

**Site Study of Granby Plantation,
Lexington County, South Carolina, 1730-1990**

Granby Plantation, long the possession of the Taylor family, is situated on the west side of the Congaree River at the confluence of Six Mile Creek and Congaree Creek. It has a long and varied history. Before it became the plantation of the Taylor family, it was intended for other uses. The plantation occupied a large part of the land set aside in 1730 for the colonial township of Saxe Gotha. It also encompassed the site of the first fort at the Congarees, which was built by 1715. The site of Granby Plantation was significant in our colonial history not only as the site of the township and the old Congaree fort, but also as a major trading point for the Indians and colonists. This site study will not only explain the sequence of the tract's land owners, but also changes in land use over time.

The Township Era

The tangible history of the land belonging to the Granby Plantation really began in 1729, when Governor Robert Johnson, under the direction of the King, formulated his "Township scheme." Under this plan, eleven townships would be laid out across the backcountry of the colony at strategic places on the rivers. This string of townships was designed to populate the backcountry and act as a buffer between the Indian country and Charleston. They were planned to attract poor Protestant immigrants from war and disease torn European countries,

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By: KATHERINE HURT RICHARDSON
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primarily Germany and Switzerland. The settlers were given fifty acres of land per head in the family and supplies for one year. They were not required to pay taxes on the land for ten years.¹

The township at the Congarees, called Saxe Gotha, lay at the hub of transportation routes to the backcountry. [See Figure 1] The Indian path to the mountains, known as the Cherokee Path, and later the old state road passed directly through the land occupied by the township and later by Granby Plantation. Roads to Orangeburg and Augusta branched off of the state road at Saxe Gotha as well. River traffic could go no further up the river than Saxe Gotha due to the rocks in the river, making the township an inland port. These transportation routes made the plantation a central place for communication, transportation, and trade.²

Another important function of this site was defense. The first Congaree fort was built after the 1715 Indian war and was garrisoned by British troops. It stood on the bluffs of Congaree Creek just below the present day sewage treatment plant. [See Figure 2] Above the fort, the town lots were laid off along the Congaree River and a Common was reserved to the west and north of the lots. Each township settler was to receive a town lot on the river and his allotted acreage further away in the surrounding

¹Katherine H. Richardson, "As easy to build towns as draw schemes . . .," Colonial South Carolina Settlement Patterns: Towns on the Frontier, Masters Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1988, pp. 39-40.

²Ibid, p. 131.

20,000 acres reserved for the township lands. The town and fort were to be a place of refuge in the instance of Indian hostilities, as well as a place of commerce.³

Saxe Gotha developed along the state road, called Russell Street in the town, which ran parallel to the river. This "single street" plan was one which they would have been familiar with in Europe. By 1746, the town was a reality, however small. In the Journals of the Commons House of Assembly it was recorded of Saxe Gotha, " ... their Houses, being in a Row along the River Side, might be easily surrounded and they singly destroyed by any small Party [of Indians] without their being able to give notice to the Neighbors."⁴

In 1809, it was estimated that about ninety lots in the town of Saxe Gotha were granted, though probably not all were built upon. Many of the Swiss and German settlers preferred to live upon their plantations; yet, there were those who built houses and shops in the old town. Using the records left behind in the papers of the Secretary of State, the owners of lots in the town can be determined. See Appendix A for the extant names of those receiving lots in Saxe Gotha. All of the town lots of Saxe Gotha were on the site of the Granby Plantation. As well, much of the common lands were located within the 1873 borders of Granby

³Ibid., pp. 131-2.

⁴Ibid, p. 132.

Plantation.⁵

The land upon which Granby Plantation is located has a rich history. We are able to "see and hear" what it was like during the township days through the letter of Jacob Gallman, who came to Saxe Gotha 1735.

"From Karolina God's Protection and Mercy ... we are still hale and hearty ... it is now one and a half years ago that I have written to you and received no answer, therefore I will report again on how we fared on the journey ... we arrived at Carlistath [Charles Town] the seventh day of February, the 1735th year ... After three weeks we were taken to Ganganlist [Congaree] 50 hours to the north from Carlistath. There they gave each person axes and hoes, in the town of Farzigaten [SaxeGotha], one half acre of land for to have a house and garden in town; after that 30 acres land for each person, men and women, and that for ten years free. Provisions they give enough for one year. By that time you can grow your own, so you do not suffer want at any time ... We were given an exceedingly beautiful place only half an hour from the town. The whole farm is garden-like ground. It is a good four-and-a-half hundred acres in one piece, all black-brown earth, nary a rock, all even land, wheels need no brakes ... My children are all married, all except Hanss, he still serves and gets L91 a month, he tans deerskins. Heiri lives with me and has a wife from the Rhienthal and a little son. Heinni has Heiri's wifes' sister, he lives on his farm and is doing well. He has 5 cows, milk and butter he has enough. I and Heiri have 14 cattle, cows, and others more, 3 horses, more than 20 pigs, bread and milk and butter we have enough. We can slaughter two

⁵Robert L. Meriwether, The Expansion of South Carolina, 1729-1765, (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), p. 52; South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Comindex; 1873 Plat of Granby Plantation; "Survey Made in 1789, Original in the Possession of John Taylor, Roughly Traced June 5, 1905 by B. F. Taylor," South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, S. C.

fat oxen [when] we want to, 6 pigs besides, so in winter we have enough meat for every day, and in summer we have some too. Elssbeth is married to Master Jacob Schall [Spuhel] from Thurgau and lives in Town [Saxe Gotha Town]. He has his farmland near the town and lives well, has 4 cows, is able to have more if he wants to. He had a little daughter that died. Annabeli has already another husband, from the first she has a little son, he was an Irishman. This time she has a husband named Euchiner, she comes dressed like our pastor's daughters. She has 20 head of cattle and many horses, also many pigs. She has 3 niggers, those are black people or Moors that one buys. They bring whole shiploads from Affrica [sic], and one of them costs 100 to 200 pounds [depending on] how they are, this year there are a great many. And indeed we are doing well, ideed very well, and we owe nobody anything ... I wish ... that you would be so good and report to my son how things are with us. If he does not wish to be a soldier all his life, that it would be my wish for him to come here.

