

THE SAGA

OF

MARY LAWTON

&

CHARLIE MCCALL

(Mary Rebecca Lawton

&

Dr. Charles Polhill McCall)

## ANCESTRY

(Mary Lawton)

Reverend Pierre Robert was born in Switzerland in 1656. He married Jeanne Braye, daughter of Jehan and Susanne Braye of Basel, Switzerland. Pierre Robert was a French Huguenot minister and became ~~the first~~ Huguenot preacher in the Carolinas. His teachings were said to be similar to the Calvinistic beliefs. ~~It is claimed that he was pastor of a Waldensian church in Basel before he emigrated to the Carolinas. History explains that the Waldensians were the ancestors of the present day Baptists.~~ His church still stands in or near Charleston, South Carolina. He and his wife had three children - Pierre Jr., Jean and Elias. Pierre Jr's second wife was Judith. Their eldest son; Jacques or James married Sarah Jaudon in 1735. They had seven children. Sarah, the sixth child of Jacques Robert, married Joseph Lawton, Jr. 1773.

WILLIAM

c.1730

~~1748~~ and settled on Edisto Island near Charleston. He married ~~Miss~~ (3) ~~Pickling~~. They had ~~three~~ <sup>one</sup> children. Joseph Lawton Jr., born on Edisto Island 1753 married Sarah Robert, daughter of Jacques Robert and great-grand daughter of Reverend Pierre Robert.

Joseph and Sarah Lawton had ~~seven~~ <sup>eleven</sup> children. The ~~seventh~~ <sup>tenth</sup> was Winborn Asa D.D. born 1793. Reverend Winborn Asa Lawton married three times. His first wife, Mary Cater Rhodes had ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> son Winborn Benjamin, (1 Aug 1812-1884), and three other Lawton children.

Winborn Benjamin Lawton, born 1812, married Sarah L. Mathews\*\* ~~Mathews~~. Their oldest child was Mary Rebecca, born June 30, 1845. She became the wife of Charles P. McCall, born July 26, 1843.

\* Mary Stone (c.1720-1803), daughter of John & Susannah (Carrière) Stone; her only Lawton child was Joseph Lawton (1753-1815).

( It is interesting to note that these two great preachers, ancestors of Charles and Mary, often held revival services together - Moses Nathaniel McCall and Winborn Asa Lawton)

\*\* Sarah L. Mathews, born 1815 on Hilton Head Island, daughter of Rev. Philip Mathews, Rector of St. Lake's Parish, and his wife, Rebecca Davant (2 Jan 1793-4 Sep 1859), daughter of James & Lydia (Page) Davant who are both buried in Zion Chapel-of-Ease Cemetery, Hilton Head Island, SC.

## ANCESTRY

(Charlie McCall)

Francis McCall was born in Ireland of Scotch parentage in 1710. He came to America and landed in Pennsylvania where he married. His son Charles was born in Pennsylvania. Charles son William married Celeste Ann Williams in Society Hill, South Carolina. Francis, Charles and William all fought in the Revolutionary war under General Francis Marion.

William was given a grant of land in Bullock County, Georgia. William's son, Moses Nathaniel, was born in Society Hill, South Carolina, and moved to Screven County, Georgia. He was a prominent preacher in Screven, helping to build and organize many Baptist churches. He built a church for the slaves and preached to them. This church was still standing in 1967 and had been newly painted. It is called Zion. Reverend Moses was married twice. His first wife had three sons and three daughters. Mary was the grandmother of Louis Newton. Louisa married a Texan, Wash Denton. To keep Wash from taking her to Texas her father gave her a large tract of land near the line of Effingham and Screven Counties. This farm is all of the original grant still in the hands of descendants of the McCalls. Reverend Moses's three sons were George, a preacher and one time president of Mercer College, Mose a preacher also and Philip, a farmer. His second wife was Catherine Porter Dopson - she and her first husband had a large plantation on the Savannah River. Her husband and children died there and are buried in a family cemetery in Moon Change. Nobody knows where it is.

