

BARUCH, MY OWN STORY

Boyhood Days in Camden, Turbulent Era Recalled

By BERNARD M. BARUCH

"This is an exciting tale of men and millions, of titanic conflicts, speculations and panics in Wall Street and of Reconstruction times in South Carolina. . . sufficiently salted with humor and peppered with anecdotes. . ." Arthur Krock, the famous Washington correspondent wrote of Baruch: My Own Story. "Some books are written to please the author; some to satisfy the historians; some to be read by everybody for their pleasure and profit. 'Baruch: My Own Story' should satisfy all three," another famous Washington Correspondent, Roscoe Drummond, said. Today The State begins se-serialization of the bestseller book with Mr. Baruch's account of his boyhood which, he says, had "a Huckleberry Finn or Tom Sawyer quality."

CHAPTER I

The two-story frame house in which I was born on August 19, 1870, stood on the main street of Camden, South Carolina. Still, living there was almost like living in the open country.

Directly behind the house were a vegetable garden, stables, and barn. Beyond them stretched three acres of land which Father had turned into a kind of experimental "farm."

Father used to spend time on his "farm" which Mother thought should have been devoted to his medical practice. Yet he was one of the most successful physicians in the state. He was only thirty-three when the South Carolina Medical Association elected him president. He also served as head of the State Board of Health and was active in the troubled and sometimes bloody politics of the Reconstruction.

Recently I was reading through one of his early case books. Those scribbled pages mirrored his role in the community. He treated Negroes and whites alike for all their ailments and accidents, from the lad who caught a fish-hook in his leg to the poor old Negro who, on the death of his former master, refused to eat or drink for eighteen days and starved to death.

A PORTRAIT OF FATHER

Father was a man worth looking at — six feet tall, erect and military, with a dark beard and mild, unwavering blue eyes. His dress was rather formal. Never do I recall seeing him in his shirt sleeves. Yet he had a kindly manner, and a soft voice which had no trace of accent to suggest his for-

eign birth.

Simon Baruch — as Father was named — was born in the village of Schwersenz, near Posen, then part of Germany, on July 29, 1840. He rarely spoke of his forebears. When the matter came up he would say that it was not so important where you came from as where you were going.

Not until I was twenty and Father took me to Europe to visit his parents did I learn anything of the Baruch ancestry. It appeared that the Baruchs were of a rabbinical family and of Portuguese Spanish origin, although somewhere along the line there must have been an admixture of Polish or Russian stock.

Father had come to the United States in 1855 to avoid conscription into the Prussian Army. He was fifteen years old and a student at the Royal Gymnasium in Posen when, with some secrecy, he set out for America. It took a bit of courage since he knew only one person here, Mannes Baum, also a native of Schwersenz, who owned a small general store in Camden.

FATHER FINDS A FRIEND

Mannes Baum became Father's protector. Young Simon went to work for Mannes as a bookkeeper, teaching himself English by reading American history with a translating dictionary beside him. Mr. Baum's wife — she was Mother's aunt and it was through her that Father and Mother met — quickly appreciated the promise of this bright boy. She persuaded Mannes to send him to South Carolina Medical College in Charleston, and later to the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond.

Father never forgot the kindness of Mannes Baum. Mannes was given me for a middle name. I am proud to bear it.

It was Mannes Baum who gave Father the uniform and sword that he donned on April 4, 1862, when he joined the Third Battalion, South Carolina Infantry. Father had just graduated from medical school and was appointed an Assistant Surgeon "without even having lanced a boil," as he used to say.

A WARTIME SURGEON

Enlisting in the Confederate Army was the natural, human thing for Father to do. Like so many others, including Robert E. Lee who neither owned slaves nor approved of slavery. Father felt his first allegiance to be to his adopted state. Moreover, nearly all the youths he knew in Camden were enlisting.

As a surgeon, Father saw the saddest, most grisly side of the war. He did not talk much of his

experiences. When my three brothers and I asked him to "tell us of the war," he usually would send us to our studies or assign us some chore.

As soon as the war was over, Father returned to Mannes Baum's home in Camden, the only home he had ever known in America. Like tens of thousands of other Confederates he was destitute. While he was held in Baltimore as a prisoner - of - war a physician friend had given Father a set of medical instruments and

he had sent them home to Camden. He had counted on the instruments to help him start as a country practitioner. But they had been carried away by Sherman's raiders.

A REBEL FOR LIFE

The war left one indelible influence which remained with Father for the rest of his life. Let the band strike up "Dixie," and, no matter where he was, he would jump up and give the rebel yell.

As soon as the tune started Mother knew what was coming and so did we boys. Mother would catch him by the coat-tails and plead, "Shush, Doctor, shush." But it never did any good. I have seen Father, ordinarily a model of reserve and dignity, leap up in the Metropolitan Opera House and let loose that piercing yell.

