

ulation of 1,500 in 1840, it would have been considered a

BENJAMIN HAWKINS' ORIGINAL WILL

One of the greatest treasures of history, unearthed in the Jones county records during the effort to preserve old documents in lasting form, is the original will of Benjamin Hawkins. It is now in the office of Mrs. Annie Elder Morton, ordinary. It is brief, specifying equal participation for his wife Lavinia, and his daughters Georgia, Carolina, Virginia, Muscogee and Cherokee, and his son Madison. The name of the daughter Jeffersonia does not appear. The will was made in 1812, and it was filed for probate in 1816. It is assumed that Jeffersonia was born after the will was written, and as it was evident from the wording that each heir should have a proportionate share, Jeffersonia was given equal rights by the executors.

In one sentence Hawkins says, "If my wife Lavinia chooses to move into Georgia, or any state to settle, she has full power to do so, to purchase a settlement for her convenience and accommodation."

It is evident from this that although Jones county had been established four years earlier than the writing of the will, the Hawkins family considered themselves citizens of the Indian domain rather than of the states.

Each of the eight heirs inherited under the will property appraised at approximately \$8,000 for each. Seventy-two Negro slaves were appraised at \$24,000. Three of the slaves were designated as "charges." In the language of the present day law they would have been called burdensome, unprofitable, not worth their keep.

Benjamin's Greek writings, Cicero's Orations and also many valuable books were among the assets. Hundreds of hogs, cows and sheep were distributed, and eleven spinning wheels. The wife Lavinia bought eight.

Timothy Barnard, Hawkins' interpreter, bought the other three. Bank stock, money in the bank, money in the hands of Lavinia, was considerable.

Mention is made of the plantation at the old fort. This is supposed to refer to old Fortville where the Hutchins settlement later was, and it is supposed this is why the will was filed in Jones county.

The Hawkins family had lived at Fort Hawkins, the cradle of Macon, and had followed the trail from Macon to Milledgeville, where the militia maintained a garrison, and this trail became known to history as the Garrison Road now about to be paved.

At Fort Hawkins the Macon Telegraph began its career under a different guise, and around the fort a considerable town grew on one of the important eminences of Middle Georgia.

Two of the Hawkins daughters married well-to-do Jones county men. Cherokee married Lewis Lawsha, Muscogee married Christopher Kiser, who died within two or three years. These were the only marriages recorded for the family in that county.

The guardians and commissioners received the same fees for administering the estate as are paid in the year 1938. No changes have occurred during the years.

Georgia and Carolina, sometimes written "Georgiana" and "Caroline," died soon after their father's death. It is supposed their names were really "Georgia" and "Carolina" in honor of those two states. Lavinia, the mother, signed her name with a cross-mark. As illustrative of another bit of history that has undergone little change in the country is that Hawkins seemed to be a student of Denman's Treatise of Midwifery. This book was in his collection with many other books on medicine.

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