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Journal of General Peter Horry

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JOURNAL OF GENERAL PETER HORRY

Edited by A. S. SALLEY

Peter Horry, who played a conspicuous part in the history of South Carolina during the Revolution and for over thirty years subsequent thereto, was born in South Carolina about 1747. After the death of his father, John Horry, which occurred April 10, 1770,<sup>1</sup> he became possessed of a plantation near Winyah Bay in Prince George's Parish, Winyah; probably a tract of 475 acres which had been granted to his father in 1762 and which adjoined a plantation composed of two tracts which his uncle, Elias Horry, had bought from Henry and Benjamin Smith by deeds dated March 25, 1756, and March 2, 1757, respectively, and amounting together to  $1779\frac{3}{4}$  acres. These lands were originally a part of Winyah Barony, which had been granted to Landgrave Robert Daniell by the Lords Proprietors June 18, 1711, and by him conveyed to Landgrave Thomas Smith the next day, June 19, 1711. By his will Landgrave Smith, who died May 9, 1738, parcelled out the barony of 12,000 acres, "more or less", to his children. Henry and Benjamin were two of these children.<sup>2</sup> At the time of Peter Horry's death in 1815 he owned three plantations on Winyah Bay embracing the whole or the greater part of these lands which his uncle Elias had purchased from Henry and Benjamin Smith.<sup>3</sup> These were named by him in his will as Belle Isle,

<sup>1</sup> This *Magazine*, Vol. XVI, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> This *Magazine*, Vol. XIII, pp. 3-12.

<sup>3</sup> The records of Georgetown District (1769-1868) having been destroyed in Cheraw by Sherman's troops in 1865 makes it impossible to determine accurately how and when Peter Horry acquired these lands from his uncle. (This *Magazine*, Vol. XIII, p. 179.)

Prospect Hill and Dover.<sup>4</sup> On June 12, 1775, the Provincial Congress of South Carolina elected twenty captains to serve in the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiments, which on September 16, 1776, were taken on the Continental Establishment as the 1st and 2nd Regiments, South Carolina Line. Peter Horry was elected one of those captains and, receiving the fifth highest vote, was ranked fifth of the twenty and assigned to the 2nd Regiment.<sup>5</sup> On September 16, 1776, he was promoted to major of the 2nd Regiment, and in 1779 was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and assigned to the 5th Regiment. When the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th Regiments were consolidated, February 12, 1780, into three regiments he was placed upon the "supernumerary list" to await a vacancy in the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Continental Line of South Carolina.<sup>6</sup> In July, 1780, all officers and men of the South Carolina Line not in the hands of the enemy or on parole were directed to report to General Gates's headquarters at Hillsboro, N. C. In accordance therewith Horry reported to Gates, but, as he was without a command, Gates assigned him to duty with the militia of South Carolina. After the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Marion, another officer of the South Carolina Line without a command—his regiment having been captured at the fall of Charles Town while he was on furlough—to be brigadier general of the lower brigade of the militia of South Carolina by Governor Rutledge, Horry became colonel of one of the militia regiments under Marion. He subsequently organized a regiment of light dragoons for State service and so served until his regiment was consolidated with Maham's and placed upon the Continental Establishment near the end of the war. He kept an order book while so serving which has been printed in this *Magazine*.<sup>7</sup> He also wrote a history of Marion's brigade which he entrusted to Mason L. Weems to be improved in style—but not changed in sense—for publication. Weems changed most of the statements from truth to falsehoods, invented and inserted many things that had never happened and called it a *Life of Marion*. Very little of the actual career of Marion is recorded

<sup>4</sup> His will is on record in the office of Judge of Probate for Richland County.

<sup>5</sup> This *Magazine*, Vol. VIII, p. 190.

<sup>6</sup> This *Magazine*, Vol. III, pp. 178-179, Vol. V, 216-217.

<sup>7</sup> This *Magazine*, Vol. XXXV.

therein. Horry's annotated copy is extant and it shows many of Weems false statements, but not near all. To Horry Weems acknowledged that he had written a "military romance".

The title page of the first edition credits the alleged biography to Weems, but after Horry's death new editions falsely assign it to Weems and Horry, despite Horry's repeated repudiation of it during his lifetime. Soon after the Revolution Colonel Horry was made brigadier of the 6th Brigade of the militia of South Carolina and so served until 1806. In 1801 a part of Georgetown District was erected into a new district and named Horry District in honor of General Peter Horry whose brigade included the militia of the new district. Late in life (1812) General Horry began setting down daily occurrences in a fragmentary manner, calling each collection of fragments a "book". He had married, February 9, 1793, Margaret, or Magdalen, Guignard, a daughter of Gabriel Guignard, a French Protestant who had come to South Carolina about 1735, and had here married, November 10, 1746, Frances DeLiesseline, of another French Protestant family that had settled in South Carolina about the same time as Guignard. General Horry died in Columbia and was buried in Trinity (Episcopal) churchyard and the following record is given on the tombstone at his grave: Sacred / To the Memory of / General Peter Horry / who left this mortal life on the / 28<sup>th</sup>. day of February A.D. 1815 / aged about 68 years. / [Four lines of tribute.] When Mrs. Horry died this record passed to her Guignard relatives in whose hands it has been ever since. It was loaned for publication here by the family of the late John Gabriel Guignard (1832-1914) of Still Hopes, Lexington County.

