

The Nortons and the Mosses

Two Old South Carolina Families and their Descendants

W.H. Robert in "The Baptist Courier".

At an early day in our history, two intelligent and respectable families from Great Britain settled in South Carolina on St. Helena Island, Mr. William Norton, a distinguished man from England, claiming for his family a "coat of arms" and his three sisters, wife and children, and Dr. George Mosse, a highly educated young physician from Ireland with a young wife. They lived near together and when in a little while Dr. Mosse lost his wife, he married Miss Phebe Norton, a sister of William Norton.

These families, thus related to each other, on terms of the greatest intimacy lived near each other and reared large families. Two of the sisters of Mrs. Norton besides the wife of Dr. George Mosse, were Mrs. E. Graham, the widow of an Episcopal preacher, the Rev. Wm Graham, (who she was a baptist, having been baptised by Dr. Holcombe in Savannah,) who lived and died in Black Swamp, never having had any children, and Miss Martha Norton married a Mr. Pope, and reared several children. Their descendants, Hopkins and Judge James B. Cole and family in Galveston, Texas are of this family.

Dr. George Mosse had seven daughters whom he reared and educated, and saw happily married. Their descendants are now scattered in all parts of the United States, of various names and occupations.

(1) Esther Marie, the eldest married Capt Patrick Mackenzie, a Scotch-Irish Captain of the Revolutionary War, who died of small pox in 1797 and left only one child, Phebe M., who bore the slight marks of that disease on her face to the day of her death, in 1854 in Marietta Ga, where she was buried. She was baptized by Dr. Holcombe in Savannah, Ga. when she was seven years old, and adorned the Christian life all her days, becoming the wife of Deacon James John Robert, of Black Swamp Baptist Church at Robertville. She left eight sons and two daughters, who called her blessed "She feared the Lord, and was praised by all who knew her."

(2) Elizabeth Mosse was baptized on St. Helena Island (after her father and uncle and their families became Baptists) and established a church there, by the Rev. Dr. Holcombe when only 12 years old. They had 15 children, only two of whom were reared, Dr. George M. Stoney and Martha Sarah, who became the wife of the Rev. James A. Lawton. They have left one son, Samuel Lawton of Allendale, S.C. an active Baptist.

(3) Phebe, or as they called her, Sibby, married the Rev. Jos. J. Lawton. They left two sons, the Rev. Joseph A. Lawton and Dr. Benjamin W. Lawton, and several daughters, who had families.

(4) Jane married Deacon Benjamin T.D. Lawton. Their sons and daughters were quite numerous. Dr. James L. Lawton, who died in Atlanta in 1892, and Mrs. Willingham, the mother of that large and influential family, now doing good service for the cause of God, being of the number.

(5) Mary married Adam Brisbane. They reared two children, the Rev. Dr. W.H. Brisbane, who moved to Ohio and carried his negroes with him. He became quite prominent among the Abolitionists, and at one time was run for President of the United States at the head of the Abolition Ticket. He left several children, one at least a Baptist preacher, the Rev. Ben. Lawton Brisbane now at Council Bluffs, Iowa.

(6) Martha, the sixth daughter, became the wife of Col. Alexander L. Lawton, a deacon of the Black Swamp Church at Robertville, S.C. Col. Lawton was a prominent man in the church and state, serving a number of times in the legislature, being at one time treasurer of the Baptist State Convention and a trustee of Furman University. Their eldest daughter became the

wife of the Rev. Jos. T. Robert, Ltd., and left three sons, the Rev. J.S. Robert, Jr. Col. H.M. Robert, United States Engineer Corps, now on duty in New York, and Prof. J.A. Robert of Dayton, Ohio. Their eldest son is Gen. A.R. Lawton, now of Savannah, Ga. known throughout the United States as well as in the Confederate States Army, and as a representative of the United States under President Cleveland in Austria.

(7) Sarah, the seventh and youngest, married Robert Godfrey Norton a son of William Norton, an educated and pious man, who was always in place as the layreader of sermons for the Robertville Baptist Church in the absence of a regular preacher. They left only one son, Alexander, whose children are in Georgia, and three daughters, one of whom married the Rev. James T. Sweet, who died a year or so since. Martha married James Buckner and left no children and Mary Norton, who I think is still alive and has had a happy and useful life.

This is a tribute to my mother's ancestors. The great-grandson of Mr. William Norton and Dr. George Mosse is Dr. Robert G. Norton of Savannah who has also a son, Dr. William E. Norton, who is a practicing physician in Savannah. Dr. Robert G. Norton has the coat of arms described in the foregoing article presented to him by his cousin J.D. Debow, editor of Debow's Review, whose mother was a sister of Mr. Robert G. Norton, all originally from South Carolina.

From the Charleston, S.C. "Times" April 4th, 1808.

"The date of Dr. George Mosse's birth is not known, but public records state he was a graduate of the University of Dublin, Ireland, and came to America just before the Revolutionary War. He settled on St. Helena Island, afterward his young wife, Miss Elizabeth Martin, died, then he married the sister of his friend and neighbor, William Norton. Dr. George Mosse was taken a prisoner May 1781 on the prison ship, "Forbay" in Charleston, S.C.

On Oct. 26, 1800 he helped organize the First Baptist Church at Savannah, Ga. serving as the first deacon. He was the organizer of the old Savannah Medical College and also a charter member of the First Medical Society in Georgia. He died Feb. 17, 1808 in his 67th year. A widow and seven (7) daughters survive him."