

SOUTHERN HEARTS

THE LEGACY OF HENRY BLACKMAN, SR.
and DEPHRONIA GOODSON BLACKMON

by one of their second great granddaughters, Cheryl Kathryn Blackmon Moore

I am not a historian, nor a certified genealogist. I am simply a beloved daughter, and granddaughter of many generations of noble great-grandfathers. Their memories have faded through the quagmire of ages past. This labor of love is a feeble attempt to bring these facts to light once again, restore this loving generation, and pay due respect to our noble ancestors. Great Grandfather Henry was a man whose longevity spanned a mere breath from a century. This work is based on documented facts, observations and personal conclusions drawn from the aura. It does not show due obeisance to the century of accomplishments, nor proper reverence to the unselfish deeds. I leave you to draw your own conclusions. These reflections come from a daughter who has inherited and been richly blessed with a stubborn nature, and a too deep, overly prideful, passionate Southern Heart.....

HENRY BLACKMON, SR. was born December 14, 1798, in South Carolina. He spent his youth learning farming, carpentry, and caring for animals. He hunted for fowl and game. He must have had a curious nature, as he learned everything to make himself a man of his own. He was self sufficient. He had first-hand knowledge of how to survive in the miasma of the wild new country he was surrounded by. He lived in perfect harmony with nature and had a deep appreciation for the true quality of life. He used all that nature provided for the benefit of his self preservation.

Something in his youth made an outstanding influence on him, whether his parents, his true nature, his love and compassion, the source is unknown. Undeniably he learned his lessons of life well, as he grew to be a hard-working man of sterling character. He was a man any mother would be proud to call son.

At twenty-six summers, Henry served for the United States in the War of 1812 with Great Britain. He was drafted 24 September 1814 in Captain David's Company, under Major Fields Regiment, General Brigade, Pinckney Division at Darlington, SC. He was discharged at Beaufort, SC on 12 March 1815. He went from Darlington to Charleston, SC, and from Charleston to Beaufort, SC. He was honorably discharged and he acted in the capacity of a Sergeant. He served the full period of sixty days in the military service of the United States.

As verified by Duke University, Henry was a non-commissioned officer with the Black Creek Company of South Carolina Militia in 1816. They were a reserve group and mainly tracked down runaway slaves.

On November 6, 1816, Henry purchased a parcel of land from John Youbanks for \$300.00. The land is situated on the South side of Black Creek on the waters of Belly Ache, adjoining the southeast by William Goodson, Sr., northwest on Jonathan Wright's land, southwest and south, southeast of Jesse__ land. It was part of a 160 acre tract 'including the house where John Youbanks now lives', by reference to the original grant . The instrument was witnessed by Jesse Blackmon and James (X) Blackmon. The Justice of the Peace was James Standley. Darlington District, SC Deed Book G, pg. 35.

May 20, 1817, Henry Blackmon purchased 215 acres from Edwin Goodson for \$210.00. That tract or parcel of land was adjoining lands of John Standley's estate, lands of Nathaniel Beck, between Swift and Black Creek and were the lands wherein John Ubanks (sic) resided for 2 or 3 years. Witnessing the deed were George Bruce, John A. Trull and Edwin (X) Goodson. Darlington District, SC Deed book G, page 155. Recorded 10/25/1817.

After Henry purchased his land in 1816, he settled into his own loghouse. He lived the life of a bachelor for about six years. He spent many hours working the fields. When he would finish each day, he spent additional hours carving his furnishings for his home. I imagine him under the shade of a massive oak, or the extended pitch of the barn, assholes and elbows making a chair to put before his hearth. He loved to work with his hands, and took great pride in every task he did. The sounds of the forest and the creek nearby rose to a cadence as the sun would set each day.

On the first day of the first month in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty three, being thirty-five summers old, Henry wed Elizabeth Dephronia Goodson. Sixteen summers old, Dephronia was Henry's first and only wife. She was born on April 29, 1806, in South Carolina.

