

CONCERNING OLD FORT

G. M.

During the past summer it was the writer's pleasure to have as her guest the granddaughter of Sanborn Worthen, who served as the business manager for a group of individuals which he called "the colony"; and who as their advance agent, in 1871, bought the Davidson Plantation on which the town of Old Fort is located; and divided it into lots which he sold to members of the colony and to others. That was the beginning of the town of Old Fort.

Upon having that information the publisher and editor of The Progress requested that the writer make this contribution, he believing that it would be of interest to many who either remember the early inhabitants of the town of Old Fort or who are interested in the history of the town as such.

The writer has before her photostat copies of letters which were written by Sanborn Worthen to relatives who were then living in Canada and the Northern States. They are not only of interest because they tell of the early days of the village, of the happenings of the times, and of the business transactions; but they contain much information that is otherwise interesting.

Now sixty years distant from those turbulent and bitter days, those of us who are one and two generations removed find that they engage our attention because of the insight they give into the mind of a "Yankee" whose family had suffered by reason of the loss of a son who had died in the Confederate prison at Andersonville, Ga.; and who had so soon after that loss — after the War Between the States—come to live among the "Rebels". It is with the permission of his granddaughter, Mrs. Wilber Blakeslee, of Baltimore, Md., who owns the original letters, that the writer has been permitted to use them.

From Old Fort and vicinity many gallant soldiers had gone to the war and had fought for the cause of the Confederacy. At least one, Capt. Thos. Y. Lytle, had enlisted with the Buncombe Riflemen, the first company to enter active service from Western North Carolina. That company participated in the first battle of the war, Bethel Church. Be it said of them all, that they served the cause faithfully! Many poured out the rich wine of life in full measure. Others returned, crippled in mind and body. At the close of the war Stoneman's raiders had passed through McDowell county and had left ruin and destruction in their wake. Some of the homes to which they paid unwelcome but memorable visits were those of Col. Logan Carson's near Marion, Thos. J. Greenlee's at Greenlee, and Thomas Hemphill's near Old Fort, which is now the Thomas Porter place.

Consequently in the vicinity of Old Fort in the early eighteen seventies there were few sympathizers with the Union and as few, we imagine, who bade the Yankee colony an agreeable welcome.

"This is certainly the prettiest country so far that I have seen," Mr. Worthen wrote. In one letter he drew a diagrammatic picture of the village and environs, "at the foot of the Blue Ridge mountains with bottom lands in front and mountains at the north."

Those who remember him say that he was calm, serene of soul, kind, affable, gifted with the ability to get along with folks, and so made many binding and lasting friendships. Though he remained in Old Fort only a few years he made North Carolina his permanent home, going from Old Fort to Shelby where he was engaged for a number of years in the manufacture of the "Carolina" sewing machine. In February, 1905, at the age of 80 years, he died at the home of a son, Dr. B. S. Worthen, at Spencer, N. C.

Mr. Worthen, who was originally from Canada, along with others from the North, went first to Warm Springs (Hot Springs), N. C., where they expected to purchase land and settle. For some reason they were not satisfied there and so sent him out to find a more desirable location. The following is from a letter written from Old Fort, N. C., under date of July 31, 1871:

"I believe I was keeping the hotel temporarily (Warm Springs) for them when I wrote before. . . I got through two weeks ago and I have been traveling for the colony since, looking at some farms, and getting prices and particulars to settle another colony on. I have just made a bargain for this plantation (Davidson's) of 2200 acres, 700 of which is in corn, about 50 in oats, 100 in wheat and rye, and the rest in timber, for which I pay 30 thousand dollars. I suppose you will draw a low whistle and say how did

you get your money. Well I had to put my hands in other people's pocket for it, of course. I am to pay six thousand tomorrow in check on New York and cash.

"The cars have just run into this place for the first time and I suppose this will be the end of the road for some time although they are tunneling through the Blue Ridge. They have got in about one mile. The road runs through Swannanoa Gap into Catawba Valley from Asheville to Salisbury. My heart is sad when I think of Salisbury. Many a poor soldier lies there in his last sleep.

"This plantation was worked by about 60 slaves before the war. Some of them still remain and are going to work for the colony. One is running the mill. Others are cultivating some lands. Some gone and their kind master Mr. Davidson had to sell the plantation to pay Confederate debts. Desolation seems to have overtaken the people. This plantation would have brought 50 thousand before the war. This plantation is the gate that leads into the upper gap of the mountains. Stoneman went through this section destroying everything before him during the war and the people hate the Yankees secretly."

