

HISTORY
OF
THE OLD CHERAWS

CONTAINING

An Account of the Aborigines of the Pedee

THE FIRST WHITE SETTLEMENTS
THEIR SUBSEQUENT PROGRESS, CIVIL CHANGES, THE STRUGGLE OF THE
REVOLUTION, AND GROWTH OF THE COUNTRY AFTERWARD

Extending from About A. D. 1730 to 1810

WITH NOTICES OF FAMILIES AND SKETCHES OF INDIVIDUALS

BY THE
RIGHT REV. ALEXANDER GREGG, D.D.

Bishop of the P. E. Church in Texas
Formerly Rector of St. David's Church, Cheraw, So. Ca.

that he had a wife and one child; that he came from Virginia the year previous, and had no land assigned him. His petition was granted.

About the same time was presented the petition of John Rushing, stating that he came from Virginia with a wife and one child, and had made a settlement in the Welch Tract on Thompson's Creek. A grant of 150 acres was made to him.

In 1749, Joshua Edwards emigrated to the Pedee. He was born in Pembrokehire, South Wales, February 11th, 1703-4, and removed before his maturity to Pennsylvania, or the Welch Tract in Delaware, as it afterwards became. Here he remained about thirty years before following his countrymen to Carolina. He petitioned for land in 1751, stating that he was a settler in this Province, having come nearly two years since from Philadelphia, and that he had a wife and one child. His petition was granted. By his first wife, Joshua Edwards had two sons,* Thomas and Abel, and two daughters, Rachel and Phoebe. By his second wife, three sons,† Henry, Elijah, and John, and one daughter, Mary.

Joshua Edwards was ordained in 1751, and became the third pastor of the Welsh Neck Church. This connexion ceased after six years. He then took charge of the Mount Pleasant congregation, near Cashway Ferry, an off-shoot from the Welch Neck Church; and, resigning this, continued his work on Little Pedee, where he remained until 1768. Mr. Edwards was a man of ardent piety and great purity of character. He lived to see of his posterity eighty-two, and died August 22nd, 1784.‡

*Thomas, the first son, married Sarah Roblyn, the fruit of which marriage was but one child, Joshua Edwards, jun. Abel, the second son, married Sarah Harry; and afterward Sarah Douthel (Dousnel, as it appears in the earliest records). His children were Catharine, who married Thrashley Chapman; Edward, who married Mary Dewitt; and Sarah, who married John McDonald. ←

Rachel, the elder daughter, married Roderic McIver. Phoebe, the younger daughter, married Josiah Evans. Abel Edwards lived on the north side of Cedar Creek, near the crossing of the Cheraw and Darlington R. R.

†Of the sons of Joshua Edwards by his second marriage, John married Elizabeth Bevil, Henry married Elizabeth Oliver, Elijah——, and Mary, the daughter, John Rodgers. Henry Edwards is remembered by some persons of the present day as an old revolutionary soldier. He was a man of stout frame, and told of many a hard-fought battle through which he had passed.

‡Wood Furman's "History of Charleston Association," pp. 70, 71.

The late Jehu Kolb, of Darlington, was a collateral relative of Abel Kolb,* probably the grandson of one of the first settlers of the name already mentioned. He was a man of unassuming character and retiring virtues, but bold and fearless when occasion demanded. He rendered effective service in the Revolution, carrying the marks of serious injuries received to his grave, and died some years since, universally respected.

In May, 1751, Anthony Pouncey obtained a grant for land in the Welch Tract. He petitioned for and obtained a grant for 800 acres on the Wateree, April 6th, 1749, where he probably settled first. In this petition he stated that he had a wife, six children, and eight slaves. The name of William Pouncey appears about the same time. The former was probably the father of William† and Roger.‡

In 1751, the name of John Todd appears as a grantee of

→ who married Ann Chapman, and subsequently Rachel Love; Peter Kolb, who
 → married Elizabeth Chapman, and afterwards Mrs. Maria Nettles; Thomas A.,
 who married Nancy Howard, of Alabama; Eliza, who married Thomas Griffin;
 and Mary Ann Williams, who married Horatio Cannon.