Carolina lies under the sun which makes it very warm ... the land is real good and fertile with all kinds of grain. You fell the trees, then you begin to till and sow corn. The first year you get plenty and good, after that there is wheat, too, then corn again ... round this corn you plant peas and beans, melons, watermelons, a great number of all sorts of plants. If the land is good you begin planting all sorts of grain, barley which turns out well here, rice is planted here aplenty, and there is a very large trade with rice to Carlistadt [Charles Town] and other places.

They do not have fences here, only where things are planted, everything is left to itself. Cattle, horses and pigs are left to roam together, no fodder is made, no cattle is herded, not even pigs, no horse is shod, and everyone can have as much livestock as he wishes or can handle. There are such that have as much as up to 100 or 200 cows, and if there were ten times as many, they would have enough to feed on. There are very many rabbits in hollow trees, turkeys, chickens, ducks, wild geese, in winter also wild pigeons, turtledoves, bees can also be

found in hollow trees. There is water near our place, it runs down to Carlistadt [Charles Town], a water full of ships and has much good fish. One does not have to work half as much here as in Switzerland. When the heat is the greatest one goes in to the shade under the roof and lies down to sleep. One also doesn't walk as much but goes on horseback to see one another. It is also very good here for tobacco smokers, each grows it himself.

This country is not at the end of the world, it borders on several other countries such as Virgieln [Virginia] and [West] India. That is where wild people live; much trading is being done with them. These savages live mostly in part on shooting game, there is much deer here and there, for which reason many traders ride there with 20 or 30 horses right through my pastures with brandy, also with shot guns, muskets, lead, bullets, belt straps, pouches, and deer skins. Many savages come here too, and shoot game. We don't do anything to them, so neither they to us. When we give them something they give meat in return ... And so it is that Carlina [sic] is good and large. From here one can also ... get to Pensillfanen [Pennsylvania]

We lived in our town Sageigten [SaxeGotha] and built huts. My daughter - husband Heirich Buchman from Trachsler [Dachleson] had his own little house, worked hard, liked it here, but both died, one after the other in two days, he and his wife, and had been sick no more than five days ... Cousin Heirich Walder ... did not go with us to our beautiful splendid town ... but to Buris burg [Purrysburg] ...

Flax is doing very well here ... there is also very fine cotton ... So one can see that I did well by my children in having left my fatherland and being here ... we live under a good, mild government ... there are all sorts of nations and people here ... the 15th of Autumn Month, the 1738th year. Jacob Gallman."⁶

⁶ Gallman Manuscript, pp. 1-4, The South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division.

Later in the eighteenth century the history of the land comes alive through the 1770 writings of the Rev. Alexander Hewatt, a Scots Presbyterian minister from Charleston.

... the Congarees often presented scenes more boisterous and busy than many commercial towns of the present, with far more pretention in situation and trade. On [the] outskirts are encamped numerous caravans of pack trains, with their roisterous drivers, who are mostly mischevious boys. The smoke from a hundred camp-fires curls above the thick tops of the trees, and the woods resound with the neighing of horses, and the barking and howling of hungry Indian dogs. A large supply of goods has arrived from Charleston and every pack-saddle came down from the [Indian] Nation loaded with skins and furs, and these being displayed to the best advantage, the work of barter begins.

In the open air and in the trading houses are congregated a motely assembly of pack-horsemen, traders, hunters, squaws, children, soldiers, and stately Indian warriors - some silent and grave, seemingly uninterested in the scene; but the greater number loudly huxtering, and obstinately contending over their respective commodities in trade, in many barbarous tongues ... The clamor begins, however, presently to subside, and at length the last bargain has been struck, and the goods and peltries have alike changed hands. The packs are once more made up: the goods for Indian towns and the skins for the market on the seaboard, and everything is again ready for the trail ... the trains enter the narrow paths, and are soon far on their way, leaving the garrisons and the agents of the posts to the dull monotony of the wilderness until their next visit.⁷

This all took place on the land which eventually became a part of Granby Plantation.

⁷Ibid., pp. 133-4.

The location of the present Granby Plantation was also the site of a ferry over the Congaree River. Though there is no written account of the ferry at Granby Plantation, the one slightly to the north of the plantation was described by Martin Fridig. The ferry established by Martin Fridig in before 1749 to the north of the town lots of Saxe Gotha was a bustling crossroad. Fridig petitioned the General Assembly for the right to establish this ferry and described the scene at his abode,

... the petitioner [lives] on the Road by Fall Creek [the falls of the Broad River] in the township of Saxe Gotha, which is the Common Passage for all Travellers from the North, is the High Road to the church, to the Fort, to the Corn Mill, and to Savanna Town and where the petitioner hath had great Trouble, not only in transporting People over, but also hath been at great Charge in supplying those Travellers with Food, and which Place is most convenient for a Ferry
...⁸

The Town of Granby

It seems that the establishment of Fridig's Ferry and the construction of a new fort to the north of the Saxe Gotha town lots in 1750 pulled the center of population northward. Slowly the old town of Saxe Gotha shifted north and became the town of Granby. The name of Saxe Gotha eventually faded from use. Granby was located on higher land. It too developed into a single street town along the state road with a wide place in the main street which was used as the market. [See Figure 3]⁹

⁸Ibid., p. 134.

