

Who are we? How did we
get here, through time?

Important questions.

No other creature on earth
asks them.

As human beings we know
by intuition that there is
a spiritual plane above and
beyond the material world.

The material and practical
help us survive.

The spiritual allows us
to breathe, to expand the
universe inside our heads.

We do history simply because
we can't help ourselves, the
way we were created.

How did a Quercus Virginiana get involved in a fascinating genealogical story with political, historical, romantic and economic ramifications? Varied answers evolve from numerous sources which question, explain, augment and verify a unique 1888 letter by an 1811 born Islander to a brother-in-law of President Abraham Lincoln. It begins with an Irish baronet, Sir John Talbot, widower involved in debt with three children, who settled in Dublin with a 2nd wife whose fortune catapulted him into the Lord Mayorship of Dublin. His brother Henry, a successful London childless merchant, persuaded Sir John to send him his second son, Henry who would be his heir. It was so done and some months later 3-year old Henry became separated from his abductors in a strange part of London, frightened, lost and crying, knowing only that his name was Henry Talbot and lived with his uncle of the same name, he was comforted by a kindly old gentleman who took the lead to his home, instructing his wife to watch the newspapers for notice of a lost boy. He was a sea captain of Plymouth, owning a merchant ship which traded with Charleston wither he sailed, leaving Henry with his childless wife. Upon his return they decided to keep the child, as Henry Talbot, their grandson. Captain and Mrs Hayton moved to Charleston, eventually taking Henry voyaging with him until he sold his ship and established a successful mercantile business. Upon his death he left his business to

Henry, who in receiving a shipment of goods from England, was given some newspapers which he knew his "grandmother" would enjoy. That evening as they were reading, Henry heard a suppressed sob and was surprised to see her bitterly weeping. In reply to his concern, she showed him the obituary of Sir John Talbot and confessed that she had seen the lost child and of Henry's uncle Henry but couldn't bear to give him up. The obituary reported that Sir John's eldest son, John had d.s.p. The younger son lost in London would inherit the baronetcy and a fortune but it had been settled on the son of the 2nd marriage. Henry sailed to Dublin, found his sister Jane who declared she would not be deceived since her brother had certain birth marks. He insisted that he submit it to them, which he did and she accepted him. A note to introduce him to the Duke of Ormonde, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and related on his mother's side, resulted in an interview with the Duke who frankly told him there was no chance of his recovering the title and estate of his father without legal proof of his identity. The Duke gave him a letter of introduction to the guardians of his young half brother who accused him of being an impostor, threatening him with jail. Henry took refuge with his sister Jane, winning her affection. He returned to Charleston to find his "grandmother" had died and his health failing. With several thousand pounds after settling the estate, Henry moved to Port Royal where he proposed to...

Harmon 4 May 1745 and after her death married in 1758 Mary (possibly Bona) widow of Buck's subaltern James Doherty, by whom she had a son, James Doherty b. 19 June 1743 whom we shall meet later, and a daughter Mary b. 1745 who married a gentleman, Edward LeCroft. Her 3 sons: John LeCroft, William and Christopher we shall also meet.

But now return to Henry Talbot, prosperous planter, living at 1217-acre Whale Branch Plantation on Port Royal Island with a quite profitable brick yard and several Negro slaves instructed in brick laying. He kept up a correspondence with his sister Jane in Dublin who wrote she was dying of "consumption" and had made him her heir, was anxious to see him. Within a month he was at her bedside and also visited his half-brother who, in defiance of their sister Jane, had Henry arrested, imprisoned as an imposter until a judge heard and dismissed the case. This cruel conduct of her brother hastened Jane's departure, but not before she placed her fortune in Henry's name. After settling her estate he realized over £3500. And in London associates of the Duke of Ormond closed a contract on behalf of the Home Government and the governments of South Carolina and Georgia for him to build brick lighthouses along the coast. He returned to Whale Branch and on the Georgia side of Tybee Island built the lighthouse still known in the 19th century as "Talbot's Light". With profits from the work he bought from Philip Martinangele 200 acres on Skull Creek (now Skull Creek) south of present Fort Mitchell (not built until 1862), just inside the back gate of present Hilton Head Plantation, site of the Cypress cottages. The 200-acre plantation was a gift to his son, John. Eighteen year old John Talbird came by rowboat from Whale Branch

his 200-acre area

(4)

