

known children of John Steele.

As stated in the *History of Delaware*, James Steele inherited most of his father's property. James is, himself, mentioned several times in this volume. He served on a committee formed by Governor Penn of Pennsylvania to settle a border dispute in 1732-1733 concerning the border between Maryland and Pennsylvania and is again mentioned in the history of the Head of Christiana Church as having, in 1732, leased a tract of land of two acres "already laid out for and towards the Erecting and Building thereon a new House for the exercise of Divine Worship by those Protestant Dissenters commonly called presbyterians." This church was erected in 1750, the congregation having met prior to that time in a log cabin meeting house. James Steele was also ordered by Governor Penn to write a letter in the matter of a market-house dispute in 1737. It might be interesting to note here that the counties of New Castle, Sussex, and Kent, now located in Delaware, were at that time a part of the Province of Pennsylvania. A look at a present day map will show the area in which the Steele family lived to be in the northwestern tip of Delaware, next to Cecil County, Maryland, and bounded on the north by Pennsylvania.

It might also be interesting at this point to read about the excerpts from the diary of W.T. McKean, a great-great-great grandson of James Steele. These entries in his diary were made in 1862 upon the occasion of a visit to the Steele farm in Newark, Delaware. He stayed in the Steele home on this visit.

"May 30, 1862. Our visit in Philadelphia will soon be over. I am now on board a steamboat bound for Wilmington. While I lie here I can see nine steamboats and the masts of the ships look like an old clearing. As far as the eye can see you will see ships, thousands are unloading (unreadable) Newark. We have arrived here. We passed through Wilmington. It is a right beautiful place, beautifully laid out in squares. It is quite a place of business. We then took the cars for Newark and arrived here about eight o'clock in the afternoon. We met several ships sailing on the Bay. I saw the 10th Regt. of Rosessland (word doubtful) going to Washington. They are a fine looking set of fellows. Newark is a beautiful village situated about one mile from here. It is a nice place. This is a very pretty country so far as I can judge, but I can tell better after I see more of the state of Delaware. It is now night, 10 P.M.

"May 31, 1862. Newark. I have walked over the farm. It is a nice farm and on the line between Delaware and Maryland. The state line runs through the place. I went down to Newark this morning with George Steele. I saw the place where the British army passed through on their way to attack Wilmington. The Battle of Brandywine was fought some sixteen miles from here. I saw the place where the young man was killed on the college steps some years ago. I visited the old churchyard and graveyard. In it are graves that are 144 years old. I visited the place where my Grandmother McKean was born. (Note: Anna McIntire McKean, great-great-granddaughter of James Steele, and born 1778 in Cecil County, Maryland.) The walls of the home yet remain. I went over into Maryland this afternoon, but did not see any Sesech.

"June 1, 1862. It rained very hard last night and some this morning, but is now clearing off. I went to preaching near here and heard Mr. Valandingham preach. He is a brother of the Rebel Congressman from Ohio. He is a very able man. We then went home and ate our dinner. We then went to preaching out to McClellansville to Methodist meeting. Got acquainted with two young ladies. Went home and I don't know what else I'll do.

"June 2, 1862. Started to Baltimore. (Note: While in Washington, he was at the White House and saw President Lincoln, but he only talked to us a few minutes.)"

The above excerpts were sent to me from the files of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington, D.C., as part of the proofs of descent of one of their members. To the above, she adds the following note (written in 1933): "I consider the above of interest because written 71 years ago it shows the family visited the Delaware relatives, the Steeles, that the McIntire house, though in ruins, was still standing and was visited during a morning drive that included the mile drive to Newark. It shows also that the Battle of Brandywine was of interest to the vicinity and not distant. I think the residents of Newark enlisted in East Bradford Township, Chester County, Pa., for Alexander Steele (note: he was the son of James who inherited the family land in the next generation) is on their record of soldiers, yet no Steele paid taxes there. Business took them to Wilmington. Residents of Newark nowadays drive to Wilmington sometimes several

times in one day. The minister referred to is the one of which Head of Christiana Church is most proud, their pastor for 40 years, author of *Historical Discourses by Vallandigham*."

