

CHESTER MAN HEADED COLONY IN BRAZIL

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(Note: Dr. James McFadden Gaston, who figures prominently in the attached article from The Richmond News-Leader, which was sent The Reporter by Miss M. Bland Sloan, of Richmond, Va., was a native of Chester County, and an uncle of Col. A. L. Gaston. At the outbreak of the War Between the States he was practicing in Columbia, and it was from that city that he headed the movement of ex-Confederate soldiers and their families to Brazil. Capt. W. T. D. Cousar, of Chester, if we are not mistaken, was a member of the colony, but the call of the homeland soon proved too strong, and he came back to Chester.- Editor Reporter.)

When, after Appomattox, the South lay spent and disconsolate, a surgeon of the Confederate army, Dr. James McFadden Gaston, of Columbia, S. C., looked upon the ashes of his home and declared that he would quit the United States for a new country.

Moreover, he vowed to himself, as he saw Yankee soldiers triumphant in the streets, he would take with him all those "unreconstructed" Confederates who were willing to go. He kept his vow. More than sixty families sailed for Brazil.

Today a little city, Villa Americana, is a monument to this Confederate colony, and throughout Brazil are famous engineers, doctors, farmers, and missionaries who are descendants of those sixty families who declined to live under the Stars and Stripes.

A woman, 70-years-old, but as spry as a debutante, is authority for those statements. She is Mrs. J. B. Kolb, of Sao Paulo, Brazil, a daughter of the Dr. Gaston, who led the way to Brazil. She is here today visiting her daughter, Mrs. B. H. Hunnicutt, of Mission Court, Ginter Park.

"Our fathers left the United States after the Yankees had won the war," she said today, smiling, "but today there is positively no enmity against the Yankees or the United States government. Indeed, I, the daughter of the man who conceived the idea of the migration, married a Northern Presbyterian missionary."

There were said to be at least three migrations from the South after the War between the States. Some authorities contend that virtually every other country under the sun received a part of the flower of the South when the Confederate cause was lost. But it is known that fairly large groups went to Mexico, British Honduras, and to Brazil. The Mexican colony, it is understood, figured in the events which followed the arrest of Maximilian.

Probably the first complete story of the American colony in Brazil which has ever been told in this country was related today by the little 70-year-old woman who speaks English as if she had been living in Richmond rather than Brazil since she was 9 years old.

Her father, Dr. Gaston, went to Brazil immediately after the end of the war. He called upon Dom Pedro, II, emperor of Brazil, and presented his scheme for colonization. The emperor was overjoyed. If Dr. Gaston would bring to Brazil members of that gallant fighting unit known as the Confederate army, the emperor would give them vast lands almost anywhere the Southerners wished to live.

The South Carolinians spent some time in Brazil and finally settled upon the state of Sao Paulo as the likeliest place for the colony. Then he returned to this country.

There were many friends and acquaintances, the most of them South Carolinians, who were eager to escape from what they considered the thralldom of a Yankee government. In his party were: Halls, Millers, McIntyres, Pyles, Norrises, McFaddens, McCords, Fergusons, MacKnights, Millses, Ellises, Gradys, Stegals, Barnslys, Bairds, and Finleys.

Mrs. Kolb believes the party sailed out of Savannah bound for Rio de Janiero, a merry group of men, women, and children who believed they would find in South America what they thought they had lost in the United States.

She distinctly remembers entering the harbor of Rio, she said today. The beauty of this city that forms a semi-circle around a gorgeous blue harbor struck the entire party speechless. Dr. Gaston started them all on their way to Campinas, and thence by pack mule to Santa Barbara. There they established the Villa Americana.

All of them at first became farmers. They built wooden and brick homes, refusing to live in the shacks of the natives. They astounded the Brazilians by erecting fireplaces where on chilly nights in winter they could have warm fires like those in the elegant manor houses of Carolina.

They prospered. Some of them left the farms and became business men. The sons went in for medicine or the law or engineering. The Americans inter-married with each other at first, but later they began to wed the missionaries who came into Brazil, and some of them married Brazilians.

Villa Americana grew and grew. Foreigners of all nationalities went there to live. The section began to be famous for its watermelons, for the Southerners carried with them the seed of the great American product and planted them in the virgin soil of this fertile country.

Dr. Gaston did not settle at Villa Americana. He had other ambitions. At Campinas he established a hospital and became very well-to-do. He was so prominent in the medical fraternity of Brazil that when Brazil went to war with Paraguay the emperor pleaded with him to become a leading surgeon in the Brazilian army. But Dr. Gaston had had enough of that when Sherman and Grant and other Yankee generals were crashing into his Southland.

