

Winter, 1960

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the Negroes spoke of it as Boss's house. Speculations have been made concerning bosses on armorial bearings or the architecture of some former owner. My own guess would be that it is a corruption of some old English root word meaning "bosky" or thickly forested.

Rested and refreshed, we set forth that afternoon for the shortest ride of a week's trip—only about ten miles on to Middleburg. Passing Hyde Park, Kensington and Limerick, we crossed Huger Bridge and headed down the east side of the Cooper's eastern branch.

There is *Silk Hope*, bearing witness to an industry brought to South Carolina by French Huguenots. There is *Quinby*, called for Quinby Hall in England. There ~~*Pumpkin Hill*~~, one of the most interesting houses of worship in the Low Country, bears the French name for pumpkin but is called by those of English descent *Punkin' Hill*.

And in that twilight under the twilight-colored moss, our two gray horses turned into the avenue of Middleburg Plantation, so called by the first French Huguenot immigrant Simons after Middleburg, Holland, a refuge of Huguenots.

—DRAYTON MAYRANT

References: *Low Country Plantations*, by Samuel G. Stoney; *A Day on Cooper River*, John R. Irving, M.D., Louisa Cheves Stoney; *The Hinson Clippings*; information given by Plantation owners; *Guide Map to Plantations on Upper Cooper River*, compiled from various sources (mainly Miss Anne Deas) by Mayrant Simons, September 1921.

Norway, South Carolina

Norway is located 42 miles south of Columbia on the Seaboard Railroad and on Highway 321 in Orangeburg County.

The town was founded in 1891 when the south-

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bound railroad was built between Columbia and Savannah.

J. A. Weathersbee, John I. Walker, and J. F. Way owned the land on which Pruitt, as it was called, was projected.

Mr. Weathersbee was the most active in starting the town.

Pruitt was the name first given to the new town in honor of one of the railroad officials, but the name was soon changed to Norway.

After the town of Denmark was named for the Denmark family, railroad promoters, our little city's name was changed to Norway.

Denmark was first called Graham's Turnout.

Mr. John S. Baxter of Garnet, South Carolina, who as a civil engineer surveyed the railroad line between Columbia and Savannah, named the towns on this line. Some were named for the land owners, others for cities and countries in Europe.

—VANETIA S. MATTHEWS

Some Aiken County Names

The settlement and the naming of the town (now City) of Aiken is intertwined with the history of the South Carolina Railroad and with an enchanting and absolutely true love story.

The railroad was constructed during the period from 1830 to 1833. It extended from Charleston to Hamburg, which was situated on the eastern bank of the Savannah River, opposite what is now the City of Augusta, Ga. This was the first effort in America to build a railroad of any length. Shortly before the South Carolina Railroad was constructed, the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company had built a very short railroad out of Homedale, Pennsylvania, which was steam propelled, and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had constructed a fourteen mile stretch which was operated entirely by horse power. Thompson in his *History of American Railways*, however, states correctly and authoritatively that "the Charleston and Hamburg in point of performance is entitled to precedence in the list of railways operated by steam in the United States." It was then the longest continuous railroad in the world, 136 miles long. It was the first railroad to transport the United States Mail.

The moving spirit in this then gigantic task at railroading and its first President was William Aiken, Sr., who had been born in Ireland and had been brought to Charleston as a lad by his parents. He became a prosperous cotton merchant and was prompted by the need of better transportation facilities for the development of the cotton trade with the interior of the State, to think of a railroad. Financing the project was a colossal undertaking, which only a man of Mr. Aiken's genius could effect.

When the town of Aiken was settled after the railroad was constructed, it was natural and most appropriate that it should bear Mr. Aiken's name. In passing we should note that the Railroad President's name should not be confused with that of his son who later became a Governor of South Carolina. Our town was not named for the Governor.