From an address delivered on October 9, 1932, by Rev. Henry Welborn of the Head of Christiana Church: "It is from 1707 that we date anniversary services. In 1717 Philadelphia Presbytery became too large and was divided into three Presbyteries of which New Castle Presbytery was one. Mr. Gillespie was one of the original members of this reorganization and the elder that represented this church was John Steele. On March 5, 1732, two acres and four perches were leased by James Steele to the elders of this church." (Note: they chose two elders from each county and each county is now in a different state, Cecil County, Maryland; New Castle County, Delaware; and Chester County, Pennsylvania.)

All of these bits and pieces help, I think, to give one the feel of the community and the part the Steele family played in the development of the area.

On page 1 of this report, I gave as a reference *The Mecklenburg Signers and Their Neighbors*. I would like to tell you something about the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. This declaration was made in 1775 and predated the Declaration of Independence signed by the colonists the following year. Mecklenburg was in North Carolina and this declaration was framed and signed by a convention of duly elected delegates at Charlotte, North Carolina. In his book, Mr. Ray states, "the actual birthplace of the indomitable spirit and love of liberty that brought forth this defiant demand for religious freedom and independence can be traced back to the 'forks of the Elk' and the banks of the Susquehanna River in what is now Cecil County, Maryland. The Alexanders, Gillespies, (etc.), all settled Cecil County, Maryland, and it was their influence, operating through the (and he names many additional families) offshoots of those teeth-gritting, defiant and determined sons and daughters of the Highlands of Scotland who were besieged at Londonderry, who flung the seeds of liberty to the four winds of a New World and brought about a revolution in thought and action that startled the thrones of Europe." Steeles and Alexanders were marrying back and forth for many generations, the most recent being the marriage of Aaron Steele to Violet Alexander of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, who were the parents of Abner Alexander Steele.

James Steele, son of John Steele, died in New Castle County, Delaware, and his will is dated August 20, 1751. His will names his wife as Mary, and most records I have found say that her name was Mary Alexander. Since none of these records predate the early 1900's, there is no proof that was her name and research shows that she was most definitely not the daughter of James Alexander and Mary Steele as has been supposed. There were, however, many other Alexander families in the area, so we cannot rule out the probability of her being from one of them. One of the present generation Steele descendants joined Colonial Dames on a lineage that is only partially correct. Having correctly traced the line to James Steele, she then skipped over to his sister Mary Steele who married James Alexander and traced the Alexander line back to qualify for membership. It was originally thought from the accompanying charts that the daughter of James Alexander and Mary Steele was the Mary who married James, but that also is not correct.

James Steele and his wife, Mary (Alexander?), were the parents of John, Moses, James, Mary, Alexander, William, Isaac, and Aaron.

John married a Miss Allen and their children were Allen, John, Mary, Sarah, James, and Joseph.

Alexander married a Rachel in 1758 and their children were Allen, James, and Ruth. (Their descendant filed Bible records with the DAR Bible records at the Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware.) Alexander was born in 1730 and died in 1783.²⁹

William married Elizabeth Maxwell Gillespie about 1763 in North Carolina. She was the widow of William's first cousin, Robert Gillespie. William and Elizabeth had only one son, General John Steele, who was born November 1, 1764, in the town of Salisbury, North Carolina. He served in the Legislature, was a member of the First United States Congress, and First Comptroller of the Treasury under George Washington. He died August 14, 1815.

Isaac was born October 23, 1732, will dated March 13, 1802, and probated March 15, 1803. He died in the Pendleton District of South Carolina. He married Grissel Dixon, born June 10, 1750, and died August 1848 in Benton, now Calhoun County, Alabama, at the home of her

daughter, Jane Steele Barnett. They were the parents of James, Michael, Margaret, William, John, Ruth, Isaac, Jr., Moses, and Jane.

Mary is named in her father's will as the wife of James Alexander.

We can see from the above, and next, record that while the son (Alexander) who inherited the property from his father (James) remained in Delaware, the others spread far and wide. We do not know anything about the sons Moses and James, Jr.

Aaron Steele, from whom the Alabama Steele family is descended, son of James and Mary Steele, was born in New Castle, Delaware, about 1740, his will probated on November 10, 1795 in the Abbeville District of South Carolina. He was married in 1761 to Violet Alexander of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, by whom he had four children, William, James, Abner Alexander, and Aaron. Violet Alexander was born about 1743 and died about 1780. Aaron then married Mrs. Elizabeth Crosby (Cozby) in 1782 at Long Cane in the Abbeville District, South Carolina, by whom he had one daughter, Jean, called Jenny, who never married.

