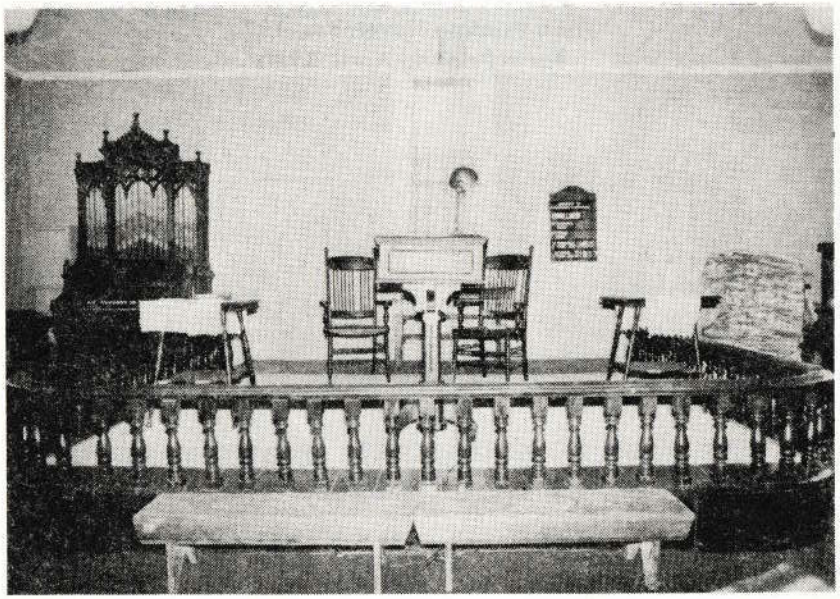
The Story of

Wrightsboro

1768-1964



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The Story of
Wrightsboro
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WRIGHTSBORO RESTORATION FOUNDATION
THOMSON, GEORGIA

Chapter 1

The Move to Wrightsboro

If it had not been for the cruelty of a British Governor and the stubborn courage of a Quaker mill-owner, Wrightsboro might never have existed. The official was Governor William Tryon, and the Quaker Joseph Maddock.

The Maddock family was English in origin, emigrating from Cheshire with William Penn in 1682. They settled first in Chester County, Pennsylvania, then moved to Delaware. Joseph and his family went to North Carolina in 1755 where he established his grist mill on the Eno River near Hillsboro.

As the British representative in North Carolina, Governor Tryon was very unpopular with the Patriots, and they suffered greatly from his oppressive rule. He imposed exorbitant taxes on all imported goods, property, and legal papers for the colonists, while exempting his favorites. For example, a wedding license with its government stamps might cost the average colonist as much as three pounds, a prohibitive sum in those early days.

In 1766 a group of rebellious citizens called "Regulators" called a meeting at Maddock's Mill to discuss their grievances, and decide on a course of action. They invited Edward Fanning, one of Tryon's aides, to attend and hear their side of the argument. But Tryon, in a rage, sent the militia to arrest Maddock. Maddock said that the Regulators met at his mill only because it was centrally located and "no liquor sold on the premises," to quote an old handbill, and was not punished.

More meetings were held, without any results, and the colonists were running out of patience. Tryon's deputies were seizing their cattle and horses for unpaid taxes, the value of the confiscated stock far outweighing the amount owed.

Maddock and another prominent Quaker, Jonathan Sell, decided that they and their people could not exist under such intolerable conditions any longer, so in 1767 Maddock applied for grants of land in the frontier territory of Georgia where they were assured of justice and freedom of religion.

Up to this time, most of the settlements in Georgia had taken tenuous root along the sca-coast, and up the major rivers. The sea islands were quite well populated, perhaps because people believed themselves safer from the Indians there. Inland from the coast early traders had established posts, connected by paths and rough trails, and the militia had built isolated forts at wide intervals.

The first cession of land that concerned Wrightsboro and the Quakers occurred in 1763, the boundary line extending along Little River to William's Creek, then south-east to Briar Creek. The Indians subsequently become indebted to the traders for the amount of 40,000 pounds, and it was suggested to them that they rid themselves of this debt by ceding more land to the Colonial Government which would, in turn, pay off the traders. This they did, relinquishing, in a second cession, a vast tract of land extending north to the Tugaloo River, thence westward, in all some 2,100,000 acres.

These lands were opened to colonization in 1773.

Their North Carolina property disposed of, the Quakers set out on their 300 mile trip late in 1767, travelling by oxcart and horseback. There were 40 families in this first group, with Maddock and Sell as their leaders, heading for the Georgia grants.

The government had ordered a reserve of 12,000 acres to be set aside for the Quaker petitioners until February 1, 1768. The boundaries of this reserve ran up Briar Creek, northwest to the Indian Treaty line (re-surveyed in 1767), then east along Little River. The treaty line went southeast from William's Creek, slightly above present-day Camak, to the head of Briar Creek. If, by February 1st, ten families had settled on their grants, the option would be extended until January, 1769. Under the customary allotment system, a head of a family was allowed 200 acres with 50 acres each for his wife, minor children and servants, no grant to exceed 1000 acres.

The first petition was presented by Joseph Maddock for 200 acres on which to build a grist mill. He was granted land "on the north fork of Briar Creek, call Sweetwater" in 1768. Later he built another mill near the town of Wrightsboro.

Evidently a settlement grew in the Sweetwater area, perhaps because the boundary between Indian and white lands was still being disputed. Several contemporary writers mention a place called "Maddocks" about 30 miles from Augusta, which was a temporary stopping-place for some of the Quakers, until their grants could be located and surveyed.

Zechariah Ferris, a noted Quaker traveller and writer, refers to a visit at Maddocks, and remarks that it was "ten or twelve miles south-east of Wrightsboro."

William Bartram, botanist and diarist, visited Maddock in Wrightsboro in 1773, which shows that Maddock had more than one estate, perhaps putting his son Joseph in charge of the Sweetwater mill. The Maddock genealogist, Mr. R. A. Stubbs, has a theory that this mill was located on or near today's Usry Pond, but further research tends to place it south of there. In 1771 Maddock was granted 200 acres for a grist mill near Wrightsboro, on the creek later named for him. He also received a large grant to be used as a "horse-pen", and to be held in trust for the Quakers, with Isaac Vernon as his co-trustee.

It has been said that Maddock and Sell obtained a grant near Wrightsboro on which to maintain a "Cowpen" for the community. But at the Columbia County Courthouse at Appling, is a deed dated 1804, stating that Jonathan Sell (a son of the original grantee) sold a tract of

land on Sweetwater "Said tract formerly granted to Joseph Maddock and Jonathan Sell, intended for Cowpen, for people called Quakers." It is quite probable that there was more than one such tract, because the Quakers had a good deal of livestock.

These cow and horse pens were very essential to the colony's economy. At one time, the Wrightsboro people had a common herd of nearly 2000 head, not counting the privately-owned cows kept for milking. The "Cow-pen" cattle were allowed to range freely, subject to a seasonal round-up for branding and selling.

The pen itself consisted of a fenced enclosure, cabins for the cow-pen superintendent and his helpers, with a nearby corn-field for supplementary feed. The superintendent employed cow-boys, who fought rustlers and Indians, and had to contend with characters who were not averse to changing a brand. It all sounds like a 1770-style Western. Although the name "cowboy" has existed since the 12th century, originating in Ireland, his Southern counterpart was known by the odd name of "pindar."

Chapter 2

Quaker Cabins and Paths

On December 6, 1768, finding that a great many more settlers were arriving than could be accommodated on the original 12,000 acres, Joseph Maddock, Jonathan Sell and Thomas Watson applied for an additional grant "on both sides of Germany Creek, not taken up by people already come." Fifty-seven families signed the petition, and on July 3, 1770 the grants were issued.

It is not known, exactly, when the land was surveyed for the town of Wrightsboro (the plat has been lost), but in 1769 a petition was presented asking that "1000 acres of the reserve be laid out in a proper spot for a town," and the earliest town lot allocations were made in July 3, 1770. The village was located on Town Creek (now called Middle Creek), and named for Sir James Wright, the colonial governor of Georgia. Town Creek formed the east and south-east boundaries of the town, and the Augusta-Wrightsboro Road, completed in 1769, ran through it.

