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ROCK HILL, S. C. - BIOGRAPHY

Old Families

History of the Frew Family

History of the Jones and Pride
Families

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William Michael Frew, born December 21, 1817, at Salisbury, N.C., died June 21, 1863 at Charlotte, North Carolina.

Sara Ann Keesler, born November 20, 1824, Rowan County, N.C., married June 11, 1844, to William Michael Frew, died 1885 at Rock Hill, S.C.

Samuel Golden Keesler, born November 16, 1832, married April 15, 1860, to Sallie Caston of Lancaster, S. C., died June 29, 1894.

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During the war when we were living in Charlotte, my father became desperately ill with pneumonia and died. He left my mother with eight children, four boys and four girls, but with no home, no money, no income of any kind.

Her brother, Sam Keesler, was living in Rock Hill and ^Acame to Charlotte to persuade his widowed sister to live in Rock Hill. Uncle Sam had ten children; the family were poor but they were happy, good-hearted people, and he thought if his sister lived in the same town, he could be of some help to her.

So my mother packed her few belongings and with her many children started to Rock Hill, but the ^Yankees had been before her and ^{had} burned the bridge over the Catawba River. We crossed on a pontoon bridge; I remember holding to a rope with one hand and carrying my little yellow dog, Penny, under my arm as I watched the muddy Catawba swirling beneath me.

My mother rented a big frame house and kept boarders. The house was probably where Friedheim's Store now stands. We lived there a while and then moved to the old "Dick Springs" house in the grove back of where Friedheim's Store now is, near the Caldwell house on Caldwell Street.

My mother was fearless, courageous and industrious. At one time her hands would be busy with her knitting, her eyes on a book and with her foot she would rock the baby in the cradle.

One of the girls was frightened one night and thought she heard someone in the house, she wakened my mother who without hesitation lighted a candle and picked up a hatchet and searched the house, finding no one. She kept diligently at the work required to run a big house, taught her children to help her in housework, sewing and gardening.

My sister Mary (Mrs. Charles E. Cobb) thought more of her appearance than any of the other girls, she was quite "fixy" and told scarey stories to the younger children and enjoyed it when they became frightened. She was full of pep and loved to sing. She took charge of the baby, Sam.

My sister Laura (Mrs. Tom May) was considered the prettiest of the girls and had the sweetest disposition. She took care of Bob, the next youngest in the family. She was clever with her needle, made dresses and whatever was needed.

My sister Sallie (Mrs. Will Wetmore) was the most industrious and accomplished the most work. She would put the family wash on the line before breakfast and think nothing of it. Sallie had a sweet voice, and sang alto in the choir. The choice of my name was left to her and she always looked after me.

My brother Charlie used to sew too; his sisters taught him and he made two quilts. He went to work very young, clerking at Friedheim's. He worked hard, was steady and honest and seldom had any recreation and was very shy and quiet.

My brother Willie also went to work very young. He was considered unusually bright. My brother-in-law, who employed him, said he was a very clever bookkeeper. Charlie and Willie established the firm "Frew Bros." It must have prospered because they built the home "High View" where they took care of all the family.

I was the next in the family and I am going to tell more of my early life later on.

My brother Bob was considered very handsome. He was tall, straight and good looking.

By brother Sam, the red-headed baby, was a happy fellow. He was called on to do the "fixing" about the house; he was handy and could mend anything. He entered business young, opening a furniture store.

My older sisters were so capable and efficient at household tasks that they did them rather than teach me, but they did leave the darning for me to do.

How I loved my teacher, Mrs. Reid, and the school we attended, "Pine Grove Academy". Mrs. Reid might be criticized as a teacher today, because I can remember she let many days go by without an arithmetic lesson - she did not care for arithmetic - but she made the characters of history and literature live. She inspired each of us to do the best we could. We had such a happy time playing in the woods near by and at May Day when we danced around the May Pole our joy was complete.

Minnie Hope (Mrs. Ratterree) was one of my good friends, as were Hallie Caldwell (Mrs. Mills Mooney). Tom Johnston was a great tease. I was learning to write my name and made the "E" backwards; he called me "3" a long time afterward.

We all went to the Methodist Sunday School and Church. I went to the Presbyterian Sunday School too in the afternoons, to be with my friends; Miss Mary White was the teacher of the class and she presented me with a book as a reward for reciting the Shorter Catechism perfectly.

The Rev. Olin Watson came to see me and said he was surprised that I, a member of the Methodist Church, would attend dances. He tried to get me to promise that I would not attend any more dances but I did not promise.

Now I will go back to tell you something of my father's forebears.

My father, William Michael Frew, had two sisters, Mary and Sarah Ann Frew, born November 18, 1824, and the brothers were Archibald (born July 27, 1851), Charles and Junius. William Michael was the only one who married and their father was Archibald Frew who was born October 7, 1776 in Philadelphia. He married Ann Cowan in 1806. Ann Cowan was born in 1786, daughter of William Cowan, Member of the Committee of Safety from Rowan County (Wheeler's History of N. C., Vol. 11, P. 368)

Archibald Frew built the homestead in Mecklenburg County at Sugar Creek, now on the Salisbury Road, occupied by the Davidsons. It is known as "Frew's Folly". He had several sisters and brothers, none of whom married.

My mother, ^{Sarah Ann Keesler (Frew)} was the daughter of Ralph Keesler who came from Elizabeth, New Jersey, a clock maker. He married Nancy Reeves January 6, 1814, the daughter of William Reeves. Ralph Keesler died April, 1842.

William Reeves married twice; the second wife was Eleanor Wakefield of Maryland, mother of Nancy Reeves.

Mary Ann Frew, born April 17, 1846, married January 13, 1870, to Charles E. Cobb, died March 18, 1922.

Laura Frew, born December 19, 1847, married to Tom May on .

Sara Frew, born July 12, 1849, married to Will Wetmore, died August 18, 1879.

William M. Frew, born August 17, 1855, married to Sallie Sturgis, died February 7, 1893.

Emma Dora Frew, born July 30, 1858, married December 18, 1878 to Fred Hill London.

Robert Frew, born July 5, 1860, married to Lillie Sadler, died October 10, 1889

Samuel T. Frew, born August 15, 1863, married to Mattie McElwee October 15, 1891

Charles Wakefield Frew, born November 6, 1852, married January 21, 1891 to Ella T Tollinger, died May 18, 1917.

This record compiled by Emma Dora Frew London.