

By Rev. Dr. Robert E. H. Peoples

Last fall Harold Folk asked me to talk to our Reunion about some of our interesting forebears of long ago and in a moment of weakness I succumbed to his persuasive powers. Miss Cora & I made a trip to Washington where Harold & May Day gave us a beautiful room & bath in their handsome home, wined & dined us as though we were visiting royalty, took us to the National Geographic Society and the National Symphony Orchestra, plus visits to the Mormon Temple and the National Cathedral where we saw the new "moon rock" window. For four days Miss Cora & I did basic research in the National Archives, the D.A.R. library and the Library of Congress.

Last month I spent a day in the South Carolina Archives in Columbia while visiting my sister Ruth & her husband, Douglas Mc Nair. Earlier this year I invested \$23 in The Hiers Genealogy, compiled by a Research Committee of which our own Angelia Hiers Breland was a member, and found that they had discovered some information which I consider more immediately interesting to us as the family of John Francis Folk & his wife Mahala Elizabeth Platts. The first fact I found had not even been realized by the Hiers Committee member who recorded it, Wilmot C. Hiers of Allendale. Perhaps we ourselves had not remembered that when John Francis Folk died on 11 March 1861, only 38 years old, his widow Mahala was only 30 years old and had 8 children to support, including the baby Annie Catherine, only 5 months old. There was, I note, no financial problem because John Francis left real estate valued at \$4000 according to the 1860 Census and a personal estate of \$10,500 which means that at the usual value of \$500 each, he had 21 slaves.

This is about what we should have expected since both his father (2) and grandfather were substantial planters. In 1840 Jacob, Sr. had 42 slaves and Jacob, Jr. (John Francis' father) had 18 slaves. By 1850 Jacob, Sr. was dead and Jacob, Jr. (then 48) had real estate worth \$10,000 which amount had increased to \$25,860 by 1860 worked by 81 slaves. There was no widow Folk in the 1870 census because the fact I found is that she married again. Her first husband was 8 years her senior; her second, William Martin Carter, born 1840, was 11 years her junior. They had no children, so presumably he raised her Folk children. William died in January 1882, only 41 years old, but Mahala Elizabeth lived on until Dec. 1897, 68 years old, surviving 3 husbands and 5 of her 10 children. She m(3) John Wesley Folk.

This makes Mahala Elizabeth Platts Folk Carter, ^{Folk} come a little more real to us. But we have a further and more important windfall. The Hiers Committee employed a German genealogist who has supplied us with a remarkable amount of data about her Platts forebears.

The story begins with Ludwig Platz (or Plas), a member of the local law court in the village of Hochdorf in the duchy of Württemberg in southwest Germany. Württemberg was part of the duchy of Swabia which was conquered by the Roman Legions in the 1st century, stretching eastward from the Rhine River to the Danube and northward from Lake Constance. In the period of the great migrations, 4th & 5th centuries, the German tribes over-ran & destroyed the Roman Empire. By the late 5th century Clovis had been converted to the religion of his wife, St. Clothilde, and united the area under the Franks. His descendant Charlemagne revived the Roman Empire when he was crowned Emperor in 800 and the division of his empire by the Treaty of Verdun in 843 began the history of Germany as such under Ludwig the German.

The southern part of Württemberg is the core of the medieval ⁽³⁾ duchy of Swabia which broke up into numerous fiefs in the 13th century when the Hohenstauffens became extinct. The Counts of Württemberg soon held directly from the Emperor. The chief cities of Stuttgart, the capital, Ulm, Esslingen, Tübingen, Ravensburg, Heilbronn & Friedrichshafen all accepted the Reformation religion of Luther, as did the majority of the rural areas, although a substantial minority around a number of powerful abbeys remained Roman Catholics. The country is hilly, drained by the Neckar and upper Danube rivers, partly forested (it includes part of the famed Black Forest in the west) and partly cultivated, famed for its scenic beauty, the loveliness of its landscape. But the rest of Germany looks upon the Württembergers as "country bumpkins" or "hillbillies", rather like our attitude toward Appalachia.

Our founding father, Ludwig Platz, was born in 1607, married 1st in 1628 Maria who died at Hochdorf 1654, aged 50, by whom he had several children, including Bartholomäus Platz, born 1635. Ludwig married again in 1654 a widow, Agnes and died 11 years later in 1665.

Bartholomäus Platz of Hochdorf there married 1st in 1655 Christina Weber by whom he had 7 children, 3 dying as infants, before Christina died in 1669 aged 38. Bartholomäus married (2) at Hochdorf Barbara Bitt, daughter of deceased Caspar Bitt, a Swiss citizen. They had an additional 7 children, including Hans Jacob Platz, born 1673. Bartholomäus lost his 2nd wife in 1704 but he lived another 12 years as a widower, known in the village as "Old Bartle Platz" or

"Gessenbarthle". His death record indicates that he was then selling rakes, apparently successfully, because he returned from a sales trip "in a brandy drunkenness", fell into a water-ditch in the Grindtal Valley, took pneumonia and died. The moral seems to be that if you're going to drink brandy, stay away from ditches. But he was almost 81 years old!

