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HILTON HEAD SAND IN MY SHOES

By

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(28 Aug. 1896 — 29 Dec. 1976)

An Address

Delivered To

The Hilton Head Island Historical Society

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

2 March 1972

By W. S. Stoney, 1972

## HILTON HEAD SAND IN MY SHOES

### A MIDSUMMER DAY - 1860

Laughter sounded from the dock. Fifteen year old Jimmy of the merry disposition and his seventeen year old brother, Reed pulled the bateau up to safety. The tide would come in later in the evening. The two were chattering light heartedly of the events of the day. The heavy mid-summer heat bothered them not at all. The dock was only a short hundred yards in front of the old plantation house, said to have been built by an heir of the earl of Trimbleton. Plantation life, about the house and slave quarters, its doctor's office where their father treated his patients, mostly his slaves, was lulled almost to a standstill. Work was over. Men were leaving their field tasks and women their chores. Quiet contentment would surround the slave quarters. Life in the big house would continue into the evening. The plantation was called Trimblestone.

The boys had rowed over to Fairfield, one of the family homes on Hilton Head Island. Trimblestone was on the mainland. Skull Creek separated the two plantations. The waterways were as familiar to Reed and Jimmy as a highway.

Ned, George and Lewis, ages 13, ten and five, were playing with some black friends in the shade of the masonry lower story of the house. Mamie, now two years old, busied herself with the brand new baby, Nana.

Great Uncle Joe Jenkins Stoney was with Grandfather in the Medical office building over by the driveway, near the crepe myrtles. My great uncle Joe was born four years before my grandfather, Rev. Dr. James Stoney. He was at Trimblestone

often, helping with the widespread activities. Today they were working on the 1880 Census. Estimates of the value of land and the value of personal property, the ages of each slave and the names and ages of the owner's family had to be given. They estimated \$21,000.00 for lands and \$100,000.00 for personal property which included the slaves, as the record shows.

A Bible lay open on the office table. Random notes on the sheets of paper indicated that Grandfather had been working on Sunday's sermon. Church services were held in Bluffton, and Sunday School was held on the back steps and lawn at home.

My Aunt Addie Pope Stoney wrote me that she had a clear idea of what the house looked like. The 17 year old Reed who was down by the dock with Jimmy was later to be her husband. The marriage took place in 1871. Great Uncle Joe and Uncle Reed lived until the very end of the eighteen hundreds, as also Jimmy, my father, but Aunt Addie lived a quarter of a century longer. She was able to give me many word pictures of family life at Trimblestone.

The Census taker lingered for supper at the invitation of my Grandmother, who was formerly Mary Catherine Reed of Beaufort. Though she was only 33, her ninth child was there in the nursery. She had been not quite sixteen when she and Grandfather were married in 1841. She looked worn and tired. In less than two years she would be in her grave in Yorkville.

Both of my grandmothers told of the heavy burden of caring for the needs of the slaves, perhaps a late call in the night

to help with a sick child, perhaps a day spent cutting and sewing materials for clothing, always teaching, managing, and both of them burdened with their own children. Grandmother Shannon had 13 and Grandmother Stoney seven to reach maturity.

In spite of the busy times plantation life was a good life. One might wish that Harriet Beecher Stowe had spent a year or two on Hilton Head plantations before she wrote her book. She might not have been so bitterly accusing towards our ancestors.

The Census taker wrote down the facts, but in cold ink. He was more human at supper table that night. Talk of Secession had reached the newspapers. Slaves would be set free. Southern life was endangered.

Though they did not realize it that evening the era of the great plantation life, asknown to these South Carolinians, was ending. The eight score blacks at Trimblestone would be freed. The Freedman's Bureau would try to guide them. Turmoil and a sort of Dark Ages would settle on Hilton Head. For forty years there would be a sojourn in the wilderness.

It happened on a November afternoon in 1861 when two Drayton brothers, one in the U.S.Navy and one in the Confederate Army on the Island faced each other in the Battle of Port Royal. The Federal troops stormed ashore. The whites fled before them. Two years later the confiscated lands were offered for tax and penalty sales. 25 plantations were fofferred to the highest bidders, or at least the price of taxes and penalty unpaid. Blacks took over most of the Island. One estimate puts the number at

ten thousand freed slaves being supported by the Federal Government on Hilton Head Island at one period.