⁹Ibid., p. 135.

The old town lots of Saxe Gotha were slowly abandoned by their owners. By 1805 the lots were grown up in trees and some were cultivated. The newer town of Granby to its north was established as the county seat in 1785 and the court house erected there. It was a bustling place before the establishment of Columbia across the river. It had a municipal government, thus meeting one important function of a town - it was a legal and political center. Granby also served other functions of a town. It was a place of commerce; at Granby was located the tobacco inspection station and warehouse for the region. The town had eight stores, two blacksmith shops, a tavern, a grist mill, and the public market. As well, when the legislature voted to move the seat of state government across the river from Granby, the town offered accommodations for the first people who ventured to the new town of Columbia. In 1789, the Governor's report on the area around the new state capitol stated, "accommodation will be ready for ... one hundred and nine persons and seventy two Horses in Granby." Granby probably served as a religious center, for one eighteenth century map shows a church located there. Alexander R. Taylor later bought the tract of land upon which Granby was located, known as the Hane tract, though it apparently was not considered a part of Granby Plantation.¹⁰

Though it was at the height of its day in the first half of the 1780's, Granby began to decline after the establishment of

¹⁰Ibid., p. 137-8.

Columbia in 1786 and the removal of the Lexington District courthouse to the new town of Lexington in the early nineteenth century. Granby became a ghost town. Robert Mills described Granby in 1825,

Granby ... was once a flourishing town, where much business was done previous to the establishment of Columbia; since which it has declined, and is now nearly deserted ... Granby was one of the first settlements in this section of the country. It was laid out under the prospect of its becoming a place of commercial importance, being at the head of navigation of the Congaree River. A township was originally attached to it, seven square miles, and named after the parish, Saxegotha. It was defended on each side, by two forts, and constituted an important station during the revolutionary war.¹¹

Once the old town was deserted and Alexander R. Taylor had acquired the property, James G. Gibbes, manager of the Saluda Factory, purchased all of the old buildings at Granby with the exception of the Cayce House for three hundred dollars and disassembled them to be moved to the factory. There he hoped to use them as houses for factory workers. His profits were not realized, however, for the old hammered nails split the boards so that many had to be discarded. Thus many of Lexington County's significant late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century buildings met their demise.¹²

¹¹Robert Mills, Statistics of South Carolina, (Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1972), p. 614.

¹²Edwin J. Scott, Random Recollections of a Long Life, 1806 to 1876, (Columbia: Charles A. Calvo, Jr., 1884), p. 114.

The fort at Granby was British and once the Revolutionary War began, it was Col. Thomas Taylor's regiment of patriots which "harrassed" the British at Granby in efforts to drive them out of this strategic position. Robert Mills wrote, "The fall of this place [Granby] was owing principally to the activity and perserverance of Col. Taylor ...". The Taylor's influence upon this land preceeded the family's ownership of the property.¹³

The Plantations Surrounding Saxe Gotha and Granby

The towns of Saxe Gotha and Granby were not the only tracts abandoned in the vicinity. Apparently, many of the surrounding plantations were also abandoned by their original grantees and were escheated by the colonial government. By the 1760's, after the French and Indian War, many such parcels were re-granted, likely as bounty lands for those who had fought in the conflict. In this manner Edward Southwell received a plantation in 1762 which encompassed a portion of the old Common of Saxe Gotha and the southern portion of Granby Plantation as it appears on the 1873 plat. This tract was on Six Mile and Congaree Creeks. [See Figure 4]¹⁴

To illustrate the deserted nature of the old Saxe Gotha town by 1770, one Job St. Julian Marion received seven hundred and sixty-four acres directly on the Congaree River where the old town had been surveyed and more land to the north of it. [See

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Colonial Plats, vol. 7, p. 281.

Figure 5] A large portion of Job Marion's grant was the eastern portion of Granby Plantation on the river. By 1770, William Nichols appears to have owned the tract to the northwest of the old township lands. [See Figure 5] No plat or grant has appeared for him, though he is listed as a neighbor on various plats pertaining to Granby Plantation. The land directly below the town lots and common of Saxe Gotha were granted to John Hubert and Jacob Spear in 1736, and these were a part of Granby Plantation in 1829. [See Figure 6 and 8] The plantation below Hubert and Spear was laid out for John Wildrick Miller in 1735 and appears to have become a part of the 1829 Granby Plantation as well. [See Figure 9]¹⁵

Knowing these early landowners helps designate sections of the 1873 Granby Plantation which will be named after eighteenth century owners. The Southwell tract was in the southern portion of Granby Plantation. The Marion tract was a portion of Job St. Julian Marion's grant on the Congaree River. The Nichols tract was northwest of the township lands. The Spear/Hubert/Miller tract was the extreme southern parcel of Granby Plantation as it appears on an 1829 plat. Thereafter, this tract below Congaree Creek does not appear to be part of the plantation, usually being identified as "Arthur's" land, having been sold to him by the Taylors.[See Figure 10]

¹⁵Secretary of State, Loose Plats, Job Marion, Feb. 15, 1770; Royal Grants, Vol. 19, p. 242; Colonial Plats, Vol. 18, p. 415; Colonial Plats, Vol. 17, p. 122; Plat of 394 acres Sold to Ainsley Hall by Wade Hampton, Jr., June 3, 1814, Collection of the South Carolina Historical Society (32-50-1).

