

piece, about five feet above the ground. The cornices of the main structure and of the porch were decorated with block patterns. Double doors framed by paned side-lights made an attractive entrance.

The rooms were spacious and were decorated with handcarved woodwork and trim. Two of the mantels, in particular, were well executed and quite handsome. The easy-rising stair with its bannister and pickets of walnut was one of the main decorative features of the house.

This house, from all appearances, must have been built in the very early 1800's by one of the Winns. The second owner on record was Ed Robinson whose family lived here for many years before the War Between the States. Ed Robinson married Elizabeth Bolick and they had two daughters. One of the daughters, Lizzie, married Moses Clark. She and her husband purchased this place from her family and lived here their entire lives. It was occupied by their descendants for many years and the property still belongs to this family.

Older residents of the community recall the place as always being hospitable, one in which many of the parties and dances of the community were held. The site is not far from Little River in one of the oldest settled portions of the section. It is near the Bell, Winn, Palmer and Lemmon homes.

THE BELL PLACE

BELL - LEMMON - HENRY - WILKES

The BELL PLACE is one of the older of the pre-Revolutionary houses in the county. It occupies the site of one of the first settlements or "cow pens" in the upcountry.

Originally the BELL PLACE consisted of more than three thousand acres of land. The house was built in the 1750's, and is probably the oldest house in the county that is still in use. The original portion consisted of two rooms and a hall on the first and second floors and two partially finished rooms in the attic. These rooms were floored and ceiled with wide, heart-pine planks, some of which were hand-planed. None of the lumber was tongued and grooved. In this old portion of the building loop-holes for sighting and firing on the Indians and holes used as candle holders are still to be seen in this pioneer house of which the entire framework is put together with pegs.

The doors in this part of the building are of particular interest and are of authentic, pre-Revolutionary design, now reproduced and referred to as "colonial doors." In each is a distinct cross, indicating according to tradition, the religious belief of the household. The Bells were Scottish Covenanters, in this country referred to as Associate Reformed Presbyterians.

Many years before the War Between the States the old house was enlarged and remodeled. A two story, seven room wing was added to the back of the building and was fronted with a double-decked porch. During this time the three big mantels with their straight panels and beautiful handcarvings were added. This work was done by highly trained plantation hands who used only their pocket-knives to carve the intricate designs. The kitchen was in the yard a distance behind the house.

The Bells owned many slaves and the quarters for housing them was about one quarter of a mile from the main dwelling. Across the road from the plantation house was a large slave cemetery. A few of the marked graves still may be seen. The inscriptions are quite interesting. Near this burying ground, on a peninsula jutting into the Little River swamp, is a large grave. It is evidently the tomb of a person of some consequence. A heavy granite base supports the stone tomb which is above the ground and covered with a heavy slab of granite. This is enclosed with a low rock wall. In recent years this grave has either been desecrated or badly damaged by storms and floods for the slab now lies half buried in the ground beside the open grave. The wall is broken and the massive base has been upset in several places. Time and weather seems to have erased all traces of an inscription. Old timers say that they can remember when the inscription was still legible and that this is the grave of a Winn, probably the Richard Winn for whom Winnsboro is named.

Another story that is told but is sometimes contradicted is about a daughter of the family who eloped with her father's northern born overseer. The ambitious young man thought that he would be received as a member of the family and of the gentry of the neighborhood and would live in the "big house" with his bride and her people. When they returned to the plantation he had a rude awakening. They were met by the master who horse-whipped the groom and later built a small four room house in the yard for the couple to occupy. Whether this is truth or legend is not known but it is a fact that there was a four room building near the house that was removed a few years ago because it was not only useless but a fire hazard, as well as an eyesore.

This old place is heavy with tradition and many stories are told about the old house being haunted. One of these is based on an unfortunate accident that occurred many years ago. Mr. Martin, a Presbyterian minister, and several other men, were riding up the avenue of trees leading to the house. The men were joking and cutting at each other with their riding crops. As the play grew rougher some of them lost their tempers. One struck the preacher, who dismounted and picked up a rock to throw at his assailant. John Bell had also dismounted and had hidden behind a tree. Just as the clergyman threw the rock Mr. Bell peeped from behind the tree. The hurling stone struck him with full force on the head and he died soon after he was brought to the house for treatment. His widow continued to operate the plantation for a time and then it was leased.

Walker Kirkpatrick, a young man from York County, managed the place for the Widow Bell and later rented and planted it for himself. He was an affable and popular bachelor and married a Lebanon girl, Maggie Pope. Later his brother, Robert Kirkpatrick married Maggie's twin sister, Mattie. When the Kirkpatricks lived here they were young and gay and the old house was a center of the social activities of the neighborhood. Dances and parties, quail hunts and picnics were held here often.

In the early 1900's the place was sold by Mrs. Bell to James T. Lemmon who bought the house and a one thousand acre tract of land. At his death the plantation was inherited by his daughter, Mrs. Lambert Henry, the mother of the present owner, Mrs. Myrtle Henry Wilkes.



THE BELL PLACE