

Historical Sketch of Edgefield.

To the Editor of The State:

In 1785 Edgefield district was carved out of the old domain of Ninety Six. The locality had already become well known. During the Revolutionary war two skirmishes of importance took place within its bounds, one at Cloud's Creek in 1782, where fell in the cause of liberty 32 Americans. The spot is in the eastern part of the county, three miles from the town of Leesville. The other was a battle of more note, fought near what was known as "The Old Pine House," the home of the Weaver family, burned soon after the war of the '60's, which stood where the village of Trenton has grown up.

Among the scattered dwellers in old Ninety Six district was Arthur Simkins, a native of Virginia, where his family had been prominent for over a century. In 1772 he emigrated to South Carolina and purchased a large tract of land. He called his plantation "Cedar Field." It lay about three miles from the present town of Edgefield, which was largely built on a part of his land. Mr. Simkins gave to the infant village a site for a Baptist church and graveyard, the same on which the present building stands. He also donated ground for a school, and one of the present public school houses stands on that original site. Mr. Simkins built on his plantation a handsome and commodious dwelling. He established orchards and gardens, all of which have been swept away by the hand of time. Only the magnificent cedar trees remain. They were flourishing a very few years ago, and may be still, lovelier perhaps in this 20th century than they were to the eyes of Arthur Simkins and his friends in that far away 18th.

Held Various Offices.

Mr. Simkins was a soldier of the Revolution. He was regarded as the founder of Edgefield, and held a number of responsible offices in its early history. In 1795 county courts were established in South Carolina, and he became one of the county judges.

Arthur Simkins married Margaret Clarke, a sister of General Clarke of Georgia, said to have been a very handsome and charming woman. Their graves are side by side in the old Simkins burying ground not far from their home.

When his father was fighting for

solemn words of the marriage service, when a shell fired by the bombarding enemy crashed through the building and a fragment penetrated the bride's heart, crimsoning her robe with blood and snuffed out her life. So sudden, so awful was the tragedy, that for an instant she still stood erect with hand upon the bridegroom's arm while the voice of the minister continued reading the marriage words, until a groan broke from the horror stricken audience, and the dazed bridegroom caught in his arms the falling body of his bride.

Another daughter of Governor Pickens and his first wife, the loved and honored Mrs. Rebecca Pickens Bacon, died only a few years ago, after a long and useful life.

Just before going to represent America at the court of the Czar, Francis Pickens, then a widower, married a Kentucky girl, Miss Lucy Holcombe, whose wonderful beauty created a sensation even in St. Petersburg. While living at the Russian capital another daughter was added to the family, and the Czarina herself became the child's godmother. Francesca was the baby christened in honor of her father, though never in all her brief life was the maiden called by that stately name, but always "Darling," though the love word was in the Russian language, where it is "Douschka." Little Douschka was, however, but a baby when the chunders of war reverberating from her far off birthplace called her parents back. Then the darling of the Romanoff court grew to charming girlhood at her quiet ancestral home on the outskirts of Edgefield. Greatly was the girl beloved by all who knew her.

Red Shirts Ride.

In later days when "Red Shirts" companies all over the state wrested political victory from the hands of an interloping enemy, Douschka Pickens won for herself the title of "The Joan of Arc of Edgefield."

Benjamin R. Tillman in a speech in Anderson about the year 1892 or 1893 gave a very vivid and lucid account of the first appearance of the "bloody shirt" in Edgefield county, making clear what before that time had seemed to be a thing inexplicable. How both Anderson and Edgefield could and did claim to have originated the red shirt uniform. Senator Tillman, who was a young man at the time, was one of a number

Scenes" was a sketch of Col. Edmund Bacon of Edgefield, descended from the Virginia family, of which Nathaniel Bacon was a member, and also related to the distinguished English family of the same name. Col. James T. Bacon, as remarkable a character as Ned Brace himself, was his grandson, and for many years the brilliant editor of the Edgefield Advertiser.

Edgefield was the home of A. P. Butler, M. C. Butler, Preston S. Brooks and four of South Carolina's governors, Pickens, Bonham, Sheppard and Tillman.

