



## EDITOR'S NOTES

This biography, written by John Wells Simpson, son of Chief Justice William Dunlap Simpson, was never formally published. For this reason, we have decided to add it to the story of the Simpson family of Laurens County, and to the history of the Belfast Plantation as a way of preserving a valuable piece of history as related by a man so close to Governor Simpson. The book, as far as we can determine, is only otherwise available in the Rare Book section of the library at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, or perhaps with some descendant.

There were at least five men in the Simpson family of Laurens who were named John Wells Simpson, and probably more. The original person known by that name in Laurens County was Dr. John Wells Simpson (1796-1881), who was named John for his father, Col. John Simpson, who came to Laurens County, SC in 1786, and Wells for the maiden name of his mother Mary. She was the daughter of Richard Wells and Jane Ashmond of London, England, who were clients of John while he was a merchant there.

As noted elsewhere in this work, Col. John Simpson was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, thus the name for his eventual home in Laurens County. His life span was 1751-1815. John and Mary were married in 1786, just before their immigration to the new country of the United States of America. Mary was also born in Ireland in 1754. She and John had five children in rapid succession before the birth of Dr. John Wells Simpson in 1796: four girls and one son. One more son was born in 1798, and Mary would pass away twelve years later in 1810. Col. John remarried, to a Sarah Smith, but produced no more children. All of his children married into the families of prominent local citizens.

Dr. John Wells Simpson was the father of William Dunlap Simpson who served briefly as Governor of South Carolina, and who is the subject of this biography written by his own son, who was named for his grandfather. It is obvious that John had copies of his father's letters and papers, which makes this biography even more illustrative and important.

Thanks to some business dealings of the brother of William Dunlap Simpson, attorney John Wistar Simpson (1821-1893), and the family of Governor Simpson became familiar with Spartanburg County. Wistar and William were law partners and being the only two children of Dr. Simpson and his first wife, Mary Elizabeth Satterwhite of Newberry, they developed an affinity and mutual friendship and respect for one another that lasted their entire lives. They lost their true mother when they were both very tiny children, and Dr. John would marry four more times, producing nine additional children. This probably helped the two boys to become closer than if their mother had survived and produced more children herself. The two brothers were born within two years of one another, and only three years separated their deaths.

John Wistar Simpson studied law and became an accomplished attorney; he also became editor of the *Laurensville Herald* and like his brother, served in the CSA. In 1877, he bought Glenn Springs, the famous Spartanburg County resort, and Governor Simpson took occasional well-deserved holidays at the hotel there.

John Wells Simpson was born in 1871 to William Dunlap Simpson and Jane Elizabeth Young. Unlike his brothers and father, he did not pursue law as a career. In September 1895, he and Mabel Fleming were married in Spartanburg. John had also been a frequent visitor to the resort in Spartanburg and had expanded his acquaintance with Mabel, daughter of Dr.

Charles Edwin Fleming (1835-1894) and Elizabeth Dean (1844-1915), who was herself the daughter of Hosea Jefferson Dean (1806-1855), a former Spartanburg mayor and Clerk of the SC House. Hosea Dean was at one time the law partner of Henry Clinton Young, whose daughter just happened to be the mother of John Wells Simpson as the wife of Governor Simpson, who had also practiced law with Henry Clinton Young. So they were all "family".

In 1897, John Wells Simpson was serving as an Assistant Cashier in the National Bank of Spartanburg. His wife Mabel had pursued family history for much of her life, and some of her correspondence can be found among the papers of William Dunlap Simpson in the Wilson Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC. By 1910, Simpson had advanced in his work as a banker, and the couple had produced three children: Mabel (Jr.), William D., named for his grandfather, and Elizabeth. In 1920, the Simpson family was in Columbia, and only two children were still living at home: John Jr. and Elizabeth.

During the 1920's, the Simpsons moved from Spartanburg to Greensboro, N.C., where John worked for the Atlantic Bank and Trust Company. He was also elected vice president of the North Carolina Bankers' Association. In 1930, John and Mabel were still in Greensboro, and no child was counted in their family on that census. In 1934, letters show that they had moved to Morristown, TN, where John was receiver for the First National Bank. Sometime between 1940 and 1942, John, now about 70 years of age, and Mabel moved back to Greensboro, where it seems he lived until his death in 1951. His wife had died at Friendship, near Guilford College, just five years before. Since he states that he was the only living child at the time of the writing, this biography was probably written about 1946-1948.

Perhaps no other person could have written a more illustrative account of the outstanding life of this Laurens County native. The reader will move through a sea of commas and interesting syntax, but will experience an intimate view of the man and of the times in which he lived. William D. Simpson was born at Belfast, and grew up a playmate of slave boys. Throughout his life, he did not demonstrate the radical racial sentiments of some of his contemporaries. His family situation determined that the finest education would be available to him, and he did not disappoint his father. He obtained a bachelor's degree at the South Carolina College (later the University of South Carolina), and from there went on to Harvard.

Upon graduation, he joined the law office of Henry Clinton Young in Laurens, and made a name for himself there. In 1854 he was elected to the SC House and served two terms, and then was elected to the Senate, but that career was cut short by the War. He entered the CSA as a Major, serving as an aide to General Bonham and was soon promoted to Lt. Colonel. He served in the Confederate Congress from 1863-1865, and after the war, was elected as the Representative of the 4th District to the US Congress. He was denied taking his seat, however, because of a hastily drafted resolution that disallowed service in Congress by anyone who had taken part in the "rebellion". He served again in the SC Senate, became Lt. Governor with Governor Wade Hampton in 1879, then for a year was Governor. He was elected to the SC Supreme Court in 1880, and was Chief Justice until his death in 1890, which came about, according to the biography, as the result of untreated diabetes.

Note: We have changed some of the spellings in the text in the interest of authenticity: Scotch is a drink, for example, Scots or Scotsmen refer to people, therefore the expression SCOTCH-IRISH should rightfully be written SCOTS-IRISH. Also, we can find no time at which Laurens, named for Henry Laurens, was written LAWRENCEVILLE; it was once Laurens Court House, then Laurensville, and finally Laurens. Changes are indicated in footnotes. No footnotes were present in the original text, these were added for historical reasons. Editor: Richard Fowler, May 2011.



William Dunlap Simpson in his earlier years, about 1860.



**CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM DUNLAP SIMPSON**

(All photos in this re-edited work except the original on page 29 were added by the editor.)

## A BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM DUNLAP SIMPSON

By John Wells Simpson

### CHAPTER I

**W**illiam Dunlap Simpson, born at Belfast, Laurens County, South Carolina, on October 27th, 1823, is the descendant of Scots-Irish<sup>1</sup> Presbyterians, emigrants from Belfast, Ireland, where they were well-to-do citizens, highly respected for all those virtues associated with Scots-Irish Presbyterians, many of whom migrated to America.

William and Mary Simpson, the parents of Colonel John Simpson, together with four of their five children, came to America in 1770<sup>2</sup> and settled in Laurens County.<sup>3</sup> The fifth child, John Simpson, after receiving a fair education in Belfast and after reaching his majority, moved to London, England, and engaged in merchandising. On September 21st, 1786, he married Mary Wells, of Burfort (Burford) Oxfordshire, England, and six weeks later they came to America and they too settled in Laurens County, South Carolina. Colonel John Simpson invested his money in a plantation in that county and, with the prior consent of the other Simpsons who had preceded him, named his new home "Belfast" in honor of his native city. His home, a three story brick structure, still stands and is still in use.

By reason of his ability, energy and character, John Simpson prospered in his adopted country and became quite prominent, and, for that period, quite wealthy. He acquired much land and is said to have owned, in addition, about half of the village of Laurensville<sup>4</sup> (now called "Laurens"). He served his State as a member of her legislature and, for many years, was a member of her militia. As a citizen, he always counted as an influential advocate and supporter of all worthy causes.

He, and his wife Mary Wells, were the parents of three sons and four daughters, all of whom survived them and, through whose marriages, the family became identified with several of the other leading families of upper South Carolina. One daughter married John Nickels, a prominent physician and planter. Another married Thomas Wright, a general of the militia and a planter. Another married General John K. Griffin,<sup>5</sup> a member of Congress, and the fourth married Anthony Griffin,<sup>6</sup> another prominent planter. The three sons became prominent and sustained the standing and reputation of the family. One of the sons, W. W. (*William Wells*) Simpson, became judge of the Ordinary Court. Another son, R. F. (*Richard Franklin*) Simpson, the youngest of the three, was a lawyer and a member of Congress. The second son, John Wells Simpson, the father of the subject of this biography, was a graduate of the South Carolina College, and later of Jefferson Medical College, in Philadelphia. Colonel John Simpson, having previously provided for his other children, bequeathed his entire estate to his two sons, John Wells and R. F. Simpson, and to John Wells was entrusted the management of the estate.

John Wells practiced his profession for a number of years at Belfast and later moved to Laurens, where he became widely recognized, not only as an able and successful physician, but as a wealthy and capable leader in many community businesses and activities. While owning comparatively few slaves, there were, among those whom he did own, several trained artisans, whose services were in constant demand and with whom he built the stately Laurens Court House, the Laurensville Female Academy, which he also endowed, and his home in Laurens. This home continued, until comparatively recently, to be a show place of the town, its outstanding features being its lovely stairs and railings and its beautiful

<sup>1</sup> Spelled SCOTCH-IRISH in the original text. -ED

<sup>2</sup> William and sons Alexander and James were passengers on the *James and Mary*, from Larne to Charles Towne, arriving 21 October, 1772. From there they journeyed to "Craven County" which included present day Laurens County, to take up land "on the waters of Little River (indicating a tributary) bounded by Jacob Jones, Elizabeth Caldwell and vacant land." -ED

<sup>3</sup> At that time, the area was part of the Ninety Six Judicial District. Laurens County was not formed and named until 1785, after the War. -ED

<sup>4</sup> Spelled "Lawrenceville" in the original text. We find no record that it was ever officially spelled that way. -ED

<sup>5</sup> John King Griffin (1789-1841) was a son of Charles Griffin (1763-1820) and Mary King (1763-1823). -ED

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Griffin, (1786-1850) son of Richard Griffin (1734-1805) +Nancy Clark (1739-1792), 1st cousin once removed of John King Griffin. -ED

scenic wall paper, which was imported from Europe. Its furnishings were in keeping with the house, some of them still being owned by his descendants, especially by his grandson, John Wells Simpson.

Dr. Simpson exemplified throughout his life all the finer qualities attributed to his Scots-Irish descent. He, a worthy Presbyterian Ruling Elder, died in 1886 at the age of eighty-four, his mother, Mary Wells, had died August 29th, 1810 at the age of fifty-six.

Dr. Simpson's first wife, he having been married more than once, was Miss Elizabeth Satterwhite, the daughter of John Satterwhite of Newberry, SC, a Virginian. She was born April 3rd, 1803, and died September 24, 1824. To Dr. Simpson and Elizabeth were born two sons, John Wistar and William Dunlap Simpson. These two boys spent their early childhood at Belfast where they were born, forging the ties of affection which bound them closely to one another and endured as long as both were alive. They played together as children, they attended school together, went to the South Carolina College and to Harvard University together and practiced law as partners until the health of John Wistar failed. Their confidence in, and affection for one another were so great that not once, until death separated them, was a settlement of their business affairs made, nor did any question ever arise in the mind of either as to the propriety of an act of the other in handling their common interests.

Their mother, having died during the infancy of William Dunlap and their father, having moved to Laurensville, the Belfast home was occupied by an Uncle and Aunt, Dr. and Mrs. Peter Moon, who became largely responsible for shaping the character of these boys and their life histories show what a fine job these devoted kinsfolk did.

Before school age, these boys, like most country boys at that time, in this section, had ample territory in which to play and many activities in and around the country home to watch and in which to participate. They doubtless also had specific chores, suited to their ages, to perform, which may in part explain their later interest in farming and their capabilities as farmers. Idleness was not at that time an approved thing for those able to share family duties.

Although living in the country, they were not without playmates. There were a number of slaves and their children and some of the latter were the daily companions, the loved friends, the devoted attendants of these boys, a relationship which meant much to the happiness of all concerned. It also accounts in large measure for the sympathetic and friendly understanding of, and kindly attitude to, Negroes, which were marked characteristics of J. Wistar and William D., in their maturity, in dealing with them. My father, William D. Simpson, remembered all his life many things which happened while he was a small boy at Belfast, but the one which made the most vivid impression on his mind was the great fall of meteorites in 1833, visible in both Americas, and the re-action to this of the Negroes, the birds and the animals. He could never forget the beauty of the display nor the terror of the Negroes. The Negroes simply knew that the end of the world was at hand and voiced their fears in loud lamentations and prayers, running, in their fright, for protection and comfort, with impartiality to their "white folk" and to their God. It is probable that these "white folk" were scared too, but they had to conceal this for the benefit of "their" colored folk. Though this remarkable natural display occurred during the day, the heavens were overcast, adding vividness and brilliance to the meteors and causing the birds and fowls to go to roost.

Reaching school age, these boys joined their father in Laurensville and entered the Academy, where they received their primary training. Finishing this, they became students at the South Carolina College, in Columbia, S.C., from which they were graduated with distinction in 1843. Selecting the practice of law as their life work they then entered Harvard Law School, which, at that time, was presided over by those two outstanding authorities on law, Joseph Story and Simon Greenleaf, but, because of illness, William D. pursued his studies under these men for only one year.

Upon returning to Laurens, William D. entered the law office of the Honorable Henry C. Young, one of the most prominent and successful attorneys of the Western District of South Carolina, under whom he continued the study of the law until he was admitted to its practice in 1846, at which time he

became a member of the South Carolina Bar. Shortly thereafter he and his mentor, Mr. Young, became partners, a happy and successful relationship which lasted until the death of Mr. Young, October 20th, 1875.<sup>7</sup>

After Mr. Young's death, the partnership with his brother, J. Wistar, already mentioned, was formed and the two brothers practiced law as partners until, years later, J. Wistar was incapacitated by ill health. During this period this firm became one of the most successful and prominent in upper South Carolina, representing one side or the other in most of the important cases in a wide range of counties.

While a partner of Mr. Young, my father courted and married Jane Elizabeth Young, Mr. Young's daughter, thus entering upon a happy relationship which lasted until his death in 1890. To this couple were born eight children, three daughters, Lucy Elizabeth (Mrs. Nickels John Holmes), Laura Wells (Mrs. John Nickels Wright), and Mary Eloise (Mrs. Stobo James Simpson), and five sons, Henry Young, Wistar Augustus, William Dixie and Ernest, who subsequently added "Augustus" as his middle name, and John Wells, the writer of this biography. All of these, except Wistar Augustus, who died in infancy, lived to maturity, exemplifying in their lives the high ideals of their parents. The only one of these now living is the writer.

## CHAPTER II

WILLIAM Dunlap Simpson, like many young lawyers, not only practiced law, but, because of that fact and the prominence he attained in the practice, became actively engaged in politics, representing Laurens County in the legislature for a number of terms. He was first elected to the House of Representatives, on October 10th, 1854, and again in 1858. In the session of 1854-55 he was a member of the Committee on Claims and of the Committee on Grievances. In the session of 1858-59 he was a member of the Committee on Claims and of the Committee on Education, the latter being a happy assignment for him, as he was an ardent champion of improved educational facilities for the state. During this session he introduced a measure of very considerable importance at that time, and of justice.

In the session of 1859 the following measure was introduced: "Resolved that in the opinion of the General Assembly a dissolution of the Union is inevitable; and, inasmuch as it must come sooner or later, the best interests of the South require that it should come speedily; Resolved that South Carolina has been ready since her Secession Ordinance of 1852 to form a Southern Confederacy with her sister slave-holding states. She is still ready and to this end stands prepared either to accept an invitation to a Southern Congress or to unite in a call for one, not to discuss the propriety of a dissolution but to make the necessary arrangements, and in the event of such an invitation being tendered by one or more of the slave-holding states, or of such call being made, the Governor is hereby authorized and required to convene the legislature to provide for the election of delegates to said congress to assist in carrying out the purpose herein above expressed." This was passed by the House on December 16th, 1859, in an amended form, providing "immediate communication with other slave-holding states and appropriating \$100,000 for military contingencies." As this was adopted by unanimous vote, it may be assumed that my father voted for it.

In 1860 he was elected to the state Senate, succeeding Senator Irby,<sup>8</sup> and was a member of this body at the beginning of the Civil War. He was Chairman of the Senate Committees on Incorporations and Engrossed Acts.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Clinton Young was the man for whom the city of Clinton, SC was named. He was part of the development of the railroad that eventually passed through Clinton from Columbia to Laurens, and helped to name and lay out streets in the town, which was located in a former marshy area known as Five Forks. As noted, he was also the father-in-law of William Dunlap Simpson. -ED

<sup>8</sup> This a reference to James Henderson Irby (1793-1860) of Laurens, also former Lieutenant-Governor of SC. -ED



Early in his public career he began displaying that interest in all matters which affected his home community and his state, which distinguished his public service throughout his life, and, an unusually handsome and impressive man and an eloquent speaker, he was in demand for meetings of all kinds having to do with the welfare of his community and his state. Through such meetings he soon became known over the state for his advocacy of better educational conditions and, especially in his own county, for his support of everything that promised in any way to be of benefit to it and to the state.

Illustrative of this catholic interest in the public welfare were two meetings held in Laurensville (Laurens) in September, 1855 in the interest of the Laurensville Academy, at both of which he was an invited speaker. Reporting on the second of these meetings, the *Laurensville Herald* of September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1855 said editorially "First came our talented young friend, William D. Simpson, Esq. who, Boanerges-like, took things by storm, putting everybody in a good humor with themselves, the college and the rest of mankind."

Also, in June, 1855, he was chosen by a meeting of those interested in the construction of a railroad to Asheville, N.C., to attend a convention in that city on July 11<sup>th</sup>, to further the enterprise. And, while chronologically out of order at this point, his interest in things promoting the welfare of the state is further illustrated by a resolution he introduced in 1871 to support the building of a railroad from Spartanburg to Augusta, GA, his appointment as chairman of a committee to interest in this project the communities along the proposed line of road and his later appointment, on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, to co-operate with other committees at Spartanburg and Edgefield in connection with a convention to be held in Columbia on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1871, for the promotion of the road.