Reverend Moses Nathaniel McCall and his second wife had two daughters and four sons - Evelyn and Kate; Thomas, Charles, William and Tucker.

When the Emancipation Proclamation was signed and war between the States was declared Reverend McCall and five sons went into the service. They served in General Wheeler's Command. Reverend McCall was a Chaplain - he had served in two other wars. Of the sons Moses was Captain and Charles was in his Company. Thomas was a Lieutenant but while serving in a much higher capacity he was killed. Thomas' horse was sent home - at night when everything was still the horse would act like a wild thing, perfectly unmannagable. Nobody could quiet him except Tom's mother. She would get up and go to the stables and talk to him until he was quieted. The negroes said "Marse Tom is there with his horse".

## MARY

Before the Civil War Winborn Benjamin Lawton owned and lived on a truck farm which is now a part of the City of Savannah, Georgia. He had four lovely daughters and two little boys. When Sherman decided to march through Georgia and destroy everything in his path Winborn Lawton knew that it was time for him to take his little family out of Savannah, so he refuged to Screven County near the line of Effingham. His daughters were being educated by a private governess, but when he moved she returned to the northern states and Mary Lawton took on the job of teaching her younger sisters and brothers. At that time Mary was a beautiful girl of nineteen, auburn haired with a fair complexion and most expressive soft brown eyes. It was said that she was the prettiest girl in Screven County.

If Winborn Lawton thought he would save his family from Sherman's army he was mistaken for many were the aggravating and humiliating experiences suffered by his family because of forays of bands of Northern soldiers. They came into the home and picked up anything that caught the eye. One day a very persistent soldier had followed Mary around the house and tried to talk to her without response. Finally in the kitchen he picked up a little bunch of onions and in a sarcastic manner said, "May I have this?" Mary merely looked at him -- He must have given up for he exclaimed "You damned little Rebel!" At another time a soldier deliberately took the cover off the girls' piano. This was more than Mary could stand. She with some of the others followed the soldiers to camp and asked to see the commander who when he was told of the incident, reprimanded the guilty soldier and had him take his booty back where he found it.

When a wounded Confederate soldier slipped silently into the home seeking aid Mary and her mother hid him in a safe place and nursed him back to health. After he had gotten his strength back and wanted to return to the Confederate army Mary gave him a gun and said, "Get me a Yankee soldier!". Who can blame her? She had suffered much at their hands. This boy was from Alabama and after the war was over he wrote to Mary and said he had carried out her wishes and asked her to marry him - Mary had met Charlie McCall and had fallen in love! She married him in 1866.

## SLAVERY

When the slaves were freed many of them took the names of their former masters but the McCall slaves did not. Mrs. McCall suggested that they take the surname of Thomas since they were all descended from "Daddy Tom". There were three boys - Abram, Sam and Almond - all fine looking, tall with splendid physiques. Abram was something of a preacher and a grave digger. The two girls were Easter and Sylvia. Easter went Louisa when she married Wash Denton. Sam went with Charlie into the army. His duties were to take care of Charlie. It was not unusual for some of the slaves to go with their masters. Sam was useful in foraging for food etc. In after years Sam lived on Charles' farm. His wife was named Becky - they had three children, Sing

Boy, Francis and Eveline. Becky died and Sam was left to raise the children alone. I went to his cabin one day to play with Frances and Eveline and Sam was quilting a quilt. It seemed very strange but he would try anything. As long as Charlie McCall and Sam Thomas lived the ties between them were very close.

-- MuM Mandy --

Amanda had been sold in Savannah and bought by Mr. Charlie Lafitte, a friend and close neighbor to the McCalls. She was a young negro woman with a baby in her arms when she was sent away from her husband down the Mississippi River and sold in Savannah. She had a high temper and quarrelled with the children, but after the slaves were freed she was a wonderful servant to Mary and took the very best care of the children. She was a fine cook - her specialty was "Big Hominy". This she started cooking in the wash pot in the yard. Some people used lye to take the husks off the corn but Mandy used oak ashes. What else she might have used I don't know - perhaps "black m magic". I only know her big hominy was better than anybody else's.