Mrs. Joshua Edwards, who survived her husband, married Enoch Evans. The fruits of this marriage were six children—Margaret James, who married William Kirven; Thomas, who married Mary Brooks; John, who married Mary Craig; Hannah Kolb, who married John F. Wilson; Enoch, who married Ann Pegues; and Benjamin, who died at an early age.

*Through his wife Abel Kolb became possessed of the plantation at the public ferry (Sparks') near Society Hill. His residence was a two-story brick building, immediately on the east bank of the river, a short distance above the ferry. The cellar-walls of this dwelling were brought to view a few years since by a freshet in the river breaking over the embankment, and interesting relics were obtained.

†William Pouncey died when quite young, leaving one son, the late Major James Pouncey—and a daughter, who married Alexander Peterkin, the father of Jesse and James Peterkin of Marlborough, well known to the present generation in that district. Major Pouncey married Ann Kolb, and reared a large family. His sons were William, who married Sarah Sparks; James, who married, first, Mary Pledger, and afterward, Mary Forniss; John A., who married Miss Armstrong, of N. C.; and Peter A. K., who married Miss Adelaide Hodge.

His daughters were Sarah, who married D. M. Crosland;

Mary,	„	Dr. Robert S. Thomas;
Eliza,	„	Wm. Crosland;
Ann Jane,	„	John Smith, of N. C.

‡Roger Pouncey had two sons—Anthony and William—and three daughters—Mary, Lucy, and Delilah.

Anthony Pouncey died in Marlborough early in the present century. His widow afterwards married, and removed with her family to the West.

To this statement it ought to be added, that from 1767 to 1774, when Mr. Bedgegood finished his course, the spirit of the time and disturbed state of the country were most unfavorable to general religious progress or the growth of any congregation.

Not later than 1760, Martin Dewitt emigrated to the Pedee from Fredericksburgh, Virginia. He settled on the lower part of Black Creek, in what is now Darlington District. He married Ellen Douthel. His sons, who came with him, were William, Harris, Thomas, and John. He took part in the Revolution, though advanced in years, and died in the place of his first settlement. William, the eldest son, married Mary, the daughter and only child of Daniel Devonald, one of the Welch settlers.* Harris married Elizabeth, a daughter of Richard Brockington, and afterwards a Miss Pawley, and removed to the West at an early period. Thomas married and died early. John was the father of the late Martin Dewitt, of Darlington; a man who maintained a most unblemished character through life.

William Dewitt, afterwards well known as Capⁿ. Dewitt, settled in the upper part of the present district of Darlington.† His sons were John, Charles M., and Daniel, who died when a boy. John, the late Major Dewitt of Society Hill, married Nancy, daughter of Thomas Powe. Charles never married. He was a man of superior talents. The daughters of William Dewitt were Mary, who married Edward Edwards; Sarah, who married a Mr. James, and subsequently Sam^l. Ervin; Eleanor,‡ who married Allen → Chapman; Elizabeth, who married Sam^l. Wilds, and afterwards Dr. Thomas Smith; Margaret, who married Enoch Hanford, and Dorothea, who married Josiah J. Evans. Harriet, another daughter, died at an early age. Cap. Dewitt was a man of strongly marked character, and an

*Her mother was long a widow, of good property for that day, and lived a short distance above the old Welch Neck Church, on the east side of the river.

†On Cedar Creek, near the village of Society Hill, where the late Judge Evans resided.

‡This excellent lady, the last of her father's family, and almost of her own, died in 1860. The writer was indebted to her for much interesting information.

In 1762, Evan Pugh emigrated to the Pedee. His ancestors came from Wales to Pennsylvania, where he was born. They were associated with the Quakers, and probably constituted a part of the colony of William Penn. While he was yet a boy, his father removed to Winchester, Virginia. Upon arriving at manhood, Mr. Pugh became a teacher, and acted in that capacity on the Yadkin River, North Carolina. While there he became a Baptist. In 1762 he pursued his studies at Long Bluff, and was ordained two years afterwards.

Subsequently he removed to Cashway, and took charge of the Mount Pleasant congregation in that neighbourhood. Mr. Pugh married Martha McGee.

