

General James Blair and Family

by William Campbell Blair, M.D. (Mem. #290)

My great, great grandfather, General James Blair, was my first American born Blair ancestor; he was born 24 September, 1786, in the Waxhaw Settlement, Lancaster District, South Carolina, and died 1 April 1834 in Washington, D. C. He is buried in the Congressional cemetery.

James Blair was an extraordinary and colorful South Carolinian. He became a prominent figure in South Carolina politics during the days of Nullification, and leader of the Union Party in Camden District. He has been described as "one of nature's noblemen, cast in heroic mold, a magnificent giant possessing great charm, six feet six or seven inches in height,"¹ weighing 350 pounds. He had the strength of three ordinary men, was a statesman, politician, military leader and athlete. As a champion wrestler, there is no record of his ever having been bested in a match.

In his early twenties, James was elected Sheriff of Lancaster County, and he served in the South Carolina Militia at age 28 and subsequently became Adjutant General of the Militia. In 1821, he was elected to the United States Congress, representing Kershaw, Lancaster, Chesterfield and Sumter Counties, an office he was elected to four times. He died while in office.

In February, 1820, James married Charlotte Rochelle (1789-1852), daughter of Lovick Rochelle (a descendant of a French Huguenot family) and his wife, Elizabeth Perkins, both of Kershaw County. Charlotte inherited her father's large cotton plantation, Red Oak Camp, which James acquired by the marriage. Lovick Rochelle had built a large mansion home at Red Oak Camp, designed by Mr. LaTrobe, the architect of the United States Capitol. James and Charlotte had only one child, son Lovick William Rocheile Blair, known as Rochelle, born 20 July 1821 at Red Oak Camp.

Rochelle Blair was also an extraordinary man, well educated, by private tutors and at the University of Virginia. He made Red Oak Camp an advanced plantation, trying new scientific planting techniques. He became quite wealthy until he was financially ruined by the Civil War. In 1861, at his own expense, he raised, equipped and commanded a company called the Li-



Lovick William Rochelle Blair

zenby Guards, a unit of the Seventh South Carolina Battalion, part of Hagood's Brigade. They suffered heavy casualties defending Charleston. He was promoted to major, and at the end of the war, to Colonel. He relinquished his command after an illness, following which he served as a Confederate secret agent to Ireland and France, and as Confederate Emissary to the Pope at the Vatican. In 1859, at the age of 39, Rochelle married Sarah Thompson Workman. They had six children, all born in Camden, five girls, and then my grandfather, James William Blair, born in 1873.

Following the war Rochelle was active in the reconstruction effort of South Carolina. He was very influential as editor of the Kershaw *Gazette*. In 1870 he purchased land near Camden from General Chestnut and built a home called "Dixie's Retreat," with money acquired from the sale of a Leonardo de Vinci painting he had received from the Pope. He became a popular leader of the Greenback Labor Party, and ran unsuccessfully for Governor of South Carolina in 1880. He was assassinated in 1882 on the street in Camden while again campaigning for governor. Rochelle was buried in the Quaker Cemetery, Camden. His son, James William Blair, my grandfather, was orphaned at an early age, and raised by his eldest sister, Sarah Charlotte Blair. James married Matilda Barwold in Atlanta, and in 1912, moved to California with their two sons,

Col. W. M. Shannon, quoted in Kirkland, Thomas J., and Robert M. Kennedy, *Historic Camden, I: Colonial and Revolutionary* (Columbus: The State Company, 1926), page 91.

Lovick William Rochelle Blair (my father), and James Blair.

General James Blair was of Scots-Irish descent. In 1771, his grandfather, James Blair, Sr. with his wife Mary Harper Blair and their four sons: John (born about 1757); William (father of General James); Thomas (born 1764), and James (born 1768), came to America from County Antrim, Ulster, landing in or near Philadelphia. They then traveled down the Great Wagon Road to South Carolina to the Waxhaw settlement to join Mary Harper's family who had arrived three years earlier. The Harpers traveled from County Antrim to Charleston on the ship *Earl of Donegal*, arriving December 1767. Mary Harper's parents, William and Margaret Harper, her brothers, Dr. Daniel, a physician, and Ben, all received land grants on Wild Cat Creek, Craven County (now Lancaster County). Later some of the Harpers moved to land near the Catawba River.

The immigrant, James Blair, Sr., and his family purchased land in 1778 and 1782 on the east side of the Catawba River at Lands Ford, a shallow area where there was a road crossing the river. There they built a log cabin home, developed a farm with a grist mill called the Blair River Mill Plantation, and raised their family. Their home was burned during the Revolutionary War. James, Sr., was deceased by 1789 and, dying without a will, his land and mill were inherited by his eldest son, John Blair, by right of primogeniture, who then sold the land to his younger brothers, Thomas and James. By that time, John and William had purchased rich farmland in the Waxhaw Settlement from Mr. McKelheney, who had obtained the original land grant for it. Their farms were adjacent to each other. Because the land was so Eden like, it was called the "Garden of the Waxhaws."

