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S.C. - Homes, Historic - York County

Old Black House, Almost 100 Years Old, In Perfect Condition

Brookwood, Built In 1856, Now Owned By Mrs. Norman Black

By Elizabeth Reed
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One of the loveliest old homes in York county and one of the most perfectly kept and preserved is the Black home about three miles from York.

"Brookwood," as the Black home has been called for a long time, is a short distance off the paved road that now connects York with King's Creek.

Built in 1856 by Joseph Black, the home and land are now the property of Mrs. Norman Black who lives in the house with her sister, Miss Bessie Faris. The latter was for many years a teacher in the Ebenezer Avenue School in Rock Hill.

Although the house is a little less than 100 years old it stands on land that has been in the Black family since 1774. The early owners of the land were Robert Black who was born in 1762 and died in 1807 and his wife, Elizabeth Carroll Black, who died in 1859.

Joseph Black, builder of the house, was born in 1803, the date of the Louisiana Purchase, and died in 1858; his wife, Elizabeth Stewart, was also born in 1803 on the boat that brought her parents from Scotland. She died in 1868.

Children of Joseph and Elizabeth were Robert (1832-1894) who inherited the house as the eldest son; James, who was born in 1834 and died in 1862. (He was killed at the Battle of the Crater in the War Between The States); Edward, who was born in 1840 and died in 1889, Amzi, who died in a Columbia hospital from injuries received in the War Between The States; and Margaret, who married J. W. Y. Dickson and died in 1887.

Of the couple's five children, the four boys all served in the War Between The States. Still in the Black house is the picture of handsome Edward. When he went to Columbia to enlist he had his picture made as soldiers of all wars of all times have done.

Robert Black married Margaret Elizabeth Scoggins (1855-1942). Of their three sons, Fred died at 18 years; Arthur Lindsay met a tragic death and Norman, husband of the present owner, died in 1940.



THIS BEAUTIFULLY-KEPT HOME near York is almost 100 years old. It was built in 1856 by Joseph Black. (Herald Staff Photo).

Many will remember the tragedy that fell on State Fair "football" day in 1941. Mr. Black and his attractive debutante daughter, Jane, were enroute to the game in Columbia. Near Winnsboro an automobile accident snuffed out the lives of both.

At the death of Norman Black in 1940 the house passed to his widow, Mrs. Lillian Faris Black, and their son, Robert, who now lives in Clinton.

The House

Five rooms of the original house stand today with the same wide board floors, the same plaster and the same board ceilings. The home has had such care that the over-size door locks, the huge smoke-house keys, and many of the original pieces of furniture still remain in perfect condition.

A bill for lumber for at least a section of the house shows the big difference in the price of lumber then and now. It is this bill of lumber that is used to form an estimate of the age of the structure.

In 1856 Joseph Black bought from Love and Black lumber that totalled \$145.52. Prices are startling: "3,057 feet weatherboarding, \$34.90; 2,683 feet flooring, \$33.54; 1,032 feet sheeting, \$5.16 and 4,986 feet lumber \$49.86."

The appraisal of the estate of Joseph Black is to be found in the clear handwriting and phonetic spelling that warms the heart of a reporter with a weakness in the art of spelling.

Some items of furnishings are still in the family. A "flebenleaf" table was valued at \$4; Son Robert would not take a hundred for it now; the walnut three cornered cupboard was valued at \$3.50; Mrs. Black would not take \$350 for it now.

The house varies somewhat from typical pre-War Between The States architecture. The front door opens on a parlor with large fireplace at one end. Off the parlor and on the front is a very small bedroom from which the stairs originally ascended. The stair has now been placed in a large hall that was added by Norman Black about 1916. Connecting the hall is the large dining room and kitchen. The stair leads to three upstairs rooms.

The chimney is remarkable and can be seen exposed in a corner of the dining room. The individual stones that form the lower part of the chimney were hewn near the house and measure 28 by 14 inches in size.

Dozens of valuable antique pieces of china and glass line the cupboard walls. Two ancient "fish scale" platters are among those Mrs. Black prizes most.

In the kitchen of the home the coffee mill stands ready to grind the morning beverage and upstairs a 75 year old trundle bed and cradle are ready to receive the grandchildren who may come to visit.

Another yellowed paper shows a receipt for "tax in kind" levied at the time of the War Between The States. It also reveals that in the last despairing days of the war just how poor the south was.

The receipt, signed by J. H. Faysoux, agent, is for a few pounds of wheat, oats and little more than a pound of wool. It represented a tenth of the production of those three items on the farm.

(This is one of a series of stories on old families and homes in York County)