

## Congressman Stevenson's Defense of South Carolina's Claim of Jackson's Birthplace

### PART III.

Parton's History is the one upon which the North Carolina tradition rests. It was published in 1859 or 1860, and is not accurate as to real legal proof on this question and on several others to which I will call attention. His conclusions depend (a) on the alleged statements of Mrs. Leslie, a mid-wife who had been dead 50 years when the people were making their statements as to what she said; (b) Mrs. Sarah Lathan had been dead 35 years before the statement was made. In other words, Mrs. Leslie was dead in 1808 before the original controversy as to the line from the gum at Twelve Mile creek to the stone at Waxhaw creek had been settled; and Mrs. Lathan had been dead at least since 1823, according to the testimony of the folks who gave their statements; and one witness stated that he had heard (c) Mrs. Cousar make the statement, who had been dead possibly 75 years. She must therefore have been dead since 1783; and, finally (d) what they heard James Faulkner say Jackson said, which was that James Faulkner—who had then been dead 40 or 50 years—said that Jackson told him while they were sleeping together in the McKemey house that he was born in that house. Now, Parton says that Jackson believed he was born in South Carolina, but that he did not know any better, not knowing where he was born. James Faulkner says, if we believe him, that Jackson did not know where he was born, and hence Parton has discredited one of his most material witnesses because he evidently does not believe Faulkner. If Faulkner was right, that Jackson knew where he was born, the folks who brought down the tradition merely forgot which place Faulkner said Jackson said he was born. So we can not place a finding on the testimony of Faulkner because Parton himself repudiates Faulkner's statement and says that Jackson did not know where he was born. He certainly can "not ask us then to believe Faulkner—that he was born in McKemey's house.

Then coming to the statements of the other witnesses, John Lathan, a son of Sarah, who says she attended the birth at midnight when only 7 years of age (p. 54 of Parton), testifies that soon after Jackson's father died Mrs. Jackson left Twelve Mile creek to go and live with Mrs. Crawford in Lancaster district, South Carolina; that on her way she called at the house of George McKemey, and while at McKemey's she was taken sick and Andrew was born, and as soon as she was able to travel she went to Crawford's. Let us lay that beside Parton's conclusion. He says on page 52:

The ~~Porter~~ family of the Jacksons never returned to their home on the banks of Twelve Mile creek, but went from the burial yard to the house, not very far off, of Mrs. Jackson's brother-in-law, George McKemey by name.

Now, his (Lathan) witnesses say that they did return to the Jackson home and were removing to Crawford's when they stopped at McKemey's. Parton thereby discredits Mrs. Leslie and Mrs. Lathan, and without them he can do nothing. Then to increase the contradiction Parton brings up one Charles Finly, who is said while in the flesh to have said that he took the Jackson family to the burial and then conveyed them to the residence of George McKemey where Andrew was soon afterwards born (see p. 55). This contradicts the statement of Sarah Lathan, the most numerous quoted witness, and also contradicts James Faulkner, both of whom say that Mrs. Jackson returned to her home, and while moving from Twelve Mile creek to Crawford's stopped with her sister, Mrs. McKemey, and was there delivered of Andrew (p. 54). So the two most material witnesses produced by Parton are contradicted by Parton and his other witness Finly, and their story is discarded as being incidental to the removal to the Crawford's.

The most reasonable theory is to adopt Parton's statement that Mrs. Jackson went to her sister, not far off, from the burial of her husband, and that sister was Mrs. Crawford. It was possibly a mile and a half or two miles from the graveyard to Mrs. Crawford's; it was 2 1/2 miles farther to Mrs. McKemey's (see Tompkins' "History Mecklenburg county," vol. 2, p. 5), so that I assume that she did go as Parton says, to her brother-in-law's, not far off, to wit, James Crawford, and there Andrew was born.