John and William married sisters, Jane and Sarah Douglass, daughters of George Douglass, Esq., of the Waxhaw Settlement.

William and Sarah (Douglass) Blair had seven children: Mary (1784-1834, who married Walter Bell of the Waxhaw Settlement); James (to become General James Blair); son George Douglas Blair² (a lawyer in Camden); daughters Jane and Dorcas (they and brother George did not marry, and the three subsequently

² A family lineage sheet compiled by Larry C. Harris and Nancy Crockett of Lancaster, South Carolina, states that the George Douglas Blair who married Elizabeth S. Crawford was a cousin, the son of William's brother, John Blair and June Douglas.

moved to Shelbysville, Tennessee); Elizabeth and William.

William and Sarah are buried in the Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Lancaster. Large horizontal slabs over their graves list details of their birth in County Antrim, arrival in America, his participation in Revolutionary War battles, and the names of their children. Next to these two graves is that of Jane Blair, wife of John Blair, who had predeceased him in 1817.

William's brother, Thomas Blair, was a private in General Sumter's forces, serving under Capt. John Ballard, and was in the skirmish at Lynch's Creek and in other engagements.³ He married Jane Taylor, and by 1812, had sold his land at the River Mill Plantation in South Carolina and moved to Williamson, Tennessee with his sons, Daniel Ferguson (born 1791); Taylor Harper (born 1795) and Thomas Simpson (born 1797). Thomas died in Maury County, Tennessee, 2 May 1836. One son, Francis Blair, remained in the Waxhaws. He married Flora Lee of Sumter District in 1817, and was prominent in military affairs, commanding a company from Kershaw County in the War of 1812. In 1817 he became Colonel of the 35th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers.

William's youngest brother, James Blair, a planter (farmer) at the River Mill Plantation, died in 1801 at the age of 33. He married Mary Cantzon, daughter of a French physician, Dr. John Cantzon of the Waxhaw Settlement. Their son, John James Blair, born 1793, married Martha Ray, and in 1838, moved to Spring Hill, Mobile, Alabama. John J. and his cousin Francis were in business together, merchants in Lancaster.⁴

William's two sisters, born in the Waxhaw Settlement, Margaret (born 1771) and Elizabeth (born 1775), married brothers Robert Harper and Benjamin Harper, Jr. These were first cousin marriages of brothers and sisters.⁵

An account of the Blair Cemetery, burying ground for Red Oak Camp and Red Oak Woods follows.

³ Thomas Blair, Revolutionary War Pension Records, published in Bobby Gilmer Moss, *South Carolina Patriots* (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Company, 1983).

⁴ Stubbs, *Alabama Settlers*.

⁵ "Floyd's Descendants of William Harper with Corrections by Nancy Crockett." October. 1988.

Blair Cemetery

This cemetery is included because a partial record of it was made in *Historic Camden*, by Kirkland and Kennedy, though it was incorrectly located in that work. The Blair Cemetery, as it was designated in *Historic Came/en* was the family burying ground for the plantations Red Oak Camp (Rochelle. Blair) and Red Oak Woods (Morton). It was originally surrounded by a brick wall six feet high with wrought iron gates, enclosing an area 100 feet by 60 feet. The wall, gates and tombstones have been destroyed or carried off by vandals. . . The following record of interments is incomplete, but was compiled from these sources: *Historic Camden*, I, page 339 and II, page 92: Kirkland papers, South Caroliniana Library; Dotsy Boineau; Mary B. DuVal: Elizabeth P. Hough; Esther Rate I iff McCaskill; Gertrude Blair Strother, U.D.C. records: Carrie Yarbrough Witherspoon.

Blair Cemetery. (0297-W) From Camden, drive north-east on Jefferson Davis Highway (Highway #1) 27 miles to the town of McBee. There, at the stoplight, turn left at the intersection onto Highway 151. Drive north 5.8 miles. At the crest of a hill, turn left onto a dirt road. Drive as far as possible on this road. When it ends, the cemetery may be found on the left. Surveyed: 12/91

Bell, Alexander, s/o *James Blair Bell* & *Margaret Morton Bell*

Bell, James Blair, b. 1811 d. 28 Jun 1863 S. C. Militia

Bell, Margaret Morton, b. 1810 d. 4 Jun 1863
w/o *James Blair Bell*

Bone, Chunky, Catawba Indian. Faithful Attendant of General *James Blair*

Blair, Amelia Rochelle, b. 19 May 1819, d. 21 July 1855 w/o *Henry Blair*- d/o *John Rochelle* and *Elizabeth Morton*

Blair, Henry, b. 19Nov 1818 d. 20 Mar 1852 s/o Col. *Francis Blair* and *Flora Lee* - S. C. Militia

Blair, Charlotte Rocheil - b. 21 Jun 1787 d. 2 Sep 1852 d/o *Lovick Rocheil* and *Elizabeth Perkins* - b. Red Oak Camp - d. Wilson Springs, N.C.
w/o Gen. *James Blair*