Charlie's father gave him a farm on the Savannah and Augusta Road, called "The Big Road". The home was built on top of a hill halfway between the Mallard and Brown branches. At the foot of the hill were tall long leaf pines with yellow jessamine blooming in the tops of them.

Mary was a very busy home maker. She had a green thumb and supervised both the vegetable garden and the flowers. Her yard was always full of roses, lilacs, cape jessamine, oleanders, jonquils and narcissus. Among her roses were La France, Aleene Sicily, Martinal Neal, Catherine Murmet, and what she called the penfield rose, which had been brought from Penfield by Thomas McCall. In later years the Catherine Murmet was admired so much by Dr. Fred that he took some to his home on the Altamaha and later to Miami. In Mary's vegetable garden were beds of strawberries and asparagus as well as the usual common varieties.

After three or four little boys came Charlie decided that he was not a successful farmer and he wanted to be a doctor. (at that time the Georgia Medical College was located in Savannah) His mother was anxious for him to study medicine and to help him she took off her money belt and handed him several gold pieces. While he was in school the medical college was moved to Augusta. Mary was very courageous - she and the little boys stayed alone and she taught the neighborhood children. Since she was well educated and knew music she became the organist and sunday school teacher of the adult class in Jackson Church which position she held for many, many years. As Charlie's practice grew he spent long hours on the road away from home, ministering to the sick. He was a good doctor and a very generous and sympathetic man. For his services to preachers and widows he never charged. Occasionally he experimented with remedies not learned from the medical books. One indian remedy that he was a great believer in and sometimes concocted was a preparation made from redoak bark and elderberries boiled with other ingredients. It was a kidney medicine.

Charlie McCall was a hospitable man - said by one preacher to be the most hospitable of anyone he had ever known, and truly his home always welcomed the traveler. One Jewish peddler made it a point to spend the night there on each of his trips through the country. He drove a horse to a light wagon loaded with all kinds of household articles. The children liked to see Mr. Beardman come for his pockets were always filled with rock candy for their benefit.

Charles as a young man was quite an athlete. He had the honor of being master of the broad jump while in the army and as his boys grew he often jumped with them. He was also noted for his dancing and jigging - at times he indulged himself by quoting poetry. His rendition of The Burial of Sir John Moore made quivers run up and down his little daughters spinal column.

His name for his beloved Mary was Plum - He never called her anything else.

Dr. Charlie was not always even tempered - When Jackson Church was first built and was to be dedicated Charles' brother, Dr. George McCall, was invited to preach. He was an older half-brother and an eminent preacher - one time a president of Mercer University. There was no organ nor musical instrument in the church at that time. Charles wanted things done right for such an important occasion so as Mary's Mason and Hamlin organ was the only one in the neighborhood he decided to take it to the church and Mary could play for the service. But he hadn't consulted Mr. Conner who was the oldest deacon and opposed to musical instruments in the church. When Mr. Conner came in and realized what had happened he raised a scene - whereupon Charles grew very angry, picked up the organ in his arms and marched out of the church. It was neither very large nor very small - just medium and he was very angry so had extra strength!

The Savannah River played a big part in the lives of the McCalls. They depended on it for transportation to Savannah, Carolina and Augusta and for entertainment. There were two outstanding steamboats running regular schedules from Savannah to Augusta. The Katie, owned by John Lawton and named for his daughter, was a side wheeler. The Ethel had one large wheel at the back. The captains frequently raced their boats from one landing to the next and on down the river. The landing called "Poor Robin" was a favorite place for Sunday School picnics. It was well known that if you had picnics on a boat day the captain would give the crowd a ride up the river a piece. One day something very interesting was seen on one side of the boat and everybody crowded to that side so the boat came near turning over and the captain had to scatter the crowd.