Henry had lived a fair number of years, had traveled around a bit with the militia, and no doubt met other available girls. None of them captured his fancy though, as he would settle for none other than Deprony. The Goodson family was enormous and well endowed with pretty wenches. Their land bordered Henry's, and he probably watched Deprony grow up. As the records further show, Henry loved all children. I can easily see Deprony, as a child, sitting on Henry's lap and extracting his word to wait for her. He waited, patiently or no, for her to be of an age to marry. She earned his respect, admiration and no doubt made his blood sing. She must have been a very special lady, as she had truly enchanted Henry. They settled into a comfortable married life and further prepared their loghome for the family they dreamed upon.

Promptly nine months after they were wed, their immortality began with the birth of the first of their nineteen children. What a dream! Their descendents are listed in full in subsequent chapters. (For Henry and Deprony's heirs, see BLACKMON TREE 5.) They are my twice great grandparents.

Deprony was seventeen when she gave her husband his firstborn. Without doubt, Henry was a lusty romantic and a sentimental soul. He took his manhood serious. He welcomed his responsibilities, and providing for his family was his utmost priority. He took excellent care of their possessions. Whether or not Henry kept Deprony barefoot, we doubt, but he certainly kept her with child. Deprony spent nearly twenty years pregnant, and four decades she had babes in swaddling. She was truly deserving of the endearment, mother.

Deprony was the daughter of James Goodson and Celia Pollard, granddaughter of Joshua Pollard. The Goodsons were neighbors of Henry's and the Pollards were of the Auburn Community. They were all residents of Darlington.

Henry and Dephronia united with the Swift Creek Baptist Church in 1827. He and his wife were baptized at the same time by the Rev. Rice. Henry was a member of the church for about sixty years.

Henry had an aversion to riding in a buggy or carriage, and of all vehicles, he preferred a cart. He made enough provision to supply his needs if crops were short. He was a man who lived entirely within himself and never wore store clothes, but carded, spun and wove his own cotton and wool into clothes. Another trait was his strict honesty in all his dealings. The interior of his house was a curiosity to the youth of the 19th century. There were looms, old spinning wheels, including one he made at the age of 12. All his household furniture and utensils were made by himself, and though very antique in appearance, were all well made and in a good state of preservation. He settled in this county before the Indians were removed, and told some very interesting reminiscences of his night vigils to avoid surprises from the predatory bands of Cherokee Indians.

Henry walked seven miles every sales day from his house in Darlington C.H. and back. He certainly had the means to purchase fine horses, but he preferred walking. It is unknown if he had a smithy shop in the village or not.

Henry bought an additional 500 acres of land on the north side of Swift Creek from Samuel Bacot on September 2, 1828. Deed book L, page 127.

As certified by Duke University, Henry was a member of the Darlington Volunteer Rifle Corp. on 26 July 1834. He was also an esteemed member of the Masonic Lodge.

After the birth of their twelfth child, Henry bought 125 more acres bordering Curtis, Lunn, Goodson, et al from Sheriff King. Deed book N page 332. The date of sale was October 7, 1839.

It is obvious that Henry was more than capable of taking care of his ever growing family. He was a blacksmith, and did work for others, as proven by a receipt found in Jane Goodson's estate papers. He charged the estate for \$2 1/4 for smithy work for 1834-1835. We already know Henry and Deprony were self-sufficient and did not buy market made goods. Not only did he grow enough to feed them, to shear his sheep, to pick, spin and weave all his homegrown cotton and wool to clothe his enormous family, but obviously hardworking enough to produce extra to barter or to sell for cash.

The firstborn, William, married at sixteen summers to Isabella Atkinson. Shortly thereafter, Henry and Deprony became proud grandparents, yet still they continued having more children of their own.

On April 6, 1846, Henry bought an additional 375 acres on the north side between Belly Ache and Mill Creek from Law (Conir?). Deed book P, page 193.

