

HISTORY OF OLD PENDLETON DISTRICT

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History of old Pendleton district by R. W. Simpson

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R. W. SIMPSON

**HISTORY OF OLD
PENDLETON
DISTRICT**



COL. R. W. SIMPSON.

HISTORY

—of—

OLD PENDLETON
DISTRICT

—with—

A GENEALOGY OF THE LEADING FAMILIES
OF THE DISTRICT

—by—

R. W. Simpson

PREFACE

WE HAVE for quite a number of years felt the importance of preserving to some extent, at least, the history of Pendleton, as well as that of the County of Pendleton as much as possible. Many intervening years, the death and removal of some of the prominent citizens of the past as well as their descendants, have made this pleasant duty almost an impossibility. Our duties otherwise have also made this labor a burden instead of a pleasure. But, nevertheless, with the help of friends and neighbors, we have ventured upon the experiment.

A wise historian has said that history ought not to be written until one hundred years have elapsed since the event. Be this as it may, it appears to us to be the duty of all good citizens, in passing through life's toils and pleasures, to preserve the facts and circumstances of history, so that in the future the history of Pendleton may be presented accurately by the coming historian. We, therefore, present with some misgivings as well as pleasure, such facts and circumstances in the history of Pendleton as we have been able to trace them in the past.

R. W. SIMPSON.

Pendleton, S. C.

RICHARD WRIGHT SIMPSON

BY WILLIAM S. MORRISON, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND
POLITICAL ECONOMY, CLEMSON COLLEGE,
SOUTH CAROLINA.

RICHARD WRIGHT SIMPSON was born on his father's farm near Pendleton, Anderson County, South Carolina, September 11, 1840.

His father was Richard F. Simpson, a native of Laurens District, South Carolina, a graduate of the South Carolina College, and for many years a lawyer at Laurens Court House; a soldier with the rank of major in the Florida war; a member of both branches of the General Assembly of his native State; three terms (1842-48) a member of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States; and a signer of the Ordinance of Secession of the State of South Carolina.

His mother was Margaret Taliaferro, a native of Anderson District, South Carolina, whose parents were Virginians by birth.

"Dick" Simpson enjoyed an ideal boyhood. He was well and strong, the son of indulgent parents, living a free country life. He enjoyed hunting and fishing and was fond of work with tools. At home he read the Bible, Shakespeare, and Scott's Novels. He attended Pendleton Academy from which he went to Wofford College. The late Dr. James H. Carlisle, at the time the only surviving member of the Wofford Faculty of the fifties, was asked a few years since, to write his recollections of the "Simpson Brothers" as students. The following is a literal copy of his answer:

"The Simpson Brothers—this is the way in which

the survivors of the generation of Wofford students, 1857-1861—think of T. N. Simpson and R. W. Simpson, as the catalogues gave their names. Their brotherly affection was marked. Each might have said of the other what the late Robert W. Boyd said to me about his brother Charles: 'We were not only brothers—we were great friends.' They were gentlemanly, self-respecting young men, whose conduct represented the refined Christian home, which they had left. Joining different literary societies each gained the highest honor in the gift of his fellow-members. At the Anniversary the two brothers sat on the platform as presidents of the Calhoun and Preston Societies. In their Senior year (1860-61) the clouds of war gathered. The students formed a military company, 'The Southern Guards,' and T. N. Simpson was elected captain. Arrangements were made for the usual May exhibition. The program had these names and subjects:

T. N. Simpson—Vox Populi.

R. W. Simpson—Republican Institutions in North America—are they a failure?

Surely these were timely subjects, well fitted to draw out the feelings and convictions of the young patriots and orators. But when the time came these speakers were not on the platform. They were on the tented field. The bombardment of Fort Sumter, April 12, 13, 1861, seemed to the students as their mother's call to duty, and they answered at once.

Capt. T. N. Simpson was one of the unreturning braves. His sword is now among the valuable relics in Wofford College. His brother was spared for years of service with his fellow-citizens in carrying his native State through a great historical crisis."

R. W. Simpson served as a private in the Confederate army in Company A, Third Regiment South Carolina Volunteers, and in Adams' battalion of cavalry from April, 1861 to 1863, when, on account of disease

contracted in the service, he was detailed for special duty until the close of the war.

From 1865 to 1874 Colonel Simpson farmed. Then began his sympathy with the tillers of the soil. In the fall of 1874 he was chosen a member of the State Legislature, and was re-elected in 1876—the year of Carolina's redemption from the hand of the alien and the traitor—the “carpet bagger” and the “Scalawag.” He was made chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means of the “Wallace House,” always a position of great responsibility, then one of peculiar dangers and difficulties, as is well understood by all who remember the struggles of that time and by every student of “Reconstruction.” Colonel Simpson's friends claim for him the credit of first suggesting the idea of the Democrats of South Carolina breaking loose from the maternal party—of securing control of the State and letting Tilden's friends fight for their own cause—the plan of cutting what Gen. M. W. Gary called the “gordion knot”—a plan which resulted in President Hays withdrawing the United States troops, and Governor Hampton securing undisputed possession of the State House and the State.

Chairman Simpson's services in settling the disordered finances of the State were delicate and difficult, but time proved the wisdom of his views. “He devised the plan—and secured the adoption—which reduced the debt of the State to its present small proportions.”

It was while serving in the Legislature that R. W. Simpson was appointed a member of the Governor's Staff, with the rank of Colonel of Cavalry, by Governor Wade Hampton.

During those days he became convinced that changed conditions made necessary a change in our educational system. He became an earnest advocate of the establishment of an agricultural college. He was the confidential advisor of the Honorable Thos. G. Clemson—

wrote that gentleman's will, was made executor of that instrument, and on the organization of the Board of Trustees of the Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina was elected chairman of that Board, which position he resigned, on account of impaired health a few years before his death. His interest in, and his devotion to the welfare of Clemson College are well known to all who know anything of the history of that institution for the first twenty years of its existence.

About the time he went into politics Colonel Simpson studied law, was admitted to the bar, practiced at Anderson Court House, and was local attorney for the Southern Rail Road fifteen years and for the Blue Ridge Railway for eight years. He was also attorney for the Bank of Pendleton.

Colonel Simpson was a life-long member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He loved its doctrines and polity and was many years a Sunday School teacher and superintendent.

On February 10, 1863, R. W. Simpson was married to Miss Maria Louise Garlington, of Laurens County, S. C. Their beautiful home-life, their devotion to each other are well known to all their friends. Of this happy union ten children were born—of whom nine are now living: Mrs. W. W. Watkins, Mrs. P. H. E. Sloan, Jr., Miss M. L. Simpson, Mrs. A. G. Holmes, Mrs. S. M. Martin, Mrs. W. W. Klugh, Messrs. R. W. Simpson, Jr., J. G. Simpson and T. S. Simpson.

Colonel Simpson died in a hospital in Atlanta where he had been taken for treatment a few days before, at four o'clock in the morning of the 11th day of July, 1912. The afternoon of the next day his remains were laid to rest by the new made grave of his wife, near the resting place of his father and his mother and his soldier