

VALLEY VIEW

Valley View was built by James Caldwell Sproull, a planter from Abbeville District, South Carolina, in the 1840's. He was my Great Grandfather.

The land was acquired from his brother-in-law, Wade Cothran, who was an early settler in Rome, interested in real estate. The plantation extended over Sproull Mountain into the Mission Road Valley.

The house was built with slave labor supervised by two master builders. The brick was made of native clay baked in kilns in the great pasture near the river. native limestone was burned for the mortar. The timber of heart pine was cut as the farm land was cleared.

The boxwood maze was planted with plants brought from the home place of James Sproull's wife in South Carolina - as was the Carolina Cherry hedge on the front walk. The herringbone front walk was typical of the time and fingerprints of the slaves can easily be seen in some of the bricks.

When he came to Valley View, James Sproull brought with him, in addition to the slaves, a German cabinet maker - Mr. Vitinger, called by the family, Mr. Witey. He made furniture of the plentiful walnut on the place - sturdy and simple in design. Twenty one pieces of this furniture remains in the house - the larger pieces, two four-poster beds in the upstairs bedrooms, china cabinet in the dining room and the book case in the parlor.

Through his German citizenship, Mr. Witey was able to save the household things during the occupation of Valley View by the Yankee soldiers in 1864, while the family had refuged to South Alabama. James Sproull later lost everything in Alabama to raiding parties of Yankees supporting Sherman's "March to the sea".

In September of 1864 after the burning of Atlanta, Sherman withdrew his forces to Kingston to regroup and re-supply. It was at this time that General John Schofield was headquartered at Valley View for three months. It was then that horses were stabled in the parlor - to protect them from Confederate skirmishing - and the soldiers removed the key board from Grandma's sewing piano and used it for a trough. The family later converted it to a desk and it remains in the parlor. In the North Upstairs bedroom some of the Yankee soldiers wrote on the wall in the onset, the inscription reads.

Newton Westfall
4th Indiana Cavalry
Sept. 7th '64
Michael Mc Nertry

We were fortunate enough to obtain a copy of a roster of the company from the Archives in Indiana. Both of these men survived the war and were mustered out in 1865. There is a bullet hole in one of the Columns on the back porch. The family lore is that at this spot a Confederate soldier rode his horse up to the well and shot a Yankee who was on the porch, leaning against this column, reading. There are minnie ball scars on the wall of the old kitchen building.

Helen and I inherited Valley View in 1962 from the widow of my Uncle Sproull Fouchi, who was my Mother's only brother. He and his wife had been in Rumania for about ten years during the reign of Queen Marie. Many interesting things in the house were acquired by them during their travels. The chandelier in the dining room was a gift to them from the summer Palace of Queen Marie. We have tried to return the house to it's early charm as a plantation home. Many things, such as the paint on the interior woodwork, are in their original condition while many other things have had to be redone - a new roof, new bannisters on the balcony, etc. With a house this old, here are always more jobs to do - it keeps us interested and active.

Robert Fouchi Norton