Immediately upon the beginning of the Civil War, and while a member of the state Senate from Laurens County, my father volunteered for service and was appointed a member of his staff by General M.L. Bonham,<sup>9</sup> who was Major General commanding the Carolina troops in and around Charleston, S.C. and was ordered, on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1861, to report for duty at Charleston. He participated in the siege of Fort Sumter and was stationed on Morris Island for a while after that battle. On duty on the beach and in full view of Ft. Sumter, he was mystified by the failure of the fleet of Federal warships to come in response to its signals to the rescue of the Fort.

His attitude to his duty as a soldier was expressed in a letter to his wife, written in April, 1861. He wrote "It is a great duty. I think it is right to stand up to things as they may turn out, and I mean to do it," and, expressing as his opinion at that time that the Confederacy was "Certain to win," he added, "Should misfortune overtake me, I could not go in better service. I hope, however, that I may be spared." These remarks reflected the fidelity to duty and the courage which controlled the actions of his whole life. And in a letter written to his wife from a camp near Port Royal, South Carolina, he expressed his opinion of the war as follows—"Nothing will bring about peace but a long a bloody war, perhaps the ruin of both sections." How prophetic!

Writing on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1861, my father commented on the attitude of those guiding the Confederacy and on an anomalous situation in connection with the South Carolina troops. He predicted that Virginia would be the main battle ground of the war and "found it strange that the South was not showing more interest in preparing to contest every inch of Virginia." The anomalous situation was that the Carolina troops had not been mustered into the army of the Confederacy and that General Bonham, a Major General in South Carolina, had been promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and was not, thereafter, entitled to the staff which had been appointed by the Governor of South Carolina. Such a staff, while of proper rank for a Major General, was not of proper rank for a Brigadier General. This affected the status of all members of the staff.

<sup>9</sup> Milledge Luke Bonham (1813-1890) also served in the Seminole and Mexican Wars, was elected to Congress, and was a central commander at the first Battle of Bull Run. He returned home as the elected Governor of the seceded South Carolina, 1862-1864 and after that term, reunited with his troops on the field of battle. It is claimed that Jefferson Davis spent his last night before captivity at Bonham's home. -ED

My father had been appointed by General Bonham, in May, 1861, at Camp Pickens, S.C., to the position of Division Inspector General of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers and was ordered to report for duty to Charleston, where he served in this capacity until assigned to duty elsewhere. While serving in and around Charleston and the Island, he, with other members of the staff, was charged with the duty of seeing that many of the essentials of life were provided for the soldiers and found it necessary many times to sleep on the beach with no protection from the elements but his overcoat or blanket. He soon became accustomed to such conditions and was amazed and delighted to find that his health, instead of suffering, was excellent.

In all his letters, no matter how trying were the conditions under which he was writing, he made clear his interest in, his love for, and his concern about, the wife and children at home. In his letter of May 6<sup>th</sup>, mentioned above, he exhorted his wife to "Train our children religiously, setting an example. Religion is a great safeguard here and incalculable in its blessings hereafter and too much attention cannot be paid to it in families."

Early in 1861 my father's regiment was ordered to Virginia, and then, and at other times later, his scene of duty was in and around Richmond, where Carolina troops were stationed and where his regiment was part of General Maxcy Gregg's brigade. He was greatly pleased by the esteem in which the South Carolina troops were held and distressed that Virginia had not then put into the field the number of troops she had promised and that many of those in the field were neither adequately armed or trained.

As a member of the staff, his duties were many and various, requiring that he be in the saddle practically all day every day. One of the duties frequently assigned to him was to ride over and survey a prospective camp site and to select suitable positions for various units, and he mentions casually in one of his letters that for the better part of a day he was accompanied by General Lee in the performance of this duty. It was necessary for him to have horses and he had two, one acquired from the Quartermaster's department and one, which he bought, with the intention of taking it home for the use of his wife, as her personal mount, when his service ended. He had long desired that she should have a suitable saddle horse of her own.

While my father, like many officers, had during the early part of the war, his personal man servant, a slave whom many other staffs wanted to buy, he shared throughout his service the lacks and the discomforts of the men. When his staff had any tent at all, it was small, occupied by several members of the staff, frequently as many as eight. Equipment consisted of a straw mattress for each, sometimes a stool, the trunks of the occupants, which served as chairs and desks, and a single mirror, the property of my father and a part of a dressing case sent to him by my mother. The question of food, revealed by his letters, was always a problem, varying in difficulty in proportion to the length of time that soldiers remained in one place, as, within a comparatively short time, an army used up the supplies available in any one neighborhood. However, while for much of the time all the food provided for privates and officers alike consisted of flour and "fatback" (fat bacon) and, later, parched corn, and sometimes little of these, my father did not complain and remained in excellent health.

From his assignment as a member of General Bonham's staff at Fort Sumter and later, in and around Richmond, my father, in the termination of his army service, was continuously in the war, actively fighting in many of the most important battles either as a staff member or as an officer commanding some military unit. Included in the battles in which he fought were Bull Run, Seven Days Fight, Cold Harbor, Malvern Hill, Harper's Ferry and Antietam. *The Charleston News and Courier* quoted the following from an officer of the 14<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Regiment, giving, in addition to the engagements just mentioned, his military record:

"Aide to General Bonham at First Manassas; Elected Major of the 1st South Carolina Volunteers in September 1861; (This regiment being part of General Maxcy Gregg's brigade); as Major he commanded at the battle of Port Royal, January 1st, 1862; commanded regiment at Gaines Mill June 27<sup>th</sup>, at Frazier's Farm June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

"Served in Jackson's corps as Lieutenant Colonel at Cedar Run, and as Lieutenant Colonel at 2nd Manassas until three p.m., when Col. Green, being wounded, he took command. Commanded at Ox Hill September 1st, 1862, and through Maryland; at Harper's Ferry September 15th; at Sharpsburg September 17th. Commanded regiment's rear guard and among the last with General Gregg over the Potomac from Maryland, September 19th, 1862.

"Commanded at Boteler's Ford, September 20th, the grand movement of General Jackson, hurling McClellan's forces back into Maryland, and at Snicker's Gap in October, thus participating in Jackson's brisk and brilliant campaign. Being elected to the Confederate Congress in 1863, he closed a military career of which any Carolinian could be proud."<sup>10</sup>

In spite of being repeatedly in the thick of fight, under heavy fire he escaped practically unscathed. He was slightly wounded at Germantown, had the bow of his tie shot away at Cold Harbor,<sup>11</sup> and in the discharge of one of his duties, his horse fell on him. However, he suffered no bad effects from any of these, except that he found riding to be very uncomfortable the day after his horse fell.

He, like most officers of the Confederate Army, whether as a staff member or commanding a military unit, led his men and was in the forefront of the battles in which he participated and saw their awful carnage, fully realizing his own danger and the suffering of the men. For example it was said of Cold Harbor, where the bow of his tie was shot away, and where Grant and Lee were arrayed against each other, that "The slaughtered Federals presented the ghastliest scene ever witnessed on any field of war."

And of Sharpsburg (Antietam), where he commanded his regiment and where McClellan's army of 65,000 men and Lee's 35,000 men faced each other over a comparatively unbroken terrain, General John B. Gordon in his *Reminiscences of the Civil War* wrote it was "Infinitely thrilling in the dread moments before the battle to look upon two mighty armies upon the same plain, beneath spread ensigns and bristling bayonets, waiting for the impending crash and sickening carnage." And at the end of the crash it is said that one could walk from end to end of the battle line on the bodies of dead soldiers (without touching the ground).

Although a Presbyterian Elder, it was not the doctrine of Predestination which alone sustained my father. In a letter to my mother, mentioning the dangers amidst which he lived and expressing the hope that he might come through in safety, he remarked that she had a prescience that he would come through and, as her presciences were usually realized, his uneasiness was much relieved. A brave man, knowing and fearing the dangers, he faced them with courage.

<sup>10</sup> A history of the 14th SC Regiment names Lt. Col. Simpson as their commanding officer at Ox Hill: 9/1/1862; at Sharpsburg: 9/17/1862; and at Shepherdstown: 9/20/1862. -ED

<sup>11</sup> It is interesting that the Battle of Cold Harbor took place May 31-June 12 1864, after Simpson entered the Confederate Congress. It is most likely that this reference is to the Battle of Gaines' Mill, which took place in 1862 very close to the same location. Cold Harbor was not a port, it was named for a tavern whose location was near or in the present city of Mechanicsville, near Richmond. -ED

## CHAPTER III

WRITING to my mother from Manassas Junction on May 25th, 1861, my father described an occurrence which greatly impressed him and caused him to remark that the hero of the event should always be commemorated by the South as an example of pure patriotism. On May 23rd or 24th, a Federal unit, known as the "Pet Lambs," commanded by Colonel Ellsworth, entered Alexandria and a citizen, a Mr. Fachton (or Eachton) had flying over his home a Confederate flag. Ellsworth ordered him to pull it down. He refused and when Ellsworth approached to lower it, he shot him dead, whereupon Fachton was cut to pieces by the Federal soldiers.

In June 1861, my father received a severe shock. The official status of the members of General Bonham's staff again came into question. The Confederate Quartermaster ruled that they were entitled to no pay, because the Governor of South Carolina had appointed them to the staff of General Bonham, who had no right to such a staff, and that they were therefore serving at their own expense. Being a man with a wife and children at home, who were almost totally dependent on his income for a living, he was in a quandary. Should he resign and go home, or did his section, in her struggle for freedom constitute a higher claim on him?

This was indeed a hard question for him to decide. Although probably at that time entitled to pay, albeit in depleted Confederate currency, he had served for a long period for which he had drawn no pay and had had to rely upon such reserve fund as he had when he entered the service. This barely covered his personal necessities. My mother, at home, charged with the responsibility of raising and caring for the children, had had dumped on her the additional responsibility of feeding, clothing, nursing and caring for a number of slaves and of operating a farm of several hundred acres. She had to see that, on this farm, an adequate supply of corn, wheat and hogs was raised to furnish all these people with the necessary subsistence. This was a terrible responsibility for a tiny woman who had been reared in comparative luxury, but one which she bravely and successfully met, even though weighed down with anxiety about her husband, about what the slaves might do and with uncertainty as to what might happen if the war came nearer home. Always responsive to duty, which was my father's higher duty—to resign, go home and devote himself to the welfare of his family or, realizing that the ultimate welfare of his family was involved in the outcome of the cause for which he fought, should he stay and fight? His decision, hard though it was, was to stay and fight.

In June 1861, at Centerville, Virginia, he and Colonel Bonham were appointed a Court of Inquiry to examine all suspected persons of whom there were many, and to pass on all persons entering or leaving the town and to issue permits to those entitled to such movements. While rather confining, after the activity to which he had become accustomed, he greatly enjoyed this duty because he liked people and this work, as he said, enabled him to meet and to know more people than probably anyone else in the army.

Writing from Centerville on June 10th, 1861, he described a scene which had a very sobering effect on his whole unit. He wrote: "We had a very bad scene just as we arrived in the church yard yesterday evening. One of Colonel Gregg's regiment had died, a young man of about twenty years of age, Gardener was his name. He had a younger brother in the regiment. He was being buried when we arrived. We pitched our tents in the church yard. The entire regiment collected around. The wagons were all stopped near the grave. The coffin was let down. A guard fired three rounds over his remains. A short sob from his poor little weeping mother and the clods rattled upon his coffin. The grave was then filled. I am now writing within fifteen feet in front of it. We all retired, sad and sorrowful. I have no doubt we all thought of home and loved ones there. None of us knew how soon it might be our turn to close our eyes, with no dear wife, mother or sister to wipe the cold brow. A sad gloom came over all of us and, for a while the usual merry laugh was hushed."

While at Fairfax Court House he was, in July 1861, made Provost Marshal. He was popular with the soldiers because of his merit and his sympathetic understanding of their ordeals, evidenced among

other things by the frequency with which he marched on foot while some wounded or tired private rode his horse. Thus it is not surprising that he was, in September, 1864,<sup>12</sup> elected by the soldiers to the office of Major of the 1st South Carolina regiment.

After the Battle of Manassas he returned to Laurens, where he and Samuel McGowan,<sup>13</sup> his lifelong friend, organized the 14th South Carolina Volunteers, of which McGowan became Colonel and he Lieutenant Colonel, the office he held until elected to the Confederate Congress. His commission as Lieutenant Colonel, which he received at Chickahominy on May 12th was dated April 11, 1862. By a strange coincidence it was on the date of his commission that he was appointed by General Bonham as Chairman of the Centerville Board of Inquiry, hereinbefore mentioned.

A letter written by my father on May 12th, 1862 indicates that he had commanded a body of troops stationed at a point near Chisholm's Island, near Port Royal Ferry and the Coosaw River.<sup>14</sup> The soldiers in this command had, in his honor, named the place "Camp Simpson" a tribute from the men which evidently, from the fact that he mentioned it, must have greatly pleased him.

While stationed at Smith's Farm in Virginia, the disturbing news was brought to him that scarlet fever, which in those days was a scourge, had developed in Laurens, causing him great uneasiness, which was later justified. His efforts to obtain a furlough in order to go home, were unsuccessful, for in the midst of fighting, officers could not be spared. A few days later, the news came that his second son and fifth child, Augustus, called "Gussie", had contracted the disease and had died. "Gussie" was buried at eight o'clock in the morning on June 22nd, 1862, probably this soon after death to minimize the danger of spreading the dread disease. My father was devoted to this little son, as was the boy to him and in a wonderfully tender letter to my mother, written in an effort to comfort and sustain her, he expressed his own grief, his sorrow that he could not have been with her in such a time and reminded both her and himself that comfort and strength could come only from a Higher Power.

In October, 1862, General Bonham recommended him for appointment as a member of the "Army Court", a position for which he was eminently fitted by reason of his recognition of the obligations of duty, his judicial mind, his sympathetic understanding of his fellows and their confidence in him. Again in October, 1862, he applied for a furlough in order that he might go home, to be with his family for a short time and help my mother in connection with the heavy and varied load she was carrying. General Gregg refused. The mortality among Confederate officers had been so great that it was impossible to spare a field officer.

On October 22nd, 1862, President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation, effective January 1st, 1863, freeing all slaves in all states, or parts of states, in rebellion against the Federal Government and my father remarked, as he saw most of his slaves leaving: "There go \$10,000 walking off down the road", and \$10,000 in those days was quite a lot of money!

<sup>12</sup> The date of September 1864 is incorrect, if Simpson resigned his commission in 1863, as his Civil War Record states, in order to serve in the Confederate Congress in Richmond. The previous summary of his record records this date as September, 1861. -ED

<sup>13</sup> General Samuel McGowan was born 9 October 1819 in Laurens County and died 9 August 1897 in Abbeville, SC. -ED

<sup>14</sup> According to the records, the Battle of Port Royal Ferry, near Beaufort, SC, resulted in a victory for Federal troops led by General I. I. Stevens, assisted by Federal gunboats nearby, on January 1, 1862. An account was published in the 18 January edition of *Harper's Weekly*. Today, the ferry site is at the location of the modern bridge that carries US 21 across the Coosaw River toward Beaufort. -ED

## CHAPTER IV

LATE in 1862 my father, while at the front and still an officer in the Confederate Army, and at that time, a member of the South Carolina Senate from Laurens County, was without his prior knowledge or candidacy, nominated for membership in the Confederate Congress, to succeed General Bonham, who had become Governor of South Carolina. He was elected, receiving a large majority of the votes cast by the soldiers in the field and by the citizens at home; in fact, he received over three-fourths of all votes cast.

In a letter to my mother, written on January 30th, 1863, from Columbia, S.C., my father stated that he was leaving for Richmond to assume his seat as a member of the Confederate Congress and, in the same letter, he made a statement, which in view of later developments, is of interest. He wrote that he had received \$650 of back salary, had added \$50 to this and had invested the total in Confederate bonds, bearing interest at the rate of 8%, which he considered a good investment for his estate! While, in this case, his judgment proved to be bad, this investment, together with others of the same kind, previously made, indicates his confidence in the cause with which he was identified and in its ultimate success. On February 4th, 1863, he submitted his resignation as Lieutenant Colonel to the Secretary of War, thus terminating his career as a soldier in order to qualify as a member of the Confederate Congress from South Carolina.

As a member of the lower House of the Congress, he was a diligent and capable legislator, attending faithfully to his routine duties, responding to many demands from his constituents for a wide variety of services and participating by debate and otherwise in shaping the course of the Government under the trying conditions with which the Confederacy was confronted.

One of the matters about which he was deeply concerned, and about which he addressed the House, was the condition of the Confederate currency, which was fast depreciating and what, if anything, could be done to restore its value and to stabilize it, things which ultimately proved impossible of accomplishment under the existing and rapidly deteriorating conditions.

Another thing about which he was much concerned was the need for more soldiers in the army and the many exempts and those who had hired substitutes and had not volunteered. He addressed the House in advocacy of a call to all such individuals, compelling them to enter the service, but was very uncertain about the reaction of his constituents to his fight for this measure. This uncertainty, and even anxiety, was reflected in his letters to his family by inquiries as to what his father, his brother, and his friends thought of his position. He hoped for approval, but whether approved or not, he knew that conditions justified, in fact, made imperative, his position.

In writing my mother about his addresses, with a naïveté that is refreshing, he revealed his modesty about his accomplishments and his pleasure in the favorable comments of his fellow Representatives and wanted her to share this pleasure with him. He told her of the unanimity with which the leaders and the most prominent men in the House had complimented him on an address regarding the conscription of soldiers, and quoted from a leader, Governor Foster, that "He promised to be one of the first men of the country." He was especially pleased by the warm congratulations he received from such members of the House as General Marshall of Kentucky, Boyce of South Carolina, I. B. Baldwin of Virginia and others. He was distressed, however, that most of his addresses were made in Executive Session and not published and that, therefore, his constituents had no way of knowing what he was doing. He therefore asked her to tell members of the family, friends and acquaintances of his work.

