

# **OUR HERITAGE**

**PERSONALITIES**

**1754-1983**

**COLUMBIA COUNTY  
GEORGIA**

**COMPILED BY**

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# REMINISCENCES OF DR. H.R. CASEY

## COLUMBIA SENTINEL

JANUARY 3, 1883

I have known Mr. Boyd for the last twenty years, and I can truly say of him (if I am to judge the inner man by his outward works--his walk in life--his example) that he was a man of fine practical sense, great will and wim, strong attachments, strickly honest, a good provider, and a sincere Christian. He often expressed himself as having great affection for the people of Columbia County, and especially for his immediate neighbors. He was a successful farmer, even under the "New Dispensation," and loved to see that great industry prospering. He was a good trainer of youth, and said to me, only a few days before he died, that he tried to give his boys a good education. He taught them at home during vacations, this fact, "and I quote," he said "to impress it indelibly upon them, that to live well and prosper, work was necessary. I made my boys, when at home, get between the plow handles, and do other farm work, in order that idleness, the fruitful source of mischief, might not be fastened on them." His teachings were not only sound in theory, but have worked well in practice.

When the Grange at Bethel was organized, he said to me, "Doctor, if I could see and hear, I would not only join you, but would be an active worker in the cause. I believe that its aims, objects, and purposes are for the advancement of agriculture, a reformation so much needed. But, as it is, old, blind, deaf, and infirm, all I can do is to give you the benefit of my example. I cannot participate in your councils, but you may enroll by name as a member, and I will aid you by any means when you need it. "He

was a true man--a type of the true Southern, a link that bounds the glories properities and honors of the past of our county with the melancholy memories and desolated fields and firesides of the present. Mr. Boyd was a good man because of his innate love of the good and virtuous. His motto was that nothing was impossible of industry, "Where there is a will, there is a way." Hence, he was always found in the place of duty, which is the post of honor. In 1828, the ordinance of baptism was administered to him by Jabez Marshal, the then pastor of Kiokoe Church. A few years, thereafter he removed his membership to Bethelchurch, where it continued to his death. For one-half a century he continued a zealous member of the Baptist Church, and Bethelchurch will deeply feel his loss.

"Why weep ye, then, for him, who having run the bound of man's appointed years, at last, life's blessings all enjoyed, life's labors done.

Serenely to his final rest has passed.

While the soft memory of his virtues yet

Lingers, like the twilight hues when the bright sun was set."

JANUARY 10, 1883

An antipode in nature and in politics, was Columbia's favorite and honored son,

PETER CRAWFORD,

the great Head-Centre of the Troup party. The name of Peter Crawford was the rallying cry--the tossin--which, like the signal of Roderick Dhwo Chan Alphine's warriors, called up the mailed panoplied and ready clansmen of the great Troup party to the conflict.

CHAS. A. CRAWFORD,

a cousin and brother-in-law of Peter C., was said to be even more popular man with the

people, but he had no desire for place or power; and beyond being Clerk of The Superior Court, he held not other office. He was content to follow the humble occupation of tiller of the soil. But Peter Crawford was the recognized master mind of the party in the county, and against him was hurled the powerful batteries of the Clarkites, under that shred and daring leader Col. Zach. Williams.

About this time there came upon the stage a young man of decided talent, and with laudable ambition to enter the political arena as a contestant for its honors. Upon the same stage also appeared another rising star, whose youthful promise was more than realized. This young man was

GEO. W. CRAWFORD

son of Peter Crawford, the noble scion of an illustrious sire. Wm. H. Crawford, by his acknowledged genius and intellect, had become a star of first magnitude (which was also doomed to be eclipsed in the meridian of its splendor) in that galaxy of constellations that was glittering prospectively for the Presidential coronet. Peter's ambition was no higher than county and state offices, with an intellect as good, if not superior, to any of his confesers. Peter had not the polish and culture, which would fit him to shine in Courts and Cabinets. He had not those advantages of early education so necessary to the cultivation and growth of the

brightest intellects; but the ore, in its native bed, was pure metal. Thus endowed by nature with some of her choicest blessings, with a brilliant intellect, an upright deportment, a laudable ambition, with a suaviter in modo that had nestled him closely and firmly in the



affection of his fellow-citizens, he was a target too regal to escape the shafts and hot shot of the Opposition.