There is another view which should be given here. Mr. D. A. Tompkins, of Charlotte, N. C., has

written a history of Mecklenburg county, and at page 188 of volume 1 it has a picture of the McKemey cottage. It is 20 feet by 16, log cabin with a door, two windows, one fireplace, and one room, which room like all pioneer cottages, was used in front for sitting room, kitchen and dining rooms, and the back was used for a bedroom in which the whole family slept. McKemey had a family; we do not know how many, but we know there were children. If the story is true, Mrs. Jackson was there with two boys, making McKemey and his wife and probably two or three children, and Mrs. Jackson and two boys, and the old Mrs. Cousar, if we accept the tradition, all in that small house when this distressing period came on—when Mrs. Leslie, the mother of Sarah, was called to officiate at Andrew's birth. Now Sarah's testimony as brought down by tradition is that she went with her mother at night to this little cabin, already full of people to overflowing, to be present at the birth of another addition to the human race. I was raised among the country Scotch-Irish people myself, and instead of bringing children in from the neighborhood to attend occurrences of that kind, even where there was an abundance of room, the children that belonged at the place were always sent away from home. And it is patently absurd to think that Mrs. Leslie, knowing the conditions there were at the McKemey house, should have taken her little 7-year-old daughter along to be an incubance and in the way of everybody there. It is simply an old wives' tale.

There is another thing to which I want to call attention as to the exuberance of traditional testimony which Gen. Walkup found in that neighborhood and upon which Parton bases his history. He says on page 62:

I was also assured that young Jackson attended the famous school of Dr. Waddell, one of whose pupils was Calhoun, and was inclined to believe the story until I discovered that Dr. Waddell did not open his academy until after Jackson had left school forever.

This rumor failed to get in his history, because Mr. Parton had an absolute check on it and found that it was contrary to the truth. Nevertheless, people in that country still tell it and believe it, just as they do this story as to his birth at McKemey's. Mr. Parton says that "the old people of that community scout the idea that Andrew Jackson's father ever owned any land" (p. 100 of his book). This is another of the uncertain traditions brought us by Mr. Parton and discounts the reliability of his statements. Andrew Jackson, Sr., did enter his land on Twelve Mile creek; he did not get a grant of it because he did not live long enough to do so. The James Crawford grant was not made until 1775, although Parton says that that land was bought in 1765. But Andrew Jackson, Sr., acquired such an equity in the land on Twelve Mile creek that his son and only surviving heir made conveyance of it in 1782 to one Shared Gray, as evidenced by the power of attorney which I hereby submit, which is on record in Lancaster county, S. C., being recorded on January 2, 1793, for the reason that Crawford lived in Lancaster, and even as to that tract of land it was so uncertain as to whether it was in North Carolina or South Carolina that it was deemed best to record the power of attorney in Lancaster county, S. C. Parton says (p. 49) that Gen. Walkup reached the conclusion that old Andrew Jackson had nothing because he had searched the records in Anson and Mecklenburg counties; if he had searched some in Lancaster county, he might have found something that would have interested him; and if he had searched some for evidence as to the place of Jackson's birth in Lancaster county instead of where he did, amongst the people who had a pride in North Carolina, he would have found evidence corroborative of our case there. (See Buell, vol. 1, pp. 22, 33.)

The power of attorney is as follows:

POWER OF ATTORNEY, ANDREW JACKSON TO JAMES CRAWFORD.

To all to whom these presents shall come, Andrew Jackson, of the county of Davidson and district of Mecklenburg, in the territory of the United States of America, south of the river Ohio, sends greetings. Know ye that for divers good causes and considerations me thereunto moving, I have made, constituted, and appointed, and by these presents do make, constitute, and

appoint, James Crawford, of the county of Lancaster, in the State of South Carolina, my true and lawful attorney for me and in my name for my use to ask, demand, sue for, recover, and receive all sums of money, debts, dues, or demands whatsoever which are or may be due, owing, and payable to me, and on receipt thereof sufficient receipts, acquittances, and discharges for me and in my name make, except, and deliver and more particularly to make over and convey unto Shared Gray by lease and release a sufficient title in fee simple to 200 acres of land situate, lying, and being in Mecklenburg county, in the state of North Carolina, and on the waters of Twelve Mile creek; and every act and deed or deeds necessary to be done in the premises do as fully and amply as I might or could do were I personally present, hereby ratifying and confirming all that my said attorney shall lawfully do in the premises. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the 28th day of November, in the year of our Lord 1792.

