

# They've Lived Through Half Of Our Nation's History

By Paulene Patrick

As American prepares to celebrate her Bicentennial, Mrs. Ella B. Martin looks forward to celebrating her 108th birthday this December 19. Although there is nothing remarkable about a nation's enduring for 200 years, it is remarkable for this lady to have lived through more than one-half of her country's history.

Mrs. Martin's life began in Richmond, Virginia, shortly after the Civil War ended. She has lived through Reconstruction and world wars, seen the coming of telephones and television, spanned the years from horse and buggy to rockets to the moon. And, as these years were full for America, so were they full for Mrs. Martin.

The adopted daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. John Coleman, Mrs. Martin moved to Fairfield County when she was a child. Her family lived in the Welch House, an historic two-story house near Alston. Mrs. Martin grew up here, walking five miles each day to attend school in Jenkinsville. While a child living in Welch House, Mrs. Martin felt the tremors of the great earthquake of 1886. She still remembers the dishes rattling on the shelves when the earthquake hit.

John Bunyan Martin claimed young Ella Coleman as his bride when the beautiful young woman was in her hey day. Their marriage lasted seventy-two years, until Mr. Martin's death. The couple moved into a spacious home in the Jenkinsville community, and Mrs. Martin lives there still.

Fond of people, Mrs. Martin was always ready to help the sick and the needy. As long as her health permitted, she was active in community affairs, volunteering for any job that needed to be done. She gave much time to Whitehall A.M.E. Church, supporting all her church's ac-

a happy, outgoing person, Mrs. Martin drew people to her. Her friends are numerous, visiting her often.

But Mrs. Martin's most notable accomplishment is as a mother. She and her husband were the parents of 14 children. They devoted their time, energy, and attention to

raising their seven daughters and seven sons. They taught their children to love and enjoy each other, making the family the hub of all the Martins' lives. Today, the surviving seven children are still closely knit with strong family ties.

It was Mr. and Mrs. Martin's greatest ambition to provide an education for each of their children. They succeeded in seeing each well educated and successful. This ambition was passed on to their children, who in turn

saw that their own children were well prepared for life. The 24 grandchildren include teachers, physicians, engineers, a journalist, a professional librarian, a banker, and an executive secretary. The family now includes 17 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren. There can be no doubt that they, too, will make their mark in the world.

At 107-plus, Mr. Martin looks years younger than her age. She is a handsome lady, with silver hair and few of the marks of time. Her health is good, requiring no pills or medication. Her voice is strong, and she appears to miss little that goes on around her.

Two of Mrs. Martin's daughters live with her. Mrs. Zenobia Dixon and Mrs. Ella Martin spend their days

seeing that their mother wants for nothing. She is wrapped in their love and devotion. Her other children and her many descendants visit regularly. When they can't visit, they remember Mrs. Martin with cards and letters.

Among Mrs. Martin's possessions are letters from Senators and the President of the United States. But, in importance, the photographs of this lady surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren head the list. For, always, Mrs. Martin's family has come first with her. And it is no secret that she comes first with them.

Another of Winnsboro's ladies is a member of the Century Club. And until a few years ago, one of the most



*Fairfield's Oldest Citizen*

Mrs. Emma B. Martin, who at 107 is perhaps Fairfield County's oldest citizen, is pictured here chatting with Harry Bryan, director of the S.C. Commission on Aging, on her 97th birthday in 1966. Mrs. Martin will be 108 on December 19 of this