via Port Royal Sound to Skull Creek to visit his half-brother, Captain James Doherty (born 1743 who had inherited 100 acres on Skull Creek from his father. Captain Doherty would take command of Fort Lyttleton the following spring, succeeding Col. William Matthews who with his brother, Major Edward Matthews, left to join Francis Marion. Doherty also had a place at Bear Island (now Black Creek and Colleton River Plantation areas) and learned that "Young Bluffs" (Bluff) would attack him that night. He determined to set an ambush with his nephews: John, William and Christopher. Leacock and half-brother Captain Thomas Talkind, but as he stepped into the yard, was hailed with "Are you Captain Doherty?" "Yes" we are the late!" he ordered his party, all of whom escaped except 14-year old William Leacock who was seized by the rebel militia and imprisoned. "If I know where your brothers were, I will not tell you!" His captors finally desisted. Captain Doherty tried to defend himself but a second volley killed him. He was later buried at White Branch Plantation. But for John Talkind, politician and patriot who later served in the early 1778 and the rest of the war, including at Doherty's place. His father, John Leacock had married Mary Ann Conway, daughter of Richard Conway who returned to the continent from the Tower of London in 1763 and had foolishly supported Oliver Cromwell and his family fell from power at the Restoration. Conway and his son, Richard, in a batch of African Slaves brought to be by a Boston shipowner. Conway loved to fish and divine retribution that he discovered while fishing a diamond ring. They called "Conway Hole" in Skull Creek.

John Talkind and Mary Ann Conway, it was "love at first sight". They "caught the fish" and were married.

in Savannah just before Gen. Howe surrendered the city to the British army led by Gen. Augustine Prevost in 1780. In the reorganization of the Granville County militia which followed, John was commissioned Lieutenant in the 1st Battalion Captain Thomas Talbird's company which was ordered to the frontier on the defense of that station. The timely arrival of President John Mifflin from Orangeburg with a militia army forced the British to retreat to James Island where one historian claims the British surprised an out-posted group whom they expelled the counter-attack, another claims a Barnwell relative, Thomas Barnwell, actually betrayed the patriots. The Battle of Stono was a massacre of patriots, Lt. John Talbird was wounded, captured, his life saved by a sign posted to British soldiers, Captain Thomas Talbird and Captain James Doherty escaped to South Carolina, the death of Captain Doherty's death you have already heard. John and his first son John Gen. Clinch for the parole terms, promising the patriots to join British ranks in fighting their own countrymen. John escaped inland under cover of darkness and joined the American forces but in the changing fortunes of war was taken prisoner again.

Back on Hilton Head Island his pregnant wife Mary Talbird, became a heroine, too. A slave came up from the Skull Creek dock, crying "Soldiers, Masses, coming ashore!"
 "Get the others and hide in the woods 'til I call you!" was her calm reply, hurrying to her front piazza, young John firmly in hand, surprised to see his brother-in-law, Lt. John Talbird, a hero of Danbury, the son of...

sister, Elizabeth Ladsom, whom she invited to share the hospitality of her home, offering to have refreshments prepared. Morgan apologized that he was under orders to burn her home, as well as all those of known rebels between Savannah and Beaufort. Her house must be burned but he ordered his soldiers to pile her furniture and belongings beneath a giant live oak tree some 150 yards from the creek. The furniture was thrown out, the house burned, the detachment moving on to continue their arson after seizing such slaves as they could find (for sale to West Indian sugar planters). All horses were passed on to their cavalry units.

Mrs. Talbird called the 12 or 15 slaves who had escaped by hiding in the woods, directing them in building several small cabins covered with palmetto fronds, camouflaged from the views of vessels along Skull Creek. Her furniture and possessions thus were protected from the elements. She and her slaves had adequate shelter. In such a primitive cabin she gave birth to her second son, named Henry for his grandfather, on the very day the exhausted Cornwallis, his army worn out and surrounded by South Carolina's three militia generals: Sumner, Thomas Sumter and Andrew Pickens, surrendered at Yorktown, 19 October, 1781 - hence Henry Talbird became "Yorktown Henry", grew up to love books and his "chemical laboratory" (about which nothing is known), married July 5th 1810 in Savannah, Sarah E. Blackwood; three sons & two daughters, died 1846 in his 64th year, buried in Whale Branch Cemetery with many distinguished relatives, including Sec. of Navy, Paul Hamilton, Sec. U.S. Navy.

The Talbird Oak, Guercius Virginiana, with a historical marker, stands proudly just inside the cypress gate, Hilton Head Plantation.

His daughter, Sarah Eliza Talbird (1813-1871) made it into OFC marrying 1832 Rev. James Screven (1804-1864) grandson of General James Screven of Gov. Landgrave Thomas Smith family.