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While on Father's side I am the son of an immigrant, on Mother's I am descended from a family which came to America in the 1690's.

The first of Mother's ancestors to reach these shores was Isaac Rodriguez Marques, whose name also is spelled in old documents as Marquiz, Marquis, and Marquise. Arriving in New York sometime before 1700, he established himself as a shipowner whose vessels did business with three continents.

Marques' choice of the city and his calling suggest a keen business judgement. New York at that time extended only two or three streets north of its wooden wall. Still, it was a bustling place of 3500 inhabitants. Its boom-town character was largely the result of the liberal attitude toward maritime affairs, including piracy, taken by ny, Benjamin Fletcher, the Royal Governor of the colo-

ANCIENT GENEALOGY

It would be colorful if I could claim descent from a pirate. Alas, the documentation I have assembled prevents my doing this. All available evidence indicates that Isaac Marques kept his salt-

water ventures on the starboard side of the law.

There is no record of the exact date or place of birth of Isaac Rodriguez Marques. One family tradition makes him a native of which is more likely. At any rate he was descended from Spanish-Portuguese Jews.

He is said to have owned three ships. I have found record of only one, the Dolphin, which appeared to have two regular runs — one, New York to England and back; the second, New York to England, then to the African slave coast, the West Indies, and home, the famous triangular trade route. Sometimes the run was made directly from Africa to New York, for slave labor was being widely introduced into the colony.

It is worth noting that whatever wealth came to Marques from the cruel traffic in slaves was paid for over and over again through the suffering and loss of life and fortune by his descendants both in the North and South during the Civil War.

OTHER ANCESTORS

After Isaac Rodriguez Marques, the next ancestor I have a record of was Isaac Marks, as he spelled the name. He is listed as a son of Isaac Rodriguez, but since he was born in 1732 he was more likely a grandson.

It was Isaac's son, Samuel, who established Mother's side of our family in South Carolina. He was born in New York City in 1762. As a grown man he moved to Charleston, South Carolina, where he became the proprietor of a samll sotre. One of his children, Deborah, who married Rabbi Hartwig Cohen of Charleston, was my maternal great-grandmother.

My grandmother, Sarah Cohen, a daughter of Deborah Marks and Rabbi Hartwig Cohen, was courted by Saling Wolfe, a young merchant and planter of Winnsboro, in the "upcountry" of South Carolina. They were married in November, 1845.

Thirteen children were born to Sarah and Saling Wolfe, of whom three died in early childhood. My mother, Isabelle Wolfe, who was born on March 4, 1850, was the third child and first daughter. A line in the family Bible recording her birth reads, "God grant her a blessing." I like to think that this line prophesied Mother's marriage to Father since the name "Baruch" is the Hebrew word for "blessed."

GRANDFATHER WOLFE

Grandfather Wolfe was a wealthy slaveholder when the Civil War broke out. The war ruined him as it did the entire social structure in which he moved. What little remained of his fortune after four years of war was destroyed by Sherman's raiders. The house, the other buildings, and the cotton were put to the torch and the cattle driven off.

I have fond memories of childhood visits to my grandparents' home, which was rebuilt after the war. Every morning Grandfather, looking like an English country squire, would mount his horse,

Morgan, and ride out to inspect his crops.

My keenest memory is of the railroad — the old Charlotte, Columbia & Augusta line — which ran back of the house and at whose passing trains I threw stones. I thought how wonderful it would be to grow up and run a railroad. This ambition to own a railroad remained with me through my entire financial career. Several times I started to buy control of a railroad but realization of this dream always eluded me.

Before the Civil War Father had been a guest in the home of Saling Wolfe and had become interested in the oldest Wolfe daughter, Isabelle. During the war they saw each other when Father was home on furlough.

FATHER'S MARRIAGE

When Simon Baruch returned from the war, the romance was resumed. In 1867, after starting as a country doctor, he and Belle Wolfe were married.

There were four children, all sons, Hartwig, the oldest, was born in 1868; I, two years later; Herman in 1872; and Saling in 1874.

In those days, Camden was a town of about 2000, with Negroes making up about half the population. The war brought economic hardship there, as it did to all of the South. Still, I cannot recall that our family ever suffered real economic adversity. We lived in a large, comfortable house and had about as much of material things as any of our neighbors.

As a child I was shy and sensitive, something of a mamma's boy. I always sat at Mother's right at the dinner table, and I remember how fiercely I fought for this privilege. When I married, I asked my wife to sit where my mother would have sat — with me to her right.

TAUGHT BY MOTHER

When Mother taught us elocution, my brother Hartwig, who was two years older than I displayed considerable talent. Eventually, in fact, he became an actor. But for me, getting up to recite was an agonizing ordeal.