A re-survey of the town was made in 1807, and the old lines and markers were found by the surveyor.

Although the town encompassed only 1000 acres, Wrightsboro township was much larger. A map drawn for the Governor in 1770 shows it covering all of present-day McDuffie County, and parts of Warren and Columbia.

Many of the earliest settlers who ventured deep into the virgin forest found it dark and gloomy from the thick over-lapping tree-branches, except where they found an open glade. William Bartram, in his journal, refers frequently to the "huge trees, with trunks six to eight feet thick," and tells of riding through the forest at a gallop, surprised at the lack of undergrowth.

After taking possession of their lands, the first thing the Quakers had to do was cut the trees to build a shelter and make a clearing in the woods. When this was done, they "girdled" the rest of the trees on the land intended for farming, and planted their seed around the stumps in holes dug with a hoe. The earliest types of crude shelters were sapling "lean-tos," shingled with slabs of bark or white-oak shakes. These were purely temporary in nature, and the next step was to build a log cabin for winter occupancy while they waited for lumber to be cut and seasoned for their permanent homes. The log cabins would be utilized then as sheds or stables. They were built with either dirt or "puncheon" floors (split logs, flat side up), and some crude furniture made the same way, tables with split-log tops and sapling legs, benches to match, and beds built into the corners of the room. A good reproduction can be seen at the Clarke cabin in Elijah Clarke Park, Lincoln County.

All the neighbors would join in at a "cabin raising", and the dwelling

would be erected in short order. According to one Quaker historian, "Greased paper was used in the windows, with wooden shutters on the outside." Glass was very scarce and expensive. Until iron fittings would be obtained, leather was made to serve for door-hinges. We do not know what the later Quaker houses looked like, because none of them are left in Wrightsboro, but they were probably similar to the houses the Friends had left behind them. Those are described as being "Comfortable homes, hip-roofed, with dormer windows, of brick or frame." The settlers probably managed to afford glass for the windows in these buildings. A house of the period still stands near Germany Creek, constructed from brick made in a near-by field, but since nothing is left of the Quaker homes, it is to be assumed that they were frame buildings.

Until a crop could be raised, people had to live "off the country," which was not too difficult. Turkeys were so plentiful, the dried breast meat was used for bread. All sorts of game and fish were abundant, as well as wild berries, fruits and greens. Hickory nut trees and muscadine vines were everywhere. The pelts of the game animals were traded in Augusta for salt, gun-powder and other necessities.

Even though a cultured society existed in the North and along the seaboard, it must be kept in mind that Wrightsboro was a new town, on the raw frontier. Supplies were hard to get, and the Friends had to live rather primitively, and "make do" with what they had at hand.

For tilling the soil, once it was cleared, they used ox-drawn ploughs and crude hoes. The town blacksmiths usually made the ploughs, forging iron rims for the shares. People made their own wooden harrows, hay-forks and rakes, and reaped their grain-crops with scythe and sickle.

A major problem facing the Quakers was transportation of produce and trading-goods. An individual could go anywhere on foot or horseback, but farm-produce needed wagon roads. The earlier traders had depended on paths, mainly, because their goods were carried by packhorse, or on the backs of Indians called "burtheners," from the coastal cities as far west as the Mississippi. They chose high ground and the easier grades for these paths, avoiding streams when possible, because water could render their packs valueless. If they were forced to cross a stream, they looked for a shallow place, with a firm bed. If necessary, they would haul in rocks and make a satisfactory fording place.

A wagon road form Augusta to Wrightsboro (via Quaker Springs) was completed in 1769, and followed, roughly, the present route of Highway 232, near Appling, Columbia County.

A little later the once famous "Old Quaker Road" was built from Wrightsboro south-east to Jacksonborough (now Sylvania), by way of Wrens and Waynesboro. Near Jacksonborough it intersected an older road that ran from Savannah to Augusta. Road-building was simple and inexpensive; (in Oglethorpe's day, a road 60 miles long was created for 5 pounds, or $25.) No grading, ditching or paving was done, and construction consisted mainly of clearing trees and rocks, to make a ten or twelve foot right-of-way. If a boulder proved too big to move, the road was routed around it. In many cases, they followed the earlier Indian trading paths, because these were found to be the best and most practical routes.

When a swampy place could not be avoided, they laid saplings and logs crosswise, making what was known as a "corduroy" road. In very damp places, dirt and rock might be hauled in to "build-up" the road, but this was not done very often.

Small creeks crossed on rude log and plank bridges, but ferries were employed on larger streams and rivers. These were usually privately owned, and always charged a fee. Some lesser rivers were crossed by toll-bridges, such as the one at Rayesville, on Little River. Nathaniel Durkee, a tanner from Wrightsboro, was authorized to build this bridge in 1796, and he charged the following tolls: "Loaded wagons, 25c, empty, 12½c. Four-wheeled charriages, 25c. Man and horse, 6¼c, rolling hogsheads (tobacco) 12½c. Cattle, hogs, sheep and goats, 1c a head."

Even with the coming of the roads, many settlers preferred to ship their goods by water. In some cases, produce would be floated down river to Augusta on a log raft, which was broken up at the end of the journey and sold for the timber in it. This method appealed to some plantation owners, because they could avoid paying toll.

Unfortunately, due to harassment by the Indians, and a bad growing season, the first year, the Quakers' crops were a failure. If it had not been for their foresight in bringing with them a good supply of gunpowder, nails and salt, it would have been a very dismal prospect.

Progress was slow, and as early as 1771, in constant fear of the Indians, and disheartened by loss of property, almost a third of the people had left Wrightsboro Township, for the comparative safety of Augusta and Savannah, some going back to the Carolinas. Concerned that the settlement might die altogether, Governor Wright put their case before the Council, and obtained some aid for them. Joseph Maddock had taken the long trip to Savannah to plead for "Two companies of militia for the protection of Wrightsborough" but was refused. By 1772, many of the defectors had returned to their grants, convinced that Governor Wright and the council had their welfare in mind, and would protect them.

Many creeks watered the township, and the people left the names of some of their prominent men on the land, calling these creeks "Hart's", "Carson's," "Williams'", "Maddock's", and "Germany." The stream that formed the east and south-east boundaries of the town was named first "Town", then "Wrightsboro," and finally the name we know it by, "Middle Creek."

Chapter 3

Quaker Ways and Crafts

The Friends were very hard workers, thrifty and shrewd, and after providing for their own needs, traded butter, cheese and honey, in addition to the usual crops of corn, wheat and tobacco (which was usually exported to England.) The women were skillful weavers, and their yarn and woollen cloth found a ready market.

To quote the Jones family historian, "They were hospitable people, and welcomed everyone, even strangers, into their homes. From the first they were determined to give their children the best education possible, and made schooling their primary concern."

No public school system existed, and at first children were taught by an educated elder, gathering his flock in one of the larger homes, or in the meeting house.

"There were no libraries, and very few people owned more than a handful of books, which were considered their most valuable possessions."

The criminal code was much more rigid than it is now, and people were punished severely for what we regard as minor offenses. Crimes which today would result in just a fine were in some cases punishable by death. Murderers were branded with an "M" and hanged. Thieves were also branded, and either whipped or executed. Minor offenders were placed in the stocks, and lashed on their bare backs. People could be jailed for debt, and women "ducked" or put in the stocks for malicious gossip.

In 1775, 124 Quaker men held grants in the township. Bearing in mind that large families were customary, many having twelve to fifteen children, one realizes that the population was greater then the number of families would indicate.

The Quakers were not all farmers; they included quite a few craftsmen in their number. One such man, Henry Jones, was a saddler and owned a tanyard on the present-day Tanyard Creek. He must have been a very busy person, for, in addition to saddles, he made "Bridles, belts, scabbards, shoes, leather hats and coats." He was called the "Little Giant", because while he was only five feet six inches tall, he weighed 300 pounds.