During his stay in and around Richmond while in the service and, later, while in Congress, he had frequent occasion to comment on the constantly ascending prices of everything. A pair of ordinary black trousers cost him \$200, a hat \$100, and other items in proportion. From a fairly reasonable price, a room's rent jumped to \$200 per month, two meals a day to \$15, laundry to \$9.00 per day, until, when

entering Congress he had to pay \$40 per day for board at the Spottswood Hotel, his expenses being in excess of his salary as Congressman.

With an affectionate attention to her inquiries, my father tried to answer such questions as my mother, from time to time, asked in her letters. She, like most women, and despite the trying conditions under which she lived, was interested in what the other women were wearing. She asked about the cloaks being worn in Richmond. He made a valiant effort to tell her. He wrote that their cloaks were called "Circulars", were nearly as long as the dresses, with a small collar and a nice pocket on each side, with large buttons down in front; that the arm holes were slits, pretty far in front so that the arms could go through only about half way between hand and elbow, and then the hands to rest in muffs and the slits ornamented with a lot of binding like a vest pocket, and, he added they were "pretty nice." Doubtless a pretty good job of description from a mere man, but probably not entirely satisfactory to my mother. And he ended this letter on a note that revealed a phase of the responsibility with which my mother was burdened- "Had you not better have the old dehorned cow sent to the plantation then you will not have so many to feed, and perhaps some of the pigs, too, but do as you think best."

Death and birth took no account of the necessary absence of the father of the family. "Gussie" died while my father was at the front, unable to get a furlough because of the need for officers, and Ernest, my next older brother, was born in February 1864, while my father was in attendance upon a session of the Congress. My mother had to endure these ordeals alone, without the comforting and sustaining presence of her husband.

Found among my father's papers was the following poem, expressing the feelings of its author, Clint Parkhurst, a young prisoner, and probably of all prisoners of war, written in December, 1864, and addressed to Colonel John F. Iverson, Commandant of the Confederate military prison at Florence, SC, which may be worthy of inclusion in this biography.

*"I'm a slender Yank, about five feet high,  
With a pale thin cheek and a light blue eye,  
With a ragged shirt, and not a dime,  
And hungry I am the live long time.*

*I think it would afford me much relief  
To assail once more a pile of beef,  
A potato mess or a loaf of bread,  
Or have a pillow beneath my head.*

*I've heard you Southrons are generous men;  
If so take me out of this loathsome den;  
Prove that you have a magnanimous soul,  
And let me out on my parole.*

*I'm handy at any kind of work,  
I might possibly pass as a headquarters' clerk;  
I could nurse the sick, on errands run  
Or do anything else that's to be done.*

*I'm from a Western state that's far away;  
I've been a prisoner many a day  
And, if exchanging commences again,  
Won't you take me out of this loathsome den?*

*I've a mother at home who mourns for me  
And for her sake, I long to be free;*

*You loved your mother without a doubt  
Think of that love and let me out.*

*If there is no exchange and we must stay  
In durance vile we wear away  
Our youthful frames, do a kindness meet,  
Give me work and plenty to eat.*

*If this epistle ere meets your eye,  
Do not spurn it scornfully by,  
But come that selfsame lucky day  
And take this hungry 'Hap' away."*

Before the war my father was in comfortable circumstances financially but, after the war, he returned to Laurens and to civil life, ruined in fortune but with unbroken spirit. With characteristic energy and pride he resumed the practice of the law in partnership with his brother, J. Wistar Simpson.

Rebuilding their practice to a position anything like commensurate with its pre-war position meant a struggle against difficulties which might have seemed well nigh insuperable. One of these was the poverty of all the people. Those who were lucky enough to return from the battle fields were, generally speaking, penniless and confronted with the insistent and urgent problem of how to provide food for their families and themselves. They had no money with which to enjoy the luxury of litigation. This condition, alone, must have called on my father for a degree of courage and determination, and even optimism, which we, now, cannot properly measure. But the gravity of this condition was as nothing compared with the gravity of another. That other was the deplorable state of affairs in the State under the rule of the "Radical" government during the period of "Reconstruction", so called, a condition which grew steadily worse from the close of the war until it reached its nadir in the middle eighteen seventies.

My father recognized two compelling calls, neither of which could be denied by a man of his character. One call was to provide for his family and himself. The other was the call of his State. Into these he poured the energies of his body and mind during the years until 1876, when he played his distinguished part in redeeming South Carolina from Radical misrule.

Despite his cares, he with his family, led a sweet and exemplary home life in the little town of Laurens. The family home, on Main Street, a twelve room frame Colonial structure, was set back about a hundred yards from the street, with a formal garden in front. On one side was a large orchard containing fruit and nut trees, some of the latter, such as the English Walnut, being exotic. At the rear was a large vegetable garden and the then usual complement of out-buildings necessary for a home. Several miles away there was a farm, containing several hundred acres of land.

The beauty spots of the house<sup>15</sup> were the stair railings, reaching up to the attic, and the library. This was ceiled throughout with wide planks of birds-eye maple, which was so unique and lovely that the writer, after the home was sold, tried without success, to buy it for installation elsewhere. It was in this house that my mother, during the war, directed the female servants in knitting, weaving and the making of clothes for the family and all the slaves in the home and on the farm. In this home, as Associate Justice Samuel McGowan so aptly said, in his remarks during the memorial service held by the Supreme Court after my father's death: "Loving and beloved, he was the very idol of his family."

My father was of a very equable disposition and had a gaiety and responsiveness of spirit that made him a delightful companion in the family and for any kind of occasion. His laugh was distinctive, merry and infectious, and his letters to my mother indicate that he was quite demonstrative. His self-

<sup>15</sup> (writer's note): The exact date of the acquisition of this home is uncertain. However, during this period the family occupied this or another home of approximately the same size not far from this one.



control was great and I can only recall two occasions, during the fourteen years in which I was old enough to notice such things, when he lost it. One of those was in my behalf. I was attending a private school in Columbia, conducted by Miss Ellen Janney, a fine woman and an excellent teacher. I had just been vaccinated, and as a result was really sick; but regardless of this, I had gone to school. For some failure in recitation or infraction of the rules, Miss Janney, ignorant of my condition, kept me in after school for a long time. About five o'clock my father came for me, and was he mad! He was as white as a sheet and he rebuked Miss Janney quite severely, for which he afterwards apologized and all thereafter was sweet between them. I, of course, thought at the time that his anger was very timely, but realized later that it was due to a misunderstanding. The other incident was a culmination of a series of irritations in a minor business matter and, at the time, I did not think it was quite justified. This time he used a "cuss" word, though not a profane one. That was the only time I ever heard him use such a word, though, considering his war and other experiences, he probably knew many. His high conception of propriety forbade the use of offensive language and his vocabulary was evidently sufficiently ample to render unnecessary its use to complete or strengthen his speech.

The home of J. Wistar Simpson was immediately across the street. In that home were nine young people of about the same ages as the eight in our home<sup>16</sup> and these, congenial and loving, found within their own group the social life and pleasure which compensated for the lack of outside entertainment.

In addition to the farm hands and their families, my mother had before and during the war, some eight or ten home servants, cook, sewing women, weaving women and such help, whom she had to oversee, direct and care for. And of course she was the housekeeper and carried the keys. This meant providing three substantial meals a day, not only for the family of seven or eight,<sup>17</sup> but usually for several of the many kinsfolk, who were always welcome guests, as well as for the house servants. In those days there were three real meals, morning, mid-day and evening, breakfast, dinner and supper, the last being the lightest meal of the day. Breakfast at that time did not consist of only juice, coffee and a doughnut.

These meals were all prepared in a detached kitchen about a hundred yards from the "big house" and this called for a procession of Negro boys or girls in order to get the food to the table while still hot. After the war, most of this luxury, or burden, depending on the point of view, disappeared forever, so far as our family was concerned. A few of the former slaves, including two or three of the house servants, remained on the place and the meals, while sufficient, lacked much of their former abundance and variety.

As stated elsewhere, most of the slaves walked off after they were freed, but several remained. In fact two of them simply declared that they were "gwine to stay till they died" and this they did, dying many years later. One of these, who lived in a comfortable cabin, about a quarter of a mile from our house, told my brother Henry, who then occupied the home place, and who needed the cabin site, "Yo' paw told me I could live here all my life and I'm gonna," and he did. Prince, the other one, was a manservant, and he, much to the disgust of my sister-in-law,<sup>18</sup> simply stayed and bossed my brother until his death. He and my brother were about the same age.

<sup>16</sup> The living children of John Wistar and Annie Patilla Farrow Simpson were: (1) John Patillo (1848-1899); (2) William Wells (1849-1926); (3) Stobo James (1853-1910); (4) Harvey Strother (1854-1943); (5) Elizabeth (1856-1945); (6) Paul (1858-1929); (7) Richard Caspar (1862-1893); (8) Arthur Osmond (1866-1914). -ED

<sup>17</sup> Simpson children living at home during or shortly after the War would have been Lucy (1848-1922); Laura (1850-1907); Henry (1852-1937); Mary Eloise "Ella" (1855-1931); Wistar Augustus "Gussie" (1858-1862); William Jr. (1860-1927) Ernest: (1864-1945). The writer, John, was not born until 1871 and also died last among the children in 1951. -ED

<sup>18</sup> Henry Young Simpson (1852-1937) was married to Mary Wilkes (1855-1935) daughter of Thomas and Martha Hix Wilkes. -ED

While we lived in the Governor's mansion and after that, in our own home, we were usually able to have two servants, a cook and one other. And fortunately, during nearly all those years, we had only two cooks, both of them men who could really cook, Dover Davis and Fortune Bratton. Dover was a tall, slender, powerful man, who had previously managed the Commons at the South Carolina College. His only weakness as a cook was his strength, for the destruction of china by his powerful hands was considerable. Fortune, in addition to his job as cook, had also the job of sexton for the largest Negro Methodist church in Columbia, which was located just two city blocks from our home. This meant he had to ring the bells for all services, and that our meals were movable feasts, being frequently sandwiched between bells.

## CHAPTER V

SOUTH CAROLINA, which became known as the "Prostrate State", was, during the period 1868-1876, subjected to conditions and treatment without parallel in modern civilization. Lincoln's emancipation proclamation had converted over 400,000 ignorant and illiterate slaves in South Carolina into freedmen and citizens. These were easy dupes for the villainous carpetbaggers and even more vicious scalawags, who rushed to take advantage of them. The Reconstruction Acts had made the Negroes dominant and the Republican politicians had promptly taken steps to organize them for their own ends. The rape of the state, under the leadership of these scoundrels, was so complete and outrageous that her recovery at all is a perpetual monument to the courage and the abilities of the Democratic leaders of the State.

According to the census of 1870 the white population of the State was 289,667. Her voting strength had been reduced by the more than 8,000 men disqualified under the 14th Amendment and the more than 40,000 men killed in the war. The result of this was that the Negroes had a voting majority in the State of more than 26,000. The power of this majority was solidified and greatly enhanced by three things: the Freedman's Bureau, under control of R. H. Scott, the Union League, and the Federal Army of Occupation.

To the Freedman's Bureau Congress assigned the duty of handling all controversies to which freedmen were parties, and, later, this was amended to include other things, too, but Lincoln vetoed this amendment. Of the Union League, A. B. Williams, in his book. *"Hampton and His Red Shirts"* says: "Practically all the Negroes were in the Union League, secret, oath-bound society, organized and kept active and controlled by leaders of both colors, absolutely unscrupulous. Actual results of the League meetings were seen, when, each election day, the Negroes were marched to the polling places in solid ranks and, without exception or variation, voted the straight party ticket. Behind and above all was the Federal Government, ready to through the compelling strength of courts and bayonets against the white man." At one time, there were eleven military units of the Federal army stationed at various points in the State.

The Governor of the State appointed for each election three election commissioners for each county, who named the managers. These had three days in which to count the ballots. The boxes were then delivered to the commissioners, who, in turn had ten days in which to revise the returns, so it was an easy matter to ascertain how many votes were needed to assure an election and to simply announce them. Of 83,000 colored voters in 1870, 70,830 could neither read nor write.

In 1868 the Negroes called a Constitutional Convention which "Levied a tax on the State of two and a quarter million dollars for its own expenses, nearly six times as much as the entire State tax for 1860 when the State was one of the wealthiest commonwealths." This convention resolved itself into the Republican State Convention and nominated a complete ticket for State offices, headed by Scott for Governor, the ticket being elected. This is but a sample of the rapacity of these people, who, in seven years, increased the State debt from less than five to twenty millions. Mr. Williams said that the battle which was to culminate in 1876 "was with new and brighter existence or tortured extinction, life or death

the issues." The people knowing his love for his State, his courage and capacity, made my father a leading participant in this struggle.

In 1868, my father was elected a delegate to and attended the National Democratic Convention in New York City which nominated Seymour and Blair, and was, in that year, nominated and elected to membership in the United States House of Representatives from the Fourth South Carolina District, defeating his Republican opponent, A. S. Wallace, by over four thousand votes. He was duly commissioned by Robert K. Scott, the Republican Governor of South Carolina but was denied his seat by the House on the grounds that he was disqualified under the 14th Amendment.<sup>19</sup>

My father made a valiant effort to secure the seat to which he had been so handsomely elected, a position to which he had been nominated by the Democratic party without his prior solicitation or knowledge. He went to Washington, personally contested the matter before the Congressional committee to which it was assigned, but, despite the unquestioned majority, admitted by Wallace, and because of the hate entertained toward the South by so many Northern Congressmen, and especially towards South Carolina, he was denied the seat. This contest threw the spotlight on one of the many outrageous and disgraceful acts perpetuated by the carpetbaggers and scalawags in control of South Carolina.

According to the law of the State, a State Board of Canvassers, consisting of five members, three of whom were Negroes, was required to canvass the returns from the precincts of the State within a certain period after a general election and to certify to the Secretary of State the names of the winners. This they did in the election of my father to Congress, and, on the basis of this certification, he was given his commission by Governor Scott. Subsequently, but after the period in which the law required that the certification to be made, a majority of this Board of Canvassers issued a second certification, declaring Wallace had received a majority of the "legal" votes cast and was entitled to the office, a thing which, even if true, which it was not, the Board had no right to do as theirs was a ministerial job and not a judicial one. Wallace contested the seat on the basis of this second certification, both being before the Congressional committee.

At that same session of Congress other members-elect, disqualified under the 14th amendment, were relieved of their disqualification by votes of Congress, but not so my father. The effort was made by fair minded members of the House to secure this relief, but unsuccessfully, even though my father had, on October 11th, 1867, under President Johnson's second Amnesty Proclamation, taken the oath of allegiance to the Federal Government. Though he was refused his seat, he was allowed his Congressional salary for the period of the contest.

During the period 1868-1875 my father, in addition to attending to his law practice devoted much of his time to the promotion of activities beneficial to his town, his country and his State, being in frequent demand for public addresses in their support. He was also in demand, in cooperation with other Democratic leaders of the State, for addresses in various places to further the reorganization of the part for effective action in the crisis that would inevitably come. In 1872 he was appointed a member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic party of the state, consisting of fifteen members, and to him was assigned the duty of organizing his district.

My father loved to farm, and, during these years his farm, on which, as he said, he expended all he made in practicing law, was a source of pleasure and a means of relaxation. And, at some time about

<sup>19</sup> 14th Amendment, Section 3: "No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability." -ED

then, he had another source of pleasure, but alas, this soon lost for him not only its charm but some of his hard earned and limited cash. Like many men, the quest for gold had an appeal for him and he, and his brother, Wistar, bought a gold mine, at least an alleged gold mine, in Laurens County, and proceeded to mine for gold. It is believed that there was gold in that mine, but, if so, very little ever reached the surface. The trouble was that, while the stock of the partnership was not watered, the mine itself was, and so fully so that the water could not be removed, no suitable machinery being available, so the mine loss had to be charged off to experience. It was believed, with some evidences of doubt, that the partners did, each, get a small nugget of gold!

In the meantime the fight between the Radicals and the Democrats was rapidly coming to a head. In this fight the Radicals had the backing of the Federal Government and the presence of its soldiers. The Democrats had only an unbreakable determination to redeem the State from the Radicals or die in the attempt. In 1872, Frank Moses, known as the "robber Governor",<sup>20</sup> was elected to succeed Scott by practically the same majority that Scott had received. He, in turn, was succeeded by D. H. Chamberlain, a cultured and highly educated man from Massachusetts, who, disappointed in aspirations there for national preferment, had joined other carpetbaggers to cash in on the opportunities for "good pickings" in South Carolina.

It was of him (Chamberlain) that A. B. Williams in his book already mentioned, said- "The civilization of the Cavalier, the Puritan and the Huguenot was in danger." It was also about this time that Senator John Patterson known as the "thief" Senator from South Carolina, remarked: "There are five years more of good stealing in South Carolina." He is also quoted as saying: "We've got to raise hell with these niggers and get troops down there or the damned rebels will carry it (the State) in spite of us." This is the background of the struggle in which my father was taking part.

The question before the leaders was: Should the Democrats support a compromise movement with Chamberlain, who was veering to a reform position or should they stake everything on a bold move and make it a fight to the finish? In July the Democratic State Executive Committee called a meeting of the State Convention for August 12th, in Columbia, to answer this question. There were able men, strong Democrats, on both sides of this convention, who vigorously defended their respective views. However, in the afternoon of the 16th, the Convention, by a vote of 84 to 64, decided to fight, the minority falling in line and pledging themselves to do their part. On this ticket, headed by General Wade Hampton<sup>21</sup> for Governor, were some of the staunchest Democrats, the ablest men and the finest speakers in the State.

My father was nominated by acclamation for the position of Lieutenant Governor on this ticket, and my information is that he was at the time visiting his sick brother at Glenn Springs,<sup>22</sup> SC and know nothing of his nomination until after it was made. The *Charleston News and Courier* of August the 19th, 1876, in commenting on the action of the Convention, stated: -"W. D. Simpson, nominee for Lieutenant Governor, both in the profession of law and in the political field, has achieved deserved distinction. Col. Simpson's nomination adds much strength to the ticket. The ticket will be a guarantee to the State of all the reforms so badly needed and a pledge of peace and protection to every honest citizen of the commonwealth."