#### First Book.

Page 2.) [Here the journalist started to give some family connections, but scratched it all out and started what is below. The first page is missing.]

My Grandfather Elias Horry fled from Paris on Account of the Persecution or Edict of Nantz, took Refuge & Settled at what was then Called French Santee in S<sup>o</sup> Carolina, See names of the French settlers there & Elsewhere as Related by Ramseys<sup>8</sup> History of S<sup>o</sup> Caroli<sup>a</sup> in Volume 1, Page 5—

<sup>8</sup> Ramsay's.

Page 3)

So my Grand Father Horry were with his Brothers refugees, he was a poor man & worked many days with a Negro man at the Whip saw, his Neighbours respected him as an Industrious, honest man he married a Miss Huger,<sup>9</sup> of french Descent, they had four Sons Viz<sup>t</sup>. Daniel, Elias, Peter, & John (who was my father) & two Daughters named Margaret & Magdeline, Their mother Tongue was French—My Grand Uncle Horry, when the Edict of Nantz was in full force, was with a Detachment of the french Army in flanders, but after when the Effects of the Persecution had Greatly abated, he returned to Paris, & married a Protestant Woman—they had 4 Sons; named Stephen, Rene, Hugh, & Peter; Rene, corresponded with my father, for a Long time after he Returned from Paris to So Carolina & when he was a young man & he wrote my Father the following Letter dated Paris Feb<sup>y</sup> 8. 1769. besides other Letters not now in Possession of the Historian—other Brothers as well besides Rene also wrote my Father their Letters also not in the Historians Possession

Rene Horry to John Horry (Translated thus) My Dear Cousin—It has Given pleasure to Gain Intelligence of you by Letter dated 8 May 1769, which we red in the month of Sept<sup>r</sup>. of that year—You speak to us of M<sup>r</sup>. Dan<sup>l</sup>. Huger, we have not the honour of knowing him, or His place of Residence—Viz<sup>t</sup>. whether tis at Paris, or in England, which Occasions our not being able to write to you more frequently & prevents our hearing often from you—That we received a Letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup>. 1765 from a Cousin Daniel Horry, who has done us the honour [Page 4] of writing to us, that he was married & that his Brother in Law would come to Paris—in the month of Novem<sup>r</sup>. or December of that year—We have Enquired for him at many places in Paris but without being able to find him—he might have Enquired for us at Paris having our Address as you have markt it on the Letter I will Inform you, that our father & Mother are Dead, & two of of our Brothers, The two Eldest & our Sister & Brother in Law Megion, & have not Left but one son, who is married & has 3 Chidr<sup>n</sup>—& there are only

<sup>9</sup> Elias Horry received his first warrant for land (150 acres) in South Carolina, January 5, 1696/7. He and Margaret, or Magdalen, Huger were married January 25, 1709/10. (*Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina*, No. 4, p. 17.)

3 Brothers of us remaining who are all Batch<sup>rs</sup> yet w<sup>c</sup>. are Hugh, & Stephen Horry, who are no longer in Business but Live on their property—I alone Still follow the Trade of a Sadler as an Employment—We all three Live together & Still in the Same Street Street of the Little Caroine, opposite the Street of the Bondumondie—I will Inform you that our Unkle M<sup>r</sup>. Gaslin & his wife are both Dead—There remains only his Son, who is married & have no Children, he Lives on his property—you have written to us that you have drank our health—We are much obliged to you for your attention, If you Intend coming to france Inform us of your Intention, that we may go to Meet you & when you do us the honour of writing to us, I beg of you to write in french, for it is with difficulty,<sup>10</sup> That we procure a Translation of English—And also Inform us to what Part of England we should Direct, That you may hear more frequently from us, My Brother & I & my Nephew Megion & his wife & M<sup>r</sup>. & M<sup>rs</sup>.—Gaslin Offer you their Compliments, & I who am Cousin Rene Horry—

Your Ob<sup>t</sup> humble Serv<sup>t</sup>. Cousin

R. Horry

Note) “My Father was in Bed, very Sick, in haste I delivered him the above Letter, Saying ’tis from France—he hastily received it, knew the writing on it, broke open the Seal & burst into Tears, & it was a Considerable time before he Could Read its Contents

*(To be continued)*

<sup>10</sup> The manuscript breaks off here, but the letter has been completed from a loose copy thereof found with the journal.