"Everyone uses tobacco. . . All the boys will walk up to you and ask for a chew tobacco (that is the poor white trash)." So soon the newcomer, we see, had adopted the term of class distinction used by the Southerners!

Vision this scene. "I am now boarding with a rebel soldier and five or six are sitting out on the fence, about as many more are lying around the store door while 6 or 8 negroes are lying under the apple tree playing cards. Lots of negro children are lying around loose and ragged but fat."

"There is a black walnut tree on this place that measures 18 feet around, and chestnut nearly as large also large oaks, hickory, rosewood, and all other kinds you can think of. I think a man could pick two bushels of blackberries a day two weeks ago when I came. We will soon have chestnuts in abundance."

"It is beautiful neath cool nights and lots of people are up from the flats from 1 to 500 miles from here. Come here among the mountains in hot weather.

"One of the men I do business with is Col. Tait." (Col. Samuel McDowell Tait it was.) "He is president of the Western N. C. R. R. which stops here. . . He received seven wounds from the Yankees during the war. We talk some nights until late.

"We are living comfortably here but there are some of the disagreeables here, for instance if you go to smell a flower you will have a sore nose; if you pick your teeth with some of the wood you will have a sore mouth for a week. If you sit down on a rotten log the chiggers will get on you. . . And then comes the pilot, copper head, rattle snake and Ku Klux Klan!"

(To be continued)

PRUNE PEACH TREE FOR OPEN CENTER

The open center or vase shaped tree is the desirable form for shaping the peach tree under North Carolina conditions and this shape should be given to the tree as early as possible after transplanting the young trees in the orchard.

In giving the desirable form for the peach tree, E. B. Morrow, extension horticulturist at State College, says the pruning at transplanting time should consist of heading back the tree to a height of 24 to 30 inches and cutting back all side branches to one bud each. This will cause the young tree to put forth some vigorous shoots during the first season's growth and will permit a selection of branches for building the framework of the tree.

The main branches of the young tree may be selected by pinching the young shoots as they start, or, the framework may be decided upon at the regular time for winter pruning. At any rate, select three of four shoots from six to eight inches apart arranged around the main trunk in such a way that a well balanced tree is secured.

After the second season's growth, Mr. Morrow advises selecting 2 or 3 strong lateral branches on each of the main branches to continue developing the framework of the tree. Pruning after the third season of growth will be to continue the building of the framework of the tree by selecting two or three side branches on each of the secondary branches left the year before. Thin out the remaining limbs and head back those that are left to outward growing branches. Peaches should be pruned moderately until the trees come into full bearing, Morrow advises.

Frantic Mother (at the beach): That's not our baby. You've taken the wrong perambulator.

Father: Hush! It's a much better one than ours.

WEEKLY MEDITATION

By Rev. Paul A. Boriack, B. D., Pastor St. Mathew's Lutheran Church, Marion, N. C.

When the blessed Virgin Mary six weeks after the birth of the Christ-child together with the foster-father of Jesus presented her Child to the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem, Simeon a pious and devout man who had long been waiting for the consolation of Israel took the Child Jesus into his arms and said: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." At this Mary is filled with wonder and amazement, but, lo, now she hears a direful prediction: Yea, a sword shall pass through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Luke 2:35. A sword shall pass through her soul. She would suffer intense sorrow and agony. She would see that though some would rise through this Jesus from their sins and be saved, many others would stumble at Him and fall. They would speak against Him, cause Him suffering, pain and death. By their stand over against Jesus, it would clearly be revealed whether they are the children of God and heirs of heaven, or the children of Satan and heirs of hell.

During the past week we also have heard wonderful tidings. We were told: "Fear not, for unto you is born in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Our spirits dejected by the thoughts of our shortcomings and sins were revived and refreshed. We rejoice in Him, who is our light and our glory. All the world ought to rejoice with us in our Savior and Redeemer. But, behold only a few cling to Him in true faith. The great masses of mankind reject

and despise Him and His Word. That saddens our hearts. What can a man do to open the eyes of these spiritually blind? But let us not be offended because of the indifference and coldness of the world. By the grace of God their foolishness should drive us to cling closer and closer to Him, who is our Jesus, our light, our glory, our salvation.

STUDY OF ILLITERACY COMES TO COMPLETION

Washington, Dec. 30.—In its valedictory report, the national advisory committee on illiteracy today estimated the number of persons in the United States who can neither read nor write at 4,283,753.

The committee, appointed by President Hoover three years ago with Secretary Wilbur as chairman, will go out of existence at the end of this year. Exhaustion of funds was given as the reason.

Pointing to the 1930 census, the report said it showed 648,152 reduction in the number of illiterates for the previous ten years while there was a 17,044,426 increase in population. This was said to be a one-third drop in illiteracy during the decade.

