

March 17, 1943 - Agnes King Tison, aged 88, on April 5th, 1943, was born March 17th, 1855.

My earliest recollection of my childhood days

I was born in the house that my husband's mother was born in located at Gravel Hill S C, then St. Peter's Parish. My father then built a more modern home and at the beginning of the war they had that house, he was furnishing that house from the north - his china was bought during the administration of John Quincy Adams and now in Washington at the White House, ~~the china~~. I saw this when I visited the White House in Washington. This china was white with a gold band, a yellow band with the letter L in gold.

This was story two story house on a brick basement, with a front porch of cement and fluted colonial columns. You entered a large wide hall on the walls were painted the four seasons - a woman with hood over the head for winter, a lady standing with a sheaf of rice or wheat in her hand, on the other side was bunch of roses representing summer, spring was represented but I cannot recall the painting. This was done by a famous artist from the north.

The fireplaces were all done in white, blue, red, black and yellow tile - ~~the tile being shipped from England~~ the tile being shipped from England. After the house was burned by Sherman, many years later the estate was bought by Mr. Huntington and he retained the name of Gravel Hill. In digging up the debris to build a new house, they found some of the tile and gave my brother many pieces which I am leaving to my granddaughters.

At the age of six, I can remember the beginning of the confederate war - my oldest brother ran away (Henry Richardson Lawton) from school to join the army, at the age of sixteen. At the age of seven, my grandmother (Katherine Morgenthal Laner) taught me how to knit for the soldiers. My brother, at the end of two years, came home with a slight wound - when he returned to the army my father sent one of his old slaves, Joe Brantley, back with him as a body guard, who was killed by an automobile at the age of 80. My father, being an invalid, could not enter the army and during the last year my mother was taken sick with typhoid fever, died leaving three little girls, me the oldest, age ten years, the others four and one. My father then went to the upper part of S C, known as 96, where his brother was living, with many other relatives (Uncle Frank Laner, Uncle Joe Laner, Uncle Bill Lawton, and my father John Goldwire Lawton)*. In route, we stopped at my aunt's in Allendale, my mother's sister, Mrs. H. W. Richardson (Mary Acenith Laner). Sam Perry Laner married my father's sister, Mary Ann Lawton. We left their home at one o'clock at night, could see their homes burning and we had gone five miles.

We reached Barnwell in time for breakfast, then we went on to Prothro. There were 6 carriages and 6 wagons in this caravan. After we left Prothro, we were behind Wheeler's army and Sherman was behind us - just after crossing the last wagon crossed the bridge at Prothro, Wheeler's men burned the bridge. It took us about two weeks to get to 96, where my uncle bought a hotel that had been deserted and three families of us stayed there while the others stayed in a vacant house they found. As soon as Lee surrendered to the Yankees, all of the families went back but my father, who was too ill to return. He was also waiting to hear from his son in the army, my brother Henry Richardson Lawton

John Goldwire Lawton (1823-1870) 700 A Gravel Hill, 1050 A Marigold, 120 A Horse Pond, 1200 A Census.

from whom he had not heard in two years. We were then receiving our provisions from my uncle, William Henry Lawton.

One day my brother rode up to the well to water his horse and an old mule he had received for his four years in the Army. One of the negroes, named Ned, who had gone with us called to "Mosser, Miss Aggie and the chillun in the house" but I had already heard my brother talking and we rushed out to see him. He would not let us come near him but said "Get me a suit of fresh clothes and let Ned fix me a tub of water in the outhouse, then I will come in and speak to you." That night his mule was stolen from him by one of the Confederate soldiers, who had no way to get home. He remarked "Poor devils, let them have it for they need the ride".

Hubber Henry and Huber Lawton, who had gone into the Army together, went back to old home at Gravel Hill and found nothing there but the negro houses and the negroes. All animals and fowls has been destroyed. My father had his year's cotton crop put in a log pen in the piney woods, which stayed there until we came home, which he sold for \$1000. He lent \$500. to a man who had been his overseer to open a store with and let my brother have the other \$500. to run the farm. At the end of the year, my father owed the overseer \$500.

Taxes were so high that my father had to give up his Gravel Hill property to save his other property - he sold it to E. C. Wade, who was a cotton factor, and he sold it to Dr. Riley, who had been his overseer. at Cypress Creek.

Then my father had to give up his three small girls, (the, Mrs. Agnes King Lawton Tison; Mrs. Katherine Lawton Ives; Mrs. Nancy Bostick Lawton Broughton). My sister Lammie was sent to my aunt's Mrs H W R chardson at Allendale; My youngest sister Katherine M. Lawton and I was sent to Dr. Southwood Smith Tison, who was the father ~~of my son Southwood's wife~~ of my son Southwood's wife, Arabella Katherine Tison. There Dr. Smith gave me my first schooling, which was at the age of 12.