The Marion Tract: How The Township Lands Became the Taylor's

A tract of land on the Congaree River, directly above the 1873 plat of Granby Plantation, was sold by Job St. Julian Marion to Wade Hampton I in 1785. It was upon this land, where Fridig's Ferry had been, that Hampton planned the terminus of his bridge spanning the Congaree River, the first of which was built in 1791. [See Figure 11] In 1785, when Hampton purchased the land, there was some doubt in his mind that Job Marion held clear title to it, for it was known to be township lands at that time. He inserted some cautious phrases in the deed, such as,

But I do agree that notwithstanding that in case the aforesaid Job St. Julian sh[ould] not have a legal Title to the aforesaid Land ... I am not to come upon the said Job St. Julian Marion for damages ...¹⁶

These lands bought from Marion by Hampton had been the grants of David Fridig, Jacob Speal, and Benjamin Farrar [also seen as "Farrow"]. The fort constructed in 1750 was located upon this tract above the present Granby Plantation.¹⁷

Job St. Julian Marion's grant also had an impact on John Taylor's Granby Plantation, for Taylor would acquire a large part of Marion's land in 1815. The controversy involving Marion's grant began sometime after 1785. At that time, an undated petition to the General Assembly (which has to have been written post-1785 for it mentions "Lexington District"), elaborated on

¹⁶Hampton Family Papers, 2 ADsS, 1785, 1791, Deed, Job St. Julian Marion to Wade Hampton I, June 3, 1785; Ibid., Petition to the General Assembly, February 1, 1791.

¹⁷Ibid.

the situation of the township lands by that time. It appears that those those petitioners were unaware of Job St. Julian's Royal Grant for the property. They petitioned,

...About ninety of the said Lotts have been granted and not More, many of which have been abandoned by the Grantees, or have otherwise escheated [to the state], - and that your petitioners are the Proprietors of the greater part of the residue of the said granted lotts. - that your Petitioners Humbly conceive that the residue of the ungranted lotts still remain subject to be granted and disposed of according to the intention of the original appropriations - but as the propriety of such a Policy at this day might be doubled, your Petitioners are impressed with a full conviction that the Legislature may controul the said appropriation and apply the said Town or so much thereof as hath escheated and so much thereof as remains yet to be granted with Proportionable part of the Streets, Glebe and common to whatever use or purpose they might judge to be Necessary ... the land in the said town is worth about fifteen thousand dollars, but as many persons are working the same and are dayly cutting down and destroying the Timber, the value will be much lessened ... the lotts in the said Town under present circumstances are of no profit to the proprietors whatever except to those few only who are already in Possession of the said Town and who from their conduct ... exclude all others, disregarding the right of the State ...¹⁸

By ca. 1785, John Taylor, was already an "Individual of the same community" as the petitioners, for Taylor, Tim Rives, and Wade Hampton, among others, signed a statement supporting the petition of their neighbors, though at the time they did not own

¹⁸Petitions to the General Assembly, n.d., No. 148, Inhabitants of Lexington.

any of the township lands in question.¹⁹

This petition stirred up a controversy regarding the old township lands. It appears that by 1789, the state legislature ordered the land in the old township laid out into "Convenient fields from No. 1 to No. 14 and advertise the same for Rent," apparently unaware of the claims laid to the land by Job St. Julian Marion. The Commissioners appointed by the legislature to accomplish this task were met with a dilemma. They wrote, "...to their great astonishment and Surprise they were forwarned from Renting any part of the aforesaid Town by Robert Stark, Esqr., Alexander Bell, Esqr., and Tuner Correll except No. 1, 9 and 10 which Rented for \$25.52 which Being much out of order for Cultivation ..."²⁰

A plat made in 1789, which ended up in the possession of John Taylor, shows fourteen tracts of land at and below where the old town was once laid out; these apparently correspond to the above-mentioned division of the land. [See Figure 6] By 1805, the matter had been presented before the Grand Jury of Orangeburg District. The jury found the following,

We the Grand Jury for the Body of Orangeburg District, do present as a great grievance that a certain Tract or parcel of Land lying near Granby in said District called Saxegotha is and has been suffered to remain unappropriated agreeably to the Act of the General Assembly passed in 1798, and that the same thereby becomes liable to be cultivated

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Miscellaneous Communication, n.d., no. 16, Saxe Gotha.

by any person or persons who take possession of the same; We therefore recommend that the Legislature at their next Session would take this grievance into consideration and provide for the same ...²¹

The Legislature determined that the state had a clear title to the land in the old town of Saxe Gotha and in 1807, they directed the commission appointed for the town of Saxe Gotha to lay out the old lots, streets, and a common. The state would buy the lots from the owners for \$20. Those lots never granted were to be laid off into "convenient fields" which would be rented. By 1808, the state was suing Robert Stark, Alexander Bell, and Tunis Currell for trespass on the old town property.²²

The State focused its first suit on Robert Stark. The suit against him states that he claimed 1,809 acres which were bounded as follows: on the south side of the Congaree River, extending back from the said river across Congaree Creek, bounded on the southwest by land claimed by the heirs of Barbara Sheden and John Taylor, Esqr., and on the west by land of John Taylor, Esqr., on the north by the village of Granby and on the east by the Congaree River. Robert Stark claimed that he was not guilty of the charges, for he had title to the land. The case of the State Vs. Stark was tried in 1807 in district court. Judge Bay found

²¹General Assembly Presentment to Grand Jury, 1805, no. 8, Orangeburg District.