By this marriage he had two sons and a daughter. James, the elder son, was the father of the family in Darlington. Ezra, the younger son, died prematurely just after commencing life as a lawyer at George-town. Elizabeth, the daughter, married Hugh Lide, of Darlington. Of the life and character of Rev. Evan Pugh, account will be given hereafter. He died in 1802.

About this time, Dr. James P. Wilson came to Pedee, and settled at Long Bluff. He was a native of Buck's County, Pennsylvania, and educated at Carlisle, in that State.

He settled first as a physician at Winchester, Virginia, and remained there several years. During his residence at that place, he married Martha Jamison.

His children were the late John F. Wilson, of Society Hill, who married Hannah Evans; Mary, who married Edward Burch; and Martha, who married John Sweeney. Dr. Wilson, for many years, had a large practice on the Pedee, and was surgeon in Marion's Brigade.

Virginia continued to furnish valuable elements to the growing population on the Pedee. Thomas Powe emigrated from that State about this period. He married a Miss Allen, of Virginia. His children were William, who married Harriet Pegues; Erasmus, who married Esther Ellerbe; Mary, who married William Falconer; Rachel, who married → Allen Chapman; Nancy, who married John Dewitt; Alexander, who married Miss Spencer; and Thomas, who married Martha Ellerbe.

modified, and finally made the settled rule of law. Commissioners were first appointed to improve the navigation of the river, then a board of public works, then a general superintendent, and at length, after the failure of these plans to a great extent, commissioners, as at the beginning, the system of all others that has proved most effective.

At an election for the Legislature, held on the 29th and 30th of November, 1784, William Dewitt was returned Senator, and Morgan Brown, Elias Du Bose, Colonel Lemuel Benton, William Pegues, Thomas Powe, and Calvin Spencer, Representatives for St. David's Parish. One of the seats having been subsequently vacated, Tristram Thomas was elected a member for the session of the following year. The Legislature met on the 20th of January. On the 29th of that month, Captain Dewitt, who was sheriff of Cheraws at the time of his election, appeared, and having taken the oath, informed the House of the fact; upon which, it was resolved, that, agreeably to the constitution, he was not qualified to take his seat. Having returned home, and resigned the office of sheriff, he was re-elected, and took his seat in March. Allen Chapman was elected Sheriff, and George Hicks, Robert Lide, and William Thomas, Commissioners of Caveats for Cheraws District.

The Session of 1785 was rendered memorable by the passage of the celebrated County Court Act. As the population of the country extended, the Circuit Court system, established in 1769, was found inadequate to the due and equal administration of justice. To remedy this evil, it was proposed to establish Courts of Inferior Jurisdiction, after the model of the County Court system of Virginia and North Carolina. Mr. Justice Pendleton, one of the Associate Judges, and an active member of the House of Representatives (for these offices were not then incompatible) was the able advocate of this scheme. By his influence and strenuous exertions, it was adopted.*

By this Act, it was provided "that the District of Cheraws should be divided into three counties, that is to say,—one county lying and being on the south-east side of

*Introduction to Brevard's "Digest," p. xvi.

the records of Cheraw District. He settled first at Long Bluff, and soon afterwards married a daughter of Thomas Powe, selecting a home four miles above Society Hill, in Chesterfield, where he continued to reside. Mr. Falconer became a prominent member of St. David's Society, and the leader of the Bar on Pedee. His career as a lawyer and public man was one of marked success, as will appear hereafter.

Major Drury Robertson came to Marlborough after the war, and was prominent there for many years, taking a leading part in the affairs of that district. He was a maternal grandfather of the late Colonel William T. Ellerbe, of Marlborough.

The name of Alexr. Craig appears in the records of Chesterfield during the Revolution. His brother, John Craig, then quite young, was long after known as a worthy man and useful citizen, having been connected for many years with the Court of Common Pleas, and Ordinary for that district. He married a Miss Chapman, and reared a large family, the most of whom, or their descendants, yet reside in Chesterfield.

→ Allen and John Chapman emigrated shortly after the Revolution, from Westmoreland, Virginia, to Chesterfield. The former was a trooper in the Virginia line during the war. He settled first in the lower part of the district, and afterwards moved a few miles above Cheraw, where he lived and died. His first wife was a daughter of Thomas Powe. He afterwards married Eleanor, a daughter of Captain William Dewitt, and reared a large family, as did his brother John. They were useful and respected citizens.