Edgefield sent to the defense of the South many brave soldiers and among them was a woman. When South Carolina seceded, Cornelius Horne and his wife, Lucinda, with an only child, William, just grown, were among the humbler citizens of the district. Both father and son enlisted in Company K, Fourteenth South Carolina volunteers, and when McGowan's brigade, to which Company K belonged, went to the front, Lucinda Horne went too. All through Jackson's hard campaigns she accompanied the soldiers, cooking, washing and nursing the wounded. Where the field hospital was located, there after every battle was Lucinda Horne to be found, by her sympathetic ministrations relieving suffering, saving life and soothing the dying. At Jones' farm her son was wounded and his mother had the satisfaction of nursing him herself. William lived 12 years after the war, but finally died from the effects of the injury then received. Mrs. Horne also outlived her husband. For many years after the war was but a memory, she was greatly honored by the Confederate veterans, and attended their reunions, a welcome and venerated guest.

In the old days Edgefield in spite of its gallant gentlemen and charming women, won the reputation of being the wickedest section of a pretty stormy little state, a championship which it has long ago lost. There are other counties today where unavenged murders and black crimes are far more common than in Edgefield.

Left Husbands in Pool.

Among the interesting places in the town which cause a delightful thrill of horror is a deep black tarn known as "Becky's pool." Into its depths by day venturesome boys cast challenging stones and stoutly

generosity of Col. Edmund Bacon (Ned Brace). Mr. Whitfield Brooks and his wife, Mrs. Mary Parson Carroll Brooks, gave the ground on which it and the accompanying rectory were built. That is now the oldest church building in the town.

The later history of Edgefield is familiar to every South Carolinian, for Edgefield men have taken leading parts in the onward march of the state to such an extent that not to know them and the great old county from which they came, at least by reputation, marks one as uninformed, and as the Palmetto state is rapidly wiping out her plague spot of ignorance, soon there will be no more uninformed in all her borders, and the heritage of her proud history will be shared by every one of her sons and daughters.

Louise Ayer Vandiver.

Anderson.

DIFFERENT BREEDS OF HENS

Leghorns and Minorcas Are Best for Eggs, but Are Poor Sitters—Brahmas Best for Meat.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Chickens, for convenience, may be classified as egg breeds, meat breeds, general-purpose breeds, and fancy or ornamental breeds.

The egg breeds include the small or medium-sized fowls which are very active, quick to mature, producers of white-shelled eggs, usually none or at best but poor sitters, and rather poor mothers, say poultry specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture. The varieties of Leghorns and Minorcas are good representatives of this class. Because they are poor sitters some other breed, or at least a few other fowls, should be kept if natural methods of incubation are to be employed. On account of their early maturity it is not uncommon for individuals of the egg breeds to begin laying at the age of four and one-half months. These breeds do not fatten as readily under ordinary conditions as the larger and less active breeds, and are rather sensitive to low temperature because of their large combs and wattles.

The largest fowls, represented in the meat class, are especially suitable for the production of large roasters. They are slow and somewhat sluggish in movement, have little desire for foraging, are easily confined by low fences, rather slow to mature, persistent sitters, and rather

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daughter of her husband's uncle, Gen. Elijah Clarke of Georgia. Of this lady General Pickens said, "She is a beautiful woman, the sweetest and most interesting lady I ever saw in any society."

Eldred Simkins served his district in congress for four years. At the end of that time he declined reelection in favor of his friend and law partner, George McDuffie. At a later date Mr. Simkins practiced law in partnership with F. W. Pickens.

Members of the Simkins family have been intimately connected with the history of Edgefield throughout its whole career. A son of Eldred who bore his grandfather's name, Arthur, was editor of the Edgefield Advertiser, established in 1839, one of South Carolina's oldest newspapers. It was not, however, the first published in the district. Preceding it was The Edgefield Bee Hive printed at Pottersville. Its existence was, however, of short duration. John C. Simkins, another son of Edgefield, was killed at Battery Wagner.

The village of Edgefield was made the county seat in 1791, and court was held there in 1792.

The Edgefield academy, which had been in operation for some years, was incorporated December 18, 1824, though the town was not incorporated until 1830. James Caldwell of Newberry, afterwards chancellor, taught there in 1819. Another of its teachers was Robert L. Armstrong, one of the instructors when Professor LaBorde of the South Carolina college and author of a history of that institution attended school.

Dies at Altar.