Aaron is thought to have moved to the Abbeville District of South Carolina about 1773. He is a certified DAR Patriot of the American Revolution. In a notarized statement made in March of 1901, his granddaughter, Esther L. Steele Kimbrough (youngest child of Abner Alexander Steele), declared that she often heard her father say that he was old enough to go and bring back the horses that his father, Aaron Steele, and his brother, William, rode to the army. She also stated that her grandmother, Violet Alexander of Mecklenburg County, wife of Aaron Steele, was on her death bed when the Tories took the bed from under her.

The children of Aaron Steele and Violet Alexander were William, James, Abner Alexander, and Aaron, Jr.

William was born December 3, 1763 in North Carolina and in 1788 he married Esther Love of Augusta County, Virginia, born 1770 and died in 1850. His children and some of his grandchildren are listed in a brief writing of him in *History of Pendleton*, by R.W. Simpson. His children were Mary Love, Elizabeth, Aaron, William, Jr., Joseph, and James.

Aaron, Jr., was born July 6, 1775, and died October 12, 1845. He is buried in New Hope Cemetery in Knoxville, Alabama. He married an Elizabeth Murray or Massey and they were the parents of at least two known children: Joseph, and a Mrs. Sloan (first name unknown). Aaron appears to have followed his older brother, Abner Alexander Steele, to Greene County, Alabama, for in the diary of William Patton there is a mention of Aaron's house burning down. There is also a mention of Aaron's son, Joseph, who died following an accident with some oxen. Joseph is also buried in New Hope Cemetery. We learned about Aaron's daughter in a rather round about way. It seems that in her old age she was going to be sent off to a home and Thomas Jefferson Patton (her great-nephew) came and got her and welcomed her into his home. When she died, she left him her property which did not sit well with Esther L. Steele Kimbrough (Thomas Jefferson Steele's aunt, and niece of Mrs. Sloan) who apparently had expected to inherit it. In corresponding with descendants of one of Thomas Jefferson Steele's other Steele uncles, I was sent a copy of an old letter in their possession which gave Mrs. Sloan's name and told part of the story. Then, among the letters that were handed down as belonging to Thomas Jefferson Steele was one from his agent in Mississippi discussing the property that he had inherited from Mrs. Sloan. Aaron seems to have had only the two children, the son dying young and the daughter with no issue.

We have no knowledge of Aaron's son, James.

Abner Alexander Steele was born November 4, 1768, in either Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, or Pendleton District, South Carolina. He was married on March 26, 1794, to Elizabeth Deale, daughter of Clement Deale, whose name appears in the census of 1790 as living in Pendleton District, South Carolina. He sold this land in 1796 and I have been unable to trace his family after that time. Elizabeth was born April 13, 1777, probably in Pendleton, and died July 2, 1854. [That was then Cherokee Indian land. The Deales went to Pendleton District from present Laurens Co., South Carolina, around 1790.] Both Abner Alexander and Elizabeth Steele are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Eutaw, Greene County, Alabama.

They were the parents of thirteen children, only one of whom did not live to maturity. All but the youngest child were born in Pendleton District, South Carolina, the youngest being born after the family relocated to Alabama. Elihue Rees Steele, second son and third child of this

couple, is said to have been the first of the family to come to Alabama. He then went back to South Carolina and assisted in the move of the entire family to Greene County. In 1818, Elihue R., then only twenty years old, and his next youngest brother, Richard Griffin Steele, planted their first crop at Mesopotamia, Alabama. This town, lying a mile from Eutaw, was later incorporated into Eutaw. Steele's Bluff at Steele's Landing was named after this prominent family and for many years was one of the regular landing spots for the ships trading up and down the Black Warrior River. Abner Steele is listed among the founders of the New Hope Presbyterian Church at Knoxville, Alabama, in 1818.

The children of Abner Alexander and Elizabeth (Deale) Steele were Alexander, Mary, Elihue R., Richard G., Nancy and Elizabeth (twins), Martha, William, Abner Alexander, Jr., Jane, Susanah (the only one who died young), Esther, and James. Their births span a period of twenty-five years from 1795 to 1820.