John Stubbs and his sons ran a combination grist-and-saw mill on Upton (now Hart's) Creek, and Joseph Maddock had grist mills on Sweetwater and Maddock's Creeks. Mills in the relatively flat lands of the south usually employed "undershot" wheels, because the creeks did not have much "fall." This kind of wheel and the mill, would be built downstream from a dam that formed the mill pond. The water would be carried down a plank mill-race or flume (some 4-5 feet above the surface of the creek) to increase its power, whence it would empty onto the wheel and cause it to turn. The dams, at first, were of plank and log construction.

Others among the friends were coopers, innkeepers and tradesmen.

The farmers raised corn, wheat, buckwheat, hemp, flax, tobacco, a little cotton and fruit. Nearly everyone had hives of bees, because they used honey in place of sugar. This necessitated the growing of flowers and shrubs to attract the bees, and herb gardens for medicinal use.

In 1772 a silk industry was started, but was not a success. Occasionally a gnarled old mulberry tree stump can be found, a survivor of this experiment.

Nearly every family owned a small still, not because they were heavy drinkers, but housewives distilled medicines for home use, and made a little brandy from the fruit they grew. Moderate use of liquor was not frowned on at first by the Friends, but later they opposed its use, and men could be dimissed from the Meeting for drinking.

Some early Quakers owned slaves, but in 1774 the N.C. Yearly Meeting decided that all Quaker-held slaves should be freed. During the Civil War the Friends operated the famous "underground railroad," to help run-away slaves escape to the free states.

No young woman of that era could marry until she had made enough quilts, sheets and household linens to set up her own home. Every house had its own spinning wheel and loom. The women spun, wove, and sewed for the whole family. They made wool and tow clothing for the men, wool, cotton and linen dresses, and petticoats for the women, and even the little girls from six years on up were adept at knitting sockings.

Although the Quakers believed in plain clothing, nearly every woman had one dearly cherished silk gown for "best", and always wore the familiar bonnet. The men dressed the grey or black (as did the women) and wore broad-brimmed, low-crowned hats such as we see in old prints. The furniture of the houses was, as might be expected, simple and durable. The Wrightsboro Quakers had one craftsman called "Thomas the Chairmaker," evidently a specialist in his field.

They had no stoves for cooking, but it is said that the Pennsylvania Germans introduced a stove for heating a house as early as the 1750's. It is quite possible that the Friends knew about this heater and used it. Benjamin Franklin is supposed to have adapted his famous circulating-air heater from this stove.

No matches were available, so people used a flint-and-steel for lighting fires. Illumination was provided by tallow, beeswax, or sperm wax candles, although the latter were quite expensive. A cheaper and more common form of lighting fixture was the "Betty" lamp, a shallow lidded bowl filled with grease, with a wick sticking out of a lip on one side. They usually had a handle or hook with which to hang them up, and they smoked and smelled horribly. Outdoors at night, people carried

sputtering light-wood torches.

The clothing of the children made them look like miniatures of their elders, long skirts for the little girls and knee-breeches for the boys. They had a great many more chores to do than modern children, but their lives were not all work. They played just as energetically as any group of children, and much the same games. Boys and girls played tag, hide-and-go-seek, and blind man's bluff together. Boys had tops, marbles, and leather balls stuffed with rags. Little girls had "cup-and-balls" games and, best of all, their "moppets" or dolls. They were of all sorts of materials. City children, or wealthy ones, might have an imported doll from Europe with china head and hands. Rural girls had dolls whittled out of wood, rag-babies stuffed with wool, or made from cornhusks. The material did not matter. They loved their dolls and cuddled them as little girls have, since time began.

From lack of sanitation, refrigeration, proper medicines and plain ignorance, the mortality rate for children was dreadfully high. In one private burying ground near Wrightsboro, there are five little graves in a row, all from one family, not one baby surviving its first year. As a rule though, if a child was hardy enough to survive baby-hood, it stood a fairly good chance of living to a ripe old age, barring accidents. It may be that people developed some sort of immunity, because a high percentage of the Quakers lived to be eighty or ninety years old.

In the Maddock family records is an account of a little girl who died "carrying water on her head." No details were given, but the historian surmised that she stumbled carrying the heavy weight, and may have broken her neck. Doctors were among the most honored men in the 18th century communities, but were not usually called in until all home remedies had been tried and failed. They knew nothing of the theory of germs, sterile bandages or anaesthesia. Amputations and trephining were about the only forms of surgery performed. A patient might survive the shock and pain only to die of infection. Abdominal surgery was unheard of. Bleeding, cupping, blistering, and the use of leeches were popular treatments. As a matter of fact, doctors were sometimes called "leeches." The town's first doctors were John Mote and Joseph de Yamport, a refugee from Santo Domingo. There were no drugstores in the frontier towns (the first druggist shop in Georgia was opened in Savannah in 1786), and doctors usually mixed their own medicines.

Housewives made concoctions such as calomel-and-rhubarb, or senna-and-molasses. The worse a medicine tasted, the more efficient it was supposed to be. Penicillin was not to be discovered for 150 years, but a dressing of mouldy bread was widely used as a poultice. As we now know, penicillin is made from a mould, and it would be interesting to know how our ancestors stumbled onto this remedy.

Some of the home remedies that the Quaker used were these: To cure the ague, 1 tsp gunpower, 1 of sulpher, 1 of cinnamon, taken in brandy; to cure a cough: to a strong decoction of allecampane, add vinegar and sugar and use as needed; for a liniment: equal quantities of oil of opodeldoc, oil of stone (crude oil?), oil of spike, and turpentine. A hair restorer was made of one part rainwater, 2 oz. glycerine, 1 oz. sulphur, ½ oz. sugar of lead. Rub scalp briskly.

Henry Jones, the saddler, who owned the tanyard, was probably one of the busiest men in Wrightsboro, and no doubt employed extra help, because in addition to his other products, he also made shoes. People were hard on shoes then, as they walked a great deal more than we do, and the roads were very rough.

Shoes were both alike, no rights or lefts, and people rotated them so they would were evenly. The uppers were sewed with heavy waxed linen thread, and attached to the soles with wooden "shoe-pegs," which were whittled out when the cobbler had some spare time.

Chapter 4

Religion and Indians

Quaker religious meetings were held on Sundays, and although some people lived quite a distance from the Meeting House, they were very faithful in attendance. They could be dismissed for not attending. Men sat on one side of the room, women on the other, in silence, until an inner voice moved them to speak. There were no hymns, collection, communion, or baptism. The length of the meeting was decided by a member of the congregation called a "timer." When he shook hands with the person next to him, the meeting was ended. In addition to weekly meetings, there were special ones held monthly, quarterly, and yearly. A Friend could be expelled from Meeting for such things as "Marrying out of the society, nonpayment of debts, playing cards, hiring a slave, bearing arms in a war-like manner, and marrying again in less than five months after the death of a previous spouse."

At first the Quakers held their meetings in the homes of the various members, then they built a meeting house of logs a mile northeast of the present Wrightsboro Church, on the land of Sir James Wright.

Wrightsboro Monthly Meeting was instituted on the 15th of August, 1773. This did not mean that they had not been holding meetings, but indicates official recognition. Joseph Maddock was chosen clerk of the meeting, and kept the records, some of which survived war, Indian raids and fire, to find their way eventually to the collection at Guilford College in North Carolina.

In 1774 the Friends built a new meeting-house of "heart-pine located in the middle of a burial ground, surrounded by cedar palings." No trace of this building remains. Although two Quaker burial-grounds have been located, there is no way of telling which of the two, if either, is the site of the meeting house. It could have been built on the same property as the older one, as deeds in Columbia county courthouse seem to indicate.

One of the "burying-grounds" is located about a mile east of the existing Methodist Church, on a hill-side overlooking Middle Creek, south of the old Wrightsboro Road. Grave markers are scattered over an acre of thickly wooded land. These markers are made of roughly-shaped pieces of fieldstone, with no inscriptions. In this site is an enclosure measuring about 20 x 30 feet, with a low rock wall around it, and a few graves inside.

The other burial ground is located between Maddock's creek and Highway 78, on the south side of the old Wrightsboro-Augusta road. It is about 200 feet back in the woods, in a tangle of blackberry briars and honey-suckle vines, and grown up in trees. There are many field stone markers here, as well as a conventional headstone inscribed "Adam Wilkerson," and a small marker bearing only a date "1777."