About 1874 my father's life was saved by what has the appearance of providential intervention. He was returning from Columbia to Laurens. As there was no railroad then in operation between

<sup>20</sup> The post-Civil War governors of South Carolina to this point were Benjamin Franklin Perry (appointed by President Andrew Johnson)(June 30-November 29,1865); James Lawrence Orr (1865-1868);Robert Kingston Scott (1868-1872); Franklin I. Moses, Jr. (1872-1874); David Henry Chamberlain (1874-1876). All those elected 1865-1874 were Republicans. -ED

<sup>21</sup> Wade Hampton, III (1818-1902) had a distinguished military career in the CSA, although he had opposed secession before the war. -ED

<sup>22</sup> A History of Glenn Springs states that Wistar and his father Dr. John Wells Simpson bought Glenn Springs in 1877, after the election of Hampton and William Simpson. Wistar was probably staying there in 1876 because of his illness. -ED

Newberry and Laurens,<sup>23</sup> he had to resort to the use of a horse between these two points. While he and his companions were between Clinton and Laurens, sometime after dark, something in their conversation amused him and he laughed aloud.

Some days later word was brought to him from a would-be assassin, whose identity was not revealed, that he had been lying in wait for Joe Crews, who, with companions, was expected along that road at that time. This killer had drawn a bead on my father, whom he could see only dimly, believing him to be Crews. Just as he was about to pull the trigger, my father laughed. The assassin recognized his laugh and did not pull, so my father's laugh saved his life. Joe Crews was ambushed about the same place on that road in 1875 and was slain by an unidentified killer.

House member (1868-1875) Joseph Crews was one of the worst scalawags in the state and the leading one in Laurens County. He it was who was instrumental in having a number of the best citizens of Laurens arrested as reputed Ku Klux members although, actually, there was no Klan in the county. Among these citizens were the President of the Laurensville Academy and one of my brothers-in-law. All of them were taken to Columbia and jailed. My father went with them as an Attorney. They were held in jail for a few weeks, being royally treated by the people of Columbia, and then were released.

That year, 1876, was a national election year, and, as the South Carolina electoral vote might be a deciding factor in the presidential contest between Tilden and Hayes, the leaders of the Republican Party in Washington ordered all Republican office holders in South Carolina to nominate and to support Chamberlain, as a reasonably decent Republican. That was done and he headed the Republicans in the struggle in South Carolina in 1876.

## CHAPTER VI

AFTER their decision to fight and the nomination of a full slate of officers, the Democrats united upon one of the most perfect campaigns in history, in which, it is said, not a mistake or blunder was made. The underlying plan was the enlightenment of the Negroes and the exposure of the sins of the venal Republican office-holders and leaders, this plan to be made effective by a judicious mixture of the soft speech and the big stick. The big stick in this campaign was the "Red Shirts", who were present, on horseback and armed, at every political meeting of the campaign, and who not only precipitated not a single instance of trouble but whose presence overawed, and prevented trouble by, others.

The Democrats went so far as to invite the Republicans to divide time with them at the meetings, which they seldom did because of their vulnerability. The first few weeks of the campaign were devoted by the Democrats to perfecting their organizations and to occasional public rallies, but the real work did not begin until September 2nd. On that date, at Anderson, SC, was held the first of the great public meetings which continued through November 6th, the day before the election. The crowd at Anderson was estimated to have been 6,000 men and women, plus 1,600 horsemen who had come from several counties. and proportionate crowds were in attendance at all the campaign meetings. My father was one of the speakers at Anderson, and, among other comments by newspapers, was the statement: "Colonel Simpson was very aggressive in attacking Chamberlain and the Republicans." As before stated, among the Democratic candidates were the most able speakers of the State, and it is pleasant to remember that Dr. W. W. Ball, in his book, *"The State That Forgot"*, remarked that "Colonel Simpson was the most eloquent speaker among the candidates."

<sup>23</sup> The Laurens Railroad Company was authorized in 1847 by an act of the SC Legislature. In 1849, the company was organized with Col. James H. Irby, president. Among the directors were Henry Clinton Young and John Wells Simpson. The railroad connected Laurens and Newberry and began operation in 1856. After the War the railroad was in ruins and did not resume service until 1875, the year William Simpson was nominated for Lieutenant Governor on the Democratic ticket. The railroad was lost to receivers in 1894, and most of the right of way became part of the Columbia, Newberry and Laurens Railroad which had begun service from Columbia to Newberry in 1891. -ED

Between September 2nd and November 6th great public meetings were held in every county in the State and in many of them more than one and my father was one of the most chosen speakers at many of these. Especially commented on by the newspapers were meetings in Abbeville, Anderson, Walhalla, Pickens, Greenville, Spartanburg, Cheraw, Marion, Kingstree, Conway, Columbia, Aiken and Blackville. A meeting was also held in Laurens. This meeting is one of the two earliest memories of my life. Though but five years of age at the time, I remember it well, the tremendous (to me) crowd, the dashing horses, the brilliant red shirts, the cheers, the music and the excitement which even I felt!

As a sample of the speeches made by my father at these meetings I am including parts of his speech at the large rally in Marion, as reported in the *(Charleston) News and Courier*.

"Colonel Simpson received deafening cheers and spoke as follows: 'Ladies and Fellow Citizens of Marion: I see before me today a vast multitude composed of beautiful women, gray-haired sires and gallant men, white and black. And I am particularly rejoiced to see so many of the latter present on this occasion. Representatives of every profession and pursuit in life are all here and, although this is an immense assemblage, yet it is not unusual. The same state of things has existed from Caesar's Head and Tunnel Hill to this, the region of the Peedee, and we may expect to meet it until we reach the lowest part of the State, where old ocean's waters wash Port Royal.

"Now, my fellow citizens, in addition to the inspiration of numbers, I see great interest and determination beaming from every face and flashing from every eye, and it is hardly needful for me to say anything in relation to this great cause when I see you all so thoroughly appreciate it. There is nothing like it in the history of the past, there is nothing like it in the history of the world, except perhaps the grand rising of the Crusaders under the voice of Peter, the Hermit, when the people of Europe rose up as one man to assist in rescuing the tomb of our Savior from the unholy tread of the infidel. Can this universal feeling be fanatical? Is it a mere fantasy? Are our people deluded or demented? No, fellow citizens, this movement has its foundation upon the very rock of justice and truth, as it can easily be shown. "The grandest example of right, the greatest event that ever happened upon this continent, was the Declaration of Independence on the part of our ancestors on July 4th, 1776 and the war which followed and made good the Declaration. Now, fellow citizens, one hundred years have rolled by since that period. The civilization of the age has vindicated our ancestors in that action. Monuments have been raised in commemoration of the great deed accomplished by them, and now I propose to contrast briefly the cause which led our forefathers to that bold act with the causes that induced us to follow in their footsteps today. But ours is a peaceful revolution, a uniting of the people to overthrow an alien and corrupt government, not with ball and bayonet but by the ballot.

"In the first place our ancestors claimed that they had no representation under the Government of Great Britain, which claimed jurisdiction over them. That was only partially true. They had a colonial jurisdiction never exercised itself to the prejudice of the colonies. In addition they claimed that the English governors were not their agents, but appointed by a foreign power, but they never claimed that England was an imbecile and impotent government. They never claimed that the grand old Island placed in power over them a corrupt and disgraceful set of officials, who were administering the government in their own interest instead of the interest of the people over whom they were placed.

"Now, how do we stand today in South Carolina in reference to these rights? Are we represented in the State Government? Is either of the races represented in the government of South Carolina? So far as the white race is concerned, we have had for the last eight years no representation whatsoever. We might as well have lived in the wilds of Asia or Africa. The Czar of Russia has as much control over our government as we have. We have been deprived of the privilege of shaping the destiny of our State.

"Have you colored men of South Carolina exerted any influence in the government of your State? You have voted, and that is all you have ever done; and you have voted under misapprehension and delusion. Delusion brought about by the foul teachings of those who have ruled the State to their own interests and not to yours. Has your race exerted any influence over the history of the State? Have you

dragged down South Carolina into the low depths of infamy and degradation in which she now lies? I relieve you of that charge. No, it has been done by the band of land pirates that have risen into power by poisoning your minds against the people with whom your destiny is to be wrought out in the future.

"How have we been taxed? I will relate to you a little piece of information which will illustrate the contrast between taxes now and before the war, when the government was ruled by native white people. A gentleman, living in Greenville, went to pay his taxes a short time ago upon the same amount of property that he had before the war. The tax was \$37.37½. On going home he happened to find a tax receipt given to him before the war upon the identical property, and the taxes were 37 cents. What is the difference of today, and in those days when the government was controlled by the wealth and intelligence of the State. When we had control of the State, with property assessed at only half its present valuation, the government was run on \$400,000 per annum in a style which gave it a reputation unsurpassed by any State in the Union and yet, now, with a miserable, imbecilic, impotent government, it costs \$1,500,00 per annum. Is this just? Will any people, will you, my colored friends, assist in putting into power a clique, a ring of men not identified with you or with us, who will dare, in the face of the history of the past, to tax us in the fearful extent for eight long years? No, you cannot and you will not! You will unite with these good men who are seeking your interests and the interests of the entire State. "If this money, which they have raised from the hard earnings of the people of South Carolina, had been expended in the interest of the State it would not have been so bad. But do you see railroads built? Do you see institutions founded and kept in operation, calculated to benefit the people of the State, white and black? Do you see education spread abroad in the land? Do you see school houses being erected and your children kept at school? I do not know how it is in other counties but in my county the schools are kept open but two months in the year, and then the cry is: "THE MONEY'S ALL GONE!" The money has not been expended in educating the poor little colored children, or upon the white children, but for the benefit of those cormorants<sup>24</sup> who have fastened themselves on the vitals of the State, and it is the duty of every man, black and white, to rise up as one man and drive those robbers beyond the limits of our beloved home.

"Have the Republican Party furnished us with a government which has been administered with the true intent and object of government? What is the object of government? It is the protection of the rights of the people, those rights which all are entitled to as a gift from the Creator; the right of personal security, personal liberty, and the right to acquire and enjoy property. Has this government accomplished this object? Need I ask the question from so intelligent an audience? What mean the Combahee and Ellenton riots?<sup>25</sup> What means the fact that blood has been spilt in the streets of Charleston? It means that our people have come to the conclusion that this government, under Chamberlain, is an imbecilic and impotent concern and that there is no means of protecting either life or property except by their own exertions and their own courage. "Do you suppose that, if you elect Hampton to the high position to which he has been nominated, when these difficulties occur, he would go to Washington and leave these riots to go on to the destruction of the lives, the property and the rights of the people of the State. No! Elevate Hampton to power and you will destroy imbecility and corruption. You will place in power wisdom, courage, justice and all the qualities that are necessary to administer government to the interest of the entire people, black and white, as he has solemnly pledged himself on every platform from here to the foot of the Blue Ridge.

Colonel Simpson said, in conclusion: "I am rejoiced to believe that this movement will be a grand and glorious success. Nothing can stop the tidal wave now. Every effort has been made by Chamberlain to prevent it. He has gone to Washington for troops, not to prevent the whites from intimidating the colored people, but for the purpose of preventing the blacks from exercising that privilege, the right of free choice in elections, the right which distinguishes freemen from slaves, and which will never lead you to injury, but to that prosperity and happiness which you desire in the future. The troops will do our State no harm. They are the representatives of that old army which met our army, and I will tell you here that if

<sup>24</sup> Cormorant was a term frequently used at the time to denote a greedy or rapacious bird or other animal. -ED

<sup>25</sup> Democrats used the riots in Ellenton, Hamburg and the Combahee, in which both black and white people lost their lives, as evidence that Governor Chamberlain could not effectively maintain control over the state. -ED

the question between the South and the North had been left to them that deep chasm which was dug by their united efforts, instead of standing wide and gaping now, would have long since been bridged.

"This movement to redeem South Carolina cannot be stopped. It has rolled down from the mountains and will continue to roll onward to the sea. Can you stop the tornado in its wild progress? Can you arrest the mighty thunderstorm as it leaps towards the oak, which it crashes? Can you arrest the avalanche when it starts from the mountain's brow before it reaches the base? No! And I tell you that you might just as well attempt to arrest any of those powers of nature as to attempt to stop the grand movement which will assuredly culminate in the election of the grand and noble Wade Hampton as chieftain of our State." (This conclusion was followed by thunderous applause.)

## CHAPTER VII

THE fate of the State hung in the balance when on November 7th, 1876, the voters of South Carolina balloted for her control. The State Board of Canvassers, composed of five men, the official positions of three of them being at stake in the election, canvassed the returns and threw out the votes of Edgefield and Laurens Counties, two overwhelmingly Democratic counties, and declared the Republican ticket had won. The Democrats took the matter to the Supreme Court. This Court ordered that the returns be presented to it. The Board of Canvassers adjourned without obeying this order. and the Court found them in contempt, fined each of them and their attorney \$1500 and sent them all to jail. Governor Chamberlain had in Columbia, as his guest, Federal Judge Bond as a source of relief in an emergency such as this, and Judge Bond released these men. The Supreme Court, on the basis of the ballots that were cast, declared the Democratic ticket to have been elected. On the face of the returns the Democrats had elected their entire ticket and had a majority of one member in the legislature, their number in the House being 64 and in the Senate 15, the Republicans having 60 and 18 members, respectively, in the House and Senate.

It was on the control of the legislature that the outcome of the struggle depended. And this control depended on the effective organization of the Senate, with Lieutenant Governor Simpson as its President and the delegations from Edgefield and Laurens properly sworn in and seated.

Hampton and Simpson had been sworn in as Governor and Lieutenant Governor respectively at Columbia on December 14th, but had not been accepted as such by the Republicans. Any act by my father which could cause the legality of their oaths to be questioned would endanger the position of the Democrats. Taking the oath of office a second time would be such an act. Would a demand be made upon him to again take the oath of office when he appeared to assume the office of President of the Senate at the opening of a called session on April 24th 1877, and, if so, what would be his course? A short communication from Laurens to the *News and Courier* of January 3rd, 1877, makes possible a pre-knowledge of his probable attitude: "-Remote as this village may be, the reputation of its people keeps it prominently before the public eye. Colonel Simpson, formerly member of Congress in Richmond, and now claiming the office of Lieutenant Governor, is perhaps her most prominent citizen. Colonel Simpson would be recognized anywhere as a tribune of the people. His surface is distinguished by the 'Suaviter in modo' of the cultured gentleman but behind that there is a whole battery of the 'Fortiter in re'."

On December 15th, 1876, my father addressed the following letter to members of the Senate- "To the Honorable Senators of South Carolina:-I have the honor of informing the Senators that yesterday, the 14th of December, instant, the election returns for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, were opened and published by the Hon. W. H. Wallace<sup>26</sup>, Speaker of the House of Representatives, in the presence of the House and Senate; that Wade Hampton, having received a majority of the votes cast for Governor and W. D.

<sup>26</sup> William Henry Wallace (1827-1901) had a career similar to Simpson's. Son of US Congressman Daniel Wallace, he was born in Laurens County, attended SC College, married Sarah Dunlap, (for whose grandfather William Dunlap Simpson was named), became a lawyer, was elected to the SC House in 1860, served in the CSA as a lieutenant colonel and as a Brigadier General, and in 1872 was re-elected to the SC House, where he became Speaker in 1876. Eventually he became a judge in the Circuit Court and had a distinguished career in that office. His daughter Helen would eventually marry John C. Sheppard, who became Governor of South Carolina in 1886, but served only six months. -ED



*Simpson, having received a majority of the votes cast for Lieutenant Governor, were declared duly elected to these offices respectively; that thereupon, His Excellency, Wade Hampton, was inaugurated as Governor and the oath of office administered to him; and I was inaugurated as Lieutenant Governor, then and there taking the oath prescribed in the constitution. Under the provisions of the constitution I am ex officio President of the Senate, and am entitled to the privilege of presiding over that body when present. The law-making power of the State is, by virtue of the constitution, vested in the General Assembly, to be composed of the Senate and the House or Representatives, organized according to its provisions. The two Houses together compose the General Assembly, and each is an integral part thereof.*

*"The Supreme Court of the State, the Court of the last resort, had decided that the body, over which the Hon. W. H. Wallace presides as Speaker, is the constitutional House of Representatives and consequently it must be a portion of the General Assembly. Such being the case, I respectfully submit that it is the duty of the Senators, composing the Senate, to unite with the House and thus form a part of the General Assembly. Should this union take place, and the Senate thus form a part of the General Assembly, the legislative power of the State will be in full action.*

*"I respectfully announce to you that, as Lieutenant Governor, I am present in the city of Columbia, and am prepared to discharge the duties of your presiding officer, which devolve upon me under the provisions of the constitution, and I hereby claim the right of taking my seat as President of the Senate.*

*"With respect, your obedient servant,*

*W. D. SIMPSON, Lieutenant Governor and ex-officio President of the Senate."*

Immediately upon the opening of the Senate on April 24th, the outgoing Lieutenant Governor, Gleaves,<sup>27</sup> called the President-pro-tem of the Senate to the chair and excused himself. After organization details had been attended to, there began probably the most dramatic scene in the history of that body. Senator Livingston arose and said: "I have the honor to state that Mr. Simpson is present and ready to assume his duties. I move a committee be appointed to conduct him to the chair." Senator Nash, Negro Senator from Richland County, moved to amend by inserting that "he be required to be sworn in." After discussion, the motion, as amended, prevailed. The committee escorted Mr. Simpson to the chair, where "he stood like a nobleman beside the shriveled, tawny colored President-pro-tem." It was then suggested that a swearing-in officer be sent for, whereupon "Lieutenant Governor Simpson, in a clear, ringing voice, said, "I desire to announce that I have already taken the requisite oath and have been fully qualified as the Lieutenant Governor of the State, and I cannot consent to take the oath a second time. I regret that I have been compelled to take this ground, but, under the constitution, I am presiding officer of the Senate to which position I have been duly elected and qualified."