Mary's people lived in Carolina and once when she planned to take the little children over to see her mother Charles was late in getting started to the landing. As they reached the edge of the swamp about two miles from the landing they heard the boat blow to leave - Charles stood on the step of the surrey and gave the Confederate Yell and drove on. The captain of the boat heard him and waited for us. It cost only one dollar to go from "Poor Robin" to Savannah. You had the ride, three meals and a stateroom.

One day just after the war when Charles and Mary were first married Charles found a bale of cotton floating in the river. There was nothing to tell where it came from nor to whom it belonged. Not being able to find an owner and being unmarked and unclaimed the bale became the property of Charles - it was like "Manna from Heaven" to the young couple.

Music meant much in the lives of Mary and her children. They sang and most of them played some instrument. Fred sang bass and played the accordian. Henry could sing any part and played the fiddle he also experimented with the saw. Mose sang bass and invented a contraption to slip over his head and hold his harmonica so that he could blow the mouth organ and accompany himself on the organ. Warren could sing bass, Charlie had a beautiful tenor voice, Sallie played the organ or piano and sang alto. Some of the old favorites that Mary sang were Maryland my Maryland, The Campbells are Coming, Love's Old sweet Song, Joy To The World and JesuE shall Reign. To entertain the little children she sang "The Fox Went Out in a Hungry Plight" and other English ditties.

## Early Memories

The first memory I have of my brother Fred was on his 21st birthday. He had just graduated from medical college and mother was giving him a big birthday dinner. I had to help pick the turkey which seemed like a tremendous job to a little girl.

It fell to my lot to go to school to both Henry and Mose. Henry was ordained to preach in Jackson Church and afterwards became the pastor. When I was twelve he baptised Charlie and me.

Mose was a very strict teacher. He taught at Maple Branch School, three miles from home, and we walked back and forth together. One day he said that I would have to stay after school until I learned fractions. I was horrified but I had no choice. We were alone and He kept me there. I have never forgotten fractions!

One very, very windy day in February the house caught on fire. The wind blew the fire so that the well curb, the smoke house, the stables, the pig pens and the chicken houses were burned. Pigs died in their pens and chickens caught on fire. Few things were saved - nothing from the upstairs rooms - there was no insurance. The family tried to keep the news from Mose, who was in school at Mercer, but he read it in the Sylvania Telephone and came home to help.