When the ceded lands of 1773 were opened for settlement, Governor Wright selected his good friend James Graham to be receiver of proceeds of sales; (the land was not free. It was supposed to pay the Indians' debts to the traders.) The best land, with a good mill-site, cost ten shillings an acre, and second best, with an "indifferent mill site" brought five shillings. The poorest land sold for much less. Due to the Indian troubles, people were reluctant to purchase the newly ceded territories, and only 400,000 acres were disposed of. Not nearly enough money came in to settle the traders' claims, and the cases lingered on in the courts for years. Edward Barnard, James McKay, and Joseph Maddock were appointed commissioners to judge the desirability of the land and conduct sales.

By the rules of the treaty, the Indians were, theoretically, moved further west and a comparatively peaceful period was experienced by the Quakers. Soon Wrightsboro had about sixty families settled in the town, and more out in the township. Not all of these people were Quakers. From the first, Maddock wanted the settlement to be opened to people of "all faiths and conditions," a decision he must have regretted deeply later on.

The treaty of the ceded lands stated that "200 acres of land were to be reserved for the Public, on a high hill, at a small run on the North Side of the North branch of the Ogeechee, about one and a half miles above the Falls, whereon a Stockade Fort may be erected, for the rendezvous of an Officer and twenty men, to be sent there on the application of the inhabitants of Wrightsboro. The fort is to be 100 feet square."

Seemingly the situation was eased a little by later summer, 1773, because when William Bartram came through the town on his famous "Travels," he noted that the village seemed to be prosperous, was neatly laid out, and about 20 good houses had been built. He and his companions bought provisions for their trip, and were favorably impressed by the prices, "almost as cheap as in Augusta." They bought cheese, butter, hominy, and beef "fit for carriage," (preserved in some way?). Bartram and Maddock had a common interest in agriculture and botany, and the journalist wrote that Maddock was growing apple trees which were bearing when only two years old, and that he was picking grapes from two-year old cuttings.

This same year, the Augusta-Wrightsboro Road was declared a public thoroughfare, and among others, John Stubbs and Isaac Lowe were appointed overseers to keep it in repair in the township. Jonathan Sell was named as Commissioner of Roads. To maintain the road, all able-bodied males between the ages of 15 and 30 were required to give 12 days labor a year.

In 1774 Captain Barnard of the Militia built a fort much closer to Wrightsboro. It cost 50 pounds, 5 shillings and consisted of earthworks and a crude stockade. It was commanded during the Revolution by Captain Thomas White, and such other notables as William and Henry Candler, Benjamin and William Few, and Hugh Rees served there. A

few rocks, which used to be a wall, are still discernible.

In October 1775 some residents of Wrightsboro Township and the ceded lands had chased a group of Indians as far west as the Ocmulgee River, and raided the town called Standing Peach Tree, in order to recover some stolen horses. Governor Wright did not want the fragile peace broken, and was quite disturbed over this event, believing that the "stolen horse" story was just an excuse. However, there was no legal action he could take against the raiders, because he had no proof of any ulterior motive.

Chapter 5

Revolutionary War Years

The Revolutionary War was a chaotic affair in Georgia, the youngest and least protected of the thirteen colonies. Possession of the state seesawed back and forth, the Americans holding it in 1776, 1777, 1778, and the British from 1778-1782, the end of the conflict.

With the onset of war, the plight of the Quakers became worse than it had ever been. The rebels were against them because they wouldn't fight the British, the British because they wouldn't fight the Americans, and the Indians hated them because they were white. The Creeks were especially bitter, and attacked every unprotected farm house they could find.

Militia companies were raised for British or Continental Forces, depending on which side was in control at the time. There were quite a few non-Quakers in Wrightsboro by now to help fill the military needs, and some of the Friends gave up their church membership to fight.

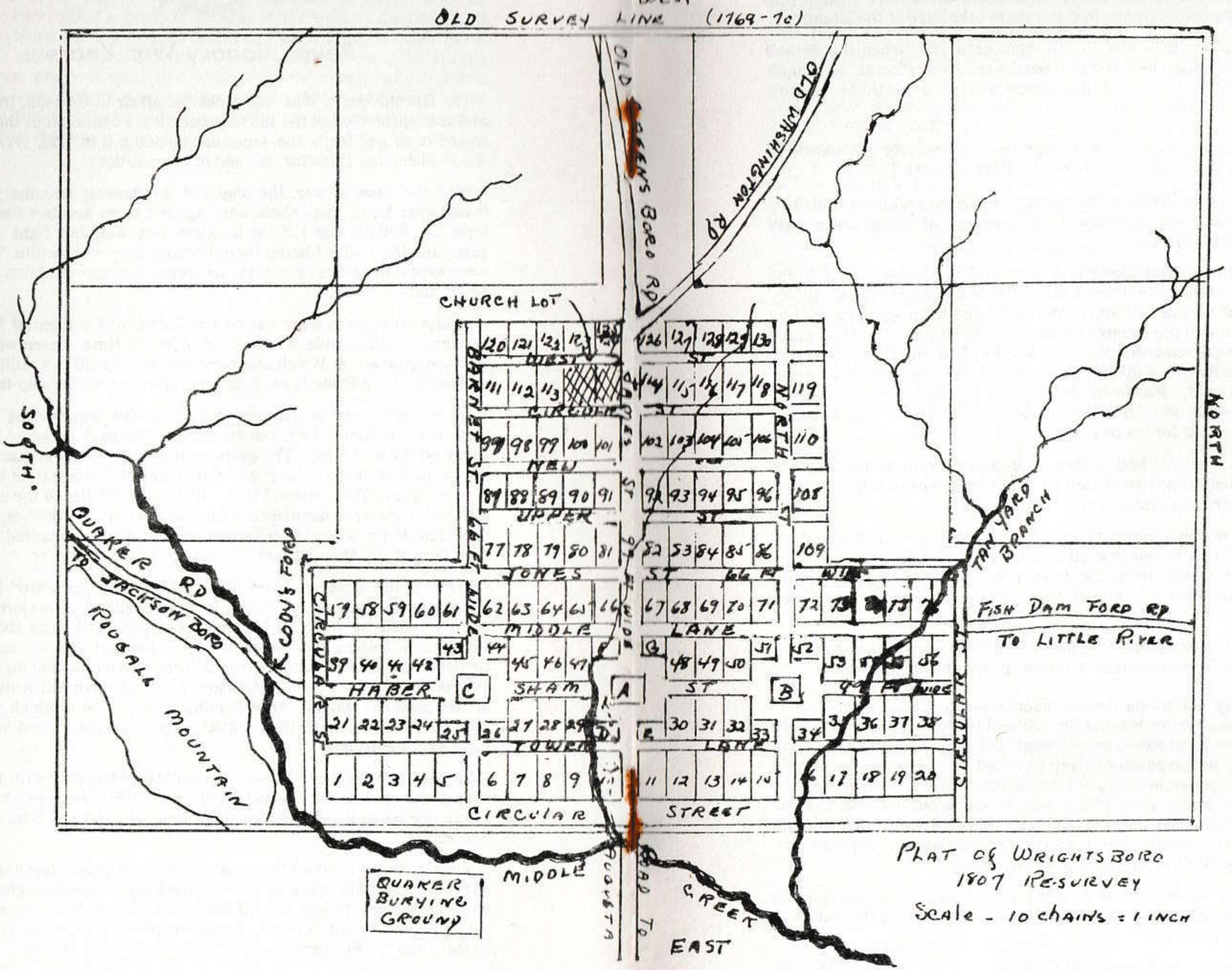
In deference to the Quakers' beliefs, a law was passed exempting them from military duty, but they were assessed an extra 25% tax to carry on the war effort. The exemption did nothing to endear the Quakers to the rest of the colony, and they found that the way of the pacifist is never easy. They relaxed their rigid rules a little, to the extent that, although men were dismissed from the Meeting for fighting, they were accepted again when the war was over, if they apologized before the members of the Meeting, and confessed their misconduct.