Andrew Jackson, (L. S.)  
In the presence of—  
Abram Boyd.

South Carolina, Lancaster County: Abraham Boyd came before me and made oath that he was present and saw Andrew Jackson, of the county of Davidson and district of Mecklenburg, in the territory of the United States of America, south of the river Ohio, sign, seal, and acknowledge the within power of attorney to James Crawford, of the county of Lancaster and State of South Carolina, for the uses and purposes therein contained, and that he, this deponent, signed his name as a witness thereunto at the same time.

Abraham Boyd.  
Sworn to December 26, 1792, before me.

Jno. Simpson, J. L. C. C.  
Recorded January 2, 1793.

State of South Carolina, County of Lancaster:

I, Paul Moore, clerk of the court of common pleas and general sessions in and for said county, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of a power of attorney executed by Andrew Jackson to James Crawford, as shown by the record of the same in my office in deed book B, at page 227. Given under my hand and official seal at Lancaster this 16th day of February, 1922.

(Official seal.) Paul Moore,  
Clerk of Court.

Mr. Hammer. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. Stevenson. I will.

Mr. Hammer. I desire to ask the gentleman if Mr. Parton is not considered one of the most painstaking of historians?

Mr. Stevenson. He is by some people, no doubt. Specially with North Carolinians.

Mr. Hammer. Mr. Collier, who wrote the authentic history of Gen. Jackson, who was a life-long friend of Mr. Jackson, did not know where he was born.

Mr. Stevenson. Jackson said that he was born in South Carolina, and said it over his own signature, and he knew more about what he knew than Collier did.

Mr. Hammer. I would like to ask the gentleman if Gen. Walkup did not make an investigation of 18 witnesses, about one-third living in South Carolina—

Mr. Stevenson. Gentlemen, I can not—

Mr. Hammer. And did not they overwhelmingly furnish the testimony that has been uncontroverted?

Mr. Stevenson. You can not take any more of my time.

Gen. Walkup got up 18 affidavits, but what were they? Eighteen affidavits as to what Sarah Lathan, James Faulkner and Mrs. Cousar and old Mrs. Leslie and Mr. Finly said, and all of them had been dead 35 years, and most of them 50 or 60. You trace it back to those five people and they do not agree. Eighteen people in 1858 stated what they had been told by people who had been dead, all of them, for more than a half century, except one, who had been dead 35 years, to contradict people who spoke while many living knew the facts.

I want to show you how unreliable Mr. Parton was. Gen. Walkup states that Andrew Jackson never had any land. The trouble is he did just what he did as to where he was born—he did not look in the right place.

I have put in here the power of attorney executed by Andrew Jackson in 1792, in which he conveys to one Shared Gray 200 acres of land in Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, on the waters of Twelve Mile creek. That is the land his father took up, just on the line, but in North Carolina.

Parton and Walkup say there was no such land, and they could not

find any trace of it. And here I produce a record of a power of attorney from Jackson himself, conveying it away in 1792 and recorded in Lancaster county, S. C., on the 2d day of January, 1793. And it shows you the absolute unreliability of the witnesses relied on by Mr. Parton, because he says not only positively that Gen. Walkup says that the old man never had any land there, but he says positively that all these people he saw down there scouted the idea that the old man ever had any, and that it was all a myth. And yet I here produce the record over Andrew Jackson's signature that he did have it, and gives the lie to that which Parton got up and which he spread all over this country. These people told him that Jackson went to school at Waddell. He believed it till he found it untrue. They told him the old man had no land. He believed it, and I show it is untrue. They told him Mrs. Jackson went back home after she buried her husband, and he repudiated that in his own text. How can history be accepted out of their mouths? (Applause.)

The Chairman. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. Stevenson. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks.

