

A History of the Winn Family, and the Town of Winnsboro,
in Fairfield County, South Carolina.

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The earliest available record of Winns in South Carolina, local libraries state, the name of Winn, or Wynn, and perhaps the far-fetched related name of Gynn, are the same. This fact has to be verified. There is a Gynn Island off the coast of Virginia,

The first mention of the Winn family in the state is given twenty-five years, or more previous to the outbreak of the Revolution according to a South Carolina handbook. This date may be taken to be approximately correct as to the date of arrival of Richard, and John Winn, whose lands are mentioned as that on which the town of Winnsborough was built. The names of the brothers Winn are Richard, John, James, Minor, and William. The landgrants are said to be first taken out by John, and Minor. There was a John, Senior.

The origin of this outstanding family was English, and Welsh. Records show they came to Parquier, County Virginia, to this state. Later they must have returned for a season at least, to the old home, to sell or divide property among the family for in the Virginia state house historical commission archives there are Winn deeds, and marriage banns in the original, bearing dates later than those of the homesteading in South Carolina.

The family history of the Winns of Fairfield County is interesting in that the men were of a virile type; and whenever courage was called for, or history to be made, they were present.

The original Winn home was on a large tract of land in the western section of this county. It was situated on a knoll on the property north of, and near a house now known as the old home of the late Doctor William Turner. In the present year, it is owned by the grandson of Doctor Turner. The hillock, where stood the Winn dwelling can be seen from the Newberry Road.

It was in this environment the Englishmen, brothers of Mrs. Rachel Phillips Buchanan (the mother of the Revolutionary heroes) began their friendship with the Winn brothers, later proving the sincerity of their neighborly feeling by procuring a pardon for John, Minor, and others when captured by the enemy in a futile attempt to take General Cornwallis as he rode on his morning constitutional out from Winnsborough, where he was encamped. At a later date the Winns, and Buchanans interceded with the Continental Army commanders for the freedom of Colonel John Phillips taken prisoner at Camden, South Carolina. Dr. George Howe in his "History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina" gives a full account of the pardon of Minor, and others. History records that Minor Winn viewing with fear and trembling the scaffold erected by his enemies for his and his companions' end, fell to the ground in fervent pleadings, and prayer to the Almighty to save him from the gallows. In good time a pardon, or exchange, came in the hands of a rider. The inference is that he had never before appeared religious, and thereafter he was not again pious.

Among the grants of land Richard Winn in, and around what is the town of Winnsboro was a grant of 300 acres. On a ple-

asant rise of land he built a home, calling it "Malvern Hill". Sometime later General John Buchanan, of Confederate fame, acquired the estate and made improvements using fine native granite with dignity. He kept the name of the hillside residence. Passing through the hands of a number of owners this site today is the residence of Mrs. T.H. Ketchin, great neice of General Buchanan, and the home is presently known as "Malvern Hill".

Before the Revolution we find in Fairfield County a movement to start a school for young men in the town of Winnsborough. The Winns, with other men of prominence-friends- among them Robert Buchanan, then teacher of the first classic school in Charleston, were active in the project. Previous to this time a study-group of congenial number of Fairfield citizens had been meeting for reading, and discussions in a small log cabin of two rooms- this now known as the Cribb house on Vanderhorst Street. The name, "Mt. Zion Literary Society" was selected by the group/ Reinforced, it later ~~it~~ became, or grew into the organization "Mt. Zion College or Mt. Zion Institute".¹⁷⁶⁷ After a number of years a charter was applied for and granted in 1779.¹⁷⁷⁷ John Winn was named president. The charter members of Mt. Zion Institute or Mt. Zion College were: John Winn, Robert Ellison, Thomas Woodward, Richard, and William Strother, Joseph Kirkland of Fairfield; Thomas Taylor, of Richland; Frances Adams, Robert Buchanan, and David Milling of Charleston. This is considered by good authority to have been the first effort in the state to organize an institution for educating men, though the charter of the

South Carolina.

College of Charleston predates it by a few years. Robert Mills says in his "Statistics of South Carolina": "No man of note in the state but passed through the halls of Mt. Zion during its flower."

Suitable buildings erected, the college flourished until burned by accident in the conflict of the eighteen-hundred-eighties. Rebuilt, the ^{of learning} school continued to wield great influence over the state, and ^{it} was well-known throughout the south. The best of South Carolina educators, and some from out-state taught there, and from the institution went out excellent, and famous teachers, statesmen, professional men, and soldiers.

In the march of time, and progress. R. Means Davis Principal and Superintendent- a native son, had a vision of standardizing the school on the order of the northern higher institutions/ ^{of learning.} here He organized/ the first graded school in the state outside of one in Charleston. Later, in the town, and county five schools of recognizable degree of superiority existed. Thus Winnsboro was noted for having a cultural, and educational background. A decade before the Revolution is given by Dr. James H. Carlisle former president of Wofford College, ^{and a} historian, as the time Mt. Zion Institute for Young Men was started. Mt. Zion is built of Winn land, donated.

The history of these Winn men is interesting. Of the brothers Winn, Richard is the most outstanding. He played the role of hero in a number of battles of the Revolution. John,

Minor, and others figured in an attempt to capture ^{the intrepid} General Cornwallis when he was in permanent camp in Winnsborough - the place said to have been selected because of the rich, out-lying farming land, and the perfect drainage of the town. The British camp was on Mt. Zion grounds.

Richard took part in battles of the Revolution at Charleston, and the forts, giving much aid to General Sumter in his campaign. He was in the Battle of Blackstocks, and was wounded at Hanging Rock. Having been made first Lieutenant in 1776, he rose to the rank of Major General on November 21, 1783.