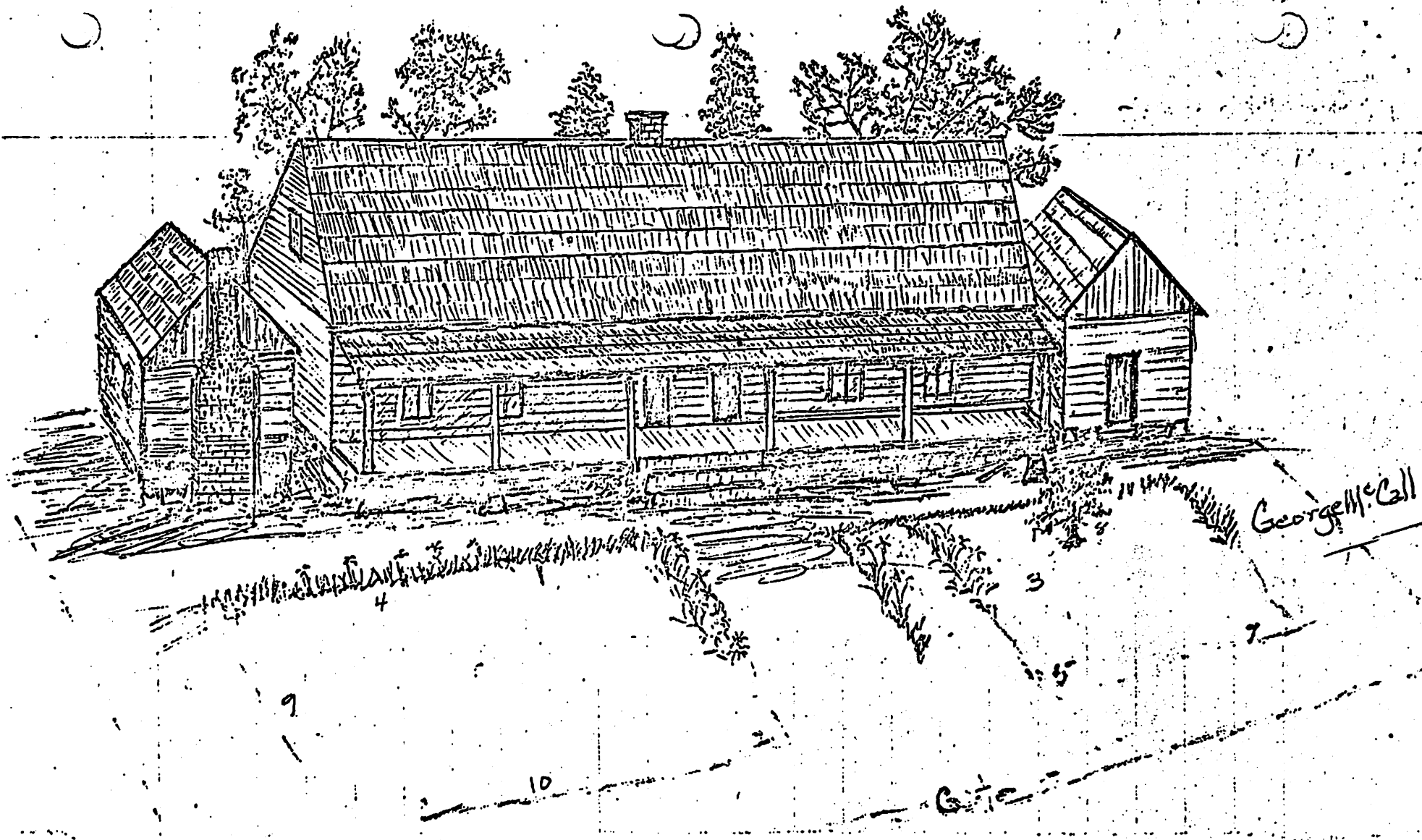
Dr. Charlie said "You can't keep a good man down" and he built again to the same chimneys. This time a six room house - four rooms with a long hall and kitchen and dining room. Four years later the second house burned - everybody was away from home. Dr. Charlie built again to the same chimneys. A different style house.

In this family of eight children the mother's gentle voice and wise counseling meant everything. She trained them well - two doctors, Dr. Fred and Dr. Charles Jr.; two preachers, Reverend Henry and Reverend Doctor Moses; one farmer, Warren and one carpenter-druggist Winborn Lawton. Sallie, beautiful wife and mother, while I, Kate, became the wife of Dr. Vance C. Powers. Widowed while still young I reared my only child, Vance Jr., by teaching school. Mary's oldest, Winborn B. died of diptheria when he was six, the only one of nine children to have blue eyes like his father. When all were settled into homes of their own Sallie came back to care for her parents.

One day the message came "Mother very ill". Fred, Henry and Kate hurried home but she lived only a short while. With Henry and Kate by her bedside she began to leave us. Henry repeated the 23rd Psalm - "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil" Here she took it up and said "For thou art with me" those were her last words - a brave, christian woman. Dr. Fred was out on an errand and Charlie the doctor was preparing a shot, but the time had come for her to leave us and go to a well earned rest.

In a few years the home place was sold and Henry took his father to his own home and cared for him as long as he lived. He and Mary, their children Fred, Charlie and Sallie sleep in Middleground Cemetery along with W.B. who passed away so long ago.





Roses

1. Catherine Murrnot
2. Penfield
3. La France
4. Aileen Sicily

5. Cloth of Gold.
6. Bon Zulime

7. Cape Jessamine
8. Lilacs
9. Oleander
10. Narcissus

First Home of Charles + Mary