²²David J. McCord, Statutes of South Carolina, vol. 5, p. 541; Miscellaneous Communications, n.d., no. 17; General Assembly Reports, n.d., no. 92, Commissioners of Saxe Gotha.

Stark's title faulty and a verdict was found for the state.²³

The case was appealed and brought before the Lexington District Court in 1809. By that time the land in contest had been resurveyed; old Saxe Gotha was found to contain 919 acres, 787 of which were claimed by Robert Stark, and 130 of which were claimed by John Taylor - this was the Southwell tract. Stark traced his claim to the land to Job Marion and John Taylor to Edward Southwell. For reasons unknown, the Southwell tract belonging to Taylor was not disputed in this case.

The Southwell tract had apparently been abandoned, for Taylor received a State Grant for it and additional land around it in 1829. There are no deeds or plats for the transactions between Marion and Stark which have been found to date, so it is not known when that land exchanged hands. This is because Sherman burned the Lexington County Courthouse in 1865, resulting in the loss of the deeds and plats for land sales between individuals for the years from 1800 to about 1839. Some people came back to the court house and re-registered their land after the fire, resulting in what is known as the Memorialized Deeds of Lexington County. Not all of the destroyed deeds were memorialized, thus the list is sketchy.

The State Grants which were registered in Columbia survived the Civil War and through those some of the Lexington County land can be traced. John Taylor did begin acquiring land on Congaree Creek by 1806, when he received a state grant of five hundred and

²³Miscellaneous Communications, 1813, no. 3.

forty-six acres on Wolf Branch of Congaree Creek. [See Figure 12] Since Wolf Branch does not appear on any maps of the creek, it is unclear exactly where this tract was located.²⁴

Stark apparently had personal deeds and plats proving his title to the land. He appealed the decision regarding his Saxe Gotha land and this case was presented before the Constitutional Court of Appeals in 1812, where it was declared non-suited. Stark held his title to the land. [See Appendix B for a copy of this court case]²⁵

Three years later, on October 13, 1815, Robert Stark deeded 853 acres on the Congaree River to John Taylor. Taylor paid Stark \$15,000 for the property. This record exists only in the memorialized deeds of Lexington County; there is no plat or verbal description accompanying this transaction. Yet, this must be the old Saxe Gotha tract, for the next time the Granby Plantation appears in the plats, in 1829, John Taylor already owned Job Marion's old tract of land on the Congaree River.²⁶

²⁴State of South Carolina vs. Robert Stark, 1809; Loose State Plats, Jonathan Taylor, January 27, 1806; State Grants, Vol. 79, p. 506.

²⁵Miscellaneous Communications, 1810, no. 4, Saxe Gotha; Joseph Brevard, Reports of Judicial Decisions in the State of South Carolina From 1793 to 1816, vol. 3, (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1921), pp. 102-12.

²⁶State Plats, vol. 49, p. 384; Brent Holcomb, ed. Lexington District Memorialized Records, 1814-1825, pp. 38-9.

Gov. John Taylor Assembles Granby Plantation

John Taylor was born May 4, 1770 to Col. Thomas Taylor and Ann Taylor. He was educated at Sion Institute in Winnsboro and graduated from Princeton in 1790. Admitted to the bar in 1793, Taylor went on to become a member of Congress, a United States Senator, and Governor of South Carolina. He also served as a state Senator and Legislature, trustee of the South Carolina College, a director of the Columbia Theological Seminary, and the first intendant, or mayor, of Columbia. John Taylor had a handsome house which stood on Arsenal Hill. From there he could look across the Congaree River and see his Granby Plantation land spread before him.²⁷

The 1829 plat of Granby Plantation is the earliest plat illustrating the plantation under John Taylor's ownership. It was produced when John Taylor received a State Grant for the one thousand acre tract in that year. The plat basically outlines the Southwell tract and indicates Taylor's ownership of the Marion tract. As well, it indicates John Taylor's ownership of the Spear/Hubert/Miller tract south of Congaree Creek.²⁸

Another tract of land was added to the plantation in 1822 which is indicated above the 1829 plat. This was Elisha Daniels' land. Daniels owned the Columbia Ferry and employed Isom Clark

²⁷B. F. Taylor, "John Taylor and His Taylor Descendants," in South Carolina Historical Magazine, vol. , pp. 98-9; Edwin J. Scott, Random Recollections of a Long Life, (Columbia: Charles A. Calvo, Jr., 1884), p. 60.