The Chairman. Is there objection? (After a pause.) The Chair hears none.

### Exhibit A.

(Report of the Historical Commission of South Carolina to the General Assembly of South Carolina at the regular session of 1908.)

"The roots of the present lie deep in the past, and nothing in the past is dead to the man who would learn how the present came to be what it is." (Stubbs.)

"A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtue to make history that is worth recording." (R. D. W. Connor.)

### The Birthplace of Andrew Jackson (1767-1845.)

During the lifetime of Andrew Jackson it was almost universally accepted that he was born in South Carolina, but of recent years it has come to be widely believed that he was born in North Carolina. The encyclopedias and biographers of that state that his birthplace is a matter of doubt or that it was in North Carolina. But the most impartial and acceptable evidence all points to a well-defined spot in South Carolina as his birthplace.

Jackson himself repeatedly declared that he was born in South Carolina, and actually fixed the spot upon a map, and his is the only evidence we have before us that would be admissible in a court of law.

In a letter dated at Washington, December 24, 1830, replying to a letter from J. R. Pringle, Intendant of Charleston, inviting him to visit Charleston, he wrote:

"Although it will be gratifying to my feelings to avail myself of so favorable an opportunity to visit the emporium of my native state, I am yet prevented by my engagements from designating the period when I can seize it."

To the committee of arrangements for the celebration of the Fourth of July by the people of Charleston in 1831, President Jackson wrote in a letter dated at Washington, June 14, 1831:

"A necessary attention to the duties of my office must deprive me of the gratification. I should have had in paying under such circumstances a visit to the state of which I feel a pride in calling myself a citizen by birth."

In a letter to Joel R. Poinsett, of Charleston, another native of South Carolina, dated at Washington, December 9, 1832, he wrote:

"If the Union party unite with you heart and hand in the text you have laid down, you will not only preserve the Union but save our native state from that ruin and disgrace into which her treasonable leaders have attempted to plunge her."

In his proclamation of December 10, 1832, against the "nullification" convention of South Carolina, he used this language:

"Fellow citizens of my native state, let me not only admonish you, as the First Magistrate of our common country, not to incur the penalty of its laws, but the influence that a father would exercise over his children whom he saw rushing to certain ruin."

Again, in a letter to Poinsett, dated at Washington, January 24, he wrote:

"I repeat again my pride and desire in that the Union men may arouse and sustain the majesty of the constitution and the laws and save my native state from that disgrace that the nullifiers have brought upon her."

In a letter to Gov. Hammond, of South Carolina, dated at the Hermitage, January 13, 1843, he wrote: "Conscious as I am of the integrity and propriety of my conduct in regard to Judge Hall, it is truly grateful to my feelings to find the legislature of my native state, South Carolina, uniting with the legislature of other states in those high and honorable feelings of justice which their resolutions so plainly indicate."

And, finally, in his last will and testament, Gen. Jackson declared that South Carolina was his native state. He said:

"The large silver vase presented to me by the ladies of Charleston, S. C., my native state, with the large picture representing the unfurling of the American banner presented to me by citizens of South Carolina, when it was refused to be accepted by the United States senate. I leave in trust to my son, A. Jackson, Jr., with directions that should our happy country not be blessed with peace, an event not always to be expected, he will at the close of the war or end of the conflict present each of said articles of inestimable value to that patriot residing in the city or state from which they were presented who shall be adjudged by his countrymen, or the ladies, to have been the most valiant in defense of his country and our country's rights."

Here are seven statements from Jackson that he was a native of South Carolina. As to the location of the spot in South Carolina where he stood the house in which he was born the following evidence is offered:

In 1843 Amos Kendall, one of Jackson's closest personal friends—in fact, so close that during Jackson's occupation of the office of president he was credited by Jackson's political opponents with being the "power behind the throne"—and, as a member of the little coterie of Jackson's personal friends and advisers, was contemptuously referred to as the "kitchen cabinet"—published several parts of a life of Jackson, which was, unfortunately, never completed. That work was prepared so much under Jackson's eye that it might almost be called an autobiography. It contained a map showing what Jackson regarded as the exact site of his birth. The evidence given on that map is confirmed by four earlier maps. The first of these is a plat to a grant of land made to Robert Crawford by the governor of that province of South Carolina in 1775. The plantation so granted contained 620 acres, and lay along Waxhaw creek, with the line between the provinces of North Carolina and South Carolina as the eastern boundary.