Some of the Quakers, even though their faith prevented them from bearing arms, wanted to remain loyal to England. A majority of them were English by birth or heritage, and regarded it as their mother country. Something most of us ignore is the fact that our country was British then. These Friends had a firm conviction that to take sides against the Crown would be treason, A few of them left America early in the conflict, leaving large holdings behind them which were later confiscated. They were the "Conservative Loyalists," and very few of them ever returned.

Another form of Loyalist was the radical, who sided with the British from motives of self-preservation or greed. They were quick to change allegiance when it seemed expedient to do so, and join with the victorious rebels.

Some of them roamed the countryside looting and burning property of people who held opposite views, attacking women and children, and killing partriots. It was not all one-sided though. Their rebel counterparts the self-styled "Liberty Boys," were known to their countrymen as the "Bonfire Brethren."

In 1777 the Rebel government proclaimed that they were withdraw-


WEST
OLD SURVEY LINE (1769-70)
OLD GREENSBORO RD
OLD WASHINGTON RD
CHURCH LOT
SOUTH
NORTH
TAN YARD BRANCH
FISH DAM FORD RD
TO LITTLE RIVER
QUAKER RD
TO JACKSONBORO
CIRCULAR
NEW
UPPER
JONES
MIDDLE
LANE
SHAM
ST
HABER
TOWER
LANE
CIRCULAR STREET
MIDDLE CREEK
QUAKER BURYING GROUND
EAST
PLAT OF WRIGHTSBORO
1807 RE-SURVEY
Scale - 10 chains = 1 inch

ing the militia from the western front, because there were enough continental and provincial troops in the state to take care of the situation.

No actual battles took place in Georgia until 1778, when the British forces attacked along the coast and northward from Florida. Savannah fell in December 1778, and the troops marched north to capture Augusta early in 1779.

Soon all Georgia had fallen except for a pocket of resistence in Wilkes County called by the British "the Hornet's nest."

Prior to the British assault, the Briar Creek area had been raided by Continental troops who destroyed the property of those whom they considered British sympathizers.

Up to this time Wrightsboro had remained unharmed. In 1780, the community possessed some 1800 head of cattle valued at approximately $10 a head, but during the winter of 1780-81, the town was attacked by Patriots who raided the country between here and Augusta. They killed nearly fifty people, choosing the most loyal to Britain. Thus the picture changed radically. On July 12, Joseph Maddock appealed to Governor Wright for aid, and, as a Town official, was granted 300 dollars to buy food for the people who had been burned out. The next day Jonathan Sell was granted $25 for his own use.

Now that the British had gained supremacy again in the Augusta area, Sir. James Wright appointed several companies of militia for the defense of Wrightsboro against the Continental troops.

The officers of these companies were Captain James Bishop and Lt. Samuel Hart, to patrol northward of the town, Captain James Watson and Lt. James Coats, from the town toward Augusta; and Captain George Nicholls with Lt. John Lang, who had the William's Creek Territory.

The same summer Joseph Maddock and his old friend, Jonathan Sell, were appointed Commissioners of Roads, in Wrightsboro township.

With so many plantation owners caught up in the defense of their country, and many more leaving for political reasons, the negroes were presenting quite a problem, even though the Quakers were not slave-owners. "Many inconveniences were reported from Negroes occupying vacant houses, under no control from white persons," as the old records compain. Many were hiding out in the woods without food or shelter, other than what they could steal. It was recommended that the Attorney General look into the laws concerning slavery, and take proper steps to see that the vagrants were controlled.

It is not clear whether these Negroes were runaways or slaves who had been left homeless by the deaths of their owners at the hands of roving bands of guerillas.

On Sir James Wright's return to Georgia, after his flight in 1776, he found that all his property had been taken from him under the acts of banishment and confiscation passed by Rebel Assembly in 1778. He had possessed eleven plantations covering 24,578 acres in all, and employing 523 slaves. After the war, when the commissioners of confiscation sold this property, it brought $200,000. His holdings in Wrightsboro township amounted to 3314 acres, including the Quaker Meeting House tract.

The commissioners sold part of this land to Robert Flournoy for 204 pounds sterling in 1783, and another portion to one William Brown. On April 11, 1787 Brown sold his share to John Stubbs and Daniel Williams "for themselves and the people called Quakers, a tract of land including the Meeting House tract, and a good spring of water," for 15 pounds according to a deed in the Columbia County courthouse. Robert Flournoy, on Feb. 20, 1793, signed a quit-claim deed relinquishing all his rights "to a parcel of land containing 43 acres, to the society of people called Friends, known as the Meeting House tract, granted to Daniel Williams and John Stubbs as trustees." (Perhaps he had lent the Quakers some money, taking the property as security.) Flournoy was a man of some importance; a surveyor for the state, he was quite wealthy, buying and selling many parcels of land. For instance, in 1795 he paid out $50,000 (an astronomical sum in those days) for 14,000 acres in the Fort Creek district. He was a good friend to the Quakers, and married a girl of that faith, a Mary Cobbs of Warrenton.

Chapter 6

A New Disaster

It is ironic that the Quakers, peace-loving as they were, should be caught up in some very bitter fighting. A few miles to the north, the Battle of Kettle Creek took place in 1779. Fierce skirmishes and deadly ambushes were common occurances, guerilla warfare at its savage worst. Add to this the hit-and-run raids of the Creeks, and one can understand why the Friends felt so desperate.

"It was an occasion for the satisfaction of personal grudges" by Patriots and Tories alike. One of the Maddock descendants wrote this graphic account in 1850. (Bear in mind that Joseph Maddock had been a Justice of the Peace, a Governor's Deputy, the head of the land grant office in Wrightsboro, and a Representative to the Colonial Assembly.)

"The war breaking, and he having enforced the laws on a lawless band of men, this was their chance to take revenge on him." They burned his house and barn, destroying priceless church and civil records. "They stole his horses and cattle and trampled his crops." Joseph and his family remained in Wrightsboro, although others had fled to Savannah for refuge. As the old account says, "He was very reduced in circumstances, debts coming due that he had contracted in the days of his prosperity, so that he was broken up and had to fail, but not until he had paid off all his debts. He died a very poor man, as to things of this world."

Joseph's son, Samuel, was burned out, too, and at one time was in such straits that the Friends in Wrightsboro provided him with a horse to ride. Later, it is nice to know, he was able to repay their kindness.

In 1779, when the British had recaptured control of the state, they published their own list of banished persons, and after the war, the new government enlarged upon its original 1778 list. It is rather surprising to find how many of the same names occur on both rosters.

The acts of banishment and confiscation were probably as unjust as laws could be. In March 1778, the Revolutionary Government passed an act to attain certain Tories for high treason, and to confiscate their estates. Refusal to take an oath of allegiance after the start of the war was considered a valid reason for inclusion on the list. If, after leaving the state, a banished person returned, he could be sentenced to death, without benefit of clergy. They did not take any consideration of the Quakers' pacifist views, their scruples against war and the bearing of arms. Some of the Wrightsboro Friends were ordered to serve with the army or provide a substitute. Failure to comply would mean confiscation of their lands. Some of these people did take part in the fighting, and after the war they received soldier's grants. Some were dismissed from the Quaker meeting, and others remained in the faith, causing one to wonder where the line was drawn—and who judged whether a man's participation was compulsory or voluntary.

When the Colonial Government regained control, they issued their own act of banishment and published a list of 151 prominent people sympathetic to the Revolution, or taking an active part. Under the British act, a man could be pardoned if he took an oath of allegiance to the King, and gave bond guaranteeing twelve months good behavior. None of the Quakers were on this list.

When the war was over and resentment was dying out, the lawmakers started working on a series of bills to soften the confiscation acts, realizing that some people had helped the British out of sheer self-defense. Some were pardoned out-right, and some were fined or "amerced" a percentage of the value of their holdings.

The lands which had already been confiscated were sold to defray state expenses, or given to Revolutionary veterans in the form of bounty grants. It had been a costly war for the newest state, and Georgia was practically destitute. Owners of large or small farms alike returned to find their homes devastated, and once productive fields a tangle of briars, pine saplings, and sedge grass.

Continental money was hardly worth the paper it was printed on (hence the term "not worth a Continental"), and the common form of trad was bartering. The Georgians were anxious to get their lands in production again, and settle the outlying territories in order to protect the boundaries against Indians.