Although it gets us somewhat away from our subject of Names, the love story referred to, determined

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the location of the town named Aiken and therefore may be in point. It is, briefly stated, that young Alfred Andrew Dexter, a Harvard graduate, was in charge of the work of surveying and locating the western portion of the railroad and he had definitely determined to built it about fifteen miles south of its present location in order to avoid what was in those days a practically insuperable grade of four or five hundred feet within four miles between the present location of Aiken and of Warrentonville. So the railroad in order to avoid this grade was to sweep through the Beech Island territory. But Dexter fell in love with Sara Williams whose father owned much of the land on which Aiken is now located and whose home was within the limits of the present city. Dexter won Sara and applied to her father for her hand, and tradition has it that the old gentleman's reply was a positive "No railroad for me, young man, no girl for you."

In any event a bargain was made between Dexter and father Williams, who brought the other landowners involved into the resultant agreement, which was that the railroad, despite the awful grade, should be constructed through the lands of Mr. Williams and his neighbors with Dexter preparing a plat of a model town and the landowners conveying every alternate block to the railroad as a consideration for its altered location. This was done. The railroad was built in the middle of an avenue passing through the center of the proposed town. An incline plane was constructed, with a stationary engine at the top of the grade. For years the miniature trains were faithfully and painfully let down and later dragged back up the grade by cable over windlass. The railroad owned and sold the alternate blocks, and the original landowners also profited by the deal. Dexter's plat is the official map of Aiken. Dexter married Sara. It was many years later that the block and tackle engine and the incline plane and the railroad through the center of the town, were abandoned and the present railroad cut and the more gradual grade were substituted.

Thus Aiken got its present location and its name.

The story of the naming of *Aiken County* is shorter. In 1857 a bill was introduced in the General Assembly of South Carolina to form largely from territory taken from Barnwell and Edgefield Counties, a new county to be called Calhoun. This bill however failed, but in 1871 a new bill forming a county embracing practically the same territory and to be called Woodbury County was introduced. When the bill reached the

Senate the proposed name was changed to Randolph County in honor of the Negro Senator from Darlington County. Fortunately, however, for us of today, the colored Senator had an enemy in the Senate who spitefully amended the act so as to name our County, Aiken, after the then flourishing town of that day.

Silver Bluff on the Savannah River was made famous by DeSoto who visited it during his historic journey made about 1540, through what is now Georgia and the Carolinas. He had heard alluring stories of plentiful silver and gold as well as of valuable pearls to be found there, and that the deposit of silver was so great that its outcropping actually shone in the sunlight on the bluff above the river. He and his men were hospitably received by the queen of the nearby Indian village. They, however,

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found no silver nor gold. What had been reported to DeSoto as shining silver was merely an abnormal deposit of mica which lined the high river bluff. They did find and stole from the Indians many bushels of pearls, taken from the freshwater mussels. Two hundred years later George Galphin, an Irishman, acquired this property and built upon it the first brick house of that region. He called the property, appropriately, Silver Bluff, and during the Revolutionary War, his brick house was used as a fort and came to be known as Fort Galphin. A few miles away is Silverton taking its name from that of Silver Bluff.

An equally historic spot, situated nearby, is the Sand Bar Ferry duelling grounds. Here many duels were fought and much blood was spilt. The name is derived from the fact that on the Georgia side of the Savannah River, near the Sand Bar Ferry, was a sand bar which was conveniently long and wide. Carolinians on killing bent, could cross to the Georgia sand bar and there conduct their gun play. Immediately thereafter they, or the survivor of them, and their seconds, could recross the river to South Carolina where Georgia sheriffs and constables could not follow to arrest the participants and where the South Carolina authorities had no immediate jurisdiction. Then, on the Carolina bank of the river, just above the terminus of the ferry is a high bluff, the site of Fort Moore, of pre-Revolutionary days, and here, accommodatingly, was a large level field, which presented for Georgia duellists even better facilities for the fight and get-away than on the Georgia side.

Historic, also, are two great roads of Aiken County, the Tory Trail and the Whiskey Road.

In the pre-Revolutionary days, the British had built Fort Moore on the bluff above the Savannah River, near the famous duelling ground, which is now part