After some discussion by the Senators, he further said "I would ask the Senate, in courtesy to me, not to press on me the unpleasantness of this position. I fully thought that it was understood that I did not intend to take the oath again and, in view of this position, I ask the courtesy of the Senate and I will add furthermore that there is no power on earth that can compel me to take that oath a second time." A motion to reconsider the motion requiring the oath was made, prevailed, and Nash withdrew his amendment. The original motion was then adopted by a vote of 20 to 7.

The President-Pro-Tem then presented Mr. Simpson to the Senate as Lieutenant Governor and President of the Senate, and Mr. Simpson spoke as follows: "Having been elected Lieutenant Governor and having qualified, I am, ex-officio, President of the Senate and I am here to assume that position and to enter upon the discharge of its duties. I am in hopes, Senators, that the relationship which is about being established between us, will be a pleasant and agreeable one. I shall exert all my powers to make it so, and, to this end, ask the cordial co-operation of the entire Senate. It will be my primary duty to enforce

<sup>27</sup> Richard Howell Gleaves (1819-1907) was born a freeman in Philadelphia to a Haitian father and an English mother. He came to Beaufort, SC in 1866, seeing opportunity there, and entered business with Robert Smalls, who served both in the SC Legislature and the US House from the 5th District. Gleaves became Lieutenant Governor in 1872 and was re-elected in 1874. -ED

the rules which you have adopted, or which you may adopt, for your own government. In this respect, I am but the organ of this body. I shall endeavor to discharge this duty firmly, fairly and with perfect impartiality to each and every Senator, and, in this effort I ask the forbearance, the patience and the indulgence of the Senate.

"Under the law, I am debarred the privilege of participating in your deliberations, and it would be improper for me to attempt to use my official position for the purpose of influencing your deliberations in the slightest degree, and I shall take care not to travel in this direction. I have no hesitation in saying, however, that, as a citizen, I feel a deep and ardent interest in the future welfare of our common mother, our beloved South Carolina. I would rejoice to see her re-attain that proud position, which was once hers amid the galaxy of states and which may again be hers by a wise and judicious course on the part of her people and her officials. I would rejoice to see her rise from her prostrate condition and again take her place among her accustomed front line among her peers, and have no doubt but that this feeling burns in the bosom of every Senator here and that everything that can be done will be done towards the consummation of this great, this glorious end. The field of legislation before us is broad and inviting. There is much to be done and I feel assured that you are prepared to enter that field with zeal and with high patriotism and that your guiding star will be that solemn decree of the Roman Senate, always issued to consuls in times of danger: "Take care that the Republic shall receive no harm!"

"In conclusion, Senators, permit me to request that we all shall resolve, in this, the beginning of our public duty, that throwing aside all partisan influences and considerations, and forgetting all heart burnings growing out of the recent election, we shall unite in one common effort for the promotion of the best interests of our whole people, all classes, all conditions and all sections. Let us do this and let us work up firmly to this resolve and the time will come, at the end of our official careers, when we will not only deserve and receive the welcome plaudits of our countrymen, but, which is far better, we ourselves, can look back with pride to the time when we were connected with the Senate of 1876. There is now nothing left for me to say but to announce that the Senate must come to order."

The first and most important business before this meeting of the Senate was the seating of the Senators-elect from Abbeville, Barnwell, Edgefield and Laurens Counties<sup>28</sup>, whose election had been denied by the State Board of Canvassers, and on whose membership depended a safe Democratic majority in the General Assembly. This critical situation required quick, clear thinking and prompt decisive action by the President. These Senators-elect presented their credentials. The President immediately ruled that these were *prima facie* evidence of their right to office and that he would swear them in. A member protested on the ground that the Senate's Committee on Privileges and Elections alone had the right to pass on members of the Senate. The President ruled that, until sworn in, they were not members, and so not yet subject to consideration by that committee. Senator Taft, on a point of order, appealed from this ruling. The President refused to recognize the appeal on the ground that it was not a Point of Order but a question of organization, which must be disposed of before a point of order could be entertained. After a prolonged fight and many delaying motions by the Radicals, my father, as President of the Senate, swore in these Senators-elect as members of the Senate. He, in that dramatic session, by his prompt and courageous action at a critical moment, contributed largely to the eradication of the unlawful opposition of the corrupt, but strongly entrenched ring which, with the assistance, and under the sanction of the Federal Government had so long misruled and robbed the State.

The *Charleston News and Courier*<sup>29</sup> made this editorial comment on the proceeding just described- "The Democracy of the state are to be congratulated especially on the results of yesterday's work in the Senate; and the courage, promptitude and dignity with which the presiding officer, Lieutenant Governor Simpson, met the responsibilities of his position in so critical an emergency marks him as a worthy co-adjutor of Governor Hampton." The same paper commented: "Is it not a shame and reproach

<sup>28</sup> SC Senator from Laurens County was attorney Rutherford Pressley Todd (1834-1886) a CSA officer veteran and former SC House member.-ED  
<sup>29</sup> it is noteworthy that in the county of this newspaper, Republican Chamberlain received 15,032 votes (63.1% ) to 8,809 for Hampton: -ED

that Clerk Woodruff (of the Senate, a disreputable Radical) should occupy for one single hour a seat by the side of the dignified and spotless President of the Senate?"

My father, by his fair and considerate attitude to them in discharging his duties as President of the Senate, gained the respect and friendship of a number of the Negro senators and this became an important factor in creating a pleasant atmosphere and in facilitating legislation. Throughout his career he also believed in and worked for better educational facilities and opportunities for the State struck a powerful blow in favor of education by saving the life of the South Carolina College on March 1st, 1878. On a tie vote in the Senate, he cast the deciding vote against a motion to strike out the enacting words of a bill to re-organize the institution. This session of the Senate adjourned *sine die* on March 22nd, 1878, and the *News and Courier* reported that President Simpson delivered to it "an eloquent farewell address" just before its adjournment.

### CHAPTER VIII

In 1878, Mr. Simpson was elected to a second two year term as Lieutenant Governor. On November 7th, of that year, Governor Hampton suffered an accident which resulted in the loss of a leg.<sup>30</sup> Realizing that he would be incapacitated for some time, he, by a proclamation, relieved himself from office and my father automatically became acting-Governor.

The preamble to his first message to the legislature in the capacity, on November 13th, offered the large amount of work and the shortness of the time he had had as the explanation of such inadequacies as the message might reveal, but a reading of the message reveals no such inadequacies. It was an excellent review of the reports of the several State officers, with appropriate and practical recommendations concerning them and with his own recommendations as to new procedures for the benefit of the State.

Among these was the passage of a "Stock Law", which would benefit the farmers, protecting their crops and their cattle. Under this law pastures would be fenced, keeping the cattle in, instead of fencing all cultivated land and allowing the cattle to roam.

Either in this message, or a later one, he also recommended the establishment of a Department of Agriculture and of a Fisheries Bureau, both badly needed. And in a message on December 12th, he urged that "Such action be taken that will conduce to the most perfect organization of our public school system."

Of the message on November 13th, the *News and Courier* said: "There is no evidence of haste or overwork in the message of Governor Simpson, presented to the General Assembly on Tuesday. The recommendations he makes are both sensible and practical, and the General Assembly could not do better than to adopt them."

He concluded this message as follows: "-Gentlemen: -Permit me to congratulate the General Assembly and the whole State on the peace and good order which have marked the conduct of our people during the past year and especially during the existing circumstances of the political campaign through which we have just passed. Since the late war, we have constantly claimed that if the State could be placed back under the control of those to whom it rightfully belonged on account of their superior qualifications of integrity, competency and interest, free from foreign interference and domestic incompetency and misrule, the violence and turbulence thereby engendered, and which were fast becoming chronic features in her history, would instantly disappear and peace and good order would immediately re-assert themselves.

"In 1876 this revolution was accomplished and the late campaign, during the present administration, fully indicates the justice and the truthfulness of our claim in that respect and should

<sup>30</sup> Hampton was thrown from a mule while deer hunting. He was elected to the US Senate by the legislature the day his leg was amputated. -ED

silence forever the libels and slanders to which the character of the citizens of the State have been so long, so unjustly and so shamefully subjected.

We, as a people, are entitled to rejoice at our redemption from governmental misrule and its consequences and I am sure that good men everywhere, when they come to understand the situation, will join with us in our rejoicing and will sympathize with us in our struggle for the permanency of that redemption. Let me express the hope that nothing will occur in the future to mar this record and that our people throughout the State will unite in the preservation of the public peace and the continued supremacy of the law.

"I have purposely refrained from discussing any matters connected with the Federal Government for several reasons, among the most prominent is the fact that, while the State and Federal Governments are closely connected with each other and while the happiness of the people of this State is much dependent on both, yet the orbits if these two Governments are entirely separate and distinct and the harmony of their movements can be best preserved by each confining itself to the discharge of its own functions, as defined and limited in the constitution of this State and of the United States. This was certainly the intent of the founders of our system and, could that be strictly carried out, home rule and non-interference on the part of the general government, except as to those matters embraced in the constitution, and which are foundation stones of that system, would be the grand result, a result which would be hailed with joy, opening, as it would, a bright future to the people of our State.

"In closing this communication, permit me, Gentlemen, to invoke the blessings of Almighty God upon your deliberations. May He give you wisdom from on high and may the performance of your arduous and responsible duties be marked with that harmony which so eminently distinguished the General Assemblies of the olden past in South Carolina, reflecting honor on yourselves and lasting benefit to your people and State."

My father, having been re-elected in 1878, held the office of Lieutenant Governor until late in the year, when Hampton was elected to the United States Senate and he became Governor of South Carolina. He was entirely familiar with the duties of this office because of having discharged them during Hampton's long illness. Familiar, by reason of his long contact with public affairs, with the condition of the State and with the pressing needs of the people, he at once set himself to the tremendous task of improving the wretched conditions then existing.

In his first message to the General Assembly he strongly urged the material improvement of the State and pointed out how this could best be accomplished. His state papers were able and earnest and many lasting benefits resulted from his administration. His friendship for and his devotion to the educational interests of the State were demonstrated when he championed the cause and was one of the staunchest friends and supporters of the South Carolina College,<sup>31</sup> when the life of that time honored institution was threatened. His action during its dark days is appreciated by all friends of education in the state. And, Chairman of the Board of Trustees by reason of his position as Governor, his clear thinking and practical knowledge were of value in the organization and conduct of the college. Being a graduate of the college and familiar with its literary societies, he was a firm believer in their value as forums in which to gain a knowledge of parliamentary law and to practice the arts of public speaking and debate. He must, himself, have taken advantage of one of the societies, the Clariosophic, for Judge McIver, who was in college with him, commented on his eloquence as a speaker, even while in college.

My father, especially while he was Governor, was called on to make a good many addresses, and to perform the wedding ceremony a number of times for Jewish friends in Columbia. One of his addresses, which seemed to find favor with him, was his acceptance before the General Assembly, on

<sup>31</sup> The South Carolina College became of course the University of South Carolina. Soon-to-be Governor Ben Tillman would later display his negative feelings toward the University during the founding process of Winthrop in 1886 and of Clemson in 1889. -ED

behalf of the State, of a portrait of Hon. James L. Petigru,<sup>32</sup> of Charleston, SC. And the thing about it which pleased him most were the compliments bestowed upon his speech by his arch antagonist, that carpetbagger, yet cultured man and eloquent speaker, Daniel H. Chamberlain. He was, however, a bit rueful over one thing in connection with the speech. He inadvertently slipped and, at one place, referred to Mr. Petigru as "Jeems", which was how he was informally referred to by his friends.

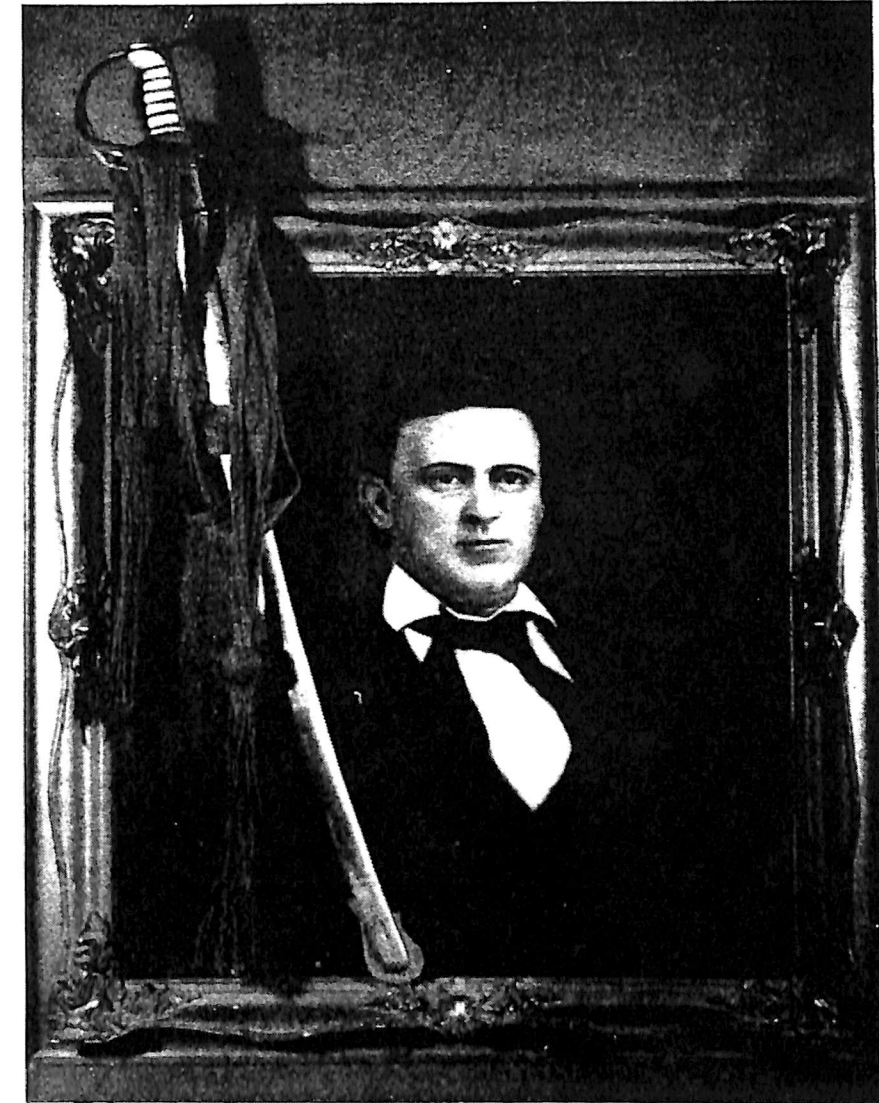
Two things during my father's term of office as Governor, which affected me, still remain vivid in my memory. The first was the family arrival the day after we moved from Laurens to Columbia, the members of the family traveling by passenger train and our household goods by freight. After traveling most of the day, we reached Columbia well after dark on a cold, rainy, winter night and proceeded to the Mansion, a barn of a brick building, formerly a military barracks, and found it, with the exception of one bed, devoid of furnishings of any kind, even lights, and all our things were in a freight car. Everything was gone, taken by whom we did not know, though we suspected some radical predecessor. So, we had to bunk down on the floor as best we could. A disappointing assumption of office! No welcoming committee, no outspread carpet for the incoming Governor! (Let me parenthetically say that Hampton had not occupied the Mansion. He owned his home in Columbia.)

However, there was one blessing in disguise in connection with this lack of furniture. In the Mansion is a very large room at the front, which, when we occupied it, had to be used as a reception room for both public and private occasions. This required that it be adequately furnished so my mother, in desperation, bought a beautiful mahogany suite, imported from France, which dressed that room up, and the several pieces of which, distributed among the children of the family, still grace their homes.

The other thing was a harrowing night for the Governor, as well as for his family. A white man had killed a Negro. He had been convicted of murder and had been sentenced to hang in the penitentiary at Columbia. Late in the afternoon before the hanging, the man's mother came to the Mansion to plead with my father for a pardon, or at least a commutation of the sentence. She stayed with him for hours, crying, sobbing, kneeling at his feet, begging for the life of her son. Finally she was persuaded to go to one of our rooms, from which, for the remainder of the night she could be heard praying and crying. And all through the night my father could be heard walking the floor, fighting in his heart and conscience the battle between sympathy and duty. Duty finally won, but with a toll upon him and his family!

At some time during his career, the State of South Carolina presented my father with a beautiful sword, which now hangs in a position of honor on a wall in my son's home. This sword has always presented something of a mystery to the family. For a long time, we knew nothing of the why and the wherefore of the presentation. This became a challenge to my wife, who liked anyhow to make research into past happenings, and she decided to find out about the sword. She began delving into the records in the Capitol building in Columbia and finally found, among some musty records, something that threw a little light on the subject. She found a record of a session in the House of Representatives which recorded the fact that some member made a motion to appropriate the money with which to purchase this sword, and it was duly seconded and passed, and she found that it was presented "for services rendered". What service? While the mystery still exists as to this, so does the pride of the family in this official tribute from the State of South Carolina to my father!

<sup>32</sup> James L. Petigru, (1789-1863) from Abbeville County, served in the General Assembly and as Attorney General. He was largely responsible for the basis of codification of SC laws during his life and was quoted as saying just after the secession of the state: "South Carolina is too small for a republic and too large for an insane asylum." -ED



Lt. Col. William D. Simpson with the sword presented to him by the State of South Carolina

(Included as the only photograph in the original biography)



## CHAPTER IX

This chapter is composed exclusively of my father's last message as Governor, to the General Assembly of South Carolina, presented on November 29th, 1879, and it is thus included only as an example of his State papers and messages.

"Gentlemen of the General Assembly: "-It is with great pleasure as the Executive of the State, I tender you kindly greetings upon your re-assembling for the purpose of entering upon the discharge of the high duties imposed upon you by the constitution.