The colonists were resilient and accustomed to hard work, so set about reclaiming the ravaged lands. Tobacco was the most profitable crop, and soon the great hogsheads of compressed tobacco were rolling toward the rivers where they were loaded on flatboats to be floated down to Augusta or Savannah.

As it was such an important crop and widely grown, inspection stations were set up at various points. One of these stations was located on Sweetwater Creek, close to the old Iron Works, and two more at the town of Petersburg at the mouth of the Broad River. Here the tobacco was graded, weighed, re-packed and stamped for export. Wrightsboro also had an inspection station.

Things went fairly well for the Friends now that peace had come, but with the influx of new settlers, they became uneasy lest their children adopt the manners and customs of the newcomers. Then a new threat appeared which at first seemed more an asset than a liability to them. In 1793 Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin.

In the early days cotton had not been the most important crop; although a few people grew it, and made cotton fabric, the labor involved in preparation made it very expensive. People wore linen and woolen clothing as a rule, with perhaps a silk gown or brocade suit for formal occasions. The first shipment of cotton from Savannah in 1784 consisted of eight sacks of the fiber. As late as 1795 the total United States

crop amounted to less than 30,000 bales, valued at 30c a pound. In 1805 production had soared to over 300,000 bales, and tobacco had lost its supremacy as a cash crop.

The ability to process cotton cheaply and efficiently, encouraged the planters to increase their cotton acreage, and employ more and more slaves to cultivate it.

During the next few years the Quakers found, to their dismay, that they were not going to be able to live their lives the way their faith dictated. It was against all their beliefs to employ slaves, and they were unable to compete with slave labor.

In the early 1800s, a noted Quaker, Zachary Dicks, who was though to possess the gift of prophecy, travelled through the South warning the Friends of the dangers of slavery and what he believed to be an impending slave insurrection. This added to the misgivings of the Quakers and they began a gradual departure from Wrightsboro which was complete by 1806. Most of those who left, moved on to Ohio and Indiana, leaving behind them their dreams of a peaceful life in Georgia, and thirty-five years of disillusion.

Chapter 7

The Great Exodus and After

Henry Jones, the saddler, had departed from the town as early as 1785, to return to North Carolina, but joined the Friends in Ohio. His heir sold the tanyard to Nathaniel Durkee in 1791. The Maddock mill was bought by Mercer Brown in 1795, and inherited by his son seven years later. Jesse and Nathan Stubbs sold their grist-and-saw mill in 1804.

Joseph Stubbs and his daughter Deborah had left in 1803 to look for new lands on which to homestead. They travelled in what were described as "Southern one-horse carts," having axles of wood, extra large wheelhubs, and iron rims on the wheels. At night the couple camped by the side of the road. The journey took them as far west as Illinois, but Joseph's final choice was Ohio, where he obtained three quarters of a section in Belmont County. They returned to Wrightsboro via Kentucky and Tennessee, and in 1805 the whole Stubbs clan moved to their new home. It was said to be a very impressive sight when the elder Stubbs families, their children and grandchildren all set out on their long journey. Some Quakers stayed on, renouncing their faith because their ties with Georgia were too strong to break.

Strangely, although Joseph Maddock was one of the most prominent men in Wrightsboro, neither the date of his death nor place of burial is known. It is assumed he died sometime in the late 1790's.

A rather touching account is given by the Jones family historian, concerning his ancestors' long trip north:
"Francis Jones (1725-1814), his children and grandchildren left Wrightsboro in a caravan of some forty families. They crossed the Ohio River at Cincinnati June 12, 1805. This town then consisted of one brick store, one frame building, and some log cabins.

Francis was an old man of eighty years, very ill, and was carried through the Cherokee nation on a litter by Indians who noticed his Quaker garb, and called him on of Penn's men."

Quite a few of the Friends went to Ohio by way of East Tennessee. Some of them had relatives at the Lost Creek Colony in this state, and spent the winter there.

With the gradual departure of the Quakers, Wrightsboro entered upon a new phase of its existence. There were many non-Quakers and ex-Quaker residents left, and on February 16, 1799 the settlement was incorporated as a town. The official order read, "All the tract of land consisting of 1000 acres which was ordered to be surveyed by Governor Wright and Council on February 7, 1769, shall be in future the town and commons of Wrightsboro."

The newly appointed commissioners were Thomas White (Revolu-

tionary hero), William Smith, Jesse Bull, and Joel Cloud, a onetime Quaker.

The town was a busy little place with perhaps 1,000 people living in or near it.

A church had been established, interdenominational at first, but then taken over by the Methodists. The first building burned, and in 1810 the present day Wrightsboro Methodist Church was built.

One of the earliest merchants was Benjamin Rees who became quite wealthy. A partial inventory which is probably typical of most old trading places reads, "Harness and saddles, frying-pans, Bibles, copper kettles, tea-pots, soap, deer-skins, powder and shot, spectacles, flat-irons, needles, coffee, sugar, salt, and hops." Evidently women still did their own spinning, weaving and sewing.

In the course of the next 25 years, several industries were started in and around the town. There was a woolen mill on Carson's Creek run by a man named Kinnebrew.

The old grist mill on Maddock's Creek (originally built by Jospeh Maddock) changed hands several times, and in 1805 was purchased by Hugh Rees. After his death it was operated by various owners until 1930 when it was destroyed by a spring flood.

The combination grist and saw mill on Upton's (Hart's) Creek, which had been built by John Stubbs, was bought by Joseph Evans in 1804. Around 1820 John Louis Porter started publishing the first newspaper in the area, "The Village Wreathe." It was a small paper, 14 x 22 inches, with four columna to a page. Publication ceased sometime prior to 1850, and as far as we know, there are no copies to be found anywhere.

There was an inn built on the present Pannell property and operated by a man named Sherwood Roberts. When the stagecoach line ran from Augusta to Athens, via Washington, the inn was an important stopping-place. The stage coach carried 15 passengers and covered 20-30 miles a day. The whole route was 93 miles long, and cost $9 for the entire trip.

The stage carried mail, too, and a corner of the inn's main room was reserved for a post-office. Before the stage coach came, the mail was carried on horse-back, stuffed into saddlebags. Postage was quite expensive. For a single sheet letter, carried 30 miles, the charge was six cents, and increased with distance, up to 450 miles, which cost 25c. In the early days, people did not use envelopes and postage was paid by the recipient, until stamps were authorized in 1847.

Tavern rates were reasonable. "Stallage and fodder per night, eight pence (16c). Good hot dinner, 1 shilling, sixpence. Breakfast 1 shilling, supper, 1 shilling; lodging, sixpence. Jamaica rum, brandy and whiskey, 1 shilling per ½ pint. Cider and strong beer, eight pence a quart."

In his Georgia Gazette of 1837, Adiel Sherwood describes the town thus: "Wrightsboro is a post village in the n.w. part of Columbia Co., On Towns (now Middle) Creek 50 m. N.E. of Milledgeville, 22 from Crawfordville, and 16 from Applington. It contains a house of worship, an Academy, thirty houses and some shops."

Although people could now travel by stagecoach or private carriage, a good deal of heavy goods were still transported by barge, down-river, as it was cheaper.

The same year that Wrightsboro was incorporated, the citizens took steps to provide education for their children. The commissioners voted to sell 800 acres of the "common land" and apply the money toward a seminary. In 1810 they sold more land in order to enlarge the school, and in 1826 a lottery was set up to raise $2000 for the benefit of Wrightsboro Academy.

Before this, in 1777, the newly written Constitution of Georgia had provided for schools to be erected in each county, to be state-supported, the so-called "free schools" which no one liked too well. They thought that the name was unfortunate, the word "free" implying that they were not able to pay. (Even if that were the case, they were proud and did not like the idea.) In 1783 the Legislature appropriated 1,000 acres of land in each county for the support of these schools, and in 1792 an act was passed giving 1000 pounds (about $5000) for the endowment of an Academy in each county. In 1817 $250,000 was granted to the academies four years later. The free schools taught primary work, and the academies took the place of our modern high schools. They taught a wide variety of subjects, some of which have long since been dropped from the curricula. A pupil could study Latin, English, Aritmetic, Geography, reading, Greek, French, elaborate penmanship, and such unusual subjects as navigation! Young ladies studied literature, French, arithmetic, music, drawing and deportment, but such niceties as wax-flower making, needlework and fancy embroidery were optional and extra.

