

History of the HARRISON family, the oldest in Fairfield

Many interesting notes of Pre-Revolutionary Days, appear in latest article of Major Dixon. Life of "John Doug" HARRISON, a man of unusual wealth and genuine purity.

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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 County, Virginia, and were closely related to the President William Henry 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 Indians 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 were given 500 lashes each when caught with two of Kirkland's mares; there are reports of many such punishments.

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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. Henderson'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, Thorntree, 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, sorrell 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.

Reuben Harrison first married Sarah Burgess [B 1765, Halifax County, NC D 15 APR 1831, Fairfield District, SC) in 1782 and after her death married Nancy REYNOLDS] reared a large family, and lived in the manner of the Virginia gentry. He died 13 MAR 1835 and his interesting will is recorded in Winnsboro. He provides for each child by name, also his beloved wife, Nancy REYNOLDS. Attached to the will is a list of his slaves, named and valued at \$25,000.00; 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 Dixons. The names of his children were as follows: (listed in this order in his Will)

Kirkland Harrison - b. 15 APR 1802, Fairfield Dist., SC; d. 5 JAN 1850

Frances Harrison Brevard - no record, but negroes by that name living in community. m. Eugene J. Brevard, Wed. evening, 13 FEB 1832

David Harrison - unmarried - Will signed 6 OCT 1836, proved date not listed.

William Henry Harrison - Will worded like this "That is to say, To the children of William Harrison" - [the Will of William H. Harrison was sg 7 June 1836 - Reuben, his father's Will was signed "13 March 1835, proved 24 June 1835, Book 14, Page 359, Fairfield County, S.C. - so if William Henry Harrison did not die until 13 MAR 1835, why did his father's will state: "That is to say, To the children of William Harrison". William Henry Harrison was still alive at the time of his father Reuben's death.
married 1st Ann Perry
2nd Phebe Trapp

Richard B. Harrison -

John Harrison - married Lucy Wythe Rives - (more later)

Willoughby Harrison - Reuben's Will mentions Willoughby's children. Born 1793, Willoughby died 11 OCT 1827, Fairfield Co., SC - had a son Richard; probably wife and son moved to Alabama.

James Harrison - unmarried - grave well marked on his plantation

Nancy Harrison Rochelle - married Anderson Rochelle - moved to Texas, descendants now living there

Nancy D 1825 - 3 children: 1. May, 2. Sarah, 3. James Harrison Rochelle
Mary Harrison MOORES - (B 4 APR 1792 D1844) married Charles Moores (B 1776)
Land grant 1837. moved to Texas in 1840 as a family, descendants still living there.

[Nancy Harrison MOORES, dau of Charles Moores & wife Mary Harrison -
b. 23 June 1809, married James ROCHELLE (brother of Anderson Rochelle)]

The remains of Reuben and his family were buried on Dutchman's Creek near the first home site. Then the Duke Power Company built the present lake, the Great Grandson, 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 Harrisons lived and prospered in the golden age before the Civil War. The Harrisons' and Peapys' 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 fisherman - Would like to tell here of the name Longtown - these planters had their homes on the creeks and streams and many died of malaria - then called the "dread miasma". It was discovered by some of them that the high ridge back of the river, covered in sand and pines, seemed to be healthier - not realizing it as 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 Long-town. I wish it could be again called by the old name. Pinopolis, near the Santee River was built in 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 marriages). 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 \$100,000.00 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 Battallion, 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 Nov. 26, 1844, Elizabeth Flemming Douglass (B 1829 D 1901) 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 Edmunds (Mac)
 Elizabeth married Duke
 Martha married Coleman
 Mary married Smith
 Roxie married Covington

Eli H. Harrison (B 1848 D1897) married Martha Battie Adams (B 1858 D1929) in Texas in 1875.

Children - Louise (B1876 D 1943) Married
 John H. Ellington

Ross (B 1878 D 1946) married

1. Dr. Eli Harrison
2. Peter Schram

Eli H. Jr. (B 1888) married
 Lessie Lanier