ENDNOTES

1. Thomas Patton, a son of William and Jean Patton of present Chester Co., SC, who moved to the Fairforest area of present Union Co., SC, in about 1772. Their other children were Capt. Matthew Patton (1758-1837), a celebrated Revolutionary War officer, by some reports supposedly first married to two sisters, daughters of Charles and Mary Moore of Walnut Grove Plantation of present Spartanburg Co., SC, although no proof of such has ever been discovered, then to Nancy (Bobo) Holland Simpson Colbert in 1802, a daughter of Sampson and Sarah (Simpson) Bobo of Spartanburg Co.; Prudence Patton (1753-1784), who married Brig. Gen. Hugh Means (War of 1812) of Union Co.; Eloise Janette Patton (1763-1827), who married Samuel Archibald; and William Patton, Jr. (1768-1825), who married Martha Archibald. Capt. Matthew Patton did have one son, mother unknown, William L. Patton, born ca. 1800 and died 1840-1850 in Carroll Co., TN, married to Sarah Ann Isabella Means, a daughter of James and Sarah (Kelso) Means (first wife) of Spartanburg Co., SC. Capt. Matthew Patton is buried in the Pilgrim's Rest Presbyterian Cemetery, Carroll Co., TN, having moved from SC to there in 1832. On 7 July 1807, he did sign a bond in Spartanburg Co. to acknowledge he was the father of a child previously born to Elizabeth Autry.

2. A daughter of Dr. George and Isabella (Montgomery) Ross, Sr., of present Laurens Co., SC. Dr. Ross attended the wounded after the Revolutionary War Battle of Musgrove's Mill and later saved the life of the wounded American Patriot, Major Joseph McJunkin of present Union Co., SC.

3. William Kennedy Clowney (1797-1851), a son of Samuel and Elizabeth (Kennedy) Clowney, and grandson of William and Mary Ann (Brandon) Kennedy of Union Co., SC, Mary Ann a sister to Col. Thomas Brandon who commanded the Second Spartan Regiment during the Revolutionary War.

4. Dr. John Storey (1779-1862), a son of James and Catherine (Cunningham) Storey, and grandson of George and Hannah (McElwaine) Storey, married Jane (1810-1890), thought to be a Cunningham. Both buried Hebron Presbyterian Cemetery, Greene Co., AL. George and Hannah Storey, with her brother, James, came from PA to present Spartanburg Co., SC, in 1751 and it was James McElwaine who gave the name to the Fairforest area. George Storey built Storey's Fort, a very important refuge for the Whigs during the Revolution.

5. Samuel Archibald married Eloise Janette Patton (1763-1827), a sister to Dr. Thomas Patton (1765-1819).

6. Peggy Means (1762-1835) was a daughter of Thomas and Jean (Rutherford) Mayes, and wife of James C. Means (1758-1807) of Union Co., SC.

7. Rev. Robert M. Cunningham (1760-1839), born Gettysburg, PA, a son of Roger and Mary (Sturgeon) Cunningham, came with his parents to Mecklenburg Co., NC, in 1775 with siblings Robert, William, James, Nelly, Mary, and Margaret. In 1792, he married Elizabeth Moore (d. 1794), a daughter of Charles and Mary Moore of Walnut Grove Plantation, Spartanburg Co., SC. In 1795, he married Elizabeth Parks of Spartanburg Co. and they went to AL in 1822, where he founded the Presbyterian church at Tuscaloosa.

8. James Patton Means, a son of Brig. Gen. Hugh and Prudence (Patton) Means. See 24 July 1844 entry note. Washington Harris, a son of Mark and Elizabeth (Means) Harris, and grandson of Brig. Gen. Hugh Means. All of Union Co., SC.

8A *Horse Shoe Robinson, A Tale of the Tory Ascendancy*, by John P. Kennedy, pub. 1835, a historical novel based on the Revolutionary War in Backcountry SC, especially in the areas of Union, Laurens, and Spartanburg Cos., the main characters having been Capt. James "Horseshoe" Robertson and Mary Musgrove. For further information, see the article "Horse Shoe Robinson Revisited" by Robert J. Stevens, pub. Chester District Genealogical Society *Bulletin*, Dec. 1993

9. A son of George and Hannah (McElwaine) Storey of Union Co., SC, married Elizabeth Cunningham (1764-1849) in

HELVY STOREY
SR.