Pupils boarded out with "best" families, or lived in boarding houses belonging to the Academies. Board was usually about $100 a year, firewood and candles extra, and they also paid tuition. Girls and boys alike wore some sort of uniform.

Chapter 8

Post-Quaker Schools and Homes

According to the McDuffie County History, Moses Waddell was one of the first teachers at Wrightsboro. He left in 1804 to start his Willington, S. C., school for boys, and eventually became President of the University of Georgia. In 1817 Billington Sanders was Dean of the Academy. Later, in 1833, he was the first President of Mercer at Penfield. Robert Fleming, whose descendants still live in McDuffie, was an early-day instructor. Obadiah Cloud, a grandson of Joel Cloud (a one-time Quaker, and first commissioner of the town of Wrightsboro) taught school here for many years. He fought for the Confederacy, and later represented Warren County in the legistlature. He died in 1920, at the age of 82.

Even with state help, there was still an educational problem. Children who lived on out-lying farms could not get in to townschools regularly, and as their help was needed on the farms, they could not board in town. Thus, of necessity, their schooling was limited to the winter months, if they had any at all.

The parents took things into their own hands, and the "Old Field" school was created, units springing up through the country. It was a law that a school could be established wherever as few as fifteen children were available. That is one reason we used to see so many derelict one-room school buildings scattered through the rural districts. Most of them are gone now, but they filled a very real need when they existed.

Parents were much closer to the Old Field schools than any other. They built the school, hired the teacher, and saw to it that their children attended, for three or four years, at least. They paid $1 a month per pupil, to be taught the three R's, and 50c a month extra for geography lessons.

These schools were built in an old, unused field, from logs, one room for all the grades, with an open fireplace at one end for heat and water from a well or near-by spring. Sanitary facilities were unknown. The teachers (always men, and very few having a college education) would travel around the countryside until they found a school needing their services, then make a deal with the parents of the prospective scholars.

The children had very few books to help them, but the old blueback speller was usually found in all the schools, and reading-books were any that the parents happened to have at home. Many an Old Field pupil learned to read from the Bible, the almanac, or Sir Walter Scott's novels which were very popular in the South.

Great stress was placed on spelling, and a spelling-bee . . . boys against girls, or one school against another . . . was an important occurance. All the parents attended, brought a basket full of lunch, and made a "social" of it. Spelling was done by pronouncing and spelling every syllable separately, and at the top of the children's lungs. A spelling bee was a noisy event. (They also studied their lessons out loud.)

They used slates for working arithmetic problems, but practiced penmanship with quill-pens, and ink made at home from oak-galls and vinegar. Pencils and steel pens were not yet invented. Paper was scarce in the rural schools, and quite expensive.

Whippings were frequent and painful, and a teacher was judged more by how well he could maintain discipline than how well he taught.

The Well-to-do, who did not want to send their children to a town academy, usually employed a private tutor, until the boys were old enough to go to college, and the girls to a finishing school.

In the 1840's the Wrightsboro public school met with a little financial difficulty. H. W. Massengale, superintendent, wrote to Governor Crawford, asking for the money due the school for the years 1844-46. He had had to pay the teachers out of his own pocket. This trouble in getting State Funds, all stemmed from a prolonged agricultural depression.

With all these efforts at education, nearly 20% of the poorer people were illiterate as late as 1860.

In 1833 the Georgia Railroad was begun from Augusta to inland Georgia, and started the slow but inevitable decline of Wrightsboro, although the decline was not yet very noticeable. Local tradition has it that the railroad was originally planned to go through Wrigthsboro, but due to the opposition of the leading citizens, was re-located through the hamlet of Thomson instead.

Life was very pleasant, if uneventful, in the years before the Civil War. The newer homes were spacious and comfortable and had refinements the earlier settlers never knew. Orchards of apple, pear, peach and fig trees surrounded the houses, and every housewife had her flower garden.

They grew tobacco, cotton and corn for their main crops, raised cattled and had all sorts of vegetables in their gardens. Women did not have any way of saving the fruit for winter use except drying and making jams and jellies, so some of it was distilled into brandy and cider made from the surplus apples.

Farmers raised cattle for food and for sale, sheep for their wool (although not as extensively after cotton came into its own), pigs, goats, and all sorts of fowl. They killed deer, wild turkeys, doves, rabbits, squirrel and bear to eat, and preserved the meats by salting or smoking. Some even smoked fish, which was very plentiful.

There were, however, a few disagreeable features in this pleasant life.

Very few, if any, houses had indoor plumbing, and water had to be

carried from a spring or well. Some lucky housewives had pumps in their kitchens, but no bathrooms. The kitchens of pre Civil War homes were rarely in the house, but in a separate building in the back yard. Even so, the meals were served fresh and hot, because little Negroes scurried between house and kitchen, carrying the food. There were not many cookstoves in use during this era. Although the first one had been cast in Pennsylvania in 1765, they did not really become popular until shortly before the Civil War, and even then some people preferred the old ways.

Before 1850, most cooking was done in an open fireplace, with iron cauldrons hung on cranes; long-legged "spiders" (or fry-pans) to set in hot coals; waffle-irons or toasters with long handles, and perhaps a brick oven built into the side of a fireplace.

For lighting, until kerosene became available in the '60's, wax or tallow candles were still used. Alexander Stephens, in the neighboring county of Taliaferro, was one of the first in the area to have his own gas-manufacturing plant, in the basement of his home, a startling innovation in those times.

Slavey was widespread, but for the most part Negroes were well treated. Food, clothing, and housing were provided, and the plantation mistress took care of them when they were ill. Their religious needs were not neglected, many Negroes sitting in a gallery in the same church as their owners. As one plantation owner wrote much later, "No Negro slave in Georgia ever went to the poorhouse, or had to beg for food when he got old."

Chapter 9

Before and After The War

Wrightsboro continued to be a typical, busy little village for some time, in spite of the loss of the railroad.

A list of the merchants in the two decades before the war show a surprising amount of business being done, and a wide variety of goods offered for sale or trade. W. A. Wade had a grocery and saloon; John Scott, dry-good store; Abijah Holliman, dry-goods store; Massengale, a large dry-goods store; Thomas White, dry-goods store; Jeanne Pearre, a very large dry-goods store; Tompkins, shoe shop; Duffy, boot-maker; and Mrs. Richards was a milliner and dress-maker. Benjamin Rees had a large store here, in 1840.

Ladies were no longer weaving and spinning all material they used, or sewing everything they wore; nor were the people raising all the food they ate as the following price list shows: corn, $2.50 a bushel, wheat, 75c a bushel, beef, 4½c a pound, chicken 20c a pair, turkeys $1 each, and one could live at a boarding house for as little as $14 a month.

They still had no drug store, although all country emporiums carried a large stock of patent medicines and housewives had not forgotten the skills of their mothers, in concocting remedies. By this time medicine and surgery had made great progress, and in the 1840's the blessing of anaesthesia had been discovered by a Georgian.

The town, now had about 100 families in and around it, and in addition to its stores, two Academies, male and female, were opened, with over 200 children in attendance, many from other counties. Those coming from a distance either lived in dormitories, or boarded at the homes of good citizens like Ned Jones, the Methodist preacher. It is unfortunate that we have no early church records; they were destroyed in a fire, and much church and town history lost.

One of the most popular features of the Boys' Academy was its brass band which gave well-attended concerts and played for parades.

The head of the Male Academy in the 1840-50's was Columbus C. Richards, who was famous far and wide for his ability as an instructor and his quick temper. He was a strict disciplinarian, and had a firm belief in whipping. Because of his reputation, boys from all over the state, who were considered uncontrollable, were sent to him for training. He would not tolerate any foolishness from these juvenile delinquents, and when they needed punishing, would add insult to injury by sending them down to the creek to cut the switches for their own beating.