"I have no doubt that you have each come prepared to meet fully your responsibilities and to do all that you can for the promotion of the welfare of the state and, to this end, you shall have my most cordial cooperation. My love for South Carolina, always strong, has grown and strengthened with my strength, until now it is one of the strongest feelings in my heart and I assure you I am prepared to unite with you in an earnest effort to accomplish during this the last session of the General Assembly of the present administration such results as may redound to her lasting prosperity, honor and glory, and I earnestly hope that such be its consummation.

"In addition to the ordinary and daily duties of the executive, some of which have been difficult and perplexing, the constitution provides that 'the governor shall from time to time give the General Assembly information of the condition of the State, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary or expedient.' This message is intended to meet this constitutional duty, to wit: -to give you the information as to the condition of the state, and to recommend the adoption on your part of such measures as, in my judgment, may be promotive of the common good.

"In proceeding to discharge this two-fold duty, you will permit me, first, briefly to call your attention, by way of information, to several matters which seem to me should afford abundant cause for great congratulation, not only on the part of the General Assembly, but of the whole State, and especially on the part of the General Assembly for the reason that some of these matters have been the direct result of previous legislation.

"First, you will permit me to congratulate you and the country on the evidences of agricultural industry which have come up from all parts of the state. Agriculture, as all understand, is the most important of a people's various interests-it is, in fact, the groundwork of all else. Let it languish and everything else languishes; let it flourish and everything else flourishes. When in successful operation, it gives rise to all other improvements. It necessitates the building of railroads and the establishment of manufacturing enterprises. It creates commerce and extended educational facilities are its legitimate results. During the past summer this great interest was threatened at one time with serious and widespread disaster by an impending drought, but at length the showers came and the rains descended, and this danger, comparatively, passed off, and our people, taken as a whole, have been blessed with a remarkable harvest. Their garners are generally full.

"I have taken some pains to obtain information on this subject, and the reports from the different counties show that the people of all classes and conditions have been more industrious, more energetic and more enterprising in this department of industry during the current year than for many years past, and I am rejoiced to believe that the new relations of labor and capital which our sudden transformation imposed upon us, as a people, are beginning to adjust themselves more harmoniously; we have certainly touched bottom and the rebound has commenced. These reports further show that, while cotton still forms the main product, yet that the people all over the State are beginning largely to diversify their crops. More small grain, especially wheat and oats, have been cultivated and harvested, at least in upper South Carolina, during the past year than in any period since the war, and greater attention is beginning to be paid to grasses and cattle, and the people are generally, and wisely, I think, coming to the conclusion that while their soil is well adapted to the production of a great staple, cotton, and that this product should not be neglected, yet that their corn cribs and meat houses should be built on their own

lands and under the protection of their own eyes. When this practice is more generally re-established and fully adopted, our future, agriculturally, I think will become more secure, and, while affording all of our people the means of a comfortable living, it will largely tend to relieve them from those fearful pecuniary disasters which not unfrequently (sic) occur among every people relying upon but one industry and the cultivation of a single staple.

"In this connection it affords me pleasure to say that the law known as the 'stock law', passed at the last session, has fully realized the hopes of its friends in those counties where it has been put in operation. Of course a measure so radical in its character and so suddenly adopted would meet with some opposition, and, as was expected, some complaints were made against this; but this was immediately upon the passage of the act and before the people had prepared themselves to meet it. Since then it has given as nearly universal satisfaction as any law ever enacted, and the concurring testimony from all quarters is that it is the greatest blessing to agriculture ever bestowed by the legislature. It is for you to determine whether or not this law should be extended to the counties not now embraced, upon such information as you may receive from the representatives of those counties.

"It gives me pleasure, too, to state that the fiery elements of party contention which have hitherto burned in our minds and kept our people apart, at least during election years and which, on account of the peculiar composition of our body-politic, threatened serious consequences in the past, if not entirely extinguished, have been held in abeyance during the present year and our whole population, free from those discordant antagonisms which seemed likely to occur, have united in a common effort for the common good. There is apprehension, however, that in the near future all this will be changed and that, in the election of 1880, turmoil and party strife will again rise to the surface. I hope not.<sup>33</sup> It is true in that election, involving as it will, to a great extent, the future policy of the general government, and arousing, as it must, the unholy ambition of the political aspirant as well as the noble impulses of the patriot citizens, some excitement must come, and we may expect that every effort will be made, for party purposes and success outside of our limits, to keep this excitement stirred and burning.

"My hope, however, is that the citizens of this State are beginning to feel that we constitute but one people; that our prosperity is bound up with each other, that we are all Carolinians and that, while we recognize the general government as supreme in its orbit, and, to some extent, affecting our interests, yet at last that our happiness as a people depends chiefly upon the destiny of our own State, and that we will not allow our internal and home interests to be swallowed up in the maelstrom of Federal politics.

"I desire also to communicate, as a matter of most pleasing information, based upon reliable data received from the solicitors of the different circuits, concurred in and fully supported by the Circuit Judges, that crime has recently diminished all over the state, diminished to the extent of at least thirty per cent, in this the third year of the administration of the party now in power, compared to any period previous to its inauguration. This, no doubt, has been the result of the fair and impartial administration of the laws which has taken place since that party has been in power and the confidence which all the people are gradually beginning to feel in the protective power and willingness of the government under the control and in the hands of that party. These results it promised to bring about, and the statistics will show that its promised have been faithfully redeemed. This is a most gratifying fact and augers well for our future. There is room, however, for further advance in this direction.

"Among the other evils left in the track of the late war there seems to have been engendered in the minds of the people a too great disregard of human life, not more in our midst than elsewhere, but in

<sup>33</sup> Simpson need not have worried too much. Comparing the party composition of the General Assembly over six years: SENATE: 1874 D=0, R=26; 1876 D=15, R=18; 1878 D=31, R=3; 1880 D=32, R=2. HOUSE: 1874 D=0, R=91; 1876 D=64, R=60; 1878 D=121, R=3; 1880 D=120, R=4. Thus after the 1880 election, the General Assembly had a total of only 6 Republican members and 152 Democrat members. However, in the 1880 national elections, in the House, the Republicans occupied 151 seats over the 128 Democrats. In the Senate there was a tie: 34 Republicans and 34 Democrats, but the president of the Senate was the Republican Vice-President, Chester Arthur, giving the Republicans a 1 vote majority in case of a tied vote. Republican James Garfield was elected President in 1880 but was assassinated after 200 days in office. -ED



every part of the country, as it is evidenced by the startling homicides in different portions of the United States. This feeling is fed and stimulated by that dangerous practice of carrying concealed and deadly weapons, and by their manufacture and sale, which prevails so extensively in different parts of the country. It is not surprising that the people should, to some extent, forget the value of human life when thousands and thousands of these instruments are manufactured and sold for no other purpose but to kill and destroy it, and, when they are made familiar with the idea of their fitness to that end, which the constant wearing and handling of these instruments must eventually produce in the minds of those who thus use them.

"This evil is not more prominent with us than in other communities -in fact I am gratified to believe that it prevails to a less extent here than elsewhere, but still it exists here to too great and should be corrected, if possible. If within the reach of legislation, your wisdom will find the remedy, in addition to this, the good, the wise and the lovers of justice and order everywhere should combine together and bring to bear upon it, with crushing power, that most potential of all influences, public opinion, and this I invoke, I do not know that any additional laws upon the subject of homicide are necessary. What is needed, perhaps, is a sterner enforcement of those already in existence. It is safe, however, to leave this to the courts and the juries."

*(Included here in the message is a recommendation to the members of the Assembly to study carefully the reports of the many Departments of State, copies of which were on the desks of the members, after which the Governor makes his recommendations, which follow:)*

"The primal object of government is protection, protection of the natural and absolute rights of the people, the right of personal security, personal liberty and the right to accumulate and enjoy property. These important rights had existence before government, and came from a much higher source, and government was created and established for their protection. But for the danger to those rights in a state of nature, there would have been no necessity for government. Laws are the instrumentalities through which government is brought in contact with the people and by which it accomplishes its great end. Such being the fact, it would seem that all wise legislation should be directed to the end, first, of establishing and supporting the government machinery upon as good and economical a basis as possible, and secondly, of affording it just such means as may be necessary, and no more, to enable it to meet its fundamental purpose, that of protection. Having done this, legislation has accomplished all that it should seek to accomplish. In endeavoring to reach this result, the tendency of most legislative bodies in the past, has been to over-legislation, rather than to too little, to the enactment of too many laws rather than to too few.

"The General Assembly of this State has not been exempt from this tendency in the past, as our voluminous statutes will show, and you will pardon me in warning you against its too great indulgence at this session. In addition to this, what is desired by all is an increase of wealth, because as a people grow more wealthy within proper bounds, they grow more powerful and prosperous, and are better enabled to surround themselves with all the comforts and improvements of a higher civilization.

"Now national wealth is but the wealth of all individuals, which, at last, is the creation of individual enterprise and energy. It would seem then, again, that the best and safest, and consequently the wisest government is that which is content rather to protect them than to attempt to create property, since the former always presumes and the latter never fails to impede the efforts of that individuality which makes men industrious and enterprising and which produces the wealth of a country.

"Having these views and looking at the State from my standpoint, I am impressed with the belief that but little additional legislation is now demanded by the wants of our people. and, consequently, I shall have but few recommendations to make. What they want is not so much more laws as more political rest and a quiet opportunity, through their own individual enterprise, activity and industry, of building up and recuperating their lost fortunes.

*(Here followed a review of the financial situation of the State, largely statistical, showing it to be far more economical and satisfactory than under the Radical regime, and comparing favorable with 1859, the last year before the war in which State affairs were well administered, adding the following comments and recommendations:)*

"As to our financial system, the present scheme in operation for the support and maintenance of the government stands upon as just a principle and as economic a basis as can well be devised. It rests upon the broad principle that every citizen should bear that proportion of the necessary burdens of government which his ability and property shall demand. This makes it bear equally upon all and all are satisfied. I am not aware of any improvement that can be made in either the collecting or the disbursing of that portion of the public money which is administered by the State Treasury. As now conducted the present scheme seems to afford absolute security both for the prompt gathering and the prompt and honest disbursement of this part of the public funds.

"But while this security exists as to that portion of public money administered by the State Treasury, yet it seems to have been forgotten that a large portion of the taxes is collected for County purposes and is administered by the County Commissioners of the several Counties without any sufficient check being provided for the correct disbursement thereof. It is true that the County Commissioners are required to make reports to the General Assembly to look fully into all the acts and doings, contracts and vouchers of the County Commissioners of the thirty-two Counties, so as to afford that check which the magnitude of this part of our financial scheme demands.

"It would be better that these reports should be made to some local authority where the facts could be more fully examined and the vouchers more easily tested; and for this better security I recommend that these reports be required to be made to the Circuit Court in the several Counties, to be examined by the grand juries under its supervision after being published in the County papers just previous to the sitting of the Court to which they shall be made.

"Nor do I see at this time any opening for greater economy or retrenchment in current expenses....When we reflect upon the great change which has taken place in our condition, social, political and otherwise and when we remember that our citizenship has been more than doubled by the emancipation of those of our people who were formerly our slaves, and the ruin which has been brought upon the country by the flagrant misrule and extravagance of those in power previous to 1876, all requiring new legislation, the application of new principles and almost an entire rebuilding of our political structure, it is not only a gratifying but a surprising fact that our expenses have so soon been brought down to the level of things which existed in 1859, and it will ever stand as a monument to the patriotism and practical wisdom of those who have conducted public affairs for the last three years. within which time this result has been accomplished. This is still more striking when the expenses of 1879 are compared with those of the fiscal year commencing November 1875.

"The expenses of 1879 in the legislative, executive and judicial departments amounted to **\$124,895** while for the fiscal year 1875 the sum required was **\$351,000**, a difference of \$226,105. This comparison has only extended to the appropriations made for the legislature, executive and judicial departments for the years mentioned. If carried out with the other appropriations, the contrast will be found still more striking, and will afford abundant evidence of the vigilant economy of the General Assemblies of the last three years. The road, then, which leads to the lightening of the people's burdens by reduction of taxes either now or ultimately, is not through an unwise withdrawal of proper support to the different departments of government under the guise of economy, but by the increase of wealth and population which will certainly come from stability, effectiveness and vigor in these departments, imparted by a fair, just and liberal support, and by the awakening of our sleeping resources through the increasing industry and enterprise of our people, fostered and protected by a just and noble government....And, inasmuch as the rate of taxation will decrease as property increases, the surest road to permanent and substantial reduction of taxes is protection and encouragement to enterprises and industries....and to these ends, therefore, legislation should be directed.

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"The public school system (authorized by an act of the Legislature of 1877) though somewhat defective, was the best that could have been devised and it has produced good fruit. Its defects are of a character which, perhaps, at this time, cannot be remedied on account of our peculiar condition.

"A perfect school system would be one which, by its own machinery, would bring into the school room all the youths of the State between the proper ages and subject them for the greater part of the year to the tuition of thoroughly competent and professional teachers, competent to instruct and discipline the mind as well as develop and discipline the character, this last being, in my judgment, as important, if not more important, than the first.

"The present system provides no special mode of furnishing the State with the class of teachers suggested. The different Boards authorized to license teachers are dependent on those who apply, many of them entering the work as a mere temporary business and for present support. The examinations are necessarily, to some extent, superficial and cannot reach fully into the higher qualifications of capacity, leaning and character, required on the part of those into whose hands the educational interests of the young of the State are entrusted. I know no mode of remedying this defect except the establishment of one or more normal schools to prepare and fit teachers for this important work. It may be on account of our depressed condition that the State is not yet prepared to undertake a scheme of this sort and establish it on a firm basis; but the whole school system depends in a great measure for complete success on the character of the teachers employed, and we will be compelled, ultimately, to adopt some better mode than is now existence to meet this demand.<sup>34</sup>

"The other defect referred to, to wit, the short period during which the schools are kept open, is due not so much to the system as to the fact of deficiency in the sum appropriated for school purposes.

"The schools are kept open to the full extent of the money appropriated, and, through the energy and most earnest efforts of the State Superintendent, are doing all the good that can possibly be accomplished with the limited means provided, and until the State is prepared to enlarge its appropriation, either through State or local taxation, this evil must continue unless, in the meantime, private efforts can be combined in some way with public aid to continue the schools after public funds are exhausted.

"The matter of public education is of the very highest importance and requires the maturest (*sic*) consideration; and in a government like ours, resting, as it does, on universal suffrage,<sup>35</sup> it is indeed the question of questions.

"The time is coming, and is rapidly approaching, when public sentiment will not only approve, but demand, that education in all its grades, higher and lower, shall be free to all, without money and without price. If I had the power I would hasten the arrival of that time and would then rejoice in the consciousness that I had borne some humble part in a work than which no greater can mark the history of any people. But you are far more competent than myself to deal with this great subject, and into your hands I commit it, commending to your consideration the very able report of the Superintendent with the valuable facts and suggestions contained therein.

"I would earnestly recommend some legislation which would secure to the teachers in the public schools the prompt payment of their salaries. The difficulties with which teachers have to contend because of delay in this matter are fully explained in the report of the Superintendent of Education. It will

<sup>34</sup> Though Simpson's insight was accurate and even prophetic, it still leaves open the question that still often confronts educators today: Where are the teacher trainers going to come from? Who is going to train THEM? Who is qualified to evaluate the evaluators? At the time of his remarks, there were almost no recognizable master teachers to use in this capacity, as the system was too young. -ED

<sup>35</sup> At the time, however, "universal suffrage" referred only to men. -ED

not be possible to retain competent teachers if we do not make provision for paying them promptly for their services."

(This message then commends the report of the Inspector-General to the consideration of the General Assembly, and says:) "The militia has been surrounded and embarrassed<sup>36</sup> with many difficulties, not the least of which is the scanty support given it by the legislature. Notwithstanding this, a splendid nucleus has been organized, which, if encouraged, could be easily extended to meet all the requirements of the State in this department, but, if it fails in the future, as it has in the past, to meet that cordial encouragement from the General Assembly which the system demands, it is idle to expect the establishment and continuance of a well organized militia, such as would do credit to the State and be prepared for any emergency that might arise."

## BUREAU OF STATISTICS

"Frequent inquiries have been made of me during the year, by parties outside of the State desiring investments of new homes, as to the agricultural, mineralogical, manufacturing and other resources of the State, with such statistical information on those subjects as I might be able to furnish; but there being no department in charge of these matters, with collected and arranged data from which I could draw, I have been unable to meet those inquiries as fully as was desirable. There is no doubt about the fact that the State abounds in resources of the character indicated, that there is a wide field here for the immigration of the agriculturist and the manufacturer and that we have a belt of mineral resources running through the State as rich, if not richer, than any that have been discovered elsewhere. In fact these natural resources are far more abundant and important than is generally known by our own people themselves, much less by outsiders.

"It is the policy of the State to encourage immigration, to bring foreign capital into our midst and to have these resources developed. Nothing, I think would tend more to the accomplishment of these ends than reliable facts and data collected by some authorized and responsible agency, and condensed and methodized into statistical reports and results, so that the character of our resources could be seen at a glance and the valuable information thus collected promptly utilized to the ends suggested....I therefore recommend this subject to your careful consideration, hoping that some plan may be adopted by which we may not only be put abreast with other States in these matters, but also our valuable resources be brought to light in such way as to attract that attention which they so eminently deserve, and may be made the means of promoting a wide-spread prosperity.

## PUBLIC ROADS

The roads of a country have been frequently said to be accurate and certain tests of the degree of its civilization. Their construction is one of the first indications of the emergence of a people from barbarism, and their improvements should keep pace with the advances of the nation in numbers, wealth, industry and science, of all of which they are at once an element and an evidence; they are the veins and the arteries of the body politic, through which flow the agricultural productions and the commercial supplies which constitute the life blood of the State, and upon their condition, sufficiency and number depend, in great degree, the health, life and vigor of the industries of the people. If our civilization were tested by this rule, I fear that our position would not be as high in the scale as we are disposed to claim....One of the necessities of our situation is a radical change in the road system...What an impetus would be given to agriculture, to progress and improvement in every way, if to the different County seats, from the extremities of the respective Counties, were running well graded, level and firm highways. Every branch of industry would thereby be materially benefitted, the expense of carrying to market every article reduced, and the necessities of life greatly cheapened to the consumer. Our present system....is deficient in two essential particulars: skilled superintendence and control and constant and efficient labor....Each County should have a practical engineer or road Commissioner in sole charge of the County highways!