The doctor later did return to the United States and settled at Atlanta. There he died about twenty years ago.

His daughter, who tells this story, did not return. She remained at Bahia with her sister, who had married a missionary. When the ~~late~~ Rev. J. B. Kolb came down to live with that missionary preparatory to entering the mission field himself for the Northern Presbyterians, Dr. Gaston's younger daughter fell in love with him and married him.

The Southerners who went to Brazil did their part toward peopling the new country. Virtually all of them had large families. Mrs. Kolb herself was the mother of ten children.

She frequently visits in Villa Americana where she has many old friends. She believes that not one of the Confederate soldiers who accompanied her father is now living. Several members of the second generation, however, have their homes there or in other parts of Brazil.

The third generation of Americans is typically Brazilian, Mrs. Kolb said, despite the fact that all have been educated either in American schools in

Brazil or in schools in the United States.

They speak Portugese, the language of the country, more fluently than they do English, and they follow the customs of the country in all respects.

Brazil has improved since the advent of the Confederate colonists, Mrs. Kolb said. In 1866 the Brazilians hardly ever thought of making up a bed or otherwise keeping house properly. Today they are perhaps better housekeepers than the foreigners. Agriculture has improved tremendously because of the American influence. Nowhere in Brazil are such watermelons grown as in the Villa Americana, and this is now one of the best cotton-growing sections of the country.

Few of the Americans have returned to the United States to live. Those who inhabit Brazil are thoroughly contented with the people and with the country. The enmity of war days has entirely passed away. The Americans regard themselves not so much as sons and daughters of unreconstructed Southerners, but as pioneers who have entered and who are making good in a new country.

"As much as I love the South, the land of my fathers," said Mrs. Kolb, "I will be glad to get back to Sao Paulo. For that, you know, is home."

- Richmond News-Leader, Sept. 30th.

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THIS MORNING

John Temple Graves, II

"That whatsoever is lost
We seek it ere it come to light..."

The gathering war and the increasingly indicated common destiny of North America and South America make interesting as never before the available items of information on the Confederates who migrated to Brazil after 1865, and whose descendants live there today. A "lost colony" they were called but apparently many of them were not lost at all, contriving to find themselves in many useful and important ways in after years.

This is an excellent idea, for patriotism's sake and for history's, to discover friends and relatives among the descendants of the Southerners who went to Brazil and to establish contact with them.

The editor of the "In and Around the Town" column in the Sumter (S. C.) Daily Item, commenting some weeks ago on our interest in data on the "lost colony" of Confederates in Brazil, wrote of some who were not satisfied with Brazil and returned to the United States: "Among the number were the late S. W. Mobley and family, who returned in about 1886 and settled near Dalzell, S. C. When the family arrived in South Carolina all of the children spoke Portuguese more fluently than they did English and their conversations among themselves were usually in that language." The Item columnist recalled that one of the causes of dissatisfaction in Brazil was that Confederates were denied the right to own slaves there unless they would renounce American citizenship and become legally citizens

of Brazil and that quite a number were not willing to sever this tie with their native land.

That the Confederates retained their love of their native land and handed it down to their sons and grandsons free of bitterness over the defeat of the Confederacy is indicated in a note from Mattie M. Brunson of Florence, S. C., inclosing a copy of a letter written to friends in this country in June, 1917, by Mr. Cicero Jones, from Villa Americano, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Doctor Jones, son of one of the original members of the colony, wrote that "following the declaration of war between the United States and Germany the boys of the American colony, some 30-odd, met in my office and through me sent to our consul the following resolution: 'We the undersigned sons and grandsons of Confederate veterans, most respectfully offer our services to the American government to be used as it may see fit during the war between the United States and Germany, promising the same loyalty to the Stars and Stripes that our fathers gave to the Stars and Bars.'

"This resolution was signed by all present, and the first to sign was Joseph E. Whitaker, a Confederate veteran, who had been a lieutenant in Walthall's brigade of Mississippians. His two sons and a grandson also signed. Others were Oscar Pyles, George Darvill, Frank Hawthorne, Julian and LeRoy McFadden, the Rev. Mr. Maxwell (independent missionary), Edward Carlton, Ernest and Lee Rowe Locke, Henry and Joseph Whitaker, Cicero Jones and his sons Robert Yancey, Carroll and George..."

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