²⁸State Plats, Vol. 49, p. 384.

to operate it; Clark lived on land abutting the Taylor property on the 1829 plat. It appears that he began acquiring land there in 1813, when he was granted 232 acres in Lexington District "on Five Mile Spring, Branch of Six Mile Creek" which was bounded on the northwest and northeast by Gabriel Friday. In 1816, Daniels received a state grant for an additional 241 acres "near the head of Fridays Mill Creek, otherwise known as "Mill Creek." These grants were a portion of what would become a 1,081 acre tract owned by Elisha Daniels. [See Figures 8 and 9]²⁹

In November of 1818, Daniels deeded 1,081 acres "in several pieces and places" to John Patton. Patton, in turn, sold the 1,081 acres called "Granby" to John Taylor in 1822, for the sum of \$1,000. It appears that this 1,081 acres lay to the northwest of Taylor's land on the Congaree, extending nearly to the site of the old Saluda Factory. This is the first documented use of "Granby" as a name for the plantation.³⁰

Evidently, there was yet more land owned by the Taylors north of the old township lands outside the bounds of the 1873 plat. Much of this had been granted to Benjamin Farrar prior to the Taylor ownership. This land was a Royal Grant of six hundred and forty acres which Farrar received in 1771. It lay below the road from Columbia to Augusta, above the land

²⁹State Plats, Vol. 58, p. 161; State Grants, Vol. 60, p. 355; Edwin J. Scott, Random Recollections of a Long Life. Columbia: Charles A. Calvo, Jr., 1884.

³⁰Memorialized Deeds of Lexington County, pp. 128-9, 141-5; State Plats II, Vol. 44, p. 169.

represented on the 1873 plat of Granby Plantation. Unfortunately, no records can be located regarding the transaction from Farrar to John Taylor due to the courthouse fire.³¹

The Land Passes to Sarah Cantey Chesnut Taylor

John Taylor died in 1832 and his property passed to his wife, Sarah Cantey Chesnut Taylor. Sarah C. Taylor began selling parcels of the vast plantation after John's death. In 1844, Sarah sold ninety-one acres to James S. Guignard; again in 1847, she sold him forty-eight acres. Both tracts were near the head of Mill Creek where Guignard eventually amassed much property formerly owned by the Hamptons, among others. [See Figure 16]³²

The largest number of acres associated with the plantation was 5,160 in 1847, when the land was platted by Deputy Surveyor John N. Barrilon. It is known that this plat existed because it is referred to in a later deed. Unfortunately, this plat has not been located in the records. If it can be found it would illustrate the plantation including the lands to the north and west of the 1873 plat. This plat and the deeds which accompanied it would help determine the other parcels of land which became a part of Granby Plantation; likely they met their fate in the

³¹Guignard Family Papers, Plat of Still Hopes Plantation, ca. 1847.

³²Guignard Family Papers, Plat of Still Hopes PLantation; Plat of James S. Guignard, 1839, 731 acres; Deed, James S. Guignard, Dec. 23, 1844, 153 acres; Deed, James S. Guignard, "Horse Pond Tract," 1854, 640 acres.

courthouse fire, for they do not appear in the county records.³³

By 1850, some of the land had been sold, for in that year Granby Plantation consisted of 4,600 acres. Six hundred acres were "improved," in other words they were cleared and being worked. The remaining 4,000 acres were not worked. When the agricultural census was taken in that year, the plantation was worth \$48,500 and had \$600 worth of farm implements. At her death, Sarah C. Taylor owned one hundred and fourteen slaves; it is supposed that most resided on Granby Plantation. On the plantation she had five horses, twenty-five mules, twenty milk cows, eighty head of cattle, one hundred sheep, and one hundred pigs. The land was productive. In that year alone she raised 5,000 bushels of Indian corn, six hundred bushels of oats, one hundred and fifty bales of ginned cotton, one hundred and fifty bushels of peas and beans, four hundred pounds of sweet potatoes, four tons of hay, and ten pounds of Irish potatoes. In addition the place produced three hundred pounds of butter. \$500 worth of animals were slaughtered for meat in 1850.³⁴

John and Sarah C. Taylor's son, Alexander R. Taylor (1812-1865), managed Sarah's "property and affairs" during her widowhood. After her death in 1851 or 1852, he became executor of her estate and took over the trusteeship of Granby Plantation.

³³Lexington County Deeds, Book T, pp. 16-8.

³⁴United States Census Bureau, South Carolina, Lexington County, Agricultural Census, 1850, pp. 145-6; Richland County Wills, Box 59, Package 1474.

Alexander Ross Taylor, Trustee of Granby Plantation

It has been written that Alexander Ross Taylor was a very successful manager of the plantation, working his mother's estate out of a debt of \$100,000. He was a member of the state Legislature and served as an alderman of Columbia. During the Seminole War he served as a private; by 1860, he rose to the rank of captain of the Congaree Mounted Riflemen. By the end of the war he served as captain of the Congaree Cavaliers and was eventually made colonel of the militia. Alexander R. Taylor was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1865. Though he studied medicine, he was unable to complete his courses due to his father's death in 1832. He married Sarah Martha Hayne in 1837. His heritage as a planter's son provided a sound background for him. ³⁵

Alexander continued his mother's practice of selling parcels of the large plantation. In 1852, 1,000 acres of the plantation was sold to William A. Hook. [See Figures 17 and 10] This land lay to the west of the northwestern portion on the 1873 plat on a branch of Six Mile Creek. Again, in 1855, Hook bought 1,000 more acres from the Taylor plantation. Alexander R. Taylor also bought land adjacent to Granby Plantation. In 1856 he bought the "Hane tract" which lay to the north of the plantation on the Congaree River. This tract, roughly 430 acres, was bought of D. J. Hane and had been part of the Nicholas Hane estate in 1829. Nicholas Hane apparently acquired part of it

³⁵Benjamin F. Taylor, p. 107.

from Thomas Hampton in 1819 for \$12,000. John Friday also deeded twelve acres to Hane on the Congaree River in 1818 for \$700. Though the Hane tract abutted Granby Plantation, it apparently was not considered a part of it.³⁶

