

ODDS AND ENDS #8

More odds and ends:

—Robert “Peg Leg” Graham, an interesting character, was born in Fort Mill township in 1845 on a small farm. When he was 17 he joined Co. B., 6th SC Regiment along with neighbors under the leadership of Capt. John M. White.

Robert Graham was in his 13th battle in Virginia. He had gotten by “with not a scratch” but at Cold Harbor he lost his left leg—hence the nickname “Peg Leg.”

For forty years afterward Graham took an active interest in politics but no election attracted him as much as Gen. Wade Hampton’s 1876 campaign. Graham accompanied Hampton to many of his stump speeches. In some ways he was Hampton’s “advance man.”

Genial by nature and always in good humor, he was easily persuaded to perform. Before Hampton spoke, Graham would recite poetry, sing and dance, “the peg leg adding to rather than marring the performance.”

Peg Leg Graham, great-uncle of Rev. Billy Graham, was buried at Sharon Presbyterian Church (near Charlotte), in his Confederate uniform. His grave marker has no birth or death dates, only the inscription “CO B 6 SC INF CSA.”

—The CC&A (Charlotte, Columbia & Augusta) railroad which had served Rock Hill and Fort Mill since 1851 became part of the Southern Railway in 1894. A few years after Winthrop College came to Rock Hill in 1895, the Southern began stopping on Winthrop’s back campus and sent a ticket agent to Main Building to sell tickets before every Winthrop holiday.

In early June 1908 Winthrop students were preparing to go home as soon as their examinations were over. The Southern rolled a baggage car to the back campus to handle the trunks brought to the platform by Winthrop workers. About 100 trunks were loaded and ready for an early morning departure.

At 12:45 a. m. a fire broke out in the baggage car when someone overturned a lamp. The Rock Hill Fire Department responded but all trunks were lost. Insurance paid for up to \$100 per trunk. The loss of railroad car and student’s trunks was nearly \$15,000.

—The highest point between Charlotte and Columbia is at Flint Hill Church north of Fort Mill close to the North Carolina line. It is exactly 700 feet above sea level at a point on the old road that runs in front of the church.

—Tradition has it that a slave belonging to Isaac Withers (1744-1814) saved the life of James Knox Polk when a boy. It seems that young Jimmy Polk, a future president of the United States, was swimming in Sugar Creek near Withers’ home a mile east of Flint Hill Baptist Church, north of Fort Mill. The boy is said to have gone under twice before he was rescued by the slave.

—David Anderson, a teacher living in Gold Hill community north of Fort Mill, taught in a school at Blackstock’s church after the Civil War. He would bring pea vines and bean vines to school and teach the children that they were agriculturally valuable. The old folks shook their heads and thought the teacher was crazy. Years later, soil experts proved Anderson was right when he said that

peas and beans added to the fertility of the soil rather than taking from it.
—On April 6, 1945, as World War II was winding down, the nation's 47th Victory Ship was launched at the Baltimore, MD shipyards. The ship's name was *S. S. Rock Hill Victory*. It was built in 50 days. Like other Victory Ships (usually referred to as "V ships"), the *S. S. Rock Hill* was launched in a ceremony with local sponsors. Rock Hill's sponsor was Miss Ann Carothers, daughter of the mayor and the acting sponsor was Miss Laura Jean Rauch, daughter of the city manager.

By Louise Pettus