

# The Wallaces of Turkey Creek

■ S.C. family included lawmaker, Confederate soldier and American Indian fighter.

Alexander Wallace was born in 1810 in York District. He was the son of McCaslan Wallace, who had been born on the Atlantic Ocean in 1772. The Wallaces were immigrants from County Antrim, Ireland, and, though latecomers, were part of the great Scots-Irish immigration that populated so much of York, Lancaster and Chester counties. McCaslan Wallace's two older brothers died fighting the English in the American Revolution.

The Wallaces settled on Turkey Creek in York District. Alexander Wallace became a planter like his father. He married Nancy Ratchford in 1833 and they had six children — four daughters and two sons.

In the 1850s Wallace served six years in the S.C. legislature. As talk of secession increased, Wallace spoke vigorously against the folly of it all. Nevertheless, he was a slave holder (the 1850 census showed him owning four). When the war broke out, Wallace retired to his farm.

The oldest son, Robert, born in 1837, graduated from Erskine College in 1858 and went to work as an apprentice lawyer for Melton &



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Melton of Yorkville. He was admitted to the bar in 1860 but never practiced. When the Civil War broke out, Robert Wallace joined Confederate forces, but, unlike the typical enlistee, he did not join any of the local companies that were being formed. Instead, he went to Texas and enlisted as a private in Terry's Texas rangers.

Robert Wallace was in numerous battles and skirmishes in Tennessee and Kentucky, wounded twice, and taken prisoner by federal forces in January 1864.

In 1865 Alexander Wallace was again elected to the S.C. legislature and served about one year until he was appointed by the U.S. government as collector of internal revenue. He held that office until 1869 and resigned after his election to the U.S. Congress as a Republican

in 1868. Robert M. Wallace, the ex-Confederate, was appointed to fill his father's vacancy. It was almost unheard of to have a Confederate appointed to a federal office. In 1872 Robert Wallace was appointed U.S. marshal for the district of South Carolina and remained in that position until 1881.

Later, Robert Wallace moved to Sumter and became the vice-president of Sumter Cotton Mills. Next, he was president of the Sumter Electric Light Co. He died in 1902.

Alexander Wallace died June 27, 1893. The lengthy inscription on his tombstone tells of his public service and concludes: "... He filled these positions with marked ability and left to his family the proud heritage of an unsullied name. A good citizen, a constant Christian, a friend of the poor, his deeds will not be forgotten."

Alexander Wallace's youngest son, George, graduated from West Point in 1872. He was a lieutenant under Maj. Reno at the Battle of Little Big Horn in June 1876, the battle in which Gen. George Custer was killed.

Officially, Wallace was

described as an "itinerist," that is, an officer assigned to record the time that particular events happened. As such, he noted how long it took to march from one point to another, the length of military engagements, the hours that various troops spent on assignments, etc.

Fourteen years later, George Wallace was killed by Sioux Indians from the Rosebud reservation. There is a large monument in York's Rose Hill Cemetery that bears the inscription: "In memory of Capt. George D. Wallace, Seventh U.S. Cavalry, Born June 29, 1849, Killed in Battle with Sioux Indians at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, December 29, 1890."

It is said that the body of Wallace was found with nine other fallen men from his company. Wallace was still holding his empty six-shooter. There were five dead Indians around him. He was a very popular officer and the circumstances of his death were widely circulated throughout the United States.

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