Another Taylor family plantation which Alexander bought also was not considered a part of the Granby place, though it abutted its southwestern line. In 1857, Alexander R. Taylor bought the plantation which had belonged to his brother, Dr. James Hunt Taylor, who moved to Alabama much earlier. This land appears under James' name on the 1829 plat of Granby Plantation. This tract, totalling 1,700, passed from James H. Taylor to Dr. Samuel Percival, then to Alexander R. Taylor. Taylor sold it to Robert Joyner, bought it back, and in 1858 sold it to Salomi Kinsler.³⁷

There is some confusion as to the death date of Alexander R. Taylor. Benjamin F. Taylor wrote in his genealogy of the family that he died in 1888. Yet in 1869, Alexander R. Taylor was already deceased and his estate was indebted for \$38,165. It is unclear exactly what this indebtedness resulted from, for the papers from the court case are missing from the state archives files. It appears that Sarah H. Taylor sued her husband over a trust estate which was to have been hers for life, and thereafter for her children. She won the suit and their house and real

³⁶Will of Sarah Taylor, Richland County Wills, Vol. 3, pp. 220-31; Lexington County Conveyances, Bk. R, pp. 284-6; Lexington County Conveyances, Bk. T, pp. 16-8; Lexington County Deeds, Book T, pp. 136-7; Memorialized Deeds of Lexington County, pp. 104-5, 48-50.

³⁷Lexington County Deeds, Book T, pp. 477-8, 636-6.

estate were to be sold in order to meet the obligation.³⁸

As a result of this court action, Sheriff S. M. Roof put Granby Plantation up for public sale in 1869. The 4,300 acre plantation, described as belonging to "the estate of Alexander R. Taylor," was sold to John Taylor (b. 1842), the son of Alexander Ross and Sarah H. Taylor, for \$5,000 and was put in trust for his mother, who died on June 18, 1870. At her death the only two surviving children of Alexander R. Taylor and Sarah H. Taylor were John Taylor (b. 1842) and Albert Rhett Taylor (b. 1860). John sued his brother for partition of the estate in August of 1873.³⁹

The Plantation Divided: Albert Ross Taylor and John Taylor, 1873

In 1873, as a result of this suit, Granby Plantation was divided between the brothers. The northern half went to Albert R. Taylor. The southern half became the property of John Taylor. The 1873 plat of the plantation resulted from this court action. [See Figure 10 and 18]⁴⁰

John Taylor's plantation journal gives a glimpse of how the plantation operated after the Civil War. Like other Southerners, Taylor resorted to the tenant farming/share cropping system to

³⁸Richland County Court of Common Pleas, John Taylor Vs. Albert R. Taylor, August 1, 1873.

³⁹Court of Common Pleas, John Taylor Vs. Albert R. Taylor, a Minor Defendant, 1873, Roll 1400; Lexington County Conveyances, Bk. W, pp. 396-8.

⁴⁰Court of Common Pleas, John Taylor Vs. Albert R. Taylor, 1873.

cultivate his land. In 1874, he had hired "hands" to help him bring in his crops and maintain the upkeep of the plantation. They worked for him for four or five days a week and he provided them with land, a house, and a mule and plow. Food was provided for some; others were responsible for feeding themselves. By 1876, John Taylor began charging rent for the acreage used by each "tenant" at the rate of \$3.00 per acre. John had fifteen tenant farmers on his half of Granby Plantation that year; Albert had eleven. Some paid their rent in cotton; five hundred pounds was the charge for one year's rent. Others paid cash for their use of the land.⁴¹

The journal lists the widely varied crops raised by John Taylor in 1876: corn, cotton, potatoes and slips, oats, wheat, hay, sorghum, artichokes, millet, melons, turnips, grasses, strawberries, clover, rye, carrots, lucerne (alfalfa), rice, tobacco, "vines," figs, and fruits. He also had a kitchen garden.⁴²

Alexander Ross Taylor and George Coffin Taylor

In his will, written in 1910, John Taylor left his residence in Columbia, at 1410 Washington Street, to his wife Eliza Coffin Taylor. After his death in 1912, his Granby Plantation went to his wife during her lifetime, and after her death to his two

⁴¹John Taylor, Plantation Journal, 1971-9, Manuscript Division, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.

⁴²Ibid.

sons, Alexander Ross Taylor and George Coffin Taylor, to "share and share alike." He described the plantation as being bounded "on the north by lands of my brother, Albert Rhett Taylor, on the south by Six Mile Creek, on the west by the Seaboard Airline Railroad, by Congaree Creek on the end of the Seaboard Airline Railroad, and ... lands of Mrs. Susan C. Griffith formerly Kinsler (bought of Arthur) - on the east by Congaree River and by lands of my brother Albert Rhett Taylor, the "big ditch" canal being the line between us here and on the west by lands of my brother ... to the north of the Six Mile Creek, and on the South of the Six Mile Creek by the center of the right of way granted by me to the South Bound Railroad Company, now the Seaboard Airline Railroad, extending from Six Mile Creek to Congaree Creek - containing about one thousand acres, more or less." He also gave his wife and sons the "Soldiers Fork" portion of Granby Plantation, which was bounded "on the west by the road leading from the Ford of Six Mile Creek to Harts Bridge over Congaree Creek, also about forty acres more or less of land lying on the south side of Congaree Creek reserved ... in the sale of [James H. Taylor's] lands to Mrs. Salomi Kinsler."⁴³

To Albert Ross Taylor, his brother, he left a tract of land "lying between Congaree Creek and Six Mile Creek on the west side of the road leading from the Ford of Six Mile Creek to Harts Bridge and bounded on the west by lands of Mrs. Susan C. Griffith

⁴³Will of John Taylor, Richland County Wills, Vol. P, pp. 352-5.