From there I went to Wesleyan College at Macon Georgia, where I entered preparatory school under the care of Dr. Bass, who was in school with my grandfather, and where I was the youngest girl in the college. I stayed there until the Christmas holidays when I was sent for on account of the illness of my father. Before I could get home, he had passed away. I then went to live with my uncle, Major William Lawton, in Savannah and entered the Massie Public School, where I completed my grammar school education. My uncle then moved back to S C and my two sisters were sent to the Confederate School at Charleston. During my stay at my uncles', Major Lawton, they had the Hampton Raid.

A negro regiment camped at our church grounds and the Yankees' officers stayed in the church. At night we had to keep our windows barred as the Yankees would fire their rifles and we did not dare to open the windows. My husband's grandfather had buried his silver to keep the Yankees from taking it as the Scalawags took possession of the country after the war. They took my husband's grandfather, Reuben Tison, out of his home and carried him to the swamp to force him to show them where this silver was. He would not and they hung him by the thumbs until the blood gushed out. One old faithful negro slave, Caleb Tison, followed him Mosser into the swamp. He saw that they were going to hang him and he said "Mosser, for God's sake show them the silver, you are worth more to Ole Miss than the silver". He then said to Caleb "Then you show them where it is" and Old Caleb took them to where it was buried. They dug it up and took it across the river into Georgia and sold it out among themselves. My husband's father, Julian Allen Tison, heard that the silver was there and he went and bought every piece of it back from them.

At this time, the negroes were getting out of hand and the better citizens of the country, knowing that they had to put a stop to this uprising, formed a Ku Klux Klan and wherever a negro committed a crime, they would not kill him but make him leave the country. One of my cousins, Joseph Maner Lawton, son of William Lawton (and also the cousin of my brother's, who left school with him to join the army) was head of the Ku Klux Klan. He was about to be caught by the Yankees and one night he came to our house about one o'clock to tell my father goodbye. He came to my room, knocked on the door and asked me to make him some coffee as he was leaving the country. The coffee we had at that time was made by cutting up sweet potatoes in small pieces, drying them in the sun and grinding them for coffee. I made some of this coffee for him and gave him some cold biscuits we had left. He left South Carolina before sun-up and finally settled in Arkansas. His brother John Goldwire Lawton, followed him and after a year both of them came back to Greenwood, S. C. and married sisters, with whom they had been in love since boy-hood days. They then went back to Arkansas, raised their families there and I did not hear anything from them for years. About six years ago, a young man named Jack Lawton came into the office of my son Lawton - when my son found that he was from Arkansas and named John Goldwire Lawton, he told Jack that he should come to see me, which he did and I explained what relation we were and took him to South Carolina where his great-grandmother was buried, she being Anne Boling Green from Va. After he returned to Arkansas, his father wrote me thanking me for informing Jack who his people were and then his wife wrote me, sending pictures.

Chamberlain was Governor of S. C. and the country had become so corrupt, especially the negro soldiers being stationed all over the country. They could not get any Democrats into office so they decided they would get rid of the Yankee Democrats. They got up a regiment with Cousin Harry Richardson as head, between Allendale and the Swamp, and everybody joined the regiment. Old Caleb Tison, the same slave that had followed my husband's grandfather into the swamp, got a red shirt and white mule and followed them showing them where the different negroes lived. My husband, then about 18 years old was a member of the regiment. He came to my Aunt Cut's house one day, when it was her turn to feed the regiment, and told me, (I was staying there at the time) that they had just had an election and he was the second most honorary man - that he was one of two privates, everyone else were officers. After they got the country straightened out, they nominated Wade Hampton from Columbia, S. C. for governor. He came down to electioneer and spent the night at Cypress Creek Plantation, where he was taken on a hunt. He killed a wild turkey which he took back to Columbia and had a fan made from the tail, which he sent back to my aunt, who had entertained him. When she died, she gave this fan to me and I still have it hanging in my room.

Hampton was elected first governor of S. C. by an overwhelming majority without the negro vote.

About this time, I went to live with my brothers Henry and Andrew and became engaged to Julian Alln Tison. I went back to my uncles to get ready to be married and was married on January 30th, 1879, in the Black Swamp Church, where I had been christened and where both my mother and father had been christened, married and funeralized.

After we were married, we went to live at Cypress Creek plantation, where we had no horse or buggy, just two mules. My son Julian and daughter Jennie were born there and we were happy just with our home life.

We then moved to Springfield, Georgia, to a turpentine farm where I and both my children taken desperately ill with fever. After we recovered from this illness, we moved to Clyn, Ga., which was then Groover's Landing. There my son Lawton was born.

