

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER
FROM LELAND W. REDD
TO HIS SON, L. WAYNE REDD

(LELAND IS A SON OF WAYNE H. A HALF BROTHER TO WM. A. REDD)

Your mother and I have just returned from a very pleasant one month's visit in the southern states. The highlight of our trip was a two day visit at Snead's Ferry, Stump Sound, Onslow Co., North Carolina. It is claimed that this is where the ancestors of the Redd's lived in the early colonial times. We inquired of the post mistress of Snead's Ferry if there were any Redds living in the area. She referred us to Joe Frank Redd. As we were eating lunch in a restaurant Joe Frank came in and we introduced ourselves to each other. He was a very pleasant young man about thirty five years of age, and told me that I was the first man bearing the name of Redd whom he had ever seen in his life, except his brother, his father, James C. Redd having passed away when he was one and one half years of age. Joe Frank's wife's name was Fern, and he had two daughters, Necia and Judy, and an infant son, Joe Frank Jr. He told us of the old Redd plantation house that was situated on the farm now owned by Robert Hampton Bethea, age 77 years, and commonly referred to as the old Redd plantation. This plantation was about 10 miles southeast of Snead's Ferry near the Bender Co. line. The last Redd who owned it was Sigle Redd who died June 11 1867. Sigle Redd was the great grandfather of Joe Frank and was a full cousin of John Hardison Redd, my great grandfather. This would make Joe Frank Redd and myself about fourth or fifth cousins. While the women visited, Joe Frank and I went about ten miles in the car to the old Redd home and met Mr. Bethea, who is quite feeble. The following is his story:

His father purchased this farm and it consisted at that time of 685 acres, from Sigle Redd's heirs, in 1878. Sigle Redd died about a year after the civil war closed and his farm was sold by his heirs to Mr. Bethea's father. Mr. Bethea was born in this house and it was generally understood in that area that the house was in the neighbourhood of two hundred years old, and several generations of the Redd family had been born in that home previous to the sale. He said that it was further understood that at one time the Redds and the Sidburys owned all the land from Turkey Creek in Onslow Co., to Batmill Creek in Pender Co., and from the bay up to what is now the highway. Roughly, this area, as we measured it in the car is three miles or four wide and four to five miles long. Most of this area is now grown up to underbrush and slash pine trees. From the front porch of the plantation you can look down about one half mile on Morris landing on what is known today as Redd's bay. He told us that in the early days this is where the cotton, tobacco and other products were loaded on the barges to transport them to Wilmington and other ports where they were sold. The old gentleman told us that as a boy he remembered where the old Redd cemetery was on this plantation. We prevailed upon him to go with us to see if we could find the

remains of the old cemetery. He took us north of the house about a half a mile on an old side road that is used occasionally. We stopped the car and went nearly another half mile into the jungle of forest which had grown up with underbrush and pine trees. We worked our way through the brush along what had once been a country road. Mr. Bethea said that about twenty steps south of this road should be the graveyard. We explored in this area for about an hour trying to find evidence of the graveyard. Sometimes we were on our hands and knees in the underbrush. Finally we discovered the graveyard. There were about ten or twelve marble headstones still standing. Apparently the graveyard had been abandoned for many, many years. There was one stone "Basil Redd, died October 3 1848, aged 22 years." One stone was marked "Henrietta Bishop, born 1815." She was the daughter of Sigle Redd. There were several names of Bishop there. Mr. Bethea told us that Henrietta Redd, daughter of Sigle Redd had married one of the Bishops. She and her husband and several children were buried there. There were also some Hendersons there whom the old man thought were descendants of the Redds.

Mr. Bethea referred us to another real old house that had been all gone except the foundation and chimney many years before he was born. This was on the land originally owned by the Redds. He said that to the best of his knowledge there were at least from fifty to sixty people buried in that graveyard and it was known as the old Redd Graveyard. However as I said, we found about ten or twelve headstones. The old wooden markers have long since gone back into the earth. It would be very interesting to know who else is buried there. We went to see if we could find the remains of the other old house which it rumored preceded the plantation house. We were successful in locating it. The chimney had been built out of oyster shells mixed with clay. This and small bits of rock in the foundation were all that was left. It is stated that oyster shells in the very early days were used with clay in making the fireplaces. We brought back some of the oyster shells taken from the old chimney.

Mr. Bethea told us that on several occasions Mormon missionaries had stayed with him overnight.

Later we met Mr. Harmon Hardison, whose post office address is Holly Ridge, North Carolina. Mr. Bethea was acquainted with many of the early day Redds in this area and spoke very highly of them. According to the information in the possession of Joe Frank, the old Sigle Redd was a son of William Redd, who was a brother of Whitaker Redd Jr., who is our progenitor. Joe Frank was a great grandson of Sigle Redd.