A second crop of peaches has been harvested this summer by a farmer of Kinston, N. C.

Side Quit Hurting, Got Stronger, Well; CARDUI Helped Her

Mrs. R. L. West, of Huntsville, Ala., writes: "I was weak and run-down. I had a pain in my side, and I kept losing weight. I grew nervous over my condition—this was unusual for me, for I am very cheerful when I am well and don't easily get nervous. I knew I ought to take something. My aunt told me I ought to try Cardui, which I did. I began to feel better. I kept it up until I had taken three or four bottles. My side quit hurting and I was soon feeling strong and well." Cardui is sold at drug stores here.

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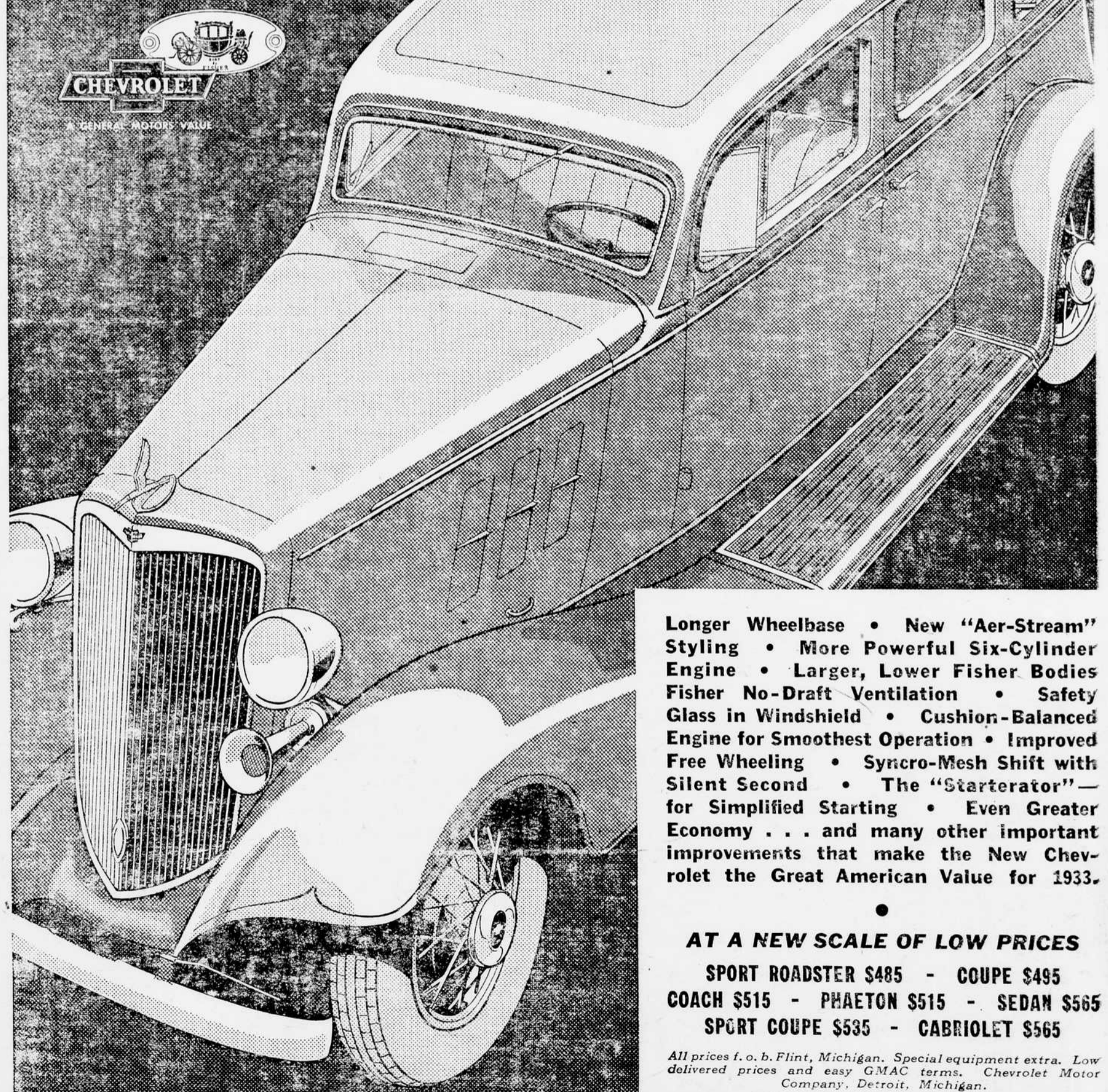
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