The certificate to the plat recites that the tract had previously been

granted to Andrew Pickens by the governor of North Carolina under the misapprehension that it lay within the bounds of North Carolina. At the time of Jackson's birth the line between the two provinces at this point had not been agreed upon or blazed out. In 1764 Gov. Bull had directed that a straight line connecting a gum tree on Twelve Mile creek with a stone about a mile south of Waxhaw creek should be considered the line until an agreement should be reached. In 1772 this line was officially agreed to, and by that agreement the land whereon Crawford then lived was shown to be South Carolina territory, and was then formally granted to Crawford, who had doubtless been on it for some years. In 1808 the states of North and South Carolina entered into a conventional agreement for definitely fixing the boundary line between the two states at certain points. One of these points was the 8-mile line referred to above. In 1813 the commissioners and surveyors appointed by the two states ran, blazed out, and made a map of the line. This map shows the landmarks along the line. On the plantation granted to Robert Crawford in 1775 two houses were shown on this map, those of J. Crawford and R. Crawford. In 1820 the state of South Carolina began the compilation of a series of maps of the districts of the state under the supervision of Robert Mills, the great American engineer. The contract for surveying and making a map of Lancaster district was given to J. Boykin, a native of that section of the state and a surveyor, of wide reputation. His map fixes "Gen. A. Jackson's birthplace" on the Crawford plantation exactly where the map made under Gen. Jackson's direction in 1843 placed it. Before publishing Mr. Mills sent a proof of the map to Gen. Jackson, who wrote back that the birthplace thereon given was correct; that he was born on the Crawford place. In the same year (1820) Eugene Reilly, "surveyor and engineer," delineated a map of Lancaster district, differing from Boykin's map as regards landmarks, but placing "Gen. Jackson's birthplace" exactly where Boykin placed it.

In 1820 Mr. James Thowaldson, of Philadelphia, presented to the legislative library of South Carolina a bust of Jackson. A committee was appointed by the general assembly to draft resolutions of thanks. Embodied in their resolutions is this significant statement:

"With so many themes of admiration and causes of gratitude in the history of the general, we, as Carolinians, have a still more happy reason for congratulation that he whose nativity has been the cause of

(Continued On Page Three)

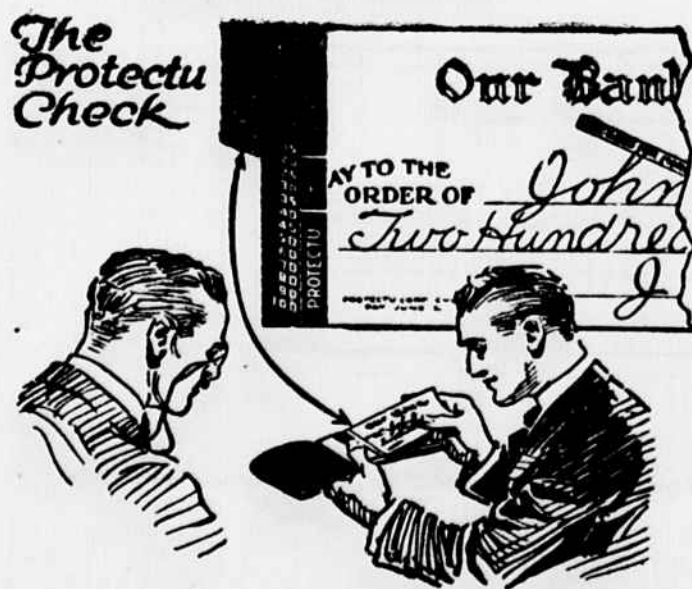
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