

William Thomas "Will Tom" Pettus & Edith Hunter Bailes Pettus  
Some Family Traditions & Memories

About 1860 Will Tom went west with his father to Arkansas or Alabama. One grandchild said she thought they went to Alabama and two grandchildren thought he went to Arkansas where they had relatives. Most likely they went to Arkansas because:

1859- November. William Wadkins Pettus, who was Will Tom's uncle, wrote Wm. E. White of Fort Mill from Sebastian Co. Arkansas: "that Thomas had a notion to move to this country. You can say to him that the sooner the better if he wants to get a home in this country. The people are working very hard for all the land that they can get and if he could get here before its all gone he could stand a chance to getting \_\_\_\_\_ that is if he will come this winter or next spring this winter would be the best and if he comes he ought to take the Rale Road to Nashville or to Memphis and then take a boat up to Portsmouth (?) and then here is in 27 miles of my house. If he comes to Nashville he can get on a boat there. Tho you can tell him more about it then I can there is a boat that runs from Cincinatti to Fort Smith once a month \_\_\_\_\_ comes through here. If he would get on that Boat he could come as cheap again as to change."

Vallie Pettus Wilson told Louise Pettus sometime in the 1960s that Will Tom returned to SC but that his sister Mattie did not. She said Will Tom came back to see his girl friend, Edith Bailes. That Edith had a sister Sallie who never married, a sister Jane who was the first of three wives of Lee Patterson and a brother, James P. Bailes. Edith had inherited a third share of Bailes' land. [incorrect. It was one-ninth share of land.]

Vallie Pettus, Mae Pettus Griffin and Rev. Walter Pettus, all grandchildren of Will Tom, agreed that the house that burned in 1887 was replaced by another on the same site (still occupied) close to Sugar Creek on Doby's Bridge Road which was later owned by Col. Murray Mack and lived in by H. R. Stegall and later Bill Mack, son of Col. Mack. After that Will Tom lived where Mae Pettus (Mrs. Will) Griffin was living in 1964. He lived in that house with his son Will and his family. After Mae married, Will Tom & Edith moved into a house beside their son James Lawrence "Lon" Pettus where Vallie and her husband, Tillman Wilson lived when they first married and Huss Barber, a colored tenant later lived.

SC Confederate pension records show that Will Tom had his pension payment shifted from York County to Lancaster County in 1903.

In January 1972, Gayle Baker Hembree interviewed and taped her grandmother Mae Pettus Griffin's memories of her childhood. The following memory took place where Maurice Ross now lives in Pleasant Valley. That house was built by Lon Pettus and behind the Ross house were four of five tenant houses. The area was called "Pettus Quarters."

"I will never forget the barn incident. Papa was having a new barn built. It still stands next to Alva Ross' house. The rafters were just up all the way to the top but the roof wasn't on. Papa and Mama were going off. Before they left Papa warned us to stay away from the barn. Roy and Hall had nothing to do. They looked at each other and looked at the barn. And each said to the other, "I can make it to the top if you can!" They started climbing. They called, "Mae, come on, it isn't bad!" I knew I shouldn't do it but I did. We climbed to the top and we made it back down all right but we didn't know somebody was watching us. The next day Papa called us in and wanted to know why we disobeyed him. Oh boy! We were three sick kids. We felt like criminals. But the next day we were glad he talked instead of getting that old strap. We were three good kids for a few days after that." (Pettus Reunion, 2003, compiled by Louise Pettus)