



DOCTOR WALTER BRICE PLACE

## DR. WALTER BRICE HOUSE

BRICE —MACFIE— JOHNSON

This attractive old house was built by Doctor Walter Brice in the 1840's. For many years Doctor Brice was a beloved physician in the New Hope section. The house he built was stately, commodious, and comfortable and a much visited place in the community. It sits back from the road and is approached by an avenue of beautiful trees.

Among the original outbuildings was a picturesque little structure similar in design to that of the residence. It was known as the "Doctor's Office." Here it was that he kept the herbs which he compounded into medicines and pills for the sick. The patients who came to him were treated in the "office."

During the War Between the States a wing of Sherman's Army came this way. When Mrs. Brice heard that they were approaching she and her faithful butler gathered all of the family silver and valuables and buried them under the flagstone floor of the Doctor's Office. This was done with great care and secrecy for some of the Negroes on the plantation were known to be eagerly awaiting the invaders and were willing to help them in any way that they might.

When the dreaded day finally came the Yankees swarmed all over the place, ransacking as they went, madly searching for gold, silver, or jewelry. When nothing of any value was found they were greatly disappointed and angry for they had been told by Negro informers that there would be much loot in this house. When this proved false they told the soldiers that the butler must have hidden it away. They immediately seized the frightened man and demanded that he reveal the hiding place. When he refused they threatened him and later flogged him but still he kept the secret. Finally they turned to methods of torture and he was hung from a tree in the yard by his thumbs. His agony was so great that his mistress commanded the men stop and ordered the good butler to take them to the office and get the loot for them. After this was done the man who took a bag of flat silver for himself began taunting and talking disrespectfully to the young mistress of the plantation. She told him coldly that he had taken what he had come for and suggested that he leave, adding, "This will be the first time in my life that I have not had a silver spoon with which to stir my tea."

The soldier reached into the bag containing the silver, pulled out a spoon which he bent and twisted all out of shape and with an outburst of oaths threw it at her feet. A descendant of this lady still has this memento of the horrible day and all that was left of the family silver.

After the bummers had departed it was whispered that the rebellious Negroes were planning to raid and take over the plantation for themselves.

Members of the Brice family and their faithful people gathered at this house to protect themselves. The raid was staged on a moonlight night and those within the house could see and hear the angry mob approaching. Just before they reached the dwelling they noticed the figure of a large black man in the road between the building and the marchers. He raised both long arms into the air above his head and motioned to them to go back. Strangely enough they did; some of them at a trot!

The people within the house thought that this big man was the stranger who had been inciting the Negroes to riot and that for some unknown reason he had changed his plan for the night. He was never seen nor heard of again and the once defiant Negroes ceased to cause or talk of further trouble.

Some time later those who witnessed the affair learned that the big man was no man at all but the ghost of a faithful servant. The insurrectionists had recognized him and had heeded the spectral warning, fleeing in terror. He is still talked about in the community and is referred to as the "Big Black Ghost."

This place has remained in the Brice family for many years, passing from them to the Macfies with whom they intermarried. A few years ago it was sold to Henry Johnson who has modernized and restored the house and now makes his home here.

## TOM "SHANTY" BRICE PLACE

### BRICE

The old house known as the TOM "SHANTY" BRICE place is one of the oldest buildings still standing in the New Hope section. Very little of its history can be found. It is known to be the home of T. S. Brice who was quite a colorful figure and politician in his day. He served Fairfield in the Legislature in 1890.

An amusing story is told about him and his campaign speeches. He would always close his orations with an invitation to all of his supporters to come visit him any time that they were traveling his way and that they would always be welcome and have room made for them in his "little shanty." Some of these people were later surprised when they paid him a visit to find the "little shanty" to be a large, spacious, rather elegant home. From this episode he was given the nickname of "Tom Shanty."