

The Winn family of Fairfield County, South Carolina
and some connections with Andrew Jackson (1767-1845)

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The name of Andrew Jackson keeps appearing during continuing research of my own family line. The following statements have been collected over several years and pieced together. Any additional information on this subject would be welcomed by the author.

Minor Winn (1704-1778) of Fauquier County, Virginia, married Margaret O'Connor about the year 1725. They had 5 sons and 5 daughters. Sons; John, William (my ancestor) and Richard Winn, removed to South Carolina, in the 1760's, all finally settling in the area of present Winnsboro. Sons; Minor Jr. and James Winn, remained in Virginia, and married sisters; Betty and Hannah Withers, respectively. All sons served in The American Revolution.

Richard Winn (later Major-General of Militia in South Carolina) was wounded at the Revolutionary War battle of Hanging Rock. He was second-in-command of American forces and in charge of the right flank of the attack. Assigned to this right flank under Richard Winn, was the Dragoon command of Major Davies. Davies employed as a messenger the 13 year old Andrew Jackson, a kinsman. This was my first documented find of a connection between the families.

A friendship, possibly antedating this incident, remained in force for the remainder of Richard's life, stimulated no doubt by a mutual love of horses and racing. Richard Winn was a charter member of the South Carolina Jockey Club and Andrew Jackson owned a famous racetrack near Nashville, Tennessee, where Richard and his sons had many entrants after the family moved to Maury County, Tennessee, about 1812.

Richard Winn's oldest son Minor (born about 1780) died at the home of Andrew Jackson in 1799, where he was studying Law. This home was not "The Hermitage" but probably a previous residence called "Hunters Hill" located several miles West of the more famous location.

James Winn who married Hannah Withers in Fauquier County, Virginia, had among other children, Hannah Withers Winn. James and family moved to "The Falls of the Ohio" (present Lewisville, Kentucky) in the 1790's.

Hannah Withers Winn married Jason Robards in 1793/4 (dates vary) as his second wife. Jason, as students of Andrew Jackson know, was first married to Rachel Donelson, and obtained a much publicised divorce from her on grounds of adultery with Andrew Jackson. This happened at a time when divorce was uncommon to say the least, and was granted by the Virginia House of Burgesses instead of the courts.

John Hensley Winn (a great-grandson of William Winn of Fairfield County) was the Captain of a wagon train on the Oregon Trail about the year 1850. He began in Washington County, Arkansas, where his family had moved in 1836. Letters written in the period 1852 to 1857 by another member of the train, establish that a Mister Jackson, also from Washington County, traveled with the same train. They both settled in the general area of Walla Walla, Washington (Oregon side) and continued their friendship.

Andy Jackson stated in a letter that he was born in the home of James and Jane Crawford, located near the Waxhaw's in present South Carolina. Jane (Hutchinson) Crawford was his maternal aunt. This area has been claimed by both North and South Carolina at various times, allowing both states to claim him as a Native Son. The same Crawford family and kin have many connections and some marriages with the Winn's, but I have just begun to amass data in this area. Again, any help will be greatly appreciated.

Sarah Jackson Lawrence married Dr. Charles W. Winn in 1880. She then died in 1882. Born of this short marriage was Charles Lawrence Winn, and he was raised "as a son" by his maternal grandmother, Rachel Jackson Lawrence. She was herself a daughter of Andrew Jackson, the adopted son of President Andrew Jackson. They lived on the Lawrence Plantation, located about 2 miles West of the Hermitage.

Another Winn to Jackson relationship occurred during the time frame of this paper, but it has no known connection with Andrew Jackson or his family:

Minor Winn (1704-1778) built a small stone house (possibly a still) in 1775 on a tract of 228 acres obtained from Richard Henry Lee, located at The Plains in Fauquier County, Virginia. Minor Winn, Junior, his son, inherited the property and made a large two story addition in 1807. The house still exists, and is called "Rockhill". The location of The Plains is near the Western extremity of the Civil War battlefield of 1st Bull Run (Manassas Junction) and the house was reportedly used as a Southern headquarters during the battle. Minor Winn, Junior, was the great-grandfather of Thomas Jonathan ("Stonewall") Jackson, who gained his reputation and nickname at this battle. He probably used this same house as his own headquarters, as he was employed on the Western flank of this battle.

Note: The Christian name "Minor", as used by the Winn family (and branches) for many generations, first came into use by a younger son of Captain John Winn (born c1627 in Virginia) and Elizabeth Minor, who married about the year 1650, in Westmoreland County, Virginia. Minor Winn I (c1668-1730) later lived at Eden Plantation in Prince William County. He established a tradition in this main branch of the Winn family to name one son Minor in each generation. This lasted well into the 1800's and indeed may still be in vogue today.

To be fair to the memories of Andrew and Rachel, they thought that a divorce had been obtained by Jason several years earlier, and had been married in a private Protestant ceremony in Mississippi, at that time. Mississippi was then a Spanish possession and only Catholic persons could be married by the Churches, and divorced persons not at all. Andrew Jackson and Rachel (Donelson) Robards were married a second time in Tennessee, after being informed of the final divorce decree. They had been living together as husband and wife several years by this time.

Andy Jackson was already a noted lawyer in Tennessee, and was just beginning his climb to political power. Enemies used this unfortunate circumstance to degrade him on many occasions, one in which he killed a man in a duel. This incident has been over published and is outside the scope of this paper.

The greater Winn family of Fauquier County, Virginia, is now placed in the position of being on both sides of one of the biggest moral and political scandals of late 18th and early 19th Century America. This fact seems to have had no effect on friendships and has gone unnoticed by Historians. Andrew Jackson and Jason Robards seem to have had no farther conflicts.

Two Taverns were located on opposite corners of the Courthouse Square in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1807. Winn's Tavern was one of these and seems to have been the favored meeting place of Jackson's opposition. Andy took a rather undignified fall in this Tavern while attempting to cane an opponent and was laughed out of the place. I have found no record of ownership of this establishment, and it is known to exist several years before any of my family are thought to have moved to the area.

Andrew Jackson is later instrumental in obtaining commissions for Richard Winn's sons (William & Thomas) in the War of 1812, and they accompanied Andy to New Orleans for that famous battle. William Winn (a son of William Winn of Fairfield County) served as a Captain in this war and family tradition exists that Andy obtained his commission also. No proof of this has been located by myself. He married Elizabeth (Byrd) Ford, a widow with 2 children, and moved from Fairfield County to Richmond, Virginia, about the turn of the 19th Century, and then to Kentucky. He married secondly, Elizabeth Webb, in Kentucky.

Winn and Jackson marriages continued for many years, one occurring at "The Hermitage" in the 1840's. I have been unable to establish relationships, but I suspicion the grand-children of Richard Winn, who died 1823/4.

A sizable group of families seem to have established together in very early Virginia, moving as a loosely knit group in their migrations across the USA. The Winns, Woods, Wilkes, Evans, Adams, Hamptons, Smiths, Harrisons, Marshalls are the families in Virginia, and they picked up Jacksons, Kirklands and McKinnies in South Carolina.