

The Harrison Family

The Harrison family was one of the first to come into what is now Fairfield County. Some say they were here even before the Woodwards. Land grants from the Crown bear this out - one to James Harrison, moving to Georgia from this section.

They were attracted to this County because of its charm, beauty and fertility and settled on the Wateree River - as the Lyles did on the Broad River. They had inter-married with the Kirklands before the colony of South Carolina called on Virginia and North Carolina for assistance against the Cherokee Indians. They came from Berkely Co. Virginia and were closely related to the Pres. Wm. H. Harrison; one of the descendants has a ring with the initials W.H.H. engraved in it, said to have been given to one of the ancestors by this President. They were fine, well-to-do, cultured people when they came to this section and soon were people of influence and importance, taking a prominent part in the development and progress of this part of the County.

The first members of the family engaged in stock-raising. Mr. Kirkland, the grandfather of Reuben Harrison was said to have owned 50 brood mares, also large herds of cattle.

After the difficulties with the Indians had been settled, many dishonest men banded together for the purpose of stealing cattle and horses. As there was no court nearer than Charleston to try these men after catching them, the Kirklands, Harrisons and Tom Woodward (1st Tom) organized a band of "regulators" similar to the afterwards famous K.K.K. - Made Woodward the head of it, - as one accustomed to command - he having been a Captain in the French Indian War. Tradition says they put 500 lashes on the back of every thief for a horse and 200 lashes for stealing a cow. On one occasion, two men, Watts and Distal, were given 300 lashes each when caught with two of Kirkland's mares; there are reports of many such punishments.

*Was this Reuben Henry Harrison born in 1760?*

W. Reuben Harrison, the progenitor of the Longtown Harrisons, was a young man during the Revolution and according to the record he served on an expedition at Four Holes and Edisto River in Gen. Manderston's brigade under Capt. Starke. He received his pay for this service in 1785 - came back to this section and began to buy cheap land. We find deeds to land bought by him, every year until his death in 1835. This land was on the Wateree River and its tributary Creeks. It is interesting to note the names of some of the creeks named in the deeds, - Goose, Morrison's, Dutchman's, Thornstree, and Rochelle. He soon began to buy slaves and plant cotton. He was smart, aggressive, thrifty and he prospered. One of the first records is of the purchase of a stud horse, sorrel in color, and from one Lewis Marr. Today the Harrison race track is shown to strangers - and 20 years ago I talked to a very old negro, Walker Harrison, who was once a jockey for the first John Harrison.

Ruben Harrison married Sarah Burgess first and after her death married Nancy *Suffan* reared a large family, and lived in the manner of the Virginia gentry. He died in 1835 and his interesting will is recorded in Willsboro. He provides for each child by name, also his beloved wife *Mary*? Attached to the will is a list of his slaves, named and valued at \$25,000; also a list of his mules and horses and their value. Before he died he gave each of his three daughters a plantation and built them large homes; these houses are still standing (similar in architecture) - one of them a two story frame house may be seen from the Longtown highway, and is now occupied by some of his descendants. The names of his children were as follows:

William - died 1827 - had children - no record

James - unmarried - grave well marked on his plantation

David -- No record

Kirkland -- No record

Willeughby -- Married, had a son Richard; probably wife and son moved to Alabama.

Frances -- Married Brevard -- no record, but agrees by that name living in community.

Nancy -- Married Anderson Rechalla -- moved to Texas, descendants now living there.

Mary -- Married C. Moore -- moved to Texas, descendants still living there.

John -- Married Lucy Rives -- (More later)

The remains of Rube and his family were buried on Dutchman's Creek near the first home site. When the Duke Power Company built the present lake, the great grand-son, John Douglass Harrison moved their remains and the old vault to the Longtown Presbyterian cemetery and it may be seen from the highway.