Once I told President Woodrow Wilson about this. At first he consoled me by saying, "There are too many men who like to speak and too few to do things. Most of them the world does not care to hear. I wouldn't advise even you to try to learn."

I couldn't agree. I believe it is almost as important for a man to be able to express his views as to have them. Later President Wilson helped me improve my speech delivery.

I was four or five years old when I started at a school kept by Mr. and Mrs. William Wallace. The Wallace school ground was a tough arena for testing one's character. You had to fight or be known as a coward. My brother Harty was a scrapper by instinct. But it took me a long time to learn to fight skillfully and with a cool head.

A HOT TEMPERED LAD

My main trouble was that I lost my temper too quickly. I was fat, freckle-faced, and relatively short as a boy — "Bunch" was my nickname — and inevitably seemed to get licked in every scrap. The humiliation of being beaten did not improve either my self-confidence or my temper.

There was a Huckleberry Finn or Tom Sawyer quality in how we lived. In fact, whenever I read Mark Twain or saw the cartoons of care Briggs or H. T. Webster's "Life's Darkest Moment," I would feel nostalgia for my boyhood.

Despite our full quota of escapades and scrapes, our parents rarely disciplined us beyond a reprimand. I cannot remember ever being spanked by either Father or Mother. Father was inclined to be more strict but whenever he seemed on the verge of punishing us Mother would restrain him. I can hear her saying, "Now Doctor, don't be hard on the boys or they won't love you."

MINERVA'S INFLUENCE

But this is not to say that we never knew the beneficial effects of a sound spanking. Our Negro nurse, Minerva, would not have favored progressive education. When she was an old woman, she would visit me at my South Carolina plantation and delight in telling my Northern guests how she used to paddle me for my bad behavior.

It is true that I stood in awe of Minerva's right hand, and so did my brothers, but what impressed me most were the stories she told and the songs she sang to us.

It was from Minerva that I heard of Erer Rabbit, Erer Fox, Erer Terrapin, and other characters which Joel Chandler Harris was to put into his Uncle Remus books.

I loved her as she loved me. To the last she never failed to greet me with a big hug and kiss, for I was always her "chile."

FINDS KKK REGALIA

One autumn day, when I was about five or six, my brother Harty and I were rummaging about the attic of our house. We came across a horsehide-covered trunk which looked promising. Opening it, we found Father's Confederate uniform. Digging deeper into the trunk, we pulled out a white hood and long robe with a crimson cross on its breast — the regalia of a Knight of the Ku Klux Klan.

Today, of course, the KKK is an odious symbol of bigotry and hate, reflecting its activities during the 1920's, when it acquired considerable power, particularly outside the South. I have good reason to know the character of the modern Klan since I was a target for its hatred.

But to the children in the Reconstruction South, the original Klan, led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest, seemed a heroic band fighting to free the South from the debaucheries of carpet-bag rule. To my brother and me the thought that Father was a

member of that band exalted him in our youthful eyes.

CARPETBAG RULE

Harsh as were the economic effects of the war, the political effects of eight years of carpetbag rule proved more galling and lasting. Even today, when the South is prospering, the carpetbag legacy of political and racial bitterness hangs on.

The carpetbaggers maintained power largely through the control that they and their scalawag allies exerted over the vote of the Negro. This aggravated all the racial wounds and sores of slavery and the war. In the end it hurt the Negro most and probably set back progress in racial relations by a quarter of a century.

Through much of my childhood no white man who had served in the Confederate Army was allowed to vote—while all Negroes could vote, even though few could write their names. The declared intention of the Black Republicans in Washington was to make this state of affairs perpetual.

TERRIBLE CONDITIONS

So oppressive was this state of affairs that even a man like my

father could write a fellow veteran of the Confederate Army that death was preferable to living under such conditions. "There is one recourse when all is lost. I mean the sword," Father wrote in a letter which was quoted by Claude Bowers in *The Tragic Era*. "What boots it to live under such tyranny, such moral and physical oppression when we can be much happier in the consciousness of dying for such a cause?"

Father blamed the Civil War on the extremists of both sides who would not use reason to settle their differences. He considered Abraham Lincoln a great man who might have reunited the country had he lived.

Still, the Reconstruction rule was oppression to Father and he fought to free the South of it.

DUEL PROMPTS MOVE

Mother urged Father to go North where opportunities would be greater. But Father held back until the Cash-Shannon duel, which he had tried to prevent and which was such a shock to him.

The duel took place on July 5, 1880, at Du Bose's Bridge in Darlington County. Colonel William M. Shannon, a dear friend of Father's, was fatally wounded. Colonel E. B. C. Cash, who had been a man of distinction in his community and had commanded a regiment in Father's brigade, was ostracized and left to a fate similar to Aaron Burr's. It was one of the last fatal duels in the United States, and led to Father's leaving South Carolina.