Henry had his property surveyed on March 12, 1847, by D. S. McScott. It is recorded in Plat Book 1, p. 262. He had 938 acres with neighbors, C. B. Rhodes, Flowers, T. Sans, Rev. William Beck, the estate of Joshua Goodson, Wiley Goodson, Roberson B. and Mill Creek. It was recorded Nov. 17, 1847.

When Deprony was forty-four summers old, she gave her sixty-three year old husband his final and nineteenth child, Noah. H. Blackmon.

By this time, Henry and Deprony had seventeen children who eventually live to maturity. One son and one daughter had already died at a young age. Henry increased his acreage along with his children it seems. Common Blackmon sense says he wanted them to have the means to take care of themselves.

On January 11, 1855, he bought 200 acres bordering Blackmon, Goodson, and Lunn from James P. Wilson, Darlington Dist. Deed Book R, page 299.

By an act of Congress, Henry applied for land bounty due him as a Veteran of the War of 1812. In March or April of 1855, he received a land warrant for 80 acres, no. 4130 which he legally disposed. The location of the land is not known to this great great granddaughter.

Six of Henry's sons, James, John J., Andrew, Henry Jr., Wade H. (our great grandsire), and Manly, one known son-in-law, James K. Beck, and several grandsons conscripted into the Confederate States Army. Two sons, James and John J. gave their lives for the cause. Henry Jr. received a gunshot in the right hand, and had three fingers amputated. Beck came home on furlough with yellow fever, and he and his wife, Sarah Ann Blackmon Beck died of it.

One grandson, Wade W., son of William, determined to wear gray, conscripted underage early May 1861 in Company A, 8th SC Infantry. He was discovered and subsequently discharged with medical disability in September of the same year. The discharge occurred at General Hospital in Charlottesville, Virginia. It is unknown if he became wounded, or contracted a disease to put him in the hospital. Underage was considered to be a disability. William was determined to have his son's uniform for him anyway. He wrote a letter to young Wade's Captain requesting his son's uniform. Within our family records is a copy of the letter sent back by A.J. Hoole stating that young Wade's uniform was taken by his uncle, John J. Blackmon, and sold for credit to another soldier. How that must have crushed the pride of young Wade to not only be denied serving the Confederacy, but not even allowed to keep the uniform he wore for some four months with such pride, determination and valor. Deep down he knew the needs of his brother's-in-arms came first, but it must have sorely pricked his pride. We also know William was disappointed to not be able to fulfill his brave son's simple request.

I am sure Henry and Deprony gave any supplies that were asked for to support our soldiers' cause. Sherman's troops were camped at Lewis Crossroads for a while. This was Henry's land, and surely they were within spitting distance of the damned Yanks. It must have been torture indeed to know that the men nearby were the very ones intent on killing or wounding their sons and grandsons. They must have wondered if perhaps already their son's noble blood lay on a field by the hands of the very men camped too close for comfort. Torture it was to try to remember they were just men, fighting for their own beliefs, and beloved sons of parents far from home.

Indeed, Henry's family gave the utmost sacrifice in defense of their beliefs. This pride is the very essence of our soul's, I believe. We would like to hold on to the chivalrous ideals that make a man a gentleman, and a woman, a lady. With the loss of the war, came the loss of the innocence of America. That true compassion, whether for family, friend, neighbor, home, beliefs, pride in being who we are, is something not only inbred through our genes, but absorbed from this atmosphere. It throbs in our veins. Anyone not from here could never understand it, but to us, it's soul deep and our pride guides our passions. The depth of our passions is sometimes frightening even to us!

Henry and Deprony were married for forty-seven years when she died on September 7, 1870, at the age of 64. It is unknown to this twice great granddaughter the cause of her death. This mother of only three, bestows great homage on this woman who gave life to so many, cared for so great a number, and had that much love in her heart that always flowed so freely. Little has been learned of Deprony, although with a small army to care for, she was seldom away from the cook pot, or the table cutting vegetables, or the stream washing clothes.