This large family of Harrison lived and prospered in that golden era before the Civil War. The Harrison and Peay owned most of the land in that part of Fairfield, accumulating land, slaves and large fortunes, and living in grandeur - today it has truly gone with the wind - The old grave yards were well marked and as the custom was, each large land owner had his own burying ground. The roads to them are almost impassable and the undergrowth dense and some of them are under water - others only visited by a few hunters and fishermen. - Would like to tell here of the name Long town; - these planters had their homes on the creeks and streams and a legend of malaria - then called the "dread Malaria". It was discovered by some of them that the high ridge back from the river, covered in sand and pines, seemed to be healthier - not realizing it was the scarcity of mosquitoes - so they built summer homes of logs on this and called it Log-town; but the name has been changed to Longtown. I wish it could be again called by the old name. Pinopolis, near the Santa River was built on the same way.

We are sorry that all the records, and family Bible were burned in the John Harrison house and except for his family, the descendants of the other children are unknown. John married Lucy Rives, a member of the prominent family of that name in Columbia. (Could some one supply the date of marriage?) He lived on a part of his father's land, built a fine house and was the richest man in Fairfield County - according to the census of 1850 - his land was then valued at \$100,000 and he had 500 slaves. He is referred to as "Old John" and I wish we knew more about him. He had several children. We have the record of three. John Rives Harrison was a Captain in the Civil War - in Belton's Battalion, Co. B. He moved away and some of his descendants live in Florida. Richard, who moved to Alabama, - the story goes that after his death he was buried there and his body became petrified. - later his people wanted him brought back home for burial; the body was carried in a wagon, drawn by six mules and after the arrival was shown at the home of Capt. Eli Harrison; this created quite a lot of curiosity and the people came for miles to view the petrified body.

Capt. Eli Harrison married Elizabeth Fleming Douglass, daughter of Dr. John Douglass of Blackstock. Mrs. Harrison's three brothers were surgeons in the Civil War. All of Capt. Eli Harrison's sons were in the war. He bought the home and plantation from his Aunt who had moved to Texas. There he reared a large family and the children were as follows;

Swanson Lunsford Harrison, married M. Walker-

Children - James H. married- ?  
Elizabeth married Duke  
Martha married Coleman  
Mary married Smith  
Roxie married Covington

Eli H. Harrison, married Martha Adams

Children - Louise  
Sosa  
Eli  
David

Ves, married Bell - Children, Laurence & Louise live in Blackstock

Robert. Wade, married Margaret Wood

Children - John, Lawrence, Wm. Lee. live in Jonesville,  
Ark.

Rebecca Lethard, married Habb. Lewis

Children - Lethard married Bryant, Conway, S. C.  
Margaret  
Almore Live in Columbia, S. C.  
Edgar  
Frances

Lucy Rives, married M. S. Dixon

Children - Eli  
Elizabeth Live in Longtown  
Eugene  
Edna - married McKelvey  
John Lee married L. Rabern

John Douglass married Sally Dixon

Children - William married Cattie Dixon  
Eli married Ross Harrison  
Mary married J. P. Jones  
Amanda married J. J. McKachern  
Viola married W. Kennedy  
Sallie married D. M. Clarke  
Estelle married R. Connor  
J. D. married E. McMaster

John Douglass Harrison was a prominent, influential citizen, a member of the Legislature. While at The Arsenal in Columbia he ran away and joined the Army in 1864 and was in Washington in prison when Lee surrendered - He often talked of his experiences; he was in Washington when Lincoln was shot and went to the funeral and walked home from there. He was mistaken for Nick Meyers when he returned and was ready to be hung (the rope around his neck) by a band of U. S. soldiers when his friend Stewart came up and proved to these soldiers that it was not Meyers.

There are many members of this old family who could be mentioned, but time and space forbids; some are in all parts of this country- others we know not where - many moved west.

There is something that brings them back to Fairfield, only this summer, John Douglass Harrison of E. Paso, Texas, drove all the way just to see the old home of his father had talked to him about. He went up in the attic, and was given a mustard jar, engraved with the Harrison coat of arms, which had been carried by his father in his kit all during the Civil war. His joy at receiving this small memento, was good to see, and made one realize that we never can get away from the something that binds us to Fairfield.

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