Col. Zach. Williams saw in his formidable antagonist—a man dangerous to the success of his party. His defeat must be accomplished at any and all hazards. Pemberton was now editing the Augusta "Chronicle." He sat on the editorial tripe no idle spectator of passing events in Columbia. His paper was the recognized organ of the Clark party, and hence he was a leading man in the bitter partisan war-fare then raging in the county. George W. Crawford and Thos. E. Burnside were rising young men, and Attornies of great promise, and both ambitious for the triumph of their respective political favorites.

Political excitement has always run high, and at times up to fever heat, in Columbia, somewhat akin to that partisan warfare between Whig and Tory in North and South Carolina, from 1776 to 1782, when the infamous Governor Dunmore and cruel Col Tarleton, "Bloody Bill Cunningham" and Col. Fanning were a terror to the men, women, and children; when Tory atrocities darkened the day-time of life, and the fires of hatred and distruction of property lighted up the darkness of night.

The political contests of which I write in these "Reminiscences" were not always crimsoned with the footprints of blood, but oftentimes when Greek met Greek, though the tug of general war came not, yet, frequently words came to blows and "Pistols for two" darkened the history of those days, and made political arenas hot with the poisoned atmosphere of envenomed hatred.

The biteness, injustice, and malignant heart-feeling of party are proverbial, and its unreasonableness and vindictive personalities a matter of astonishment. Men who are cool, calm and moderate on all other subjects of controversation, yet when

party views arise their entire natures are changed. They become hot-blooded, intemperate, inconsiderate and abusive to the last degree. I will instance a few only of those scenes of what I have written above.

#### Col. Zac Williams

I cast my first vote in the county in 1844, and for the Henry Clay electors; from that day to this, now and then I would hear of God. Zach. Williams. He was, indeed, a noted character. He was born

in Wilkes County and moved to Augusta, where he married a Miss Walton, sister, I think, of Robert Walton, a noted bank officer for many years, and one of Augusta's best citizens. While there Col. Williams had a quarrel with Mr. John Forsyth, which resulted in a sword fight on

the South Carolina side of the river. Forsyth made a deadly thrust at Col. Williams which the Colonel skilfully parried, and, in turn, directed a well aimed thrust at the "Adam's Apple" of Mr. Forsyth, insumating the blade of his rapier between the neck-tie and the neck, close to the "jugular."

The terms of the duel were, that on blood being drawn, the contest was to cease. Foreyth's second, supposing his friend murdered, removed the weapon, but there was no stain of blood. The contest was renewed, when Co. Williams dexterously

handling his Damascens blade entered the side of Mr. Forsyth, but his life was saved by its striking a rib and carving around to the back. Now, while Adam lost a rib that a wife might be made unto him, Mr. Forsyth had a rib that saved his life though Georgia came near losing him, who, in after years, became one of her brightest jewels.

Soon after this, Col. Williams came to Columbia County and settled near the head of White Oak Creek, on the quaker, now Wrightsboro

Koad, about 6 or 7 miles from Appling. In the days of Troup and Clark he was the most prominent, active and bitter partisam of the Clark party. He was a man of strong intellect, but of little culture. His was a turbulent spirit, free to offer an insult, and quick to resent one. He seemed to enjoy life in an atmosphere of strife. He was, indeed, the "storm king" in the political elements, ready, at the least provocation, to turn loose the rude Boreas of his nature upon the Crawfords and other leaders of the Troup party, whenever and wherever an opportunity offered.

JANUARY 17, 1883

#### Crawford - Burnside Duel

About this time an anonymous communication in the "Chronicle" and handbills were freely circulated through the country, abusive of Peter Crawford, but the old gentleman was slow to resent the covert attack. At last, goaded and stung to the quick, he came out in an article over his own signature in reply, tintured with gall and wormwood. There came back a rejoinder from the opposition, full of personalities and vindictive satire. The young and rising attorney, T.E.B., became implicated in some way in this newspaper warfare. I have heard it said that Col. W. was the author of these publications, and that T.E.B. fathered them, but this I do not speak with certainty. But the facts are that Col. Williams, on a visit to Augusta some time after the appearance of the last of the articles from the Clarkists, was loud-mouthed on the streets, and open in his denunciations of Geo. W. Crawford and the father, branding the former as a coward.

It is said that Col. Alfred Cumming, hearing the insults, and being a warm, personal and political friend of G.W. Crawford, communicated the same to him, and the result of the conference was that a demand for personal



satisfaction was made. A note was promptly sent to Mr. B. and as promptly accepted. This was anterior to the rapid transit travel of today, when the stage coach was the medium of travel.