Another of Edgefield's distinguished citizens was Francis W. Pickens, appointed by President Buchanan minister to Russia, and later elected governor of South Carolina, which office had been held by his father and his grandfather before him. In the lonely old Simkins graveyard sleeps his first wife, Margaret Eliza, daughter of Eldred and Eliza Simkins, and beside her two sons, Francis and Eldred. Her daughters lived to grow up, one of them however, only to reach young womanhood. The girl was being married in St. Michael's church in Charleston during the distressful and mournful days of the Confederate war: the clergyman was reading the

they were under indictment then to appear for alleged complicity in Ku Klux performances. Those were the days when Blaine was wildly waving "the bloody shirt" in the United States senate, and the suggestion came that the oft mentioned garment should become the insignia of the goaded Democrats, or rather should be adopted by that especial band of them to wear at their "trial." The idea met with approbation, and B. R. Tillman was one of two young men sent to procure material for the bloody shirts. He said they bought a great quantity of yellow homespun, and that the women of the vicinity went to work immediately to make it into garments for the men by the next day when the "trial" was to take place. Also one huge shirt was to be fashioned to be stretched across a gigantic frame with arms extended, and to be surmounted by two negro mask faces turned back to back, then of course facing both ways, topped by a kinky negro wig; this herculean figure to be carried as a sort of banner. The shirts as soon as finished were spotted with great red spots, some made with paint, some with poke berries and other crimson dyes. That was the first uniform by any of the South Carolina men soon to become known as "reformers." Theirs was the "bloody shirt." A little later in Pendleton originated the "red shirt," made of flannel, which appeared for the first time at a political meeting in Anderson when the Pendleton men marched into town and demanded a share of time for the Democratic candidates to speak at the same meeting with the Republicans, and also the red shirt company appeared at Hampton's first campaign meeting, which was held in Anderson. At a political gathering some days later in Columbia Gen. Mart Gary, "the Bald Eagle of Edgefield," recommended that the reform party adopt as their official uniform the redshirt as worn in Anderson.

Woman Leads Van.

When Hampton came to hold his campaign meeting in Edgefield, Douschka Pickens, clad in red from head to foot, rode into the village at the head of a mounted band of men, all wearing the red garment, and hailing her as "Our Joan of Arc."

The famous Ned Brace of Judge Longstreet's inimitable "Georgia

bands, after which she took a fourth, and was herself finally slain in front of the court house by her own brother, who coolly mounted his horse and rode unmolested away while the gaping crowd which had watched him beat her brains out with a rock, stood by and gazed after his retreating figure.

In a dark forest which skirts the town stands also a haunted tree, a wicked looking old beech, and the dusky denizens of an African settlement just beyond will tell you that dogs which happen to be black and white always stop at the foot of this tree and bark frantically while looking up into its branches, jumping and tearing up the earth in their endeavors to reach some object in the boughs above them. No human eye, they tell you, has ever beheld even a sparrow perch upon the accursed limbs, but all the world knows that a black and white dog can see ghosts.

But if Edgefield was wicked and infested with "hants" it early adopted a wholesome antidote. The first church established was a Methodist, which was built on the ground later occupied by the Mims' residence. One of the first preachers of which there is any record was John B. Mitchell, a soldier of the Revolution, captured by the British in some Northern colony, and brought South as a servant of one of their officers. For more than 50 years he labored faithfully in the little village of Edgefield.

The next church built was a Baptist church, and an early preacher of that faith was William Eddins, also a soldier of the Revolution, who entered the service from Newberry at the age of 16. At one time young Eddins was captured and with other prisoners was being escorted to Ninety Six. His horse was taken from him and assigned to the soldier sent to guard them. On the way the sentinel dismounted and leaning his musket against a tree, took a pull at a black bottle which he carried. Young Eddins saw his opportunity and seizing the musket, mounted his own horse and made his escape. He served the church in Edgefield as pastor for a number of years, after which he emigrated to Tennessee.

The third church to be built in Edgefield was Trinity Episcopal, erected in 1839, large through the

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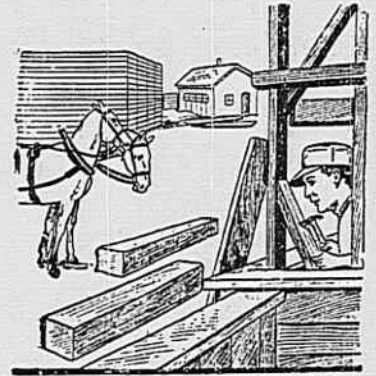
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