All of the property of my family was lost. Slaves, cotton, lands and houses went. There was no compensation in money offered. Fairfield, Possum Point, Ship Yard, Braddocks Point Honey Horn, and old Otter Hole which had been taken over by Stuarts were lost. Government lists give others we lost such as Gardner, as well as part ownership in some of the Baynard estates.

The icy hand of confiscation left my grandfather only his title to Trimblestone. Great Uncle Joe Stoney was to manage it as best he could in after years. Grandfather moved to York, taking his immediate family along, where he became rector of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd. His rectory was on the grounds of the present Home for Children. Grandfather volunteered as Chaplain, but was called home to his dying wife in 1862.

Uncle Reed, and Jimmy, my father, the merry hearted, enlisted. Reed became a Captain. Jimmy was a Corporal. It is my belief that in the Wars of our country I am the only Stoney who served as a private soldier.

Uncle Reed became a Civil Engineer. As I said above, he married Addie Pope, a relative, whose father we called Uncle or was it Cousin Joe Pope. His ancestors were Hilton Head people. Much of my information of Trimblestone came from Aunt Addie.

Jimmy, the merry hearted, went into the Ministry. I am his 13th child. Jim, my brother became Bsiop of New Mexico and served with distinction. Of his sons, one is in the Ministry, one is Major General in the Air Force in charge of Communications, and the third is professor of Music at Hampton, Virginia. From the day my Grandfather was ordained in April 1852 to the present we have been in the ministry 120 years. There are four generations in direct line, bearing the name Rev. James Mosse Stoney.

Uncle Ned, mentioned as the 13 year old boy at Trimblestone continued farming. His descendants all live in Estill. His son is a Baptist Minister.

Uncle George won an appointment to Annapolis. In his later career he did explorations in Alaska, along the Putnam river. The Government published his findings in book form. I have a copy.

Louis's name was spelled Lewis at the first. When he grew up he moved to Atlanta, where his descendants live now. He had two daughters. One of them married a Florida man.

Aunt Mamie, the two year old At Trimblestone, lived at several places with her step mother, and spent the latter part of her life in Charlotte, the wife of Dr. Robert Brevard.

Aunt Nana, the baby, later married Charlie Drake. Her son became president of the Drake Corporation of Atlanta and Norfolk.

My grandfather returned to Trimblestone in 1865, soon had to turn the plantation over to Great Uncle Joe Jenkins Stoney when he became full time rector of St. Stephens, Savannah.

## PART II

### HILTON HEAD SAND IN MY SHOES

#### THE ISLAND

In this part of my reminiscences and "geneological rabbits for chasing" as my inimitable cousin Sam Stoney wrote me in answer to some questions I asked him - I would like to tell how our ancestors came to find and be found on Hilton Head. It might help explain how others came.

Stand with me, as I did in 1931 where the Trimblestone house had been, and gaze out eastward to the low lying lands of Hilton Head. Look with nostalgic eyes, or look with the imagination. But look with interest at the people who made plantation life there, what they did, how they lived, and of much importance, where they came from.

Emerging from legend and tradition real people take shape. They move in and out of the picture. They raised indigo, sweet potatoes, corn, some rice where sea water could be held back with dykes and where a plentiful supply of fresh water became available, and long staple cotton after William Elliott developed the process of seed selection. They discovered the method of making rock like masonry by burning shells from the mounds and circles left by prehistoric Indians. The mixture included sand, gravel, shells and fresh water. It made masonry which endured the years. Many tabbies still remain, marking spots where houses stood. The Baynard house remains probably are the best known of them. They were skilfull at making bricks also.

When the British advanced from Savannah to Charleston in Revolutionary times, they scorched the land and destroyed the

Court House at Beaufort where our records were kept. Fortunately many records had been kept in Charleston. These help with the reconstruction of the history of Hilton Head. When the Federal army under march happy Gen. W. T. Sherman, the records of our forebears were again destroyed.

Among the records that remain a name emerges. This name is John Bayley of Ballinclough, Tipperary, Ireland. On August 16th, 1698 four Baronies in Carolina were granted this gentleman, and he was given the title Landgrave. His hundred pounds sterling which he paid made history, and dated the document. Mr. Bayley did not come to claim his lands. November 9th, 1722 an alert lawyer of Charleston received power of Attorney to dispose of the Hilton Head Barony. It was cut into lots for sale. Thus Mr. Trench's name comes into the documents.

