

The White Heritage

How unfortunate it is that we of this generation did not listen more attentively, ask more questions, and write down that vast store of knowledge of times gone by that the past generation had to impart to us. We look at old pictures stored in our attics with no names on them, or perhaps a piece of china that has come down to us from whom we do not know. I often think of how much Harvey's father, the late Matthew Elder White, knew of the large White Clan, whom he loved to talk about so interestingly. He often made the remark, knowing how numerous the Whites were, that Jimson Weed and the Whites were taking over Chester County. It was a joy to listen to him tell of the early days of the pioneer White family.



Home of Frank White purchased by Matthew White in 1878. Near the intersection of Southern Railroad and Great Falls Road. Became home of Matthew Elder White and Lula Dale White. Burned Feb. 22, 1940.

There were two hundred and sixty brave souls who had endured the rigors of the Atlantic voyage, aboard the ship Earl of Donegal when they put safely in at the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, on a cold wintry day, December 22, 1767. John White and his wife Ann Garner White, formerly of County Antrim, Ireland, were among those passengers to set foot on this strange land of America, a long way from home and a journey yet ahead for them to claim their grant in the Piedmont. John and Ann White had come to

America with their six children, five girls and one boy, to find a land of religious freedom. It was a long trek from Charleston to what is now Chester County in the year 1767. There were few roads, and there were wild animals and Indians to contend with on their journey. They reached their destination and settled about three miles southeast of the city of Chester on the Chester - Great Falls Highway. The land on which John and Ann White settled was a grant from King George III of England, and a portion of this original grant is still owned by David White, youngest son of Matthew Elder White.

Papa White used to talk at great length about the third generation of the White Clan, one Garner White, born 1767, who married Jennie Elder. Her brother, Matthew Elder, lived with them for a number of years. From his writings left to us, we get an insight into the daily life of the White family of that period. In those primitive days of frugality and toil people of all ages and sexes wore homespun. An indigo patch was indispensable. Other dyestuffs were sulphate of iron, maple and oak bark, walnut hulls, holly leaves, sumac, the long moss that grew on trees, and madder. The short drawn pat-pat of the cotton and the longer and more laborious drag of the wool cards, the hum of the spinning wheel, the clatter of the loom, all were heard almost daily in the household. There was a large orchard of peaches and apples. These fruits were made into brandy by putting them into troughs, pounding them to a pulp, and then letting them ferment to make the brew. Almost every family had this fiery stuff. The surplus produce from the garden and orchard was taken to Camden, Columbia, and Charleston to be sold. The journey to Charleston took three weeks by wagon. All of

the groceries and merchandise needed by the family were brought back by the same vehicle. A wagoner was hired for the task, sleeping in his wagon during the three weeks.

Papa White (Matthew Elder White) married Lula Dale, daughter of Dr. W. B. Dale of Oak Hill, Alabama. From this union there was a large family of two girls and eight boys. Papa in his



Back Row: M. Henry White (6), Matthew E. White (5). 2nd Row: Aunt Rena, servant to Matthew E. Whites, Elizabeth Jane White (5), Dr. Garner B. White (5), Rev. John A. White. 3rd Row: Susan White, wife of Rev. J. A. White, Francis, son in her lap. Carrie, wife of Dr. G. B. White, Matthew White (4), Sara Cole (6) in his lap. Lula, wife of M. E. White (5), Garner, son in her lap. Front Row: Lewis, son of Rev. John A. White. Carrie, daughter of M. E. White. Dale, son of M. E. White.

reminiscing gave us an insight into the life of his family. The family altar was the center of this Christian home, and each Sabbath morning they could be seen going to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in a horse-drawn carriage and a buggy. These two conveyances were stored along with the horses in a shed built for this purpose by the church. The children received their pre-college education at a one-room school located near Old Purity Cemetery, two miles east of Chester. Many lunches had to be prepared at home and much done before they left for school.

Many interesting events occurred during the life of this large family on the farm. The oldest son, Dale, who later became a missionary to India, had a bull calf named Isaiah that he rode all over the farm. Many times he

could be seen coming home from the wild plum orchard, in the area which is now called Hilltop Acres, with two buckets of plums across Isaiah's back. When Harvey and Matthew were ages six and four Papa took them in a buggy drawn by a young horse, which had just been broken in by Frazer's Livery Stable, to pick some peaches at the farm of his cousin, the late J. G. L. White. After the peaches and the boys were placed in the buggy and Papa attempted to turn the buggy around, the horse became frightened and went galloping down the road with Papa following in frightened pursuit. As the horse rounded a steep curve at a sweeping gallop the buggy turned over and landed upside down. As Papa came running up, the two little boys crawled from beneath the buggy unhurt.

