

Slave's monument



Grave of Civil War soldier Maj. Thomas William Brice



Photos by Perry Baker/The State

Faithful 'til the end
Isaiah Moore's tombstone is just outside the cemetery fence, near his master's grave

'As good as ever fluttered'

Solitary grave tells slave's story

By **BILL McDONALD**
Staff Writer

WOODWARD
The road winds slowly through the ancient, red clay hills in Fairfield County under a slate-colored sky, and no birds sing.

Time and the passing years have carried or chased away almost everything from this sleepy community. It is old now, and it is tired.

Brice's Store, set back a few dozen yards off U.S. 321, is closed, its windows and doors nailed shut, its dull, white wood peeling and rotting, a pale reminder of yesteryear.

Down the road a poke, about a half mile away, is the old Concord Presbyterian Church, built in 1818, and the old cemetery with its neat rows of the dead protected from harm by a black, wrought-iron fence.

Inside the fence, the tombstones are simple and unpretentious: a Confederate cross; a stone obelisk marking the grave of an infant; a bleached white urn full of dark rainwater; a cracked and leaning rectangle of stone rubbed smooth by the passing years, marking a plot of brown earth on a gentle slope.

It is to the gentle slope that a visitor has come this day.

According to local historians, a solitary granite marker on the western edge of the slope — outside the wrought-iron fence — tells a remarkable, yet little-known, story in South Carolina history.

Time and the elements have almost obliterated the lettering on the simple marker, about 2 feet high and a foot wide. But the lettering reads:

"Isaiah Moore ... Died, Dec. 22, 1917, about 75 years of age ... *As Good As Ever Fluttered.*"

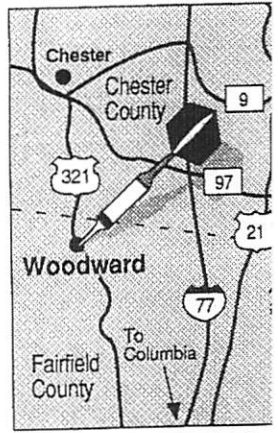
Tender shoots of iris have begun to peep up, timorously, near the marker, the first evidence that spring is about to enter its glorious phase of balmy days and cool nights here.

Who was Isaiah Moore?
What is there about his marker that, for decades, has attracted visitors to his grave?

Why is he buried outside the wrought-iron fence — "beyond the pale"?

Briefly sketched, this is Isaiah Moore's story:

He was born a slave, a few decades before the Civil War. At the outbreak of hostilities between the North and South, he followed his



State Gra

master, a white man named Thos William Brice, off to war.

History tells us that Major Brice was one of Fairfield County's leading citizens. He fought with Co. I 6th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, and even lost an eye in a mishap, which he thereafter covered with a black patch.

After the war, Brice returned Woodward, along with Isaiah, his faithful servant. He became a prominent merchant and farmer, as well as a churchgoer who faithfully worshipped at Concord Presbyterian.

In the fall of 1908, Brice died. Moore died nine years later, but his deathbed, he made an unusual request, that he be buried as close as possible to Brice.

This request was honored. Moore was buried outside the fence, a few yards from Brice's grave, on Dec. 22, 1917.

What else is known about Isaiah Moore?

Precious little, except these tattered facts:

Moore was an excellent student of the Bible and could recite the Shorter Catechism "from front to back and back to front." He even won a prize once for this difficult task.

Although a religious man, Moore was extremely superstitious. Qu often, he would heat a horseshoe hot, then, after it had cooled, hang it over his door to ward off witches.

He also played a fiddle, and on a balmy spring day, his licks could be heard throughout the red clay hills of Fairfield County.