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S.C. - Homes, Historic - York County

Smarr House At Sharon Believed 150 Years Old

Structure Built By Slave Owner

By ELIZABETH REED

Picture a two story house with slave quarters in the rear and flanked in summer by fields of luscious watermelons and you have the Smarr house near Sharon, as it must have looked a century ago.

Jackie Smarr, first known owner of the home, was one of the community's few slave owners. He was noted for his hospitality and his business acumen.

The exact date of the construction of the old home is unknown. However, it is believed to be 150 years of age. A brick found when the present owners were remodeling indicates this.

At any rate the old house is among the oldest of the county. Its hand-hewn and pegged sills and foundation timbers tell that it was constructed before nails came into general use.

And built well! When the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Randolph Lee set about to modernize the home in 1943 they found that only the porch sills had rotted; the rest of the home was firm and sound.

Modernized

The Lee family has indeed modernized the home and today it has a deep freeze unit, hot and cold water, bath, telephone, electric stove and every other modern convenience.

Mr. Lee is a distant relative of General Robert E. Lee, as family records show. He is a successful lumber dealer and saw mill operator. His wife, Mrs. Lola Gaston Lee and her mother, Mrs. Martha Smarr Blair Gaston live today in the beautiful old home.

Mrs. Gaston was born and has lived most of her life in the community. At 83 she is alert and as keen of mind as a 20 year old. She has the distinction of having four living sisters, all past 70. They are Mrs. J. B. Mickle of Ebenezer, 81; Mrs. Kizziah Abbott of Hartsville, 76; Mrs. Docia Griffin of Anderson, 78 and Mrs. Sallie Burdett of Union, 73.

In the home today are to be found some fine old pieces of antique furnishings. In one large upstairs bedroom are three massive walnut beds, one with a mirror. The room is so large that the three beds and a number of accompanying pieces of furniture do not make the room seem crowded. One of the antique beds came through Mr. Lee's family; others through that of his wife.

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The Smarr House *



The Smarr home stands today a short distance from the paved highway that runs from Bullock Creek to Lockhart. Well over a century old, the general outline of the home is the same as when built; the interior has been modernized and conveniences of the 20th century added. (Herald Staff photo).

The Smarr Family

Jackie Smarr married Miss Margaret Love, an aunt of Dr. S. Glenn Love. (The couple had two children, Willie Smarr and Alice Smarr. Alice died at age 20 with measles.)

Jackie Smarr died in the old home in the late 1870's (1878 or 1879). He had a brother who was a physician and who was noted for miles around for his remedies.

Both were quaint characters in appearance and actions. They had wizened faces and short stubby beards. Their diction was distinctive and afforded amusement to their hearers.

At the death of Jackie Smarr the property passed to the only child, Willie Smarr and his wife, Mrs. Alice Gilmore Smarr, who was a native of the Lockhart section.

Willie and Alice Smarr had a large family. Hope died in childhood. Fannie became a school teacher and taught in one of the community schools until she went to Columbia to do secretarial work. Rodger married and died in his early manhood leaving no children. William moved to Hickory, N. C., to live. Stella married H. W. Shannon of Sharon and now lives in Columbia. Mae married Frank Vance and lives now in Columbia. Fred married Alene Kirkpatrick. Roy is a physician and surgeon at the State Hospital in Columbia and Copeland is married and lives in Charlotte.

The Bullock Creek community abounds in houses that are around a century old. And all were built by sturdy Irish Presbyterians who found the center of community life in old Bullock Creek Presbyterian church a few miles up the road from the Smarr house.

A road placard a few yards from the church bears a revealing inscription "Bullock Creek Presbyterian church, under leadership of Dr. Joseph Alexander from 1774 to 1801. Church organized 1762. Near this church is the site of one of the oldest academies in upper South Carolina established by Dr. Alexander in 1787. His house, a mile southwest, was used as a hospital during the Revolutionary War."

The sturdy Irish who settled in the Bullock Creek section built simply and firmly. And they were content to let their homes stand as built in most cases. Many are left today in the community still identical in floor plan and with the same general appearance as a century ago.

(This is one of a series of stories on old homes in York county.)

* The correct name of this house is Tudor Hall.