The Whites are scattered from South Carolina to California. Most who left South Carolina migrated to Illinois, to Indiana, to Arkansas, and to Alabama. Papa White used to say that "the Whites were an honorable, people with very few exceptions." They have filled and are now filling positions of responsibility and honor. Many are educators, attorneys, ministers, missionaries, physicians, brokers, and businessmen of all kinds.

Take a trip to Old Purity Cemetery, near the site where John and Ann White settled, and read the inscriptions on the tombstones. Many have White names and others are White descendants. All of the Whites buried there are descendants of that first John and Ann White. The succeeding generations' roots run deep today. They share a love for kin and Chester County.

Burton Gettys White

About The Author

Burton Brice Gettys White is the daughter of Lawson Alexander Gettys of Shelby, North Carolina, and of Mary Adams Brice Gettys, a native of Fairfield County, South Carolina. She grew up in Shelby, North Carolina, graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, North Carolina, and is married to Harvey Stewart White, a retired executive of Equitable Life Insurance Co. The Harvey Whites returned to Chester after his retirement to build a home on part of their "White Heritage."

Beech Island to Chester - 1819

All is in a bustle at Riverside for on tomorrow Charlotte Zubley Clarke is to leave her father's home as the bride of John Mills, youngest son of Colonel John and Mary Gill Mills. She is quite sad over the thought of leaving her dear father who has always been so indulgent. Her maid, Cumber, is highly insulted to hear she is to ride on one of the wagons up to Chester. She has an idea that steamboats sail up to Chester like they do to Savannah and Augusta. She, her uncle, and his family are to go now to the upcountry as Miss Charlotte's Negroes. Mr. Clarke hated to part with this family, as they were among the most trustworthy of his slaves. However, he could not bear the idea of his dear Charlotte going up there alone with negroes not to be depended upon. This family were of the old Zubley set of slaves and were devoted to "Missy", as they called their lovely young mistress. Besides, Gabe was a fine shoemaker, and John Mills had told him how scarce a good shoemaker was in the upcountry. Besides that, he was considered a fine blacksmith. Mr. Clarke had thought of all this because if John Mills wasn't rich, then he had given him one of the most valuable Negroes he owned.

Mr. Clarke was having Gabe load the wagons from a ferry boat with things that had been sent down on the boat from Augusta. If ever a bride left her father's home well supplied with the comforts of life, Charlotte Clarke did. Her brother, Samuel, was there, too, seeing that everything was packed on the wagon, so as not to be injured or lost on the long journey up to Chester. John Mills had arrived the day before, and when seeing her father was going to give her such a liberal supply, he suggested that the wagons start a day ahead. Charlotte's brother, John, had kindly offered to come along with the wagons to help Gabe get the things to Chester in safety.

Mrs. Burney had come with the other Reddick children to make their home with her brother-in-law, Mr. Clarke. He would be so lonely now, and also, his health was failing.

John Mills was met by his brother, Thomas, at Edgefield the day he came for his wedding. Thomas was much gratified when he saw what an improvement had come over his heretofore reckless brother. John had a serious air and a dignity of manner that surprised Dr. Mills. He told his wife of how very much John had improved and said that he had great hopes of John yet being a first-class lawyer and a steady, settled man. The eventful day arrives, and Dr. Mills, with his wife and children, arrive at Riverside. They have come on ahead leaving John Mills to ride over with the minister who is to perform the marriage ceremony.

As the buggies or carriages drive up to Riverside, Mrs. Burney, who has her own quaint ideas about everything says, "Oh, let me go where I can't see these carriages and buggies. I feel like it is dear Charlotte's funeral they are all coming to."

She had such a sad ending to her marriage that she was always fearful that some sorrow instead of happiness would follow any girl who was fool enough to marry.

The nearest relatives and friends were all present. Charlotte Clarke was attired in an elegant gray broadcloth suit. Her lovely hair was caught up in a high knot and an elegant pearl comb held it in place. She had always worn her hair in loose curls and now it was hard to keep it tucked up, so little curls were everywhere trying to make their escape. She was very pale when her father came in with his proud air and had her leaning on his trembling arm.

Dr. Mills came in with John Mills. Although the room was not allowed to be decorated by either Mr. Clarke or Mrs. Burney, who had said it was funeral enough without flowers to make it look more so, Mrs. Ardis had insisted upon having the darkened room brilliantly lighted by colored wax tapers.