... said to contain one hundred and fifty acres.⁴⁴

The "Deer Branch tract," left to his wife and sons, appears to have been part of Granby Plantation when it was at its largest. It contained three hundred and fifty to four hundred acres. Thus, by 1912, this southern portion of Granby Plantation contained over 1,440 acres.⁴⁵

The Present Generation

Eliza Coffin Taylor died in 1919; in her will, dated 1912, she left her real estate to her two sons, Alexander Ross Taylor and George Coffin Taylor. The brothers shared a half-interest in the land throughout their lifetimes. Alexander Ross Taylor died in 1950, leaving the real estate which he owned outright to his wife, Glenn H. Taylor, and also the land in which he owned a half-interest. After her death the half-interest was to go to his children, one of whom was not named. The other was his son, John Taylor.⁴⁶

George Coffin Taylor died March 22, 1961. During his lifetime, much of the vast acreage was sold. In his will he bequeathed his half-interest in the remaining Granby Plantation land to his family. His wife was to receive half and his children the other half. George Coffin Taylor described the land

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Richland County Wills, Box 242, Package 8500; Richland County Wills, Book A-H, pp. 506-9.

as Tract 1, "100 acres bound on the north and east by lands now or formerly of Mrs. Glenn H. Taylor and others, south by Congaree Creek, west by Charleston Highway 21." Tract 2, also 100 acres, was bound "on the north by Six Mile Creek, east by lands now or formerly of Seaboard Airline Railroad, south and west by lands now or formerly of Mrs. Glenn H. Taylor." His children are Mrs. Eliza Taylor Shockley, Mrs. Mariana Taylor Manning, and Dr. Edmund Rhett Taylor.⁴⁷

Summary

Thus, the remaining land of Granby Plantation passed to the present generations of the Taylor family. The plantation known as such began before 1809, when their great-great-grandfather, Governor John Taylor acquired his first tract of Granby Plantation land from Edward Southwell. Governor Taylor added the township site in 1815, when he acquired Robert Stark's acreage on the river. He greatly increased his holdings when he bought John Patton's 1,081 acres called "Granby." The plantation at its largest totalled over 5,000 acres. Over the years since then, tracts have been sold to satisfy the family's situation and needs through time. Presently, it contains several hundred acres.

The remaining acreage symbolizes almost two hundred years of the Taylor family's history. Granby Plantation was this line of the family's principal plantation. It is a legacy which was carefully passed down through the generations. The family was

⁴⁷Richland County Wills, Book A-X, pp. 280-5.

able to keep control of this land through the Civil War and Reconstruction when untold numbers of South Carolina families lost their land entirely.

The history of Granby Plantation clarifies just how the colonial township of Saxe Gotha was transformed from public use to private ownership one century after the town was founded. It ran the gamut from being wilderness to a town and trading center; from a small eighteenth century plantation to a large antebellum plantation. This land has been occupied by Indians, colonists, British troops, traders, Revolutionary troops, slaves, planters, and statesmen. It has produced such varied crops as artichokes, rice, and cotton. It has been extremely important in the history of Lexington County, the colony, and the state as the site of early trade with the Indians at the "Congarees," the site of the colonial town of Saxe Gotha, the site of one of the most vital pre-Revolutionary forts in the backcountry, the site of Revolutionary War action, and finally as the seat of one of the most distinguished families in the history of both Lexington and Richland Counties and the state of South Carolina.

Katherine Hurt Richardson

Heritage Preservation Associates

August 30, 1990

Appendix A: Lots Granted in the Town of Saxe Gotha

[See Figure 19]

Lot Number	Date	Grantee
2		John Huckabee
8	1740	John Theiler
9	1739	Henry Webber; later Henry Boume
10	1741	Hans Buss
11	1736	Martin Friday
12	1736	Roodie Cooplet
13	1736	Jacob Rodney
15	1739	Jacob H. Stainer; later to John Sondricker
16	1735	Harmon C. Berdrink; later to Henry Lochly
20	1742	Samuel and James Chubb
21		John W. Miller; later to Casper Faux (Faust)
23	1735	John Matthews
24	1736	Jacob Coleman; later to Henry Gallman
26	1738	Henry Coleman; later to Henry Gallman
27	1740	Jacob Theiler; later to Barbara Appeal
28	1747	Magdala Appeal
29	1747	Jacob Burkhard
33	1736	Thomas Berry
34	1735	John Gibson
43	1736	Hans Spearly
51	1737	John Struck
52	1737	Hanna Maria Stolea
54	1737	John Gallaser
61	1737	Hans Jacob Geiger
62	1737	Herman Geiger
63	1737	Abraham Geiger
64	1737	John Shillig
71	1738	William Baker
72	1737	John Liver
73	1737	Julius Credy
74	1737	Jacob Reminsperger
81	1737	John U. Shillig
82	1737	Gaspar Fry
83	1737	Charles Hanslear
84	1737	Gaspar Hanslear
91	1737	Richard Myrick
92	1737	Robert Lang
98	1764	John Granget

99	1742	Frederick Arnold
100	1747	Anthony Ernest
304	1764	David Webb
305		David Webb ⁴⁸

⁴⁸Colonial Plats Index, South Carolina Dept. of Archives and History; Comindex, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.