

Friday, October 15, 2010

Historic Rock Hill

Sure wish I could be there!

As noted in some of what I have attached, I have fond memories of this old home. Though at the time I was acquiring my memories I didn't recognize how old the White House was.

It was almost a hundred years old then, the early 1930's when I saw it most every day. For beginning in 1932 I lived at either 305 or 311 North Confederate until early 1935 when we, my Mother and I, moved, along with her sister Ollie Hayes, to an apartment at 148 North Confederate, the corner of Confederate and White. The White house is about a block and a half west of the 148 North Confederate site.

I was a strong twelve at the time.

The house at 148 is long gone as well as the one at 305 North Confederate.

The houses at both 305 and 311 were, and as far as I know, the one at 311 still is, located in "White's pasture" of long ago.

The one still standing, at 311, will make a hundred before the end of the next decade!

"Our Gang", there were 8-10 of us, in the 8—15 age range, who basically lived within rock throwing distance of "The Fennell Infirmary" and hung out in the vacant lot on the corner of then unpaved Pendleton but paved North Confederate.

This lot was on the northwest corner and, so, across the intersection of Confederate and Pendleton is the southeast corner, the "Miller Hill" site.

And, a short distance to the west was the site of the *Rock Hill Academy*, Rock Hill's first school. Of course we didn't know that then, and probably wouldn't have cared if we had known.

What we did: was to see, and perhaps care about, the multitude of overturned trees, which until the 1926 tornado, viable and upright, had populated "White's pasture." Before 1926 this was almost a forest; but now it had been reduced to a great place to play cowboys and Indians, only.

(As an aside, in the late 1920's Billy White's (William Boyce White, Jr.) parents were married in the parlor at 311 North Confederate. )

Now, an interesting item of trivia, at least for me, is:

In the 1860 US Census, George Eli McDuffie Steele, AKA "Mack Steele", and his nearly new bride, Margaret Partlow, are shown as living with Ann Hutchison White, widow of George White, and no doubt in the house which Historic Rock Hill has just finished restoring.

Mack Steele was the son of Archibald Steele, son of Joseph Steele, son of Archibald Steele, and a younger brother of James Foreman Steele, my great grandfather.

In 1857 Mack Steele established a partnership with A. E. Hutchinson, Ann Hutchison White's brother, and John Johnson to operate a business known as Steele & Company. They started by purchasing the assets of Broach, Massey & Co., and was located along the tracks of the new railroad.



Small world.

More personal: I left Rock Hill, for good in 1936, wound up graduating from Clemson in 1948 and repaired immediately to Louisiana and "the Oil Patch." Been here ever since, married, fathered six, five are still living, but my wife, a Louisiana French girl died, at age 50, in 1977. I'm CLASS of '23, birth date one day ahead of your mortgage burning.

And, I have always pretty much considered Rock Hill as HOME.

There are still kinfolks in York County, but not many first cousins. I'm the oldest, of some 38, left standing and those first cousins no longer here include surnames: White, Thomasson, Matthews, Simril, and while of those left include those born Hayes, Bigger and Sandifer.

Classmates I recall in my 1936 "graduating class" from Central School include just two girls, Martha Thayer and Dorothy Kay, but several males, start with Andrew and Beatty White, W. E. (Wee) Stowe, the Williams twins, Edgar and Ernest, Ben Massey, Jimmy Rhea, I'm getting some faces, but no names!

My homeroom teacher that year was newly arrived Robert Wallace, and I believe Tom Gettys had just replaced Miss Peacock, who lived across from Confederate Park, as school principal.

Long ago memories can be exciting, but sometimes painful!

I'm including a small, very small check, which I hope will help, but know the "burden" is significant.

My circumstances, somewhat newly developed health issues, require that I be very prudent.