The following is copied from "Revolutionary History of Upper South Carolina", by Dr. J.C. Landrum, "Referring to the prominent heroes of the Battle of Blackstocks, it would be unfair to fail to notice the services of Colonel Richard Winn (later General) who resided in Fairfield County, South Carolina. He was a native of Virginia. Richard Winn was commissioned First Lieutenant of the South Carolina Rangers, and served in Colonel Thompson's campaign the winter of 1775 against Insurgents or Tories, an account of which is given elsewhere. He was on the banks of Fairforest in the present county of Spartanburg. He was in the Battle of Fort Sumter (later Fort Moultrie), He defended Fort McIntosh on the north side of Satilla, and after gallantly defending this post for three days, was obliged to capitulate, returning to his home in Fairfield.

At the Battle of Hanging Rock, the British regulars under Colonel Fraser were defeated, which was largely due to his conduct, and courage. In this battle he was seriously wounded, and borne off the field. Colonel Winn continued to render valuable aid to Sumter. We are unable to state in full his varied services to the state and nation during the Revolution. He acted in concert with such immortal heroes as William Butler, Captain McClure of Chester, William Bratton of York, during this time. After peace he was elected Brigadier General, subsequently, Major General. He filled various civil offices in the state; and was several years a member of Congress. In 1818 he removed to Tennessee, and died shortly afterwards."

The Book, "Colonial Revolutionary History of Upper South Carolina" gives in the census 1790, John Winn, senior, John, James, Minor.

Says a South Carolina Handbook "Thirty-five years before Cornwallis was there, the first white settlers came to these lands, then a part of Craven County, the Royal Province of South Carolina. Winnsborough, as the town was called, was settled about ten years later by Richard Winn, afterwards Captain, and Colonel of the Revolution".

The design of the town of Winnsborough was drawn, and the town laid out by the Surveyor General of South Carolina, Ephrim Mitchell. The application for charter of incorporation was signed by John, and Richard Winn and John Vanderhorst, the latter from Charleston then residing in Fairfield. And the land for the town was donated by Richard Winn, and John Vanderhorst. The charter of incorporation was given March 8, 1875. Through the years Winns-

boro has become a settlement of spacious, and handsome homes, and sizable industries.

The son of John Winn- grandson of John, senior, went west to Utah. The descendents of the Winns to my knowledge in Fairfield County are Chappells, and their families, the Rabbs, Robertsons, Elliotts and others. In Charlotte the Robertsons are descendents of Lettice, the sister of the Winn men. The Bratton s that lived in Winnsboro years ago are descended from a sister.

From records in the Fairfield County Courthouse, and in those of the Historical Commission of South Carolina we find this data:

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Richard Winns full name was Richard Frances Winn.

Richard Winn was Justice of the Peace in Winnsboro April 10, 1789,

John Winn was Recorder in Winnsborough June 27, 1789.

In a Bill of Sale dated November 26, 1793, John Winn, senior, mentions sales of slaves to his daughter, Eliza Martha Sophia Winn, and John Winn, junior, his children.

John Winn, junior was Sheriff Fairfield County April 10, 1793.

In several legal papers in court Recorder's Office for Fairfield County, S.C. reference is made to R^hard Winn, and Priscilla, his wife.

Reference is made in deeds to General Richard Frances Winn of Lincoln County, Georgia. (son of Col. John)

Match 10, 1845. Samuel Winn was made executor of the estate of General Richard Winn.

Reference in deeds to John Winn, and Penelope Kirkham, his wife.

In the book "Stub Entries to Indents for Revolutionary Claims Y²Z, Page 202, footnote: "Winn was promoted to Brigadier General November 2¹, 1782".

Richard Winn listed as a member of the South Carolina House of Representative in "Journal of the House of Representatives January 8, 1782-February 26, 1782.

Book, "History of Richland County" by Edwin L. Green" Page 193 says "The October 6, 1792 issue of the South Carolina Gazette carried a notice of the death of October 1st, of Eliza Winn, wife of John Winn, junior, at Winnsborough.

John Drayton, of Charleston was elected governor of South Carolina December 4, 1800, and Richard Winn was elected Lieutenant Governor.

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Miss Emily Winn of Atlanta, a direct descendent of ^{Minor} said Minor was the first Winn to take out landgrants in Fairfield. His wife was Margaret O'Connoy.

On a recent visit to the writer was a great-grandson of John Winn, son of John, senior. This young man of 26 was secretary to the commanding officer at the Army Camp, Fort Bragg, at Fayetteville, North Carolina, and his name was Paul B. Winn, of Preston, Utah.

He was asked by me "Did you ever hear your grandfather say what was the physical appearance of the elder Winn men of the Revolutionary generation ^{of} leaders?" He answered simply, "My grandfather always told my father he was a typical Winn. And I am exactly like my father".

This Paul Winn was an unusually vital type of man, six feet or more with blond coloring. He had a direct gaze from clear blue-grey eyes. He was perfectly built with grace and ease of physical movement. Broadshouldered without excess weight, ^{the} addition of ~~fair~~ ^{textured} fair skin, handsome features he possessed a directness of manner, and definite charm with a gift of inviting confidence. One can well imagine the force of such personality, and character with the added power of intellect, and

and dedication of purpose arising from strong convictions-^{all} adding up to Winn leadership.

In closing suffice it to say we could do no better than emulate the example set us by these heroes of old, who planned well, who gave of themselves in body and mind to build our country such that through their visions, their work we may enjoy today the fruits of their labors, and sacrifices these:
LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.

By Alice A.B. Walker. Thomas Woodward Chapter
D.A.R. Genealogist paper sent to Washington 1955.

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Deeds state the full name of General Winn is Richard Francis Winn.

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*Paul B. Winn
Route 3
Preston, Idaho.*