Another act of Congress came about, and on February 14, 1872, at the age of 84, our great grandsire applied for pension as a Veteran of the War of 1812. He subsequently received a pension of \$8.00 per month as veteran's pay.

March 25, 1876, Henry gave Wright #8 School one acre of land in Wright township. Deed book TT page 246. This seems appropriate, as he and Deprony near single handedly populated the countryside.

December 8, 1877, he deeded 65 acres along the road to Darlington, Hartsville to Noah Blackman, his youngest son. Deed book A?2, page 101.

Henry deeded William T. Campbell a lot on the road to Darlington, Hartsville on July 9, 1879. Deed book E2, page 212.

Henry stayed physically active his entire life. At ninety years of age, he was hoeing corn in his field and was bitten by a rattle snake. He was in such good physical shape that he survived the venomous bite. No doubt he knew herbs and roots and applied poltices to draw the poison.

Henry deeded 68 acres bordering Blackman and Goodson to Calvin Rhodes. Deed book F?3, page 377.

An article in the Darlington News May 9, 1878, stated Henry was a member of St. David's Lodge No. 72, A.F.M.

January 6, 1881, Henry deeded 2 acres land to William T. Campbell. Deed book I2, page 264.

On February 8, 1883, when Henry was 95 years old, he gave Swift Creek Baptist Church 35 acres of land by Mill Creek. Calvin Rhodes donated his share, and a parsonage was built there and was used for that purpose until 1962. Deed Book P2, page 178.

On April 13, 1883, Henry deeded his son Noah 65 acres on the road to Darlington, Hartsville. Deed book P2, page 153.

Henry deeded his daughter, Margaret Lewis 30 acres on September 8, 1883. Deed book P2, page 427.

September 22, 1883, Henry deeded 65 acres on the south side of the road from Darlington to Hartsville to Isabella Blackman et al, wife of his firstborn, William. Deed book P2, page 322. Henry deeded 65 acres to J. Wiley Blackman, et al, Book P2, page 322. On this same date, he also deeded 65 acres to J. W. Blackman, et al same description land, Deed Book P2, page 322.

Dec. 31, 1884, the pastor of Swift Creek Church wrote his appreciation in the courier. In it he stated he was under lasting obligations to Santa Claus for their Christmas party. "We had the real Santa Claus with us." The youngest child that received a present was our little babe, only eleven days old. The oldest person remembered in the distribution of the gifts (Henry Blackman, Sr.,) is just 90 years old.

December 31, 1885, Henry deeded 65 acres to Minerva Blackman on the road to Hartsville. Deed book W2, page 344.

From these figures, we can see Henry Blackmon purchased around 1515 acres of land, plus the acreage of the first tract-amount not stated. At the time of his death, he bequeathed 1,046 acres to his children and grandchildren.

Henry Blackmon, Sr. sported a mustache and very long full beard. He had very broad, high cheekbones. His eyes were light in color, but portray much depth, compassion and understanding. Perhaps they were hazel as that seems to be a family trait. His nose had that definite Blackmon flair to it. Even at a very old age, he had a head full of hair, much of it still black. (Blackmons do not generally get very gray, nor do I ever remember a bald Blackmon irregardless of age).

It is more than obvious that our esteemed ancestor was much respected and loved by all who came into contact with him. He was a man of many talents, just in his decisions, had much compassion, intelligence and did not believe in idle hands. He was a perfectionist in all that he did. His heart was ruled by his compassion for others. Even in his ninth decade, he was active in his grand and greatchildren's many activities, and in his church fellowship. He was blessed with that rare quality, the gift of giving, sharing and loving to the fullest.

Twice great grandsire, Henry Blackman, Sr., died October 31, 1886, on All Hallows Eve at the age of ninety eight. A severe attack of pneumonia was his destiny's finale. At the time of his death, he had sired nineteen children, had one hundred and five grandchildren and one hundred and eleven great-grandchildren! Little could he and Deprony imagine the small dream of lovers newlywed would, in eventuality, become a reality of such magnitude and grow to such fruition! At his death, he had already lain to rest his wife and nine of their children. He was a well-loved father and grandsire.