This school closed in December 1853 and Mr. Richards went to teach in the neighboring town of Thomson. In the subsequent school sessions,

both boys and girls used the Male Academy building. A few years later it burned, and a smaller school was erected on the site.

Having no television, radio, record-players, and few magazines, the Wrightsboro people had to find other means of amusement, which in some cases got a little on the rowdy side. Horse-racing, cock-fighting, and gander-pulling were some of the more lusty pastimes, and if all else failed, they would make a party out of such work-a-day things as hog-killings and syrup-boilings.

Owners of large homes held dances with everyone invited, and an impromptu orchestra composed of the more musically inclined slaves or household members.

Every educated young lady could play the piano, and group singing was a popular parlor pastime. The young men amused themselves by hunting, fishing, and serenading their sweethearts. Upper class Southern manners before the war were influenced to a large degree by the idea of "chivalry" as decribed by their favorite author, Sir Walter Scott.

In late summer, just before cotton-picking time, people loaded wagons with food and bedding, and would spend a week or two of mixed religion and socializing at Whiteoak or Fountain Camp Ground, much as they do today. For our farbears "camp meeting" was just about the only vacation they ever had. The more affluent might visit the various springs in the area with their comfortable hotels. It was considered quite sophisticated to spend some time at Rousseau of Bealle Springs, and besides, the waters were thought to be quite beneficial.

The Civil War dealt another blow to Wrightsboro, with many of its young men being killed or disabled, and the aging people left unable to do the hard work necessary to produce their crops. After the war came the injustices of Reconstruction. Exorbitant taxes cost some of the Wrightsboro people their farms, and roving bands of freed slaves looted homes, stole farm animals, burned buildings, and menaced the women.

Many Georgians went west to get a new start in life, and in 1867 there were fewer people in the community than there had been in 1800. The county school system was utterly disrupted, and some of the remaining farmers tried to solve the educational problem by furnishing a schoolroom, and using the talents of an educated elder daughter as teacher for their neighbors' children as well as their own.

In 1870 McDuffie County was created from portions of Warren and Columbia, and in 1871 the public school system much as we know it, was inaugurated in Georgia.

The exodus from Wrightsboro continued. Some people moved to larger communities to find work. They no longer had slaves to help them work the farms, and many of them had lost their sons on whom they had depended. From 1870 on, the population shows a steady decline, as the figures show: in 1870 there were 1746 men and women; in 1890 there were 1428; in 1910 there was a population of 1276; and in 1930 only 1022.

These are the figures for the entire Wrightsboro Militia District. A one-time resident, a child at the turn of the century, says that in 1905 "We had a big general store (on the present Pannell property) run by two men named Shields and Brock. They hauled in supplies of groceries from Thomson and Augusta, in a four-horse wagon. The post-office was kept by a Civil War veteran named Harris, who had lost a leg in the fighting, and got around on crutches. Hubert Hunt had the blacksmith-shop, and another Hunt, Will, opened a big general store right in the middle of Wrightsboro. Mr. Brock, the storekeeper, also ran a cotton-gin."

In 1916 there were fewer houses, the church, one grocery store, and a cotton gin left. The post office had been closed, when Rural Free Delivery was instituted. There was a small school employing two teachers which closed when the McDuffie County schools were consolidated in 1922.

Some time around 1920 the cotton gin burned, and as it was never rebuilt, it left the town with no industry of any kind. It was considered useless to build another gin, because the boll weevil had invaded the cotton fields of the South, and the cotton market had collapsed.

Even the ruins of the old places are gone, now; not even the bricks of a chimney or foundation or rock-well remain in the town, to mark where the Quakers once lived. The only Quaker house still standing is the Rock House . . . 7 miles away. All that is left is the Methodist Church (1810) and a few old post-Quaker houses. One of these, known as the Hawes house, was built about 1815, and another which was once the girls' dormitory when the Academies were flourishing must be almost as old. Many of the old gravestones in the Methodist Church cemetery are toppled and broken, over-grown with briars, but Thomas White's stirring epitaph is still easy to read: "Our father, Thomas White. Born in Dublin City, April 1753. Emigrated to this place in 1775. Married to our mother in 1776. Was fighting for Liberty over these Hills in 1777, and left the Field, not a Captive but a Conqueror, in April 1844."

The nineteenth-century stores, schools and houses, with the exceptions mentioned, are gone, and twentieth century Wrightsboro is nearly non-existent. Where there were once fields of cotton and rows of crops, the land has been turned into pasture for cattle, or has reverted back to woodland.

Quaker Wrightsboro is just a memory now in the minds of those who are descended from the original families. In the counties surrounding the old town some of the Quaker names survive: Lowe, Dennis, Fleming, Watson, Moore, Ansley, Cloud, Jones . . . all these old families

were influential in the Friends' settlement of Wrightsboro, and helped carry on after their brethren had gone. The most famous descendants of the Wrightsboro Quakers were Thomas Watson (of the Watson-Maddock line) and the late, great ex-president Herbert Hoover, whose ancestor was Abiathar Davis.

Chapter 10

Wrightsboro Township Landholders Before 1776

Ansley, Benjamin
Ansley, Thomas
Ashfield, Henry
Ashmore, Frederick
Austin, Richard
Baldwin, David
Barfield, Solomon
Beck, George
Beggot, Elisha
Bird, Richard
Bishop, James
Boggs, Joseph
Bowie, James
Bryan, John
Burke, John
Burns, Andrew
Carson, John
Castle, Jacob
Cloud, Joel
Coats, James
Cobbs, James
Cochrane, Cornelius
Cooper, Isaac
Daniel, William
Davis, John
Day. Stephen
Denison, Patrick
Dennis, Abraham
Dennis, Isaac
Dennis, Jacob
Dennis, John
Dover, John
Duncan, John
Dunn, Benjamin
Dunn, John
Echols, Edward
Elam, William
Emmett, James
Farmer, William
Fleming, David
Gray, Isaac
Greathouse, Jacob
Greene, Isaac
Hart, James
Hart, Peter
Hart, Samuel
Hart, Thomas
Hartshorn, John
Hill, James
Hill, John
Hickson, William
Hodgin, John
Holliday, Ambrose
Hollingsworth, Joseph
Howard, Benjamin
Howard, John
Howell, James
Hunter, John
Jackson, Absolom
Jackson, Benjamin
Jackson, Isaac
Jackson, Nathaniel
Jackson, Thomas
Jackson, Walter
Jones, Francis
Jones, John
Jones, Richard
Lee, John
LeMarr, William
Lockridge, Robert
Lowe, Isaac
Lynn, Thomas
Lynn, William
McCarty, Daniel
McFarland, James
McFarland, William
McLen, Robert
Maddock, Joseph
Mathews, Oliver
Middleton, Holland Jr.
Middleton, Holland Sr.
Miles, Daniel
Mitchell, William
Mooney, Joseph
Moore, John
Moore, Mordecai
Moore, Richard
Moore, Thomas
Morrow, George

Morrow, James
Murphey, Edward
Murray, John
Oliver, Alexander
Oliver, James
Oliver, John
Oliver, Samuel
Owen, Ephriam
Pace, Silas
Parvey, Dial
Perkins, John
Perkins, Peter
Perry, John
Philips, Peter
Robinson (Roberson) David
Robison, Israel
Samson, Samuel
Sell, Henry
Sell, Jonathon Jr.
Sell, Jonathon Sr.
Sergison, Patrick
Sidwell, John
Slater, John
Slater, Mary
Smith, John
Smith, Richard
Stewart, John Jr.
Stubbs, Ann
Stubbs, Deborah
Stubbs, John
Stubbs, Nathaniel
Thompson, John
Thompson, Laurence
Tinnen, Hugh
Vernon, Amos
Vernon, Isaac
Walden, Robert
Watson, Jacob
Watson, John
Watson, Thomas
Welsh, John
Whigham, Thomas
Whitsett, John
Whitsett, John Jr.
Whitsett, Joseph
Wilson, Samuel
Winslete, Samuel

NON QUAKERS

Candler, William
Few, Benjamin
Graham, John
Houstown, Patrick
Howard, John
Hume, James
Johnson, Lewis
McKay, James
Wright, Sir James
Young, Thomas