Geo. W. Crawford, with his friend, Col. Alfred Cumming, boarded the stage in Augusta. At the "White House," on the Milledgeville Road in Columbia County, Thos. E. Burnside, with his surgeon, Dr. Wm. A.L. Collins, entered the stage, and made up the quartet of travelers on their mission of blood, to that misnomer yclept the "Field of Honor." Mr. Triplet was to have been the second of Mr. B., but when he arrived on the field he respectfully asked to be excused on the plea that he had recently made to his wife a solemn vow never again to act in that capacity, as by a late act in that capacity he came near losing his life and thus making her a widow. Dr. Ingersoll was then chosen as the second. Dr. Barber, of Macon, was Mr. C. Surgeon.

**OLD FORT MITCHELL** in Alabama, was the ground selected for these young bloods of Columbia to meet face to face, with pistols in hand, wipe out their insults. The ground was measured off and a line drawn around the combatants. At a convenient distance and within this periphery had gathered a crowd of whites and Indians to witness the bloody duel. The news of this duel had spread far and wide, and many had gathered there to see it. The parties being in position.

#### WORD WAS GIVEN

Mr. Crawford fired first, Burnside's ball struck the ground just in front of Crawford, throwing the dust and sand all over Mr. C's face. Just at this moment Mr. Triplet asked to be allowed to confer with the parties, which request was granted. He came, he said, bearing the olive branch of peace, which he thought could be honorably accepted. He contended that honor had been vindicated, and that there was no necessity to longer continue

the duel. Mr. Crawford, the challenging party, with his friend, Col. C. were seen to step aside and parley. Returning, Col. C. replied that Mr. C. would accept the proposal of peace upon condition that Mr. B. refused to do, and the parties took their positions and a second exchange of shots ensued with like result, both bullets cutting the air in their bloodless track, but no thread of life. A second demand for a conference was here made by Mr. Triplet, which was acceded, but ended just as the first. Mr. Crawford doubtless felt he had ample provocation as the challenging party, while Mr. B. was equally justified in his course. So the parties took their positions again. Both shot at the same time, when Mr. B. was seen to bend a little forward. His friend was quickly to his relief, when it was discovered that the ball had entered the chest over the heart. He fell in the arms of his friend and died instantly. Mr. Crawford, with his friend, immediately left the field.

The duel was fought in 1827 or 1828. So much for party spirit. But, while Mr. C. left the field with no stain of his own blood upon his garments, when the excitement of the occasion had passed away, there was that "internal monitor," silent, it is true, but important, which was continually reminding him of the last end of Thos. E. Burnside. I have heard it said that this sad, corroding thought haunted Mr. C. through life. He did not feel that any shame was attached to him in what he had done but it was to him a life-long regret that the necessity was forced upon him. It is also said to his credit that he never forgot the widow in her great loss and that there was an annual offering sent to her through the mail, with the donor's name suppressed.

JANUARY 24, 1883

Columbia has had her Burnsides from that day to this; and along through those eventful years—years preg-

nant with temptations of all sorts no stain has ever attached to any one of the name that I have ever heard of. Some of the late descendants have gone upon the gory field, not the bloody duel, but responding to their country's call, they now fill soldiers' graves and Columbia has written their names upon her "Monumental Tablet" dedicated to "Our Dead."

Looking back through the dim vista of a half century, I would not exhume this unfortunate and bloody tragedy, long buried in the ivy-covered tomb of the past, but for one reason only. Here were two rising young men—men of talents and good habits—and each giving promise of future usefulness to their families, friends and country. But the demon of party spirit was abroad in the land "like a roaring lion," seeking what it might devour." A sacrifice was demanded, and that each party might show "foreman worthy of their steel," a bright shining mark was selected, with little or no preparation for the coming event, either of a temporal or spiritual nature, and, mayhap, with little or no real heart-bitterness toward each other; yet, under a false conception of what insulted honor demanded and under the influence of, outside, pressure, the "Blood Code" is held up as the only arbitrament. They met and the duel ended in the death of one, bringing grief and anguish of his family and friends, while the survivor is, perhaps, in after life, a victim to corroding care. What did either party gain by this sad catastrophe? Is it not time to put a stop to the duello?

JOHN WYNNE,

a brother of Mrs Moors, who was grandmother of A.M. Crawford, was a stout, stalwart man, brave, fearless and ever ready to enter the ring and "knock off the chip" for a fisticuff. He belonged to the Crawford party. He and a young man by the name of Stewart got into a fight, and