Baron de Poelnitz, moved by the spirit of his distinguished countrymen, Kosciusco, Pulaski, and others, came from Poland, to join the American standard in the cause of freedom. He made a large purchase of land on the Pedee,* and soon after the war, settled on the east side of the

*The nut-grass, now so formidable an enemy of many of the planters in this region, is said to have been first brought by William Allston, to the place which Baron de Poelnitz afterwards purchased.

The first English settlers brought the hawthorn with them for hedges. Some remains of it are yet to be seen in certain localities on the river.

vent, the aforesaid grievances, and others of the like nature. That several of the principal inhabitants have agreed to form themselves into such a troop, to consist of a captain, two lieutenants, a cornet, and forty privates; and have elected Samuel Taylor, captain, to command them; and have also agreed, that from and immediately after their officers shall have been commissioned, as aforesaid, they will, with all possible despatch, co-operate with and assist within their own district, each and every officer of this State in the legal discharge of his or their duty, when thereunto required. Wherefore, your petitioners humbly pray your Excellency to establish the said troop of horse, by the name of the Chatham Light Horse; to commission the aforesaid Samuel Taylor, captain; Holden Wade, 1st lieutenant; Benjamin Hicks, sen., 2nd lieutenant; and Thomas Godfrey, cornet, to command the same, &c.”

Signed by

Thomas Powe
 Samuel Taylor
 Holden Wade
 Benjamin Hicks
 Thomas Godfrey
 William Pegues
 → Allen Chapman
 William Falconer
 Frederick Fort
 Erasmus Powe
 Benjamin Hicks, jun.
 Alexander Craig

Leml. Cox Jepson
 Nathan Leavensworth
 Benjamin Rogers, jun.
 Alexander Powe
 William Powe
 George Hicks
 Claudius Pegues, sen.
 Claudius Pegues, jun.
 Duncan M'Rae
 Thomas Ellerbe
 William Ellerbe.

Whereupon, the Governor, Thomas Pinckney, made the following communication to the Upper House:—

“Mr. President, and Honorable Gentlemen of the
 “Senate.

“Honorable Gentlemen :

“As it does not appear to me that the Executive is vested by the existing militia law, with power to grant the prayer of the petition, which accompanies this communication, and as I think the establishment desired would be beneficial, I

have referred the matter to the determination of the Legislature.

“THOMAS PINCKNEY.

“Charles-town, 17th Jany., 1789.”

The foregoing was referred to a committee, consisting of Mr. Brown, Mr. Walker, and Colonel Hampton; and in the House, to a committee, consisting of Mr. Justice Grimke, Mr. Waties, Dr. Irvine, with the members for St. David's.

Favorable action was taken, and the troop organized, much, doubtless, to the relief of the good citizens of Pedee, and the increase of the military ardor of the people.

Another matter, affecting the interests of some of the inhabitants of Cheraws, as well as the public at large, came before the Legislature, under a petition, setting forth, “that a tobacco inspection, on the north-east side of the Pedee River, about ten miles above Cheraw Hill, at the head of navigation, would be a considerable advantage to the State, there being a large quantity of tobacco made on that side of the river; and the inconveniency of crossing to the Cheraw Hill, occasions it to be carried to Cross Creek. We, therefore, recommend Parker's Ferry as a convenient place, and William Pegues, Thomas Powe, and Claudius Pegues, jun., Esqrs., for commissioners; and as the proprietor will build warehouses, and furnish scales and weights at his own expense, we hope that your honorable body will establish it there, &c.”

Signed by

Thomas Powe

William Pegues

→ Allen Chapman

Claudius Pegues, sen.

Claudius Pegues, jun.

George Hicks

Tristram Thomas

Samuel Taylor

Lemuel Benton

William Thomas.

The committee reported favorably, and an Act was passed accordingly. At this session, the important subject of a new State Constitution was agitated, resulting in the determination of the Legislature that an election should be holden on the 26th and 27th of October ensuing, for delegates to a convention, to meet in Columbia, on the 2nd Monday in May, 1790, to consider the matter of the said Constitu-

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