Blair, James [In Memoriam stone] b. 26 Sep 1786 d. 1 Apr 1834 General, 5th Brigade, S.C. Militia - Representative from South Carolina in U.S. Congress - s/o *William Blair* and *Sarah Douglass* - b. Waxhaws - d. Washington City, interred in Congressional Cemetery

Blair, James, b. 11 Dec 1822 d. 8 Jul 1824 s/o Col. *Francis Blair* and *Flora Lee*

Blair, Thomas, b. 12 Nov 1825 d. 26 Jan 1826 s/o Col. *Francis Blair* and *Flora Lee*

Blair, Flora Lee, b. 1 Jul 1799 d. 3 Aug 1833 - w/o Col. *Francis Blair* b. Sumter District d. Red Oak Camp

Blair, Francis, b. 10 May 1789 - d. 17 Oct 1831- Captain, War of 1812 - Colonel, 35th Regiment, S.C. Militia - s/o *Thomas Blair* and *Jane Taylor* - born Waxhaws

Blair, Sallie Workman H. b. 28 Jan 1874 d. 16 Jul 1893 - w/o *James W. Blair*- d/o *William Crowe

Horton* and *Ellen Rugeley Farwell*

Horton, Elizabeth Stanley, b. 9 Jan 1775 d. 22 Feb. 1851 w/o *John Rochell Horton*, b. N.C. d. Red Oak Woods, S.C.

Horton, John Rochell, b. 12 May 1781 d. 14 Sep 1863 s/o *Wm. Horton* and *Nancy Horton* - S.C. Militia b. Charleston - d. Red Oak Woods

Horton, Jane Garland, b. 20 Nov 1814 d. 25 May 1874 w/o *Wm. Batts Morton* - d/o *Jesse Garland* and *Mary Crowe* - Beloved Plantation Matriarch and Mother, Devoted Lady of the Confederacy

Horton, Wm. Batts, b. 27 Mar 1808 d. 14 Nov. 1874 C.S.A. Regiment, S.C. Militia - Colonel, Home Guard - b. Charleston - d. Red Oak Woods

Horton, Wm. Rochelle B., b. 6 Dec 1831 d. 15 June 1865 C.S.A., s/o *Wm. Batts Horton* and *Jane Garland* - Washington Greys, Lt., Confederate States Artillery (B = Blair)

McNaughton, Wm. Daniel Neil, b. 6 July 1827 d. 19 Jun 1864 C.S.A. Kershaw Greys, Co. D, 7th S.C. Battalion - A Gallant Confederate Soldier, he was Killed on the Plains of Virginia at Weldon R.R. near Petersburg, Defending his Homeland and the Cause of Liberty and Free Government

Ratcliff, Wm., b. 1 Dec 1773 d. 16 Jun 1827 - S.C. Militia

Ratcliff, Sallie Rochelle, b. 3 Jun 1786 d. 6 Feb 1864 w/o *William Ratcliff* - d/o *John Rochelle* and *Rachel Horton*

Ratcliff, Wm. Henry, b. 21 Feb 1820 d. 2 Aug 1864 C.S.A. Wateree Mounted Rifles, Co. K, 7th S.C. Cavalry - s/o *William Ratcliff* and *Sallie Rochelle*

Rochell, Allen, s/o "Lovick Rochelle, Sr.* and *Elizabeth Perkins*

Rochell, Elizabeth Perkins, b. 1760 d. 29 Apr 1843 w/o *Lovick Rochelle, Sr.* - d/o *John Perkins* and *Mary Graceberry* - d. Red Oak Camp, Kershaw District, S.C.

Rochell, Sr., Lovick, b. 1754 d. 9 Jun 1809 Rev. War Lieutenant - s/o *John Rocheil* and *Elizabeth Boone*

Rochell, Elizabeth Perkins, d. 15 Oct 1817 Aged 16 Years 8 Months 15 Days, Died in Childbed With Her Child - w/o *Lovick Rochell, Jr.* - d/o *David and Betsy Perkins*

Rochell, Jr., Lovick, b. 28 May 1792 d. 29 Oct 1818 s/o *Lovick Rochell, Sr.* and *Elizabeth Perkins*

Rochell, Inf. d. 15 Oct 1817 - Inf/o *Lovick Rochell, Jr.* and *Elizabeth Perkins*

Rochelle, John

Rochelle, Rachel Horton, w/o *John Rochelle*

Watts, Nunnie, b. 12 Dec 1872 d. 11 Jun 1873 - Inf/o Thomas Watts* and *Henrietta Charlotte McCaskill*

Watts, Infant b. Nov 1880 d. June 1881 -Inf/o Thomas Watts* and "Henrietta Charlotte McCaskill"

Young, Benjamin Franklin, b. 7 Feb 1828 d. 25 May 1871 (Benjamin Franklin Young, Esq.) A Member of the Bar of South Carolina and of Florida - s/o *Lovick Young* and *Jane Douglass*

Young, Ellen Tabith, b. 7 Sep 1846 d. I Nov 1880 d/o Capt. *John Douglass Young* and *Margaret Ingram*