By coincidence (or was it high destiny) in 1692 one John Stoney moved to Knockshegowna, Tipperary, Ireland. George Stoney and Mary Morehouse were Yorkshire people They had lived for a time in Rilston, so the Church register shows. Their marriage, and the record of Stoneys who remained in Rilston are on exhibit now. George was from Kettlewell in the Warfdale, West Riding, Yorkshire. Kettlewell church records are clear, back to 1691.

The Stoneys lived at Knockshegowna in Tipperary, the extreme northern part for a century. If you deplane at Shannon Air Port and take a rental automobile you can drive out to see Knockshegowna, and then go down to visit Ballinclough. Who knows but that the Stoneys heard of the pleasant garden of Eden in



the Carolinas? Could it be the call of Hilton Head?

In 1774 John Stoney, later affectionately known as Captain Jack, and his wife Elizabeth Caulfield of Knockshegowna, and their two year old son James, came ashore from the trans Atlantic sailing vessel which had brought them. They were soon to feel the sand of Hilton Head in their shoes. John's name appears first in the records of a Volunteer Company of Dragoons dated 28 October 1775. 56 men signed the paper that day. Captain Charles Brownes signed the endorsement of this action.

The next document of interest to us is a bill for John's services. It involved two years for whatever it might have been. 300 pounds English stirling for 1781 and 300 pounds Stirling for 1782. It was probated 20 Feby.1783.

The next year we find him on Hilton Head Island, at Otterburn, as he called it, having purchased lots 13 and 14 of the land surveyed by one Dr. George Mosse the year before. High destiny again or coincidence, no matter which, made both of these men, John Stoney and George Mosse my great great great grandfathers!

Add great great grandfather, Isaac Rippon Jenkins and great great grandmother, Hanna Scott to the list and you find that this paper could scarcely be called anything but "Hilton Head Sand in My Shoes".

One more record of Captain Jack's is to be brought into this story later. It is his name, along with Mr. Fripp's and others in building the Zion Chapel of Ease. More of this later.

That was 1788. His interest in a place of worship answers an article published in Witness Magazine, written by my brother Bishop James Mosse Stoney of New Mexico. The language is colorful, but the facts are imaginary. He tells of his ancestors Stoneys, Mosses, Jenkins and Scotts amid a flock of pirates enjoying the King's Pardon "who chose farming to hanging". Jim declared in a letter to me that he would rather be a good ancestor than to have one. Somehow I doubted that.

I will get back to ZION Chapel of Ease in a moment.

#### DR. GEORGE MOSSE STONEY

It might be fun to mark out, with the help of Dr. Peeples and Virginia Holmgreen the plantations on Hilton Head Island, with the names of the families who lived on them during the years between the Revolution and the Civil War.

Dr. Peeples does credit to great great great grandfather Dr. George Mosse. He should, because he is his great great great grandfather too. And it is a colorful story. It would be hard to find an adventure tale any better than the one which puts this man in the center of a drama. He is a doctor in the American army. He is captured by the British in the disastrous Battle of Camden. He marches with the prisoners to Charleston. He is put on a prison ship. When passing Hilton Head Island he flings himself into the Atlantic and swims ashore. He survives to practice medicine, survey Hilton Head Island, engage in a wide range of experiments with crops and agriculture, marry Dorothy Phoebe Norton who bore him seven daughters. One of the

daughters (Elizabeth) was to marry James Stoney, making her my great great grandmother. Another was to be Dr. Peeples' great great grandmother. It is all in Dr. Peeples' book. The Mosse family moved to Savannah about 1800. 1791. (R.E.H.P.)

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Turn back to Hilton Head Island plantation life. In preparation for this paper I gathered many pages of information about indigo, rice culture and long staple cotton. It is better to omit all that at this moment in order to take time for the people themselves on the plantations. Tales of Antebellum Families, Dr. Peeples' book, Josephine Pinckney's 1941 book, Hilton Head, Tales of Beaufort by Nell Graydon, Robert Garse's Department of the South, Hilton Head with maps and photographs are better than anything I can write. I liked Virginia Holmgren's Sea Island Chronicle. And there have been magazine articles about Indians who lived here.

Now turn back to an 1820 book by Dr. Dalcho on the Episcopal Church in South Carolina. A paragraph on page 396 will be used as evidence when time comes to erect a marker for Zion Chapel. Dalcho mentions that Captain Jack and Mr. Fripp were the leaders in building Zion.