<sup>36</sup> At that time, "embarrassed" was more often used to connote "bothered, hampered, or troubled" as in the French sense of the word. -ED

His whole time should be devoted to the business. The necessary labor should be furnished him by County and other convicts, commutation tax and such other labor as might not be able or willing to pay the tax. And this officer should be held strictly accountable for the condition of the roads....I most earnestly recommend the subject to your consideration as the one matter most needing attention in our present condition....Suppose that a more efficient system (as recommended by Governor McDuffie in 1837) had been adopted then, and since that time faithfully carried out until now, a half century. The imagination could scarcely picture the difference.<sup>37</sup>"

The message then proceeds to review, and to commend to the General Assembly for its careful consideration the recommendations contained in the reports from the Railroad Commissioner, the Phosphate Commissioner, the Fish Commissioner, the Superintendent of the Penitentiary and the Asylum, the Homestead Act, the Contingent Fund, and the Governor's Mansion and Grounds.

In connection with the report of the Fish Commissioner, the message says: "The importance of this enterprise I do not think is fully appreciated. The time was, in the history of the State, when our waters all over the State were full of valuable fishes, furnishing abundantly, at certain seasons of the year, cheap, and most healthful food to numbers of our people. The supply, however, has been exhausted for some years, and you rarely meet now, above tidewater, fishes of any value. It has been demonstrated by actual experiment elsewhere that rivers and streams thus exhausted may be re-stocked and in a few years made to abound with a new and more extensive supply than formerly. This is no speculative opinion, but the teaching of actual experience, and, in several of the states, the people are now reaping the rich fruits of their efforts in this direction by a constant and never failing supply of this most invigorating food, which they find free to their hands, crowding all their streams and rivers. I recommend a careful consideration of the Fish Commissioner's report and the establishment of this enterprise upon a wider and firmer foundation."

In connection with the Homestead Law, the message calls attention to the fact that the Supreme Court had, because of an amendment to it, declared it unconstitutional, and, commenting that a constitutional amendment is the only remedy, says: "If, in your judgment, the evil of it is of sufficient magnitude as to render this necessary, I would suggest that the proper steps be taken at this session by the passage of a joint resolution looking to such amendment. And it should be remembered that the party now in power is not responsible for this evil, but it results from the want of proper foresight and care in framing the constitution."

#### CONCLUSION

"If the General Assembly would promptly pass the supply and appropriation Acts, extend the stock law to such counties as may require and demand it, mature a wiser and more judicious road system, provide better means for the comfortable support of the poor of each county, cut out, root and branch, the practice of carrying concealed weapons, establish a bureau of agricultural, mineralogical and geological statistics, foster and encourage the labors of the Fish Commissioners, provide for the other matters herein above suggested, and lay the foundations of the State University broad and deep, so that, as time rolls on, story after story can be built thereon as the educational wants of the people may demand, until it could stand forth, amid the educational structures of the world, grand and majestic in all its proportions, it might then adjourn. And leaving the rest to the people themselves, it would adjourn with the pleasing assurance on the part of the members that generations yet unborn would rise up and call them blessed."

<sup>37</sup> In this regard, little was done to address Gov. Simpson's accurate assessment of roads. Rural areas suffered from lack of decent roads well into the 1950's and the few paved roads were often patched only with temporary tar and gravel which soon washed away. It was not uncommon to see rural folks attempting to push cars stuck in mud holes of a road, or to pull them out with a mule. -ED

#### CHAPTER X

The next, and the last phase of his career, was perhaps the most congenial of my father's public life, demanding as it did, the highest use of his mental and reasoning faculties and utilizing the knowledge and experience gained in the practice of law, and his understanding of human nature resulting from his varied contacts with his fellow men.

Having previously announced that he would not again be a candidate for the position of Governor, my father was, in 1879, elected by the legislature to the high and honorable position of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of South Carolina, effective as of August 1st, 1880, the term of office being six years. In 1880 he resigned from the Governorship and donned the judicial robes. (And that is no mere figure of speech, for South Carolina judges, both Supreme and Circuit did, in those days wear beautiful robes.) In 1886, he was unanimously re-elected to this high office, in which he served with entire satisfaction to the State until his death in 1890.

During his tenure of this office, he wrote many decisions, recorded in the South Carolina Reports, which, in the opinion of a competent judge "are distinguished for conciseness and perspicuity and which compare favorably with the best opinions of the leading judges of the nation." After every sitting of the Court, my father, in conference with his two Associate Judges, Samuel McGowan and Henry McIver<sup>38</sup>, divided among the three, he always taking his full share, the causes that had been heard and, after a full discussion among them, each wrote the decisions in the causes assigned to him. Sometimes, more often than not, all of them agreed with these opinions as written, but frequently one would dissent and write a differing opinion. I mean exactly that for they had no stenographers. My father did much of his writing in his study at home. He seemed to think best on his feet and his family would always know, from his ceaseless pacing of the floor, when he was dealing with a difficult case. And, incidentally, when he had to make an address, he could often be heard trying it out on the walls of his study before reducing it to notes. He never read an address, he always spoke it.

Speaking of his opinions, I am increasingly amazed, especially since trying to read his letters to my mother, written from the war front, that the printers ever printed them in time to be of any use. His chirography<sup>39</sup> was something to be deplored. Among his papers is a letter from Judge McIver which highlights this. In reply to some card from my father, Judge McIver wrote: "I have been using my wife recently as an amanuensis,<sup>40</sup> and, as it took my family and myself a whole day to read your card, it might be a good idea if you would do the same." The relationship between these three judges was a wonderfully sweet one, marked by mutual esteem and respect and real affection.

Our home in Columbia was the Mecca of many of the prominent men of the State, most of whom were my father's friends, and of all the judges, General Hampton was a frequent visitor, coming many times to submit his speeches and papers to my father for his consideration and advice before using them. Speaking of General Hampton's speeches during his 1876 campaign, he was asked how he managed to vary them so. He replied that it was simple-one day he would begin at the beginning of his speech, the next day he would begin in the middle, and the next at the end, and then start over again. General LeRoy F. Yeomans,<sup>41</sup> a fine orator and an able lawyer was another who frequently submitted his speeches.

My father built our home in Columbia and, in the doing, nearly precipitated an upheaval among the older citizens, certainly drawing forth their fervent protests. On the lot, which he had bought at the corner of Washington and Sumter Streets, were two lovely trees, a Live Oak and a Magnolia. The Magnolia, the largest and most beautiful thereabout, stood in the center of the lot on the only spot on

<sup>38</sup> General McGowan was elected to the SC Supreme Court in 1879 and served until 1893. During Simpson's term, Laurens County natives comprised two of the justices. Henry McIver, from Darlington and later, Cheraw, like Simpson and McGowan, had also been a CSA officer, and succeeded Simpson as Chief Justice when Simpson died in office. -ED

<sup>39</sup> Also known as "calligraphy" or handwriting. -ED

<sup>40</sup> A term meaning an assistant writer, secretary, or even a "scribe". -ED

<sup>41</sup> Yeomans served as an officer in the 3rd and 4th South Carolina Cavalry Regiments of the CSA. -ED

which a house could be built. He prepared to cut this tree down, hence the trouble. These good citizens, accustomed to enjoying the beauty of the tree, as an "unalienable right" cried "sacrilege" and vigorously protested. However, after realizing the necessity, they relented, and all was well again.

The members of the family had a scare and my father had a terrible shock and a loss in connection with that lot. While still in the governor's mansion my father one day withdrew from the bank 700 dollars, about all the money he owned, with which to make a down payment on the lot. For some reason he was unable to make the payment and it was necessary to carry the money home in his trousers pocket. Evidently he was seen to withdraw this money by thieves. That night they came to the Mansion, tried to enter through every window on the ground floor, finally opening one and entering. They entered my father's bedroom, carried his trousers to the back porch and took the money. My father must have waked while they were on the porch. They evidently heard him, and fled, taking the money with them and though every effort was made to catch them, these were unsuccessful.

I remember many delightful occasions in that home my father built, even though, because of my youth, I was only an observer and not a participant. The most delightful of these were the periodic banquets my father tendered the judges of the State, both Supreme and Circuit, together sometimes with some of the prominent lawyers. My mother saw to it that the table was lovely with its napery, china, silver and flowers and with the requisite wine glasses at every place, and that the food was just what it ought to be. As attractive as all this was, the memorable things were the men and their conversations, the like of which seems to be largely a thing of the past. These men were all conversationalists and most of them were raconteurs of surpassing ability. And the marvelous thing about this, aside from the fun of their stories, was the fact there never was a risqué story told. Easily the leading story teller was Judge McGowan, oblivious of everything but the story, telling his many funny experiences in the Mexican War. I cannot believe that another such group will ever get together again.

As previously stated, my father was never completely happy without a farm of sorts, so he bought a few acres of land just outside the city limits of Columbia, now a part of the city, from which he gained the recreation he so badly needed. However, recreation was about all he gained, for, as an income producer, the farm was not a success, his most bountiful crop, so far as I can recall, having been Spanish peanuts which though very good, did not command much of a market.

The family had spent several summers in Cashiers Valley, NC and sometime during his public life, probably while he was Governor, my father bought a lovely site there, on which, with their own hands, his sons and sons-in-law built two somewhat rustic but commodious and comfortable houses in which the family spent many delightful vacations. My father was very popular with the mountaineers around us and it was not unusual to find, when we assembled for breakfast, several men, some of whom had walked eight miles in order to sit on our front porch and chat with him for an hour or so.<sup>42</sup> Among these many friends there was Riley Hooper, a tremendous red-headed man, whose occupation was horse trading, and from him he acquired three of the best horses we ever owned, a pair of spanking gray carriage horses, and a medium-sized bay, an excellent saddle horse, which was my special delight. My father greatly enjoyed and was much benefited by these summers at Cashiers. Nothing gave him more pleasure than to chat with those neighbors, to sit on the porch meditating on the cases in which he had to write the opinions of the Court, and in watching, with never ceasing interest, the play of light and shadow over the mountains all around. He particularly enjoyed this play over a great mountain, "Whiteside" over which there was frequently a cloud, which a neighbor said "used" there. In connection with these trips to Cashiers it is interesting to remember that, under SC law, it was required that a Judge, intending to leave the bounds of the State, should get permission from the Governor before doing so. The Governor informed my father that he was the only Judge who ever obeyed that law!

<sup>42</sup> Simpson was most likely introduced to the Cashiers area by Governor Wade Hampton, who bought land there before the Civil War, when he was one of the richest men in South Carolina. He bought the land from Mordecai Zachary, who also helped in the construction of the original hunting lodge which became an Inn. Hampton and his family would go by train to Greenville, then to Cashiers by horse and buggy. He was at the old lodge when the news came of his election as Governor. The buildings were destroyed by fire in 1932, and a huge mountain hotel complex was built on the grounds. -ED

## CHAPTER XI

On January 30th, 1890, speaking for the Supreme Court in reply to resolutions introduced by the Union County Bar in memory of Judge Robert Munro of Union, SC, recently deceased, my father said: "-The Court joins very sincerely with the Bar in the proceedings just had in memory of the distinguished, deceased, Judge Moore. It is true that his death was not unexpected, yet when it came, it came with a shock for the whole State, for he was well-known and admired all over South Carolina. And, although for several years immediately preceding his death, he had retired to a great extent from public gaze, remaining at home, quietly awaiting his last summons, which was to call him to join his brethren of the Bench in that spirit land to which they had all gone before him, (And what a reunion of noble spirits, when he, the last one, passed over) yet, for many years before his retirement, he had become a striking character in the State as a citizen, as a lawyer and, lastly, as a distinguished judicial magistrate, and, notwithstanding his retirement, he had not been forgotten and his death cast a gloom over the whole State.

"I regret that I am not prepared at this time to pronounce that eulogium upon his character it so eminently deserves, but I have not been able, since I was informed that this proceeding would be held, to call up the events of his life to that end, and, under these circumstances, any effort of mine in that direction would but mar the beauty of that life. I shall therefore not attempt it. I can say, however, what all know, that for many years of his public life, he belonged to the galaxy of distinguished judges who did so much before the war to build up and elevate the judicial character of the State. He not only belonged to that noble body, but he was a co-worker with them and aided in erecting that splendid legal monument which they and he built, and of which our people were so proud. He did his work well and his name will go down to posterity hallowed and embalmed for all time in the hearts of the Bar of this State. I can say, further, that during his life he had drawn around himself the love of his brethren. This grew out of the frank unostentation (*sic*), above other characteristics, which marked his life and intercourse with the members of the Bar, and which was so magnetic in attracting the esteem of all with whom he was brought into contact.

"It has been the custom of some people, and in some places, to erect historical monuments to departed greatness and worth, but Judge Munro needs no monument of this kind to perpetuate his memory, because our State Reports, in which will be found displayed his eminent judicial attainments and qualifications, will keep his name fresh and his grave green as long as courts are held and justice administered in this State, a more lasting monument, I hope, than dissolving brass and crumbling marble.

"He was the last link that bound the present to the past-the judiciary of this day to that which existed before the war. That link has been broken and that tie severed by his death and there is no longer any visible connection between the two. Yet his example and that of his noble compeers still live, over and above us, wooing us to tread the pathway which they trod and which, in his and this day, led to the highest honor and safety of the State. Oh! that we, of this day may emulate that example and follow their footsteps, adding fresh laurels to the glory of our beloved State, enabled thereby to preserve it as they left it, bright and untarnished."

Although my father was in excellent financial condition at the beginning of the war, at the end he had practically nothing. During the years that followed, although he worked hard, he accumulated little. His official salaries were good for those days, though little enough in comparison with current salaries, and, under normal conditions, would have suffered for the needs of the family, if not to provide him with an adequate estate. However he was guided by a sense of obligation, which might appear quixotic to many, which made it impossible to accumulate anything except during two or three of his last years.

When the war began, he was the Trustee of a rather large estate, with the duty of caring for and investing in funds. Believing in the final victory of the South, he did with those funds what he did with his own money, invested them in the bonds of the Confederacy, with the result that these funds were lost. He



felt that he should reimburse the estate for this loss, and it was not until a few years before his death that he succeeded in doing this. His estate at his death consisted of the Columbia house and farm, with some small investments, enough however to provide for my mother until her death, but no more. However, as Dr. A. G. Wardlaw declared in his remarks at my father's funeral, he left his family the greatest heritage any man could leave, the heritage of a good name.

My father's death in 1890 came as a shock to the whole State of South Carolina and as a terrible shock to members of the family. Whether or not he and my mother knew he had the disease, diabetes, of which he died I do not know, but the children did not know of it. Insulin was not in use at that time, so it is probable that little could have been done for him, had he known. He was ill for only two or three days, passing out from the coma resulting from this trouble.

Shortly after his death the Bar Associations of many counties in the State held memorial services in his honor, in which magnificent tributes were paid to him by many of the ablest lawyers of the State and by many other citizens, who asked the privilege of participating. These services culminated in a service held on January 12th, 1891. in the Supreme Court room in Columbia, with Associate Justices McIver and McGowan sitting, Associate Justice McIver presiding. As I recall this was a wonderfully sweet and solemn service. Present were practically every State officer, including the Governor<sup>43</sup>, and many lawyers and private citizens from over the State, filling the hall to capacity. A number of addresses were made, the general character of which is well exemplified by the excerpts from remarks of several of the speakers, which follow. These and other addresses are quoted in full in the South Carolina Reports.

Attorney General Y. J. Pope<sup>44</sup>, after reference to the long relationship of the three Supreme Court Judges, to the sorrow of the remaining two and to the loss to the members of the Bar, who appeared before the Court said, among other things: "With his whole mind engrossed by the cares of a Judge, there is reason to say of him 'It is sweet and honorable to die for one's country.' It would be a great neglect not to refer to the contributions, made in our legal history, by one who acted so conspicuously a part in the legal affairs of the State. Among the far reaching questions to which he devoted his mind were the solution of the public debt of the State on principles alike honorable to her and to the holders of her securities; to the question of the homestead; to the rights of the women of the State, and there is one thing the State should never forget, that he, along with others, in their efforts to see that the people of the State were vindicated, bore obloquy<sup>45</sup> even in order to be faithful to justice and to honor. He stood firm in this tribune and obeyed that which the constitution ordered him to do. A debt of gratitude from the people belongs to him."

Colonel F. W. McMaster, introducing resolutions from the Columbia Bar, said, among other things: "He was the fond child of fortune and during his life time, in his career as lawyer and politician, he was decorated with nearly every civic distinction in the power of his State to bestow. Both of you (the Associate Justices) knew him as the citizen, lawyer, Representative in the State legislature and Confederate Congress, as Lieutenant Governor, as Governor. and Chief Justice, as citizen, lawyer, officer, friend, husband and parent. In every position, he honored the office as much as the office honored him. Even base, cowardly calumny never shot a poisoned arrow at this shining mark. The appellation given by the Romans to Sylla 'Felix, the happy, the good, the blessed' could appropriately be applied to Judge Simpson. A thought better than that, in one sentence, it was the beauty of his life, his courtesy, conduct, conversation in his office, or on the street or in council, at the festive board, on the Bench and at the fireside. His moral and intellectual powers were so blended in happy, equal unison as to constitute a good, useful, honorable citizen, a true Christian gentleman."

