

How Doby family laid groundwork for industry

Shortly before the American Revolution, three large and interconnected families by the names of Doby, Massey and Cureton, all Whigs, came into the Waxhaws of Lancaster County as planters. Others of the same families settled in Camden and became merchant-planters.

The first John Doby was married to Elizabeth Massey. They lived in Camden but secured a deed of 514 acres on Cane Creek in the Waxhaws. Doby and his eldest son, William, were killed at the battle of Eutaw Springs. The other two sons, Joseph and John, became Camden merchants.

Joseph Doby married Sarah White. He died in 1811 leaving six young children. One of the children was John Miller Doby who graduated from South Carolina College in 1818 and became a prominent planter in the Indian Land section of Lancaster County. He married a sister of Gov. Stephen Miller, and after her death he married Elizabeth Phifer Crawford.

Beginning in 1824, Doby managed to secure leases from the Catawbas on at least 1,611 acres of land along the Catawba river. One of the leases was for 502 acres, which he got from John Hutchison who had held the lease for less than a year. This was the last unleased acreage held by the Catawbas. The land had been known as the King's Bottoms since the 1750s.

On the river just south of where Sugar Creek flows into the Catawba, J.M. Doby & Co. constructed a flour mill. When the Industrial Census was taken in 1850, Doby's water-powered mill was declared to have a value of \$4,000. The census taker recorded that there was on hand 4,000 bushels of wheat, 12,000 bushels corn and 3,000 feet of logs. The yearly product total was \$7,300 worth of flour, \$4,000 of corn meal and \$4,500 worth of plank. The mill, later known as Ivy Mill, was destroyed in the Great Flood

of 1916.

To make it possible for surrounding farmers to come to his mill, Doby's workers cleared space for a wagon road and built a bridge across Sugar Creek. The road soon became known as Doby's Road, a name that still identifies a road that leaves Tom Hall Street in Fort Mill and heads to U.S. 521, ending alongside Indian Land High School.

In September 1853, John Doby placed an ad in the Lancaster Ledger with the heading: "King's Bottoms for Sale." The ad read in part: "... on Catawba River about eight miles from Fort Mills depot containing 1,300 acres, sixty or seventy acres of which is first rate bottom land. Half the balance is in wood land, well adapted to the culture of cotton and grain. On the premises are a good dwelling house and a well of the best water, also a new Gin House and all necessary out buildings."

A year later Doby was still advertising, this time referring to the King's Bottoms, "so termed by the Indians for its extent and fertility as best bottom land on the Catawba river ..."

It wasn't until 1856 that he managed to sell the land and move to Clark County, Ark. Doby's children went with him, reminiscent of his grandparents' removal from Virginia to the Waxhaws, as well as many of his neighbors. In the party there were Whites, Boyces, Nisbets and McGills from York and Lancaster counties and a large number of Griers from Steel Creek community of Mecklenburg County. One descendant wrote that there were around 120 wagons in the wagon train that crossed the N.C. mountains into Tennessee.

In central Arkansas, the Carolinians built a town called Dobyville. They named their church the Carolina Presbyterian Church (now called Dobyville Presbyterian Church). One of the tombstones reads: John M. Doby/18 January 1801-29 May 1878.

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