number so much befuddled that they could scarcely find the way home. The citizens of Cambridge and vicinity were remarkably fond of their fine horses. Dr. Griffin says that he had often heard Kentuckians say it was the best horse market outside the city of Augusta, and it was his opinion that more fat horses were sold there for fine horses than in any other part of the State. When the fat was worn off the horse proved to be not so valuable and fine as he had appeared to be.

At least three other merchants of the last period of Cambridge were remembered by Thomas Jester who lived about a mile west of the village about 1834. He remembered William (Billie) Bowie, also "Buck" Smith and John Chappell. Presumably this was John Chappell who married Elizabeth Brooks, daughter of Elisha Brooks and Nancy Butler Brooks, and of the family giving name to Chappell's Depot.

When the decline had become acute in the business life of Cambridge, John McLennan, previously mentioned as one of the leading merchants, bought large amounts of land which were offered at low prices by the owners wanting to dispose of them and remove to some other place. McLennan succeeded his fellow Scot, John McBryde, as postmaster of Cambridge on March 7, 1825 and held the place for two years. Five years later his wife, Catherine McKellar, also a

native Scot--she was from County Argyle while he was from the parish of Lochalash--and two of their children died. Not long afterwards the Florida fever struck this section, as well as others, and James McLennan sold his business, his land and slaves and went to Florida. He remained several years and then came back to Cambridge, almost a deserted village, and spent his last days as a boarder in the hotel kept by J. Wesley Child. McLennan died in June 1853. He at one time owned the land on which the present town of Ninety Six is located.

The original Ninety Six, Old Ninety Six, was just about wrecked by the British when they abandoned Old Star Fort, under the instructions of Lord Rawdon after Nathanael Greene had raised the siege in June 1781. Rawdon had decided to return to Charleston and in the last stages of his march it is said that not less than fifty British soldiers dropped dead from the heat and exhaustion between Orangeburgh and Charleston.

Col. Cruger had orders to destroy the defensive works at Ninety Six before he left, but he extended that order to include all the homes and property of patriots for miles around, extending even to the Upper Long Cane section; but Andrew Pickens mustered enough strength to check these ravages. Finally Cruger fixed July 8, 1781, as the date on which he would abandon Ninety Six and follow his chief, Lord Rawdon, to Charleston. All the Tories in and around Ninety Six were told they would have to go with Cruger or take the consequences. They knew what would happen to them if they remained and with tears and lamentations they prepared to make the long trip to Charleston with as much of their property as they could take with them. The description in the book, *Oliver Wiswel*, of this journey of men, women and children, cattle and so on is only fiction, the picture of the writer's own imagination, but it is probably much as the scene actually was.

Most of the houses in the town of Old Ninety Six, on the Willow Ford road, were burned by Col. Cruger-- certainly all the houses owned by patriots. A few were left, probably owned by Tories who hoped to get back; and they must have been the "old relics" mentioned by Dr. E. R. Calhoun as still standing in 1830.

*(To be continued)*



# ~ News & Notes ~

- **DUES will be due in December.** The 2014 Historical Society dues will be due in December. Individual member dues remain at \$20.00 and family dues are \$30.00. An addressed envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.



- **Second Annual Antique and Artisan Fair** will be held on Saturday, May 3rd from 9 a.m. until 5. p.m. (rain or shine) on the grounds of historic **Cokesbury College** in Hodges. There will be more antique dealers and more demonstrating artisans. For a small contribution, an appraiser will be on site to look at your personal treasures and give you an estimate of their worth. There will be refreshments available and an opportunity to tour the College. Admission is free.

- **Calhoun Tour scheduled for November 3.** Come celebrate Calhoun Country days with a guided automobile tour of historic Calhoun sites. The driving tour starts at 2:00 pm on Sunday, November 3 and will last approximately 3 hours. Meet at 2:00 pm at the intersection of SC 72 and 823 (look for orange cones and American Flags.)



- **Next Meeting is Sunday, September 29 at 3:00 pm.** Greenwood Historical Society president Chip Tinsley will present his heritage and connection with John C. Calhoun. At the Veteran's Auditorium of the Greenwood County Library in Uptown Greenwood.

*If you haven't yet renewed your membership, please send your dues now. Individual \$20. Couple \$30. Make check payable to the Greenwood County Historical Society and send to PO Box 49653, Greenwood, SC 29649*



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**Return Service Requested**