FATHER SELLS PRACTICE

In the winter of 1880 Father sold his practice and the house with its little "farm." Together with his savings, the sale brought his total financial assets to \$18,000, the fruit of 16 years as a country doctor.

Father went on ahead to New York City. Mother followed with her four boys. The first leg of the journey was made in our old carriage to Winnsboro, where we took the train North. We arrived on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River at dusk and took the ferry across the river.



THE BARUCH CLAN: Dr. Simon Baruch and his wife on their golden wedding anniversary in 1917, surrounded by sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren. Back row: Miss Simona Baruch, Sailing Baruch, Mrs. Sailing Baruch, Sailing Baruch, Jr., Hartwig Baruch, Mrs. Bernard Baruch, Bernard Baruch, Mrs. Herman Baruch, Dr. Herman Baruch, Jr. Front row: Belle Baruch, Donald Baruch, Mrs. Simon Baruch, Dr. Simon Baruch, Robert Baruch, Miss Amale Baruch, Miss Renee Baruch, Bernard Baruch, Jr., was absent at school at the time. (From B. M. Baruch's collection).



Baruch's parents, Dr. and Mrs. Simon Baruch.

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The State:

JIM BISHOP: REPORTER

Ex-Camden Pioneer An Ideal Immigrant

Charlotte Observer, April 20, 1959

No country in the world throws its arms open to as many immigrants as the United States. Millions have funneled through The Narrows in New York. Of them all, I would select Simon Baruch as the ideal immigrant, the rare alien jewel.

You have heard of his son, and the deeds of the son have placed the father in the dark cool shadow of time. But Simon Baruch must not be forgotten. He had his own unique greatness.



Bishop

He was born July 29, 1840. The place was Schwensen, now a part of Poland. Simon grew up wanting to be a doctor. He was still in high school when he saved enough money to leave Schwensen for America.

Like most immigrants, he appreciated the value of an education more than the native-born Americans do.

Simon finished his medical training at the Medical College in Virginia, and served his internship in Charleston. He joined the Confederate Army as an assistant surgeon and, for the last three years of the war, saw service with the Army of Northern Virginia.

WHEN THE WAR was done, the South was not a prosperous place, but Simon Baruch loved it and set his practice up in Camden, South Carolina. He was a foreigner. He had an accent, but what the people saw in Dr. Baruch's eyes was commiseration and understanding. This was a signal they could read plainly.

He was almost 41 when he left for New York. Dr. Baruch made the move, not because he was dissatisfied with Camden, but because he had new and daring medical ideas, and, if they were to be accepted, New York was the place to try them.

In 1888—seven years after his arrival in the metropolis—Dr. Baruch was known as a prominent surgeon. One of his radical ideas was that, in cases where appendicitis is suspected, one should not wait for a turn for the worse before trying surgery.

Surgery should be undertaken at once. Prior to this, treatment often consisted of hot water bottles and ice bags.

In 1890, Dr. Baruch began intensive work on the use of warm flowing baths in the treatment of certain emotional disorders and typhoid fever. This had been introduced by Winternitz in Vienna, but it took Baruch, and two books on hydrotherapy, to make it popular.

AT THE TURN of the century, the immigrant was appointed a full professor at Columbia University. He was now 60, and he felt that he should devote more time to the poor. He opened the first free public bath in Rivington St. in New York in 1901. In a short time, there were 100 of these around the country.

He worked hard. Often, he worked for no fee. He talked the state of New York into buying the mineral springs at Saratoga. When the springs were purchased, Dr. Baruch returned to Europe, at his expense, and studied the cures effected at the famous spas. He introduced them in America.

This is not to say that he was too busy to lead a family life. On November 27, 1867, he married Isabel Wolfe, of Winnsboro, S. C., and as his children grew, he found time to impart to them his love of man and country.

Dr. Baruch believed that hard work never killed anyone. He proved it by working for as many hours as he could remain awake. The hours became shorter and shorter and the clocks ticked nervously and swiftly. The doctor kept working until the last, and the last was June 3, 1921, just short of his 81st birthday.

THE DOCTOR HAS been forgotten, except in medical circles. He came here with very little more than a clean heart and an inquiring mind. He left a legacy of goodness and understanding everywhere.

Once, to my knowledge, Dr. Baruch committed to writing his feelings about the United States. What he wrote should be set in bronze for all to see:

"If I did not stand ready to consecrate heart and soul and all that I possess to the defense of my adopted country, I would despise myself as a scoundrel and a perjurer and regard myself as an ingrate to the government which has, for 60 years, enhanced and protected my life, my honor and my happiness." . . .
The ideal immigrant. . .

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