Gessenbarthle's 10th child, Hans Jacob Platz was a manufacturer of rakes in Hochdorf (where he was born & died) and in nearby Schietingen. Apparently his aged father was one of his salesmen. Hans married Anna Barbara Freyermuth, born at Treschklingen near Heilbronn in 1669 (so she was 4 years older than her husband. Nevertheless, she outlived him by 18 years, supporting herself from Dec. 1708 when he died until Dec. 1726 by operating a tobacco shop in Hochdorf.

Her father was the Hon. & Well-born Herr Johan Andreas Freyermuth, Pastor of the Lutheran church at Rappenaau & Treschklingen. He was born at Bad Wimpfen in 1630, died at Treschklingen 1670, having married there in 1657 Margarethe Vetterlin, daughter of George Vetterlin, hunter & forester of Wimpfen. The pastor's parents were Andreas Freyermuth, citizen & knifemith of the Free Imperial Town of Wimpfen, and Dorothea Müller of Talheim.

Hans Jacob & Anna Barbara (Freyermuth) Platz were parents of Johan Jacob Platz, born 1705 at Schietingen. He married in 1732 at Emmingen, Christina Rentz, born 1710, daughter of Jacob Rentz, citizen & fisherman of Emmingen, and his wife, Christine Roller, daughter of Hans & Catherine Roller of Pfromdorf. Jacob Rentz (1682-1746) was a son of Martin Rentz (1655-

1726) former of Emmingen, and Anna Maria Eiting (1658-5.
1747), daughter of Jacob Eiting, born 1613, citizen and member
of the local law court at Unter-Jettingen, son of an earlier
Jacob Eitingen.

In May 1751 John Jacob & Christina (Rentz) Platz, their
children and other Rentz & Eiting relatives of Emmingen, were
joined by the Hoyer family of Pfalzgrafenweiler, in emigrating.
Presumably they sold their furniture and everything too bulky to
carry, built rafts of fine timber on which they floated down
the beautiful Neckar River to its junction with the Rhine at
Mannheim, thence to Rotterdam where they sold their fine-
timbered rafts for the best price they were offered. There they
were joined by the Rev. Frederick Stoltzner, a Lutheran pastor who
accompanied them to South Carolina and acted as their interpreter
until they could learn English.

They shipped from Rotterdam on the sailing ship Ann with
Captain Charles Kennaway, stopped briefly at Cowes, Isle of Wight,
and arrived in Charles Town 5 months after leaving their native
villages. On 23 Oct. 1751 The South Carolina Gazette carried a notice
of their arrival and on 29 Oct. twelve of the heads of families of the
200 immigrants aboard the ship Ann appeared before Royal Governor
James Ogle & the Council to present their petitions for their
ocean fare, for free land grants and bounty for one year for their
families.

Among the original Royal Land Grants recorded in this
area (along Savanna Branch of Saltcatcher Swamp) were
200 acres to John Rentz (which includes the present site of Wesley
Chapel), 300 acres to Jacob Hoyer, 200 acres to Jacob Studmeyer,

250 acres to Mathew Pfender, 100 acres to John Maul, (6)
(Mahala Elizabeth Platts' mother is said to have been a Mole)
Jacob Platts had a 400-acre grant on Pretty Creek, Granville Co.
dated 4 Sept. 1753. Johannes Platts had a 50 acre grant in Prince
William Parish dated 18 Oct. 1757, John 300 acres on North Fork of the
Edisto 19 Sept. 1758 and 200 acres on a branch of the Edisto 10 Sept.
1765. Hans Jacob had 150 acres on Pretty Creek, Granville 14 June
1771. Pretty Creek is 5 mi. S.E. of present Ulmers.

John Platts supplied Col. Edward Harden with two beeves (4 yr.
old steers) for Gen. Greene's army 2 Oct. 1782 and Jacob Platts supplied
six beeves 18 Nov. 1782 for Continental Army use.

On 22 Oct. 1785 Jacob Platts received a S.C. State grant for
264 acres which included Carter's Cross Road

The immigrating family of Johann Jacob & Christina (Rentz)
Platts included their 8 children: 4 daughters: Maria Barbara,
Christina, Anna Maria & Maria Magdalena and 4 sons: Johann
Jacob, Johann, Johann Christoph and Martin. I find no land grants
for the latter two. So apparently ^{b. 1741} John Jacob or his brother ^{b. 1743} John
was the grandfather (or great grandfather) of Mahala Elizabeth
Platts, born 28 May 1829, our ancestress.

~~Who has the Platts family Bibles and records?~~

[Ray Thomas inherited same from his Aunt Florrie Murdaugh.

John Platts (1743-1799) & wife Sophia were parents of John
Platts (27 May 1790 - 26 Jan 1861) m. 7 Mar 1811 Susannah Mole (27 May 1791 -
25 Apr 1844) who were parents of Mahala Elizabeth Platts (27 May 1829 -
14 Dec 1899) m. 24 July 1844 John Francis Falk