Captain Jack Stoney died in 1821. His obituary did not mention the Chapel. Nor did it tell the intimate story of his life as great uncle Joseph Jenkins Stoney of Trimblestone tells it in 1887 in a letter to William E. Stoney. It is as follows:-  
(I have not cut out any of the interesting details in this copy)

W.E.Stoney  
Comptroller General  
Columbia, S.C.

Bluffton  
20 July 1887

Dear William

Old Jack Stoney, as he was called on Hilton Head Island, our G.G.Father. He was head of the Masonic Lodge and mentally the strongest mind on the Island, and St. Luke's Parish. He and his wife, our G.G.Mother, came to this country from Ireland; She was Miss Caulfield. I think your G.Father, John Stoney and my G.Father, James were born in this country.

During the Revolutionary War, John Stoney, the elder, had a vessel built by Hob Caw Billy Pritchard, at his ship-yard near Charleston. (Pritchard's daughter married FitzSimmons. She was the mother of the wife of Wade Hampton, the elder, and Grandmother of the present Mrs. Wade Hampton). The vessel was named "Saucy Jack". She ran as a Privateer, having obtained letters of Marque. Old Jack made plenty of money by her. He was very successful. Planted first indigo, and afterwards Sea Island cotton with new negroes purchased from Yankee vessels brought to his very door on Broad River, Port Royal Entrance. He accumulated wealth consisting principally of lands and negroes. He died quite an old man at Otter Hall, one of his plantations on Broad Creed, where the "Saucy Jack" delivered her prizes during the war.

Old Jack owned land on both sides of the river, was a great hunter, used to have his horses and dogs flatted across and hunt on the ridges. On his last hunt, met with an accident which

shortened his life. His gun slipped from a damp log and discharged a load of buckshot under his arm. He was buried at Fish Hall, Hilton Head Island, along side of Fort Walker, 1821.

During the battle between the Fleet and the Fort there was many a shell thrown across his grave. A solid shot from the Wash fell between the grave and myself, while sitting on my horse. It rolled upon the ground and was spent before it reached me. There is no tombstone over his grave. There is one over my G. Father, James Stoney buried alongside of him. Your Uncle John (Stafford Stoney) is also buried there. Our G.G.Mother lived the latter part of her life in Charleston, with her son John Stoney. Died in his home and was buried in St.Michael's Churchyard. Uncle Stoney, his wife and Christopher, and I suppose Edgar, were buried there.

There was a certain characteristic about all of the Stoneys I knew of old. Cared nothing for public honors or making themselves conspicuous in any way, retiring in their manners and pursuits, attaching no importance to those who prided themselves on Blue Blood, only valuing people for honest principles and strict integrity, consequently never heard my Father, G.Father, or uncle speak of their ancestors, or make any allusion to their Irish kin. Your name as Comptroller General of the State and my nephew George, as explorer of the Putnam River, has attracted the attention of our Irish kin. They seem to be proud to trace the name back to the same stock of John Stoney and Elizabeth Caulfield. I suppose you have seen the flattering letter George re-

received from a Col. Stoney of Ireland. George's head has not been turned from seeking glory by marrying the daughter of a millionaire.

(A few lines of personal matter follow, which I omit here)  
Agnes joins in love to you and yours.

J.J.Stoney

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A letter from my late cousin Sam Stoney, March 29th, 1962 includes a paragraph on the subject of the ship mentioned above: "I am inclosing a typescript of a letter that might interest you. Incidentally, I found in a book on Confederate naval performances a list of ships built about the War of 1812. It includes the privateer Governor Middleton, built by Pritchard for John Stoney."

The two letters agree about the Pritchard Shipbuilders, but the name puzzles me. As Captain Jack, James and John were all living during the War of 1812, we have an open question as to whether there was one privateersman, or two.

May I tell a legend from the Rocks plantation life?

Captain Jack's second son John Married Elizabeth Gaillard daughter of Peter Gaillard of The Rocks at Eutawville. It is a lake bottom now, the waters of Lake Marion having covered it. The house was moved to high ground and is in good condition now.

Peter Gaillard was no less colorful a man than Stoneys and Morsses and Scotts and Jenkins. He fell on hard lines. He made and lost money on lands, crops and slaves, and also in another way occasionally. In New Orleans a legalized lottery offered

at a price, and my ancestor's uncle Peter bought one or more. He laid it aside and forgot it. But, as a shooting star, it blazed into vision, as told by cousin Sam Stoney, who was great great grandson of Peter.