We had a very pleasant visit with several Hardison families whose old homestead adjoins that of the Redds in Onslow County. We talked to Mr. Jesse Hardison who is a retired blacksmith. We visited the old home where he was born adjacent to which is an old Hardison cemetery, a small plot, well kept. In this is a

marble stone over his grandfather's grave. His grandfather was born in 1828 and died in 1881. There is one grave here older than that but he didn't know whose it was. It is a sort of a tomb affair that is built of brick and this particular grave is in bad state of repair. I asked whose grave it was and he answered by saying that it was some of the Hardisons "that goes way back yonder."

I believe that our family chart shows that our great great grandfather, Whitaker Redd Jr. married one of the Hardisons. Mr. Jesse Hardison has a brother, a very elderly man who, at the time of our visit, was in the hospital at Wilmington, N.C. The Harmon Hardison who I referred to above is a son of the old gentleman who is in the hospital at Wilmington. It is interesting to note that the Hardisons have lived on this place at least four generations that they know of, and it is a farm that was part of the old Redd holdings between Turkey Creek and Batmill Creek, and adjoins the ranch that Mr. Bethea owns, which was the old Sigle Redd home. The Hardisons are very honest, hard-working people who are well respected in this area. Several miles distant from the present Hardison holding is a place referred to as the old Hardison Mansion place. This has long since fallen into decay and we were unable to reach it by auto. The Hardison man, Jesse, told us a very interesting story about a lawsuit that he had with one of his neighbors over two acres of land. It appears that many years ago the man who owned what is now his neighbors land sold two acres of it. This two acre piece of land was sold and resold many times and finally came into the possession of Jesse Hardison. The man who later came into possession of the neighbor's farm claimed the particular two acres of land. During the lawsuit it was brought out that in 1735 both tracts of land were filed on one day apart and notice of the filing had to be sent to England where the king would issue the deeds to the land. Jesse told us that he won the case and that the new case is used as a precedent in that area for establishing deeds to land that go back to the time when the land applications had to be submitted to England for approval.

Mr. Hardison told us of the destruction of the old county courthouse that stood across the bay from Snead's Ferry on what is now Courthouse Bay. We saw the place, and I think that if you will recall from the Redd history the tales of the courthouse being destroyed at that time. It was very interesting to visit this site. Very likely if this courthouse had not been destroyed it would have been easier to get some of our genealogy. After this tidal wave the courthouse was moved several times and finally came to rest in Jacksonville, Onslow Co., some fifteen or twenty miles away.

There is now a good steel bridge over the New River at Snead's Ferry. It was recently built and replaces the first wooden bridge across this ferry which was built in 1938. The New River is actually an arm of the ocean that extends seven miles below Snead's Ferry to about fifteen miles above all the way to Jacksonville.

Quite a few of the old families now living at Snead's Ferry are descendants of some of the daughters and grand daughters of Sigle Redd. I was glad to learn what the

Stump Sound was. Apparently the counties in the south are sort of divided up and Stump Sound is about one fifth the area of Onslow County.

Joe Frank Redd makes his living by fishing. He has a boat called the "Echo" in which he does some commercial fishing, but the main source of his income is hiring himself and boat out to fishermen who come from all parts of the United States to go channel and deep sea fishing. He tells an interesting story that happened when his last baby was born. He had a group out on the boat and on this boat he can send and receive messages, by radio from other boats. They radioed a message to him from home that his wife had a baby boy. Several other boats out fishing also picked up the message and the balance of the day he didn't catch many fish as he was busy answering calls of congratulations from other boats. When Jesse Hardison was asked what nationality he was he said the Hardisons were of the belief that they were of English and French descent.

Joe Frank's brother Sigle has never married. He is now in a state hospital in N.C. and has hope of being out soon. He is a veteran of World War II and lives with Joe Frank when he is not out working. He operates a boat for other individuals.

For several centuries there has been considerable fishing in the vicinity of Snead's Ferry and today there is a lot of fishing there, especially commercial fishing. It appears that the fish from the ocean come in great schools and Joe Frank told me that on some days when the schools come in, many of their large boats were literally filled with different kinds of fish.

The postmistress at Snead's Ferry told me that about 1000 people, living within a radius of about four miles, get their mail at this office. The residents living in the area of the old Redd farms in Onslow County get their mail at Holly Ridge, Onslow County, North Carolina, about six miles distant. Holly Ridge is on U.S. Highway 17 that comes from Norfolk, Va. and north to Savannah, Georgia, and south. This highway is an important link between north and south. It is referred to as the Atlantic Coast Highway.