

TRAPP PLACE

TRAPP – GOODLETT – SMITH

This unique old house is called the TRAPP PLACE, taking its name from early owners who lived here for several generations. The builder of the house is unknown but it must be of an extremely early vintage judging by its construction. The property was given to a Mrs. Trapp by her father (name unknown) when she married William Trapp.

The present owner, Mrs. Carrie Goodlett Smith (Mrs. Caldwell Smith) bought the place from descendants of the Trapps after the death of her first husband, Mr. Goodlett. She repaired the house which although run-down was still solid, built of large hand-hewn logs. At that time only two of the windows had panes in them, the others were only gaping openings in the walls.

The walls of the house have been covered with weatherboarding and ceiled on the interior which is quite simple and plain with no ornamentations or decorations but it has a definite early-American character.

The yard is fenced in and is filled with shrubbery and a profusion of colorful flowers which gives the old place an air of cheerfulness.

FONTI FLORA

PEARSON

The Pearsons were among the first settlers to come to Fairfield. They have been cultured social and political leaders for generations and about two centuries. The PEARSON MANUSCRIPTS kept and recorded by members of this family has done much to retain the history of the county. One of the first of the name was a leader of the two Seventh Day Adventists congregations who settled here before the American Revolution.

Through the years this family acquired much land and amassed a fortune. It was during this period of prosperity before the Confederate War that Doctor George Butler Pearson built the handsome mansion at FONTI FLORA and made it the seat of his estate.

The site was chosen with care and the name is most descriptive. Fonti Flora means fountains and flowers and fountain is a very literal name for on the place are numerous strong springs around which wild flowers grow in profusion.

The home that the doctor built is large and comfortable, majestic, and bordering on elegance. It is fronted with a two story gabled portico supported by six massive wooden columns. In the center of the front gable is a beautifully designed window with a fan-light of glass panes. The rooms are large and airy with high ceilings, handsome mantels, cornices and wainscotings, all made by hand and carved by artists of the trade. An imposing stairway rises from the long, wide hall and leads up to the second and third floors. Some of the original furnishings and paintings still grace the rooms and adorn the walls of the old mansion. In the drawing room are portraits of the Pearson family painted by the famous artist, Scarborough.

The grounds have returned to their pristine loveliness. Except for the boxwood garden to the right of the manor house the setting is one of pure natural beauty. When the house was first built the grounds or park was exquisitely landscaped in the formal English tradition. This park surrounding the house included twenty-five acres of rare shrubs, flowers for each season, an orchard of fruit trees and one of nut trees; a vineyard, a rose garden, and a boxwood garden. The walks and drives were laid out in geometrical patterns and were lined with boxwood.

The usual outbuildings were well grouped to the sides and to the rear of the main dwelling. The remains of the old kitchen are still evident although now it is just a mass of huge stones. Among the auxiliary buildings was the "Doctor's Shop." Doctor Pearson was a naturalist as well as a physician and he grew and collected rare herbs from all over the world. From these he compounded his medicines which were used extensively throughout the countryside.

When the invading armies from the North came through in the Sixties FONTI FLORA was looted. Valuables were stolen and destroyed and rare books were taken from their shelves never to return again. The house itself was set fire to and still bears the black scars of those dreadful times on the charred wainscotings in the room where the fire was started and later put out by faithful servants who were responsible for saving the old mansion.

One member of the family to witness these horrible scenes was an old man in his "second childhood." His violent protests and high-sounding oratory amused the soldiers who taunted him just to hear him talk and rave. Before leaving they brought a horse into the grand hallway, bound the patriarch's hands behind him and mounted him backwards on the frightened animal, driving it with whoops and cheers up and down the hall until the old man was finally thrown off onto the hard floor. With jokes and jeers they left him there on the floor of the smoking house. After their departure the servants carried him out and extinguished the flames.

Another hair-raising event took place in this old house. A young mistress of the plantation was alone in the building with her small children one night. Living on the place was a demented but thought to be harmless old Negress. She did small tasks and was cared for by the family in appreciation for services that she had rendered in days gone by when she was well and in her right mind. On this particular night the mistress of the house was awakened by the old woman who was standing over her with a raised hatchet in her hand. She told the bewildered and frightened woman that she had seen a vision that night and that an angel had told her to go to the "Big House" and kill her mistress.

The horrified young woman was terror-stricken! She pleaded and argued that her life should be spared for the sake of her small children. In spite of the entreaties the old crone would only shake her head and say that the ugly job had to be done just as the angel had instructed her although she was "awful sorry" that her "young missus" had to be the victim. Finally, almost at her wit's end, she remembered that the old woman loved whiskey. When this fact came into her mind she reasoned in another way and told her that some liquor was in the house but that it was so well concealed that no one could



FONTI FLORA

find it if she did not take them to it. The old woman showed immediate interest and let her thirst overcome her angel's command. She permitted her victim to get the spirits for her. The cunning housewife insisted that she drink some before using the hatchet for it would give her more courage. The old woman heeded and took one drink and then another until she became so drunk that she could no longer hold the death weapon. The next day the unfortunate old creature was bound and loaded into a wagon and was taken to town by some of the plantation hands where she was placed in the county jail from whence she was committed to the State Asylum.

FONTI FLORA still remains in the Pearson family. Its present owner is Mrs. George W. Tomlin of Columbia, South Carolina, who was born Katherine Pearson. Mrs. Tomlin and her family dearly love the old place and are now in the process of a restoration which is being supervised by Mr. Tomlin.

ROSE HILL

HALL — PROVENCE — LONG — BLAIR — PARKER

This property was given to Elizabeth (Lizzie) Hall by her father as a dower when she and Colonel David Provence were married. Colonel Provence came to South Carolina from Kentucky in 1836. After he and Miss Hall were married he enlarged and remodeled the house adding a wing to the rear and the bay windows on the front. A Mr. Jennings who worked for him did the work.

The house is an odd little building. Entering it from the front is a reception hall with a room on either side and from which the stairway extends to the second floor. To the rear of the hall is a large, long dining room and another smaller room. The kitchen is behind the main building but connected to it by a covered back porch. The bedrooms are on the second story and a porch extends across the front.

Colonel Provence was an eccentric gentleman, very proud and proper. He loved horses and racing and enjoyed entertaining and being entertained. His grave is a short distance from the house and across the road from the Rock Creek Baptist Church and cemetery. One story is that he requested to be buried here and not in the cemetery with "the common herd." Another is that he was a Catholic and requested not to be buried with "the heretics." The third story is that due to his faith the members of the church objected to his interment among them. Be all of this as it may the fact remains that the solitary grave with a handsome marker stands alone on a hill opposite the church.

After the Colonel's death quarrying operations were begun at Blair's and the first of the operators and stonecutters were Italians. They heard local stories about the late Colonel and that he was a rich man who had requested that a fortune be buried with him. Believing this story a group of these men exhumed the old man's body during the hours of darkness and on finding no treasure except his watch and ring, left the casket and the almost mummified body beside the open grave.