When Lawton was about three months old, my husband was having timber cut from his land in South Carolina and had to go over to take rations to the men and see how they were getting along. Wherever he went, I always went to so he told me to feed and dress the baby and go with him. I had a colored girl named Mary to stay with the children and told her that if my baby waked up, not to feed him but to walk him ~~until he stopped crying~~ to keep him from crying until I got back. This was on February 19th. We loaded the provisions in the boat and Allen took along his gun thinking he might kill a duck. There was a freshet in the river at that time. After we crossed the river, we had to go up a small creek to get to the place where the men were working. As we left the river, I tied my handkerchief on a willow limb so that I could tell when we came out of the creek how much the river had risen. When we got back to the mouth of the creek, the river had ~~rise~~ to about six inches above the handkerchief and the current was so strong that Allen could not paddle the boat straight across the river. Just as we turned out into the river, the boat struck a willow limb buried under the water and swamped. Allen hollered to me to grab a limb but I could not reach it, however, my calomel petticoat filled with air and kept me afloat. He could not swim to where I was but dived under the water and came up where I was - lifted me up to where I could get hold of a limb, until he could pull me out of the water. This he could not do because of the weight of my clothes, so I had to shed everything but my dress. He finally got me up to a fork in a tree and he climbed higher up in the same tree. We started to holler for help but although we could hear the men cutting wood, it seemed that the louder we would holler, the harder they would cut wood. This started about 10 in the morning and although we kept up a continuous call for help, it was four in the afternoon when Capt. Groover from Clyo came to the Georgia bank of the river to feed his hogs on account of the freshet. He did not pay any attention to Allen's cries, thinking he was just one of the woodsmen, but when he heard my cries he knew somebody was in distress. He called to me, then no call for awhile and I thought he would not come back. However, in about 1 1/2 hours he came back, got into his boat and started across the river, it taking him an hour to make the crossing on account of the high water. After he got across, it took him about twenty minutes to get to where I could get into the boat on account of the current. He recognized Allen and said "Allen, for God's sake, is that Mrs. Tison with you?" and Allen replied "God must have sent you to us." By this time, another friend from Clyo had crossed the river and Allen got in the boat with him, me going with Capt. Groover.

Capt. Groover had come back to the river in his wagon and asked me if I could stand the trip in a wagon - I told him that after what I had just gone through I could stand anything just to get me back to my babies. After I reached the children, I got hysterical and they had to get the doctor to me. I then developed pneumonia and was in bed for two weeks. Allen could not speak above a whisper and my feet turned black and blue, the skin all coming off the soles.

When I asked the colored girl, Mary, what she had done about feeding my baby, she said that after I was so long coming home "I ast Miss Sauls what to do and she said get Aunt Hetty (a colored woman with a small baby) to nurse him but we had to put a sheet over her so he couldn't see she was black".

We moved back to Cypress Creek and lived there for a year, in a house built from lumber originally used in the negro houses at Gravel Hill as we could not get new lumber at that time. We then moved to Brighton where we lived in a log house across the road from my cousin, Dr.

Southwood Smith. There on march 3rd, my third son was born, during a freeze so severe that my husband rode his horse across a branch without the ice breaking. The following August we had an earthquake that almost destroyed Charleston, S. C. and we had to run out of the house and stay under the trees. I named that baby boy Southwood Smith for my cousin and doctor.

About that time, Dr. Southwood Tison and his wife had a little girl born to them. Her mother was very ill and I had to nurse her, whose name was Catherine Arabella, named for my ~~grandmother~~ ^{husband's mother}.

We moved back to the Creek, where I had another little girl, named Ella Porter, who I lost at the age of 18 months. We then moved to Savannah where my son Edgar Wartman and daughter Agnes Katherine were born. We lived there ten years before building our home on 38th St.

1908
Then my son Lawton met his cousin, Caroline Martin Stubbs, who was living in Oklahoma and returned to Savannah to visit her uncle, Edmond (Dad) Lawton. Lawton and Caroline were married in Atlanta, Georgia, on June 3rd, 1908. From this marriage there are four children - Caroline Stubbs, Lawton Day, Jr., Florence Eliza and Julian Allen.

24 Dec 1909
Next my daughter Jennie married Charles Kenneth Brown of Charleston, S. C. and they have one son, Julian Tison Brown.

1912
Southwood Smith, my third son, then married Catherine Arabella Smith, on December 18th, 1912, and from this marriage there are four children - Agnes King, Southwood Smith, Jr., Henry Lawton and John Ball.

1915
On November 4th, 1915, Edgar Wartman married Dorothy Batchelder, ^{of Beaufort, S.C.} and they have one child Dorothy Ann.

11 Jan 1914
Next Julian Henry married Lalla Vincent of ^{Yarnwell} Barnwell, S. C., and there were no children of this marriage.

1920
My last child to be married was Agnes Katherine, who married William King Smith of Garnett, S. C. on 17 May 1920

In 1918 I moved to Forsyth, Georgia, on account of my health and that of my daughter Jennie, who was a widow at the time, and I still live there in a old colonial type house that was built just after the Confederate war. I have a wonderful garden of bulbs, roses, camellias, wisterian, and every variety of flowers.

Since all that I have inherited six great-grandchildren, five great grand-daughters and one great grandson.

I hope all of you will appreciate this as much as it has given me pleasure to give ~~you~~ it to you, all of which I know is facts.