

File Hawthorne

twelve months. He served his sentence and returned to his home, when he entered actively into public matters and did a true man's full share in relieving South Carolina of the thieves and robbers who had made South Carolina stench in the nostrils of the nation. He took an active part in all the campaigns, but never held office until 1882, when he was elected county commissioner and at the expiration of his term was reelected. He discharged the duties with intelligence and fairness, giving general satisfaction.

He was an ardent Reformer and in the campaign of 1890 served on the State Executive Committee. In 1892 he was elected a member of the board of directors of the State penitentiary, which position he held until the time of his death. In the campaign just closed he held the position of chairman of the Reform Executive Committee in this county, but favored and worked for reconciliation of the Democratic factions and advocated the election of men to public office who would bring back to the State that peace and unity so much to be desired.

The deceased was a high-minded man with his heart in the right place and a level head, loyal to all of his convictions, true to his word and his friendships, a thoughtful neighbor, a genial, generous companion. The county and State can ill afford the loss of such a man.

- (Rock Hill) Herald, Nov 7, 1894

(Editor's Note: We thank William B. White, Jr. for contributing the above. The obituary is typical of a time period in which lengthy, and laudatory, obituaries were the rule, but note that there is no mention of the deceased's family. From other sources is the following additional information about Robert T. Riggins:

1. Tombstone in Sharon A. R. P. Cemetery: - Robert T. Riggins, July 14, 1847-Nov 4, 1894. His wife: -Rachel N. Riggins, Apr 10, 1846-May 22, 1903.
2. R. Elizabeth Riggins, eldest daughter of R. T. and R. N. Riggins m. Nov 7, 1888 to John C. White in Blairsville. (Marriage notice in Yorkville Enquirer.)
3. York District 1850 Census: #55. Joseph K. Riggins, 31, shoemaker, cannot read or write, b. Lancaster Co.; Mary, 23, b. Chester Co.; Robert T. F., 3, b. York County.)
4. The maiden name of Mrs. Robert Riggins was Rachel Naomi Warlick. (William B. White, Jr.)

### YORK COUNTY HISTORY AND THE DRAPER MANUSCRIPTS by Elisabeth Whitman Schmidt CALS

Inspired by family tales of pioneer bravery during the American Revolution and in the era of the War of 1812, Lyman Copeland Draper started collecting information about early Kentucky residents as a hobby. His interest quickly diversified to include nearly every aspect of frontier life. From 1836 until his death in 1891, he initiated correspondence, conducted interviews, researched in state archives, visited courthouses, and made plans to publish a series of books. Despite the massive amount of material that his efforts produced, only one volume, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes*,<sup>3</sup> ever reached print. His collection went with him to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin where he served as an administrator from 1854 until he retired in 1886. Mr. Draper continued to pursue his hobby and the result is an historical treasury of American history. Due to the efforts of the staff of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the collection has been divided into fifty units which are now available on microfilm and may be viewed locally at Winthrop University in Rock Hill and at the South Carolina Archives in Columbia. The Draper Manuscripts offer a rich variety of fact and tradition that will inspire researchers to seek out all possible documentation to support the local history laid before them.

Of special interest to York County researchers are the *Thomas Sumter Papers* which are designated as Series VV and contain twenty four volumes of letters and notes. What started as a search for information about the famous Revolutionary hero, expanded to include a wide range of South Carolina interests. There are a myriad of subjects such as Hill's Iron

<sup>3</sup> Lyman C. Draper, *King's Mountain And Its Heroes*, reprint, Continental Book Co., (Marietta, GA., 1854).

Works, Catawba Indians, the 1776 Cherokee Expedition, Susannah Barnett Smart's Recollections plus a great deal of correspondence about early York County families. Accessing the information requires patience as there is no comprehensive index. A Guide to the Draper Manuscripts<sup>4</sup> is available and contains a synopsis of the contents of the various series in the Draper collection. Probably of more value to York County researchers is the *Calendar of the Thomas Sumter Papers*<sup>5</sup> which gives greater detail about the correspondence and the subject matters covered in the series. Also, page numbers are listed to facilitate locating a specific reference. Do note that this calendar does not serve as an every name index. The most difficult part of the search procedure is to not succumb to the urge to read every page.

An example of the type of information to be found concerning York County families in Series VV is an exchange of letters (vol. II, pp 141-148) between Robert T. Leeper of Massac County, Illinois and Lyman Draper. On May 4th, 1874, Robert T. Leeper responded to an April 4th, 1874 letter from Mr. Draper inquiring about Neel and Leeper ancestors. Robert T. Leeper stated that he was a Grandson of Colonel Thomas Neel and, at the age of 74 "17 December next" was the last survivor of his family. The history of the involvement of the Neel family in the Revolution is outlined. Some information is given about Colonel James Hawthorn who with Moses Shelby, David Johnston, and Robert Leeper, were sons-in-law of Colonel Neel. Leeper family migrations from South Carolina through Kentucky into Arkansas and Illinois are discussed.

Upon receipt of this letter, Mr. Draper quickly sent off a list of sixteen questions seeking more details of these York County families to enhance his previously acquired material.

On May 18th, 1874, Robert T. Leeper attempted to answer the questions but regretted that he could not give "more accurate information in regard to the inquiries expounded in your letter". He continued to offer his memories of the family and added that a niece, Jane McDaniel, of Hopkinsville, Kentucky may have more information. The McDaniel reference set Lyman Draper off in another direction in his endless pursuit of the facts and traditions of which his collection was comprised.

Possibly, one of the greatest benefits of the *Thomas Sumter Papers* to York County researchers is the miscellaneous information contained in the correspondence. Just from a review of the two Leeper letters, we can touch on the subject of education in rural Kentucky, the continued grief expressed by his mother over the fate of the Neel men, and postal facilities in Massac County, Illinois. When compared with actual documentation available to even a casual researcher of this day and age, Robert T. Leeper sometimes had a faulty memory. His great contribution, however, was his description of nineteenth century life and family relationships between trans-appalachian America and South Carolina.

Lyman Copeland Draper and the staff of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin have surely provided future generations with the means to develop a better understanding of our York County heritage.

**Papers of the Kerr and Crooks Families, 1801-1923** — The annual report of the South Caroliniana Library Society (located on the Univ. of S. C. campus in Columbia) announces that among its acquisitions in 1994 was a "collection of one thousand, four hundred thirty-eight manuscripts [which] contains correspondence, bills and receipts, legal documents, and other papers relating to the business and family activities of Daniel H. Kerr, of Buckhead P.O., Fairfield District, and Thomas Harrison Crooks (1823-1897) and his wife, Annie Elizabeth Green Crooks (1831-1910). . . . Daniel Kerr apparently got his start in life as a clerk for the wealthy and successful Yorkville merchant Robert Latta. A document dated 4 April 1809 attests that Kerr worked in his store 'for between four and five years and I believe him to be an honest sober Young Man.' . . . . Another item indicates that there may have been connections between Kerr and the Mobley family. . . . The relationship between Daniel

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