<sup>43</sup> The writer does not name the Governor. Simpson died 26 December, 1890. On December 4, 1890, Benjamin Ryan Tillman had taken office as Governor, and served until December 4, 1894. Tillman rarely agreed with the policies of the preceding Democrats, who were considered by him too rooted in the past, and whom he called "Bourbons". -ED

<sup>44</sup> Young John Pope, (1841-1911), Furman graduate, nephew of Chief Justice John Belton O'Neall, member of SC House and Senate, elected Attorney General 1890, Associate Justice of the SC Supreme Court in 1891. He too was a CSA veteran and was wounded five times, losing an eye in battle. He also served five terms as Mayor of Newberry. -ED

<sup>45</sup> humiliation

Colonel Joseph Daniel Pope,<sup>46</sup> Dean of the Columbia Bar and head of the South Carolina College Law Department said: "The deceased Judge, honored for his services, beloved for his virtues, respected for his learning, and revered for the purity of his public and private life, has ceased to occupy his accustomed place. What was the keynote to the success of the late Chief Justice? The keynote may be sounded in two words: 'exalted character'. What is character? That quality of mind and heart which calls forth the corresponding confidence of his fellow men. This was Chief Justice Simpson's strength, this confidence he enjoyed. No man in South Carolina enjoyed in his day, within the sphere in which he was called to act, a greater degree of public confidence. While possessed of no ordinary gifts of intellect, learning, eloquence and courage, his strong point was his pure life, his unimpeachable character, illuminated by the steady guiding light of judgment, experience and learning. Guided by these lights, Mr. Simpson continued in the practice of his profession with flattering success until, in obedience to the call of his State, he took up arms in her defense. He believed in State Sovereignty, that the constitution established a republic of states and not a consolidated federal republic; that his allegiance was due to his State and that, when he struck in her defense, he was neither a rebel nor a traitor; as he lived, so he died, in the political faith of the fathers of the Republic. We kneel today at his shrine and do homage to his memory. In time to come, many will rise up and call him blessed."

Mr. Justice McIver, in replying on behalf of the Court, said: "It has been given to but few to attain the highest distinction in every department of government, as that involves varied qualities of the highest order, both of head and heart. But these were found in eminent degree in the subject of these remarks, and hence we find his name inscribed amongst the first in three departments of government, the legislative, the executive and the judicial. It seems appropriate to speak of him as Judge. Here he won his highest fame and here he erected his most enduring monument. The South Carolina Reports will furnish the highest evidence of his ability as a Judge and of the faithful performance of the high trust confided to him by the repeated, unanimous voice of the representatives of the people of South Carolina. His mind was most remarkable for its quickness, clearness and breadth of view. He had another high quality, necessary to make a judge, boldness. He was a man of the highest character. He utterly abhorred anything low or mean. After passing a long life, in many varied scenes, exposed to many temptations, even his enemies, if he left any, would find it impossible to point out a single blot on his character."

Mr. Justice McGowan said: "I can say, I feel bound to say, that at all times and under all circumstances, in the fierce conflicts of the forum or the quiet walks of private life, in adversity or prosperity, through evil report and good report, in peace and in war, W. D. Simpson ever proved himself to be an honest, truthful man, just, faithful and reliable. Loving and beloved, he was the very idol of his family."

Judge McGowan was a frequent visitor in our home and the last sentence above, quoted from him, is a true picture of the relationship in the home, a relationship I delight to recall.

*The Charleston News and Courier*, said editorially, immediately after his death: "Judge Simpson was a man of great purity of character, with firm convictions of duty, and enjoyed the respect and confidence of all who knew him. As a member of the legislature before the war, he was devoted to the interest of his people. Upon the field of battle he was ever the conspicuous champion of the cause of his people. In the halls of Congress, as Governor of the State, and as the highest judicial officer of South Carolina he proved the quality of his mettle and lived more for his State than for himself. 'A truly great Judge belongs to an age of political liberty', said Horace Bomar in his eulogy of John Marshall, 'in which he is the representative of the abstract justice of the people in the administration of the law and is rewarded for the highest achievements of duty by proportionate admiration and reverence.' Judge Simpson was a man of the highest courage and of the purest motives and was the representative of 'the abstract justice of the people in the administration of the law'. As honorable counselor, a Christian-hearted gentleman, a just Judge, his death will be deplored by all men throughout the State, whatever their political conviction or their personal preference."

<sup>46</sup> Pope (1820-1908), first Dean of the Law School of the University of South Carolina, was a graduate of the University of Georgia. -ED

Part of a sketch of my father in the "*Encyclopedia of Eminent and Representative Men of the Carolinas*" written during his life constitutes, I think, a fitting conclusion to this brief biography: "During a long life of public service he has universally acquitted himself with merit and distinction. He holds to the idea that a public office is a public trust and has been governed by that idea and no public official has ever been more accessible. His discharge of the duties of the Chief Executive Office of the commonwealth won him the encomiums of the State. As a lawyer, Judge Simpson was able, eloquent and successful; as a legislator he was conscientious, honest and useful; as a soldier, brave, brilliant and faithful; as Chief Executive, competent, energetic and progressive and as Chief Justice he is profound, impartial and just, discharging his duties as he understands them, in an independent, fearless manner and giving universal satisfaction. As a man, Judge Simpson is the most congenial it falls to the lot of the average man to meet, courteous, affable and kind; strong in friendships and attachments, liberal in his views, and progressive in his ideas; it is no wonder that the people of South Carolina delight to honor him.

The following anonymous poem, written for the *Yorkville Enquirer* from Columbia, SC in August 1886, over the pen name "Ingomar" is so fair and just an appraisal of the conduct and character of my father, not only as a Judge but in every relationship of life, that it constitutes a fitting conclusion of his biography.

THE JUST JUDGE  
*Pulman qui meruit ferat*

*The Goddess of Justice smiles when he draws near,  
And surrenders her scales without dread or fear;  
A halo of glory encircles his brow,  
And justice exclaims -I am satisfied now!  
A just Judge is rare and my hearth oft doth grieve,  
For to tell you the truth, I really believe  
That the people are mad, else they never would send  
To my temple of justice, nor countenance lend  
To the miscreants vile, who're infinitely worse  
Than some victims they sentence, for O, 'tis a curse  
To have drunkards and villains, whose names I know not,  
Sit on my Bench, and I oft blush with shame  
At the mockery of justice such vipers proclaim  
As the law of the land, for if I had my die,  
O, foully wronged victims, they'd change place with you;  
But this Judge, intelligence beams from his eyes,  
And his soul is as pure as the light from blue skies!  
My decrees he will temper with mercy most kind,  
And to worldly allurements he is ever most blind;  
My white robes of ermine he will never befoul  
Like the vampires, the Furies, the Gnomes and the Ghouls,  
Who mock at my blindness while decrees they sell-  
They are fit only for the meridian of Hell!*

*His locks they are ven'erable and hoary with age,  
And in his long record there is not a dark page  
To befoul or to tarnish, or bring blush of shame,  
And I bow when I hear his glorious name!  
I bow with thanks for this one noble son,  
And his name would embalm forever in song.  
I know that when he takes his seat on my Bench  
No reeking foul odor, no vile, filthy stench*

*Will exhale from the ermine his shoulders upon,  
That he'll frown upon vice and all that is wrong;  
That my scales will suspend like a featherweight,  
And no countenance give to the lordly or great,  
But justice mete out to the rich and the poor,  
His decrees will be justice, simple and pure.  
So I smile in his face, and greet him with joy,  
Whenever my temple my fav'rite draws nigh,  
I greet him -All hail! O my glorious son!  
Thou are as spotless as the rays of bright sun!  
O long may you live, and with wisdom adorn  
The tribune of Justice! You're my Temple's charm!*

*O, would that all Judges were like unto thee!  
No more from my Temple in shame would I flee!  
No more cloud on my face with a mantle of woe,  
To hide shame's suffusion, which burning doth glow,  
Which tells that I am stifled my own Temple in!  
And I mourn and weep for the grievous sin  
That is done in my name, whilst I'm tied hand and foot  
By a miscreant vile, or a base drunken sot!  
But you, noble son! My Temple adore  
Like the first blush of light from a glad summer morn!  
Then hail to the just Judge! O long may he live!  
Green laurels he's won, I the crown to him give!  
Entwined laurel and palm are as fadeless as time,  
So 'round his pure brows I them lovingly twine!  
Then, rejoice Carolinians, when his name I now mention,  
This my glorious son, is CHIEF JUSTICE SIMPSON!*

### SUMMARY

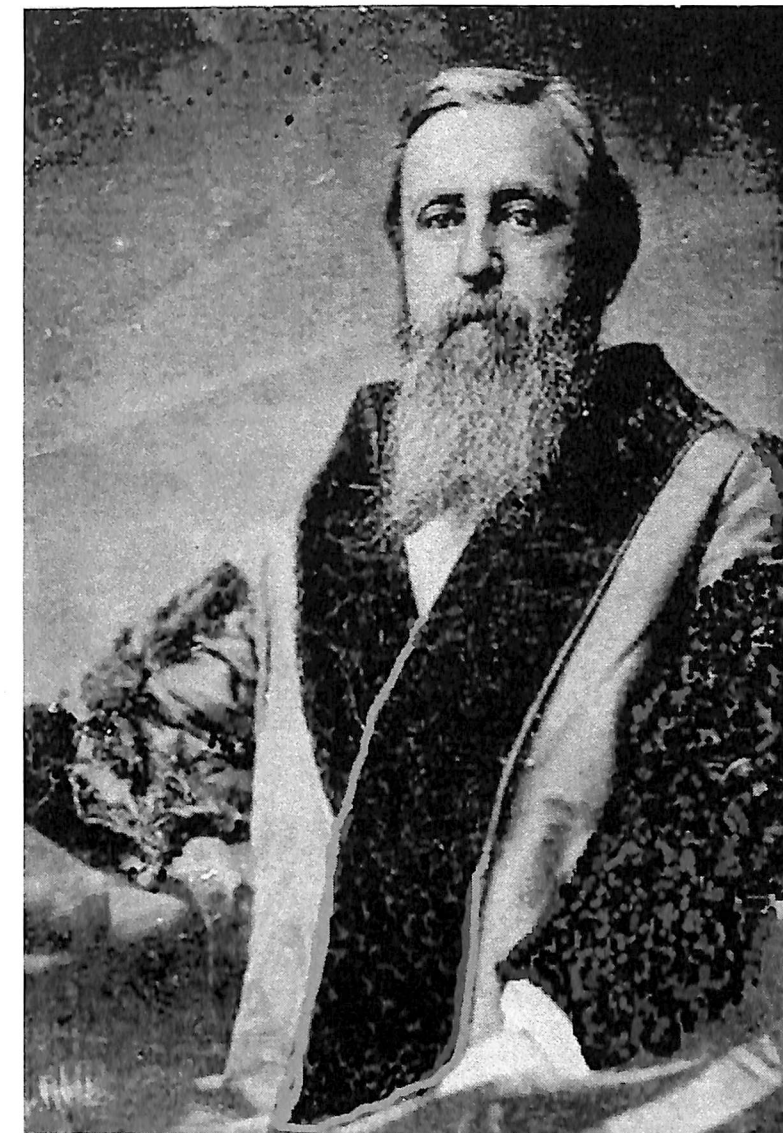
#### William Dunlap Simpson

born in Laurens County, SC 27 Oct 1823 and died in Columbia 26 Dec 1890  
Attended South Carolina College and Harvard University  
Became a law partner with Henry Clinton Young, whose daughter he married  
Was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives  
Was elected to the South Carolina Senate  
Served as an officer in the Civil War  
Was elected to Congress in two different countries!  
Served in the Confederate Congress 1863-1865  
Was elected to the US Congress but was not allowed to serve  
Practiced law with his brother John Wistar Simpson in Laurens  
Was elected Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina 1876  
Became Governor of South Carolina 1879  
Was elected Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court 1880  
With Jane Elizabeth Young, he was the father of eight children.

(Note: This summary was not a part of the Biography, I have added it here to assist the reader's understanding of the subject. -ED)

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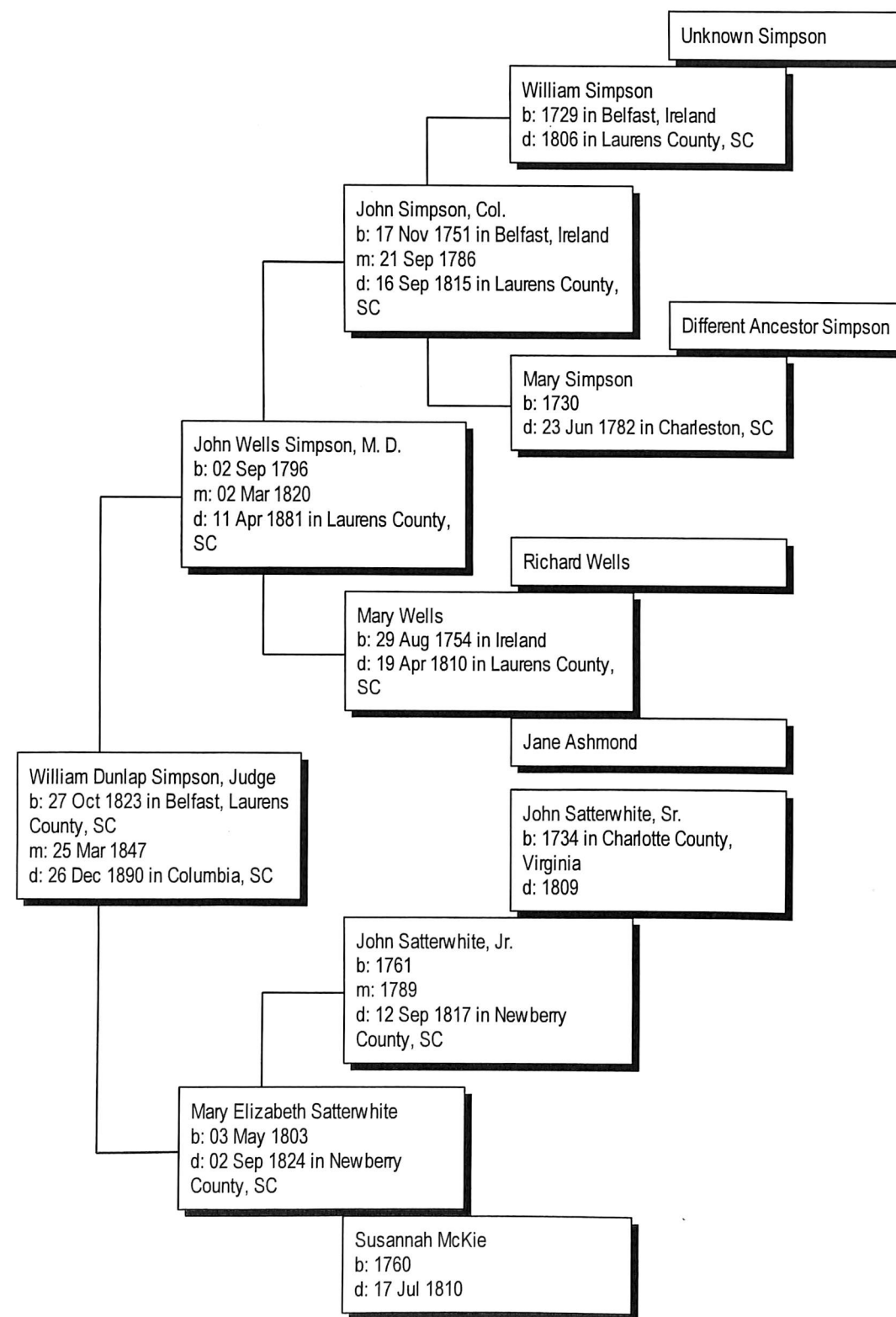
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**CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM DUNLAP SIMPSON PRESIDING OVER SUPREME COURT ABOUT 1889**  
 Judge Simpson is adorned in the ceremonial robes that once were standard apparel among Justices as a mark of the importance of their high office



### Ancestors of William Dunlap Simpson, Judge



Compiled by Richard W. Fowler



**BELFAST! THE BIRTH PLACE AND BOYHOOD HOME OF GOVERNOR AND CHIEF JUSTICE WILLIAM D. SIMPSON.**

Located in Laurens County on SC Highway 56 southwest of Clinton near the Newberry County Line

After expenses, all proceeds will be applied to the purchase of a long overdue historical marker from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, to be placed at Belfast. Gov. Simpson was born at the Belfast home and it is one of the oldest homes in Laurens County. The re-printing of the William D. Simpson Biography by his son, John Wells Simpson is a project of the Kenelm Winslow Chapter, South Carolina Society of the Colonial Dames, XVII Century. William Dunlap Simpson was one of Laurens County's most distinguished statesman.

The Society wishes to thank Richard Fowler for typing, editing, indexing and adding historical and genealogical references to the original manuscript. We appreciate Richard's legendary talent to publish the story to share with South Carolina and the Simpson descendants.

Books may be ordered from Sarah Jane Armstrong 2190 Curry's Lake Rd, Gray Court, SC, 29645. Phone 864 876-3712 or E-mail [Armstrongsar@prtcnet.com](mailto:Armstrongsar@prtcnet.com) President of the Kenelm Winslow Chapter, South Carolina Society of the Colonial Dames XVII Century. Donations to this worthy and important historical endeavor will be gratefully accepted!

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THE HISTORICAL MARKER FOR THE BELFAST HOME IN LAURENS COUNTY, SC  
South Carolina Department Of Archives and History, J.Tracy Power , Coordinator

Side 1 of 2

Laurens County 30-16 Belfast Plantation

This Federal plantation house was built between 1786 and 1815 for John Simpson ( 1751- 1815), merchant and planter. Simpson came to S.C. from England in 1786 and named Belfast for his birthplace in Ireland. A post office here was called Belfast by 1804. Simpson was the first of four generations representing Laurens County in the S.C. House of Representatives from 1797 on 1886.

( continue on next side )

Side 2-2

John Simpson's grandson William Dunlap Simpson (1823-1890), born here, was a state representative and senator 1854-1863, and a Confederate officer and Congressman 1861-65. Simpson was Lt. governor 1876-79, then governor 1879-1880, and was chief justice of the S.C. Supreme Court at his death. Belfast was acquired by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources in 2008.

Erected by the Kenelm Winslow Chapter. S.C. Society of the Colonial Dames XVII Century , 2011.



An old photo of Belfast showing how it must have looked originally before more recent restorations.