

ANDREW JACKSON MEMORABILIA

Andrew Jackson, the “Hero of New Orleans” and 7th president of the United States, was born in the Waxhaws of present-day Lancaster County on March 15, 1767—at least the preponderance of evidence points to his being born on the land that is now the Andrew Jackson State Park.

Jackson died at his home, the Hermitage, near Nashville, Tennessee. The Hermitage, open to the public, contains most of Jackson’s household furnishings and private property.

However, in Jackson’s lifetime he gave many gifts to friends and admirers. Many of these gifts are still in private hands. Surviving Jackson memorabilia include private and public letters, autographs, vases, snuff boxes and a scarf pin still in the hands of a Lancaster County family.

In his will, Jackson bequeathed his gold snuff box to “the bravest soldier in the next war” (that was to be the War with Mexico and the box was given to Gen. Ward B. Burnett of New York). Snuffboxes seemed to be a favorite gift of Jackson. While president, he sent one to a friend of his youth in the Waxhaws, Mary Crawford Dunlap.

The gold scarf pin has an interesting story behind it. The pin has the name “Jackson” engraved in a semi-circle. Beneath the name is the figure “8.” What the “8” represents is uncertain. There was once a small diamond between the “8” and the name but it was lost in 1933 when the pin was displayed at the Chicago Exposition.

Tradition has it that Joshua Gordon of the Lancaster County Indian Land was at a celebration where Jackson was speaking and that Jackson was so delighted to see his boyhood friend that he took off the pin and gave it to Gordon in memory of the days they frolicked together.

Various historians have tried to verify the story of the scarf pin. It is no doubt true that a grandson of Joshua Gordon, Thomas McKibben, inherited the pin from his spinster aunt, Hannah Gordon.

A Lancaster Deeds Book shows that in 1869, Hannah Gordon deeded 165 acres on Six Mile creek to Thomas McKibben and his two brothers, Hugh and Benjamin, in return for their taking care of her for the remainder of her life. Years later, the scarf pin was given to Dr. S. H. Ezzell of Van Wyck by Thomas McKibben in appreciation of his services.

It is not the Gordon-McKibben-Ezzell connection that is challenged. Rather, the questions come in regard to the Joshua Gordon-Andrew Jackson relationship. One writer referred to Joshua Gordon as a “boyhood friend and kinsman of Andrew Jackson”. There is no evidence that the two were kin.

Joshua Gordon is supposed to have been wounded at “Sumter’s Defeat” (Rocky Mount, Chester Co, S. C., late July 1780). Records show that in 1801 Gordon applied for a N. C. pension and that he was a private in the Franklin county (N. C.) militia when he was severely wounded in the thigh. Jackson, only

13 years of age, was not at Rocky Mount and never served under Sumter. He did serve as a courier for Gen. Wm. R. Davie at the battle of Hanging Rock and was soon captured and imprisoned in Camden.

In short, the likelihood of Gordon and Jackson meeting during Jackson's boyhood is slim. While we don't know exactly when Gordon was born, it appears that he was apparently 8 to 10 years older than Jackson. The 1790 census shows Gordon living in York county, S. C with his wife and 3 children. By the time he moves to Lancaster county, Jackson is studying law in Salisbury, NC.

One account says that Joshua Gordon heard Jackson speak in Charleston, S. C. The fact is that after leaving what he called "my native State" for Tennessee, Jackson never set foot on South Carolina soil again.

By Louise Pettus