The legacy of Henry did not die with him. He and Deprony have been immortalized within our hearts, in our genes, and lastly, albeit more than a century later, here within these pages. Without a shadow of a doubt, I know which one of our ancestors my father takes after.

Seventy-five years after Henry's death, on December 14, 1961, the United States Senate sent a letter to the Darlington Historical Commission verifying Henry Blackmon, Sr. to indeed be the eldest surviving veteran of the War of 1812. They referred as evidence the list of pensioners on Roll, January 1, 1883, from the Washington Government printing Office, 1883. The letter was signed by Wayne C. Grover, Archivist of the United States.

Even after Henry's death he was further immortalized by Ripley's Believe It Or Not cartoon in the Spartanburg Herald dated 1976. "HENRY BLACKMAN (1788-1886) of Darlington County, So. Carolina, who served in the War of 1812, lived 71 years after his discharge from the Army." Keep in mind he was twenty-six when he enlisted!

Darlington News October 30, 1890, "Mr. N. H. Blackman has in his possession the original grant of a tract of land made to one of his ancestors by George III. Mr. Blackman is able to trace the title to his property in one continuous chain back to that remote period, and he is deservedly proud of the interesting record. "

I have chronologically brought us through our ancestor's life span. The records tell scant of the personal activities of their daily lives. He was highly commended in all the articles I read. What is not in the records are the actual deeds he did to merit that kind of respect from his peers.

We know as humble as he was, he did things for others out of the goodness of his heart. In truth there's a great deal of self-satisfaction we all feel when we do something nice for someone else with no self gain.

As your chest has expanded reading about our venerable grandsire, remember those actions and deeds were passed on by example to many. He touched the lives and hearts of the simplest of creatures. Their loving nature was a tangible thing. Now maybe their memories will live more vividly in you. That is my passionate obsession. I hope you have been able to feel and see it with me though my southern born, southern bred, southern heart.

I will leave you with your pride in our ancestor with a quote from a newspaper article written shortly after our twice great grandsire passed on. Henry made a everlasting impression on everyone, and I could not perpetuate his memory any better. As you read it, you will know, I am not alone in my beliefs.

Newspaper article 1886: "Brother Blackman, owing to old age and the infirmities consequent upon old age, did not allow his physical infirmities to lessen his interest in the cause of Christ and so militage against his usefulness while he lived. He contributed regularly and liberally to the pastor's salary to the date of his death. He sent for and handed the writer five shining dollars but a short while before he fell on sleep. His exit from this world was as calm and free from agitation as the going down of the sun from behind a golden tinted west. May his well worn mantle fall gracefully upon his noble sons."

For posterity, I found a copy of a letter concerning the Blackman family of Darlington County at the Historical Commission. It was dated June 19, 62 "Aunt Lou will have to be my sole source for any information I might have. She told me that Grandpa was given a deed to the home land by the King of England and Woodrow Lewis has this in his possession or did have. Of course Grandpa bought other lands, I guess but all the land from our old home as far as Cherry Grove Negro church belong to him- now as far as how much was contained in the original, I can't say. She also told me that Grandpapa and two other brothers came over from England - They as boys got on this ship and played around for a long time and when they got ready to get off, the ship was out at sea. They work on the ship then to pay for passage - one, Grand Papa settled in Darlington, one in Kershaw or Lancaster Co. and another in Ga - but I do not know where. Uncle John the (red head) settled in Lancaster Co. If there were a sister I don't remember her ever saying so. Grandpapa lived to be 98 years old. Of course I never saw him but Howard remembers him quite well. I don't know what year he died but he and Grandma are buried in a cemetery over near the Lewis' old home. This grand daughter of Billy Blackmon who is a nephew of my father and he a son of Uncle William. I think he is the eldest of the Blackmon nineteen children. At one time I could name all of them but now I can get just about half. This is just about the some total of my knowledge of the Blackmons. I hope all this will be in print so that I can see it during my life time.... signed Aunt Emma." Exerpt, the rest pertained to the hot weather, etc. It was addressed, Dear Jack,

