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Correspondence - 1989, August 30 - Adelaide Austell Craver

Adelaide Austell Craver

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August 30, 1989

Mr. O. Max Gardner, III
Attorney-at-Law
P. O. Box 1000
310 E. Marion Street
Shelby, NC 28151-1000

Dear Max:

Here is what I know about the inhabitants of "Webbley" from 1869 to 1905.

My great-great grandmother, Adelaide Alice Williams Eddins McAfee, who was the daughter of prominent York, South Carolina lawyer, legislator and senator and Federal Court Judge, George Washington Williams and Sarah Beatty Williams and who had been the widow of James B. Eddins, purchased the S. Washington Street property with house for \$1,002 on April 1, 1869. The property which contained 7½ acres was situated on the east side of South Washington Street between the Rudisill and Andrews properties and ran deep to Flat Rock. The deed was by Sheriff Byers due to the 1968 ← 1868 bankruptcy in the Cape Fear district of owner R. M. Roark who had acquired the property in 1863 from A. R. Homesley which deed referred to it as the "A. W. Burton property". The property had been sold at auction in 1869 with the highest bidder being Thomas Dixon (must have been the author's father and brother-in-law of Mrs. McAfee) who had the property deeded to Mrs. McAfee.

Mrs. McAfee moved into the house with her husband Col. Leroy (Lee) M. McAfee and her daughter Minnie Eddins. (The McAfee's only baby had died at birth.) Col. McAfee was a native of Cleveland County born in 1836. He graduated from the State University at Chapel Hill in 1862, receiving the highest honors in a class of 69. At the beginning of the War he was a resident of Texas, where he practiced law, but came back to North Carolina and entered the service as a private soldier. He attained the rank of Colonel in the 49th Regiment, the highest ranking officer in Cleveland County. Later he organized the Ku Klux Klan to help settle the chaos after the War. The Klan met in the little house behind "Webbley". (The part about the Klan I'm sure we don't want to note today as the connotation is so different.) Col. McAfee died in 1873, at the age of 37. Later his nephew, author Thomas Dixon, dedicated his novel The Clansman to his uncle, Leroy McAfee. Thomas Dixon's mother was Amanda McAfee, sister of Leroy McAfee.

Mrs. Adelaide McAfee's daughter, who had changed her name from Mary Adelaide to Minnie McAfee Eddins to include her step-father's name, graduated from Raleigh Female Seminary in 1872 and became a voice teacher at Shelby Female Academy and was known throughout the state as the "Mockingbird of North Carolina".

On December 22, 1874, Minnie Eddins married William Joshua (Josh) Roberts, whose family were large landowners of property situated between Shelby and Kings Mountain. This couple lived in the house with Mrs. McAfee until her death November 18, 1888 and continued to live in the house after her death.

During their marriage their three sons were born in the house: My grandfather, William Joshua Roberts, Jr., born September 13, 1875 - married Frances Eskridge. James Eddins Roberts, born February 25, 1885 - married Luna Roberts. George Williams Roberts, born 1890 - married Edna - moved to Florida.

Minnie Eddins Roberts died August 12, 1892 at the age of 37 of typhoid fever. She left her husband a life estate in the house and the remainder to her three sons.

Edna
~~*Edna*~~
Cabe

Josh Roberts later married Mamie Logan and they resided in the house where the following children were born to them:
Catherine Roberts, born September 26, 1895 - later married William J. Arey.
Ben Roberts, born 1898 - married Katherine Borders.
John Roberts, born 1900 - died 1901.
Robert Roberts, born 1903 - killed in World War I.
Their last children, Sarah Roberts, born July 24, 1905 (married C. C. Horn), Mary Roberts (married Hubert Whisnant) and Ruth Roberts, born 1911, Lt. Colonel in the Air Force, were born after the couple moved back to the Roberts Farm.

June 17, 1905, William Joshua Roberts and William Joshua Roberts, Jr. for himself and for his minor brothers, deeded the property to H. I. Washburn, who the same year deeded it to Clyde R. Hoey. Also in 1905, Clyde R. Hoey and wife, Bess Gardner Hoey deeded the property to J. Edgar Poag. Mr. Poag subdivided the property and then deeded lot no. 19 with appurtenances to J. A. Anthony.

I do have the pictures of my ancestors should you ever do anything on the earlier owners of the house. They are included in our Cleveland County Heritage Book under the articles on William Joshua Roberts and Minnie Eddins Roberts.

Sincerely,

Adelaide

Adelaide Austell Craver