To meet the indebtedness Peter had to sell some of his slaves. It was almost as bad as selling members of his family. He loved all of them. Down the highway that leads from Eutawville to Charleston went the sad little band. Suddenly one of them caught sight of a cloud of dust behind them. They stopped. Towards them on a galloping horse came a trusted black, waving his hat in the air, and shouting, "Masser, Masser, Stop. You won the lottery. Some say that the woods nearby still faintly echo the shouts of joy and laughter. They returned home. That night nobody on the plantation got so much as a wink of sleep.

## HILTON HEAD SAND IN MY SHOES

### PART III

#### ZION

In his book, *The Last Foray*, Dr. Chalmers Davidson tells of four clergymen in various low country parishes who owned plantations and more than a hundred slaves each. And Vestrymen, just as dedicated as the clergy operated plantations with slaves. The 1860 Census, says Dr. Davidson, lists the following clergy: The Rev. Maurice Harvey Lance of "Wedgefield" in Prince George, Winyah; the Rev. Stephen Elliott of "Newberry" over at St. Helena's, Beaufort; the Rev. William Otis Prentiss of "Buzard Roost" in St. Bartholomew's; and the Rev. James Stoney of "Trimblestone" in St. Luke's Parish.

Among the Islanders and low countrymen the Anglican Communion seemed to have the strongest hold. Services on plantations included the owners, overseers, plantation managers and slaves on benches or in the galleries. Church attendance was important. The Methodist Parson Martin Luther Banks was holding service for three Anglican Vestrymen one day. In his sermon he remarked that Mr. Blake was too lenient with his blacks to make any money. Mr. Blake owned upwards of 500 slaves. This casual acceptance of slavery was widespread. Christian religion was ingrained in the life.

Furman University has records from its native home in the High Hills of Santee at Stateburg, where the Baptists held the blacks to the same standard of morality as they did the whites.



I have been to that church many times. Their religion must have been very real. The Baptismal pool is a walled spring of very cold water, at the foot of the ravine by the Church. I did not attend a rite, but others who had done so said that the hills rang when the shouts of the converts came up out of that cold water.

Thus, I come to the last thought of my paper.

Dalcho's history says that Captain Jack Stoney and Mr. Fripp were responsible for building Zion Chapel of Ease on Hilton Head Island. He described it as substantial and adequate, and with brick foundations, well appointed, thirty feet wide and forty feet long.

A list of the clergymen who served at Zion is available. One of these is Captain Jack's great grandson, Rev. Dr. James Stoney of Trimblestone. The silver vessels, secured in London, were taken when Zion closed. They were discovered in a Philadelphia pawn shop, I believe. Now they are safely returned to St. Luke's. This silver was used in the administration of the Lord's body and blood, spiritually speaking, for generations of plantation people. From Zion the bodies of loved ones who died were taken to their graves to await the Judgment day. It became a holy Sanctuary. At Zion the children learned to love the Lord as their Father in heaven. They received their Baptismal names at its Altar.

Although the spot on which Zion stood has been forgotten it is generally understood that it must have been somewhere

near the Zion, or Antebellum Cemetery. Certainly all could agree that it would be appropriate for a group such as this Society at the date to take action to erect a marker, giving such information as is available. It would mean much to us who have Hilton Head Sand in our Shoes if we could share in the undertaking. This has been discussed many times by many people.

Tonight I have brought along with me \$200.00 from the Hon. Tom Stoney in Charleston to be devoted to the marking of the Zion Chapel site. I herewith turn it over to this Historical Society for use in this good work.

Mr. Lipscombe gave me papers to bring along to be filled out by a group such as this, rather than an individual, towards the marker. Mr. Charles Lee, in charge of Archives endorsed our plan.

Should the Society think well of it, membership in a Cemetery Committee, as a part of the Historical Society, might be thrown open to anyone interested in the restoration and upkeep of this holy ground. When the sum has reached a large enough amount, say \$5,000.00 it might be made a Permanent or Perpetual Care Trust Fund, interest from which would be used by the Committee. To insure continued interest, there might be a date set for an annual meeting of the Cemetery Association. Many people love these fields and shores. They would delight in having an excuse for returning every year. Again the rebirth of this little Garden of Eden, Hilton Head Island is accomplished.

by Wm. S. Stoney 1972