Another letter found at the Darlington County Historical Society, this one written by Mr. John (Jack Blackman 111 S Ervin St., Darlington, SC) dated 7/14/1962. "... myths are often the only foundation of tradition, that your findings will be held gently, and so... The following is a copy of Uncle Howard's reply to my letter. Because he is now blind, it was written by Minnie Lee, his wife and a truly delightfull person. "Your Uncle Howard says he was told by his father that there were two Blackman men. He doesn't know of a sister. They were French-Irish named La Blanchmanne - meaning the white man. The name was changed to Blackmann when they went to England. They worked their passage to America on a merchant ship. In France they had been foot pages. As far as he (Uncle Howard) knows there was no record made of transfer of his gr. - gr. - grandfather's property. It just passed to his gr.- grandfather, who lived with and cared for the old man till his death. Your Uncle Howard remembers the log house where his grandfather was born. It stood on the Darlington-Hartsville highway across from the Swift Creek Baptist Church parsonage. His grandfather willed the land for the

parsonage. Your Uncle Howard's gr-father, Henry had nineteen children, five were killed at the Battle of Mannasas. His father was the youngest. The oldest, William, was a gunsmith for the Confederacy. And when Sherman came through, a part of his army camped at Lewis's Crossroads, which at the time was a Blackman holding. In Kershaw, SC and Birmingham, Ala. are some later members of the same family. And so you see, Mr. Rudisill, family traditions can be myths, the truth, or take your pick. But what reaches me is that I know that there are still families in France of similar names to the La Blanchmanne of my uncle's memory. "Blanchomme" is also french origin. Apparently it's quite a common name in some sections of France. ... The Swift Creek Baptist parsonage was recently sold for a tidy some, and that it was willed to the church under such circumstances that the property would immediately revert to the rightful heirs of Henry Blackman. To protest the sale would surely be only a matter of family pride, but it might be done....." sic

DOCUMENTATION:

Baptist Courier Nov. 18, 1886, Feb. 22, 1883, and 1885
Baptist Courier Darlington, SC. Dec. 31, 1884
Blackmon, Henry Sr. & Elizabeth Dephronia Goodson family Bible records
Blackmon, Rebecca Flowers family Bible
Blackmon, Andrew family Bible
Charleston Dispatch Nov. 16, 1886
Confederate States Army abstracts of soldiers
Darlingtoniana, Pgs. 273-275
Darlington County, SC census 1800-1870
Darlington County, SC Deed books as numbered
Darlington County Historical Commission files of Henry Blackmon, Sr.
Darlington Dispatch 11/16/1886
Darlington News November 4, 1886 May 9, 1878, March 28, 1878.
Estate papers: Henry Blackmon Darlington Courthouse, Case B, Apt. 45, Pack 8
Hatchell, Lynn Blackmon's vast research materials
Last Will and Testimony of Henry Blackmon, Sr. dated September 24, 1872
Personal interviews and correspondence with relatives
Photographs of their tombstones
Spartanburg Herald 1976
Survey of cemeteries
War of 1912 pension records of Henry Blackmon, Sr.

This family history was written by a twice great-granddaughter of Henry Blackmon, Sr. and Dephronia Goodson Blackmon --- with all my love. Dedicated to Aunt Birdie: a portion of your dream has been fulfilled.

Great Granddaughter of Wade H. Blackmon and Minerva Beck
Granddaughter of James Walter Blackmon and Mattie Martha Langston
Daughter of Wellings James Blackmon and Rebecca Oteria Mosley

Mrs. Cheryl Katheryn Blackmon Moore
5118 Parkside Drive
North Charleston, South Carolina 29406

Not for publication