

A History of Hull Springs Farm Written by Mary Farley Ames Lee

Nathaniel Turner Ames and Mary Farley Peck Ames, my grandparents, moved from Four Mile Road in Richmond, where my father was born, on March 24, 1894, to the Glebe in Westmoreland County sometime in the early nineteen hundreds. While he was living in Richmond, I understand that he had a bakery that made baking powder biscuits.

I was named for my grandmother, Mary Farley. The grave sites of these three persons, as well as my aunt Easter Ames Taylor, my brother William Patterson Ames, Jr. and his wife Doris Strange Ames are located in the graveyard of Yeocomico Church of Cople Parish.

Nathaniel T. Ames and his wife Mary Farley lived at the Glebe until the death of Mary Farley in 1907, at which time my father was 13 years of age. During the time they lived at the Glebe, grandmother and her son, my father, planted rows of walnut trees that lined the side of the road leading to the big house. Today in 1990 only one of those trees remains. The original house was built in 1680. I have been told that my grandmother went to college in Oberlin, Ohio and I have written to them to try and verify this fact. At one time grandfather was a mail carrier and he may have met my grandmother on one of his rounds. While living at the Glebe, my father spoke of going by horse and wagon to a one room school house at the Hague. My grandmother liked to paint and was possessed of considerable natural talent as she never had a formal lesson. My father would row her around the creeks so that she could paint various scenes. Today my sister, Francis Ames Harrow, has one of her paintings depicting a couple counting money and I have one called threading the needle. I do not know of any others as my father said she gave them away to friends as presents.

My grandfather sold the Glebe after the death of his wife to a Mr. Weatheral of Philadelphia, a man of considerable means. He undertook an extensive remodeling of the house, which included a large kitchen with a walk-in ice box, a butler's pantry and a self contained electrical plant. In addition, he built houses for his mother in law, servants, for the Captain of his yacht, smoke houses and barns for the crops of corn, wheat and tomatoes that were harvested each year. On the waterside of the house is a graveyard that pre-dates the Ames and the Weatherals. At this time the house is again going through extensive moderation. The farm is now a large subdivision of homes and building lots known as Glebe Harbor.

After moving from the Glebe to Arlington, my grandfather married Mamie Mann. He started the Murphy and Ames Lumber Co. in 1913, and this was located in Arlington, Virginia. His partner in the business was his brother in law, Bruce Murphy, who was married to his sister Jennie. Bruce and Jennie had lived for a time in the Hague, Va. prior to moving to Arlington. My grandfather missed the country and being unable to return to the Glebe, he purchased the adjoining Hull Spring Farm. Most of the material for this house was shipped by boat to Tidwells, at that time it was also known as Edgewater, and then to the farm due to the condition

and lack of roads in Westmoreland County. This house still stands today even though it has not been occupied for a good number of years.

My father married my mother Eva Violet Wingert in Millers Town, Pa. on the seventh of June 1916. His father Nathaniel and "Miss Mamie" attended the wedding. My father built a house at 638 North Jackson St. for his bride and they moved in the same year. The street was then known as Marion Avenue and it was a dirt road with a large oak tree marking the end of the street. The house was the last one on the block. My mother, now 99 years of age, still rules the roost on Jackson Street. For his honeymoon my father had built a cottage near the house on Hull Springs Farm on land given to him by his father, and he and my mother arrived by boat at Tidwells from Baltimore. My mother recalls that Mr. Ball met them at the boat in Tidwells and they drove by horse and buggy to the honeymoon cottage. All was well except she had lost her new large going away hat overboard during the trip. By this time my father had graduated from Mississippi State and had joined his father in the lumber business. Granddad died in 1939 and my father took over the farm.

We had many, many happy summers at Hull Springs Farm from the first of June to the first of September. The two tenant houses were occupied by the Moons and a black family by the name of Wright. They had a number of children about our ages so there were always lots of people to play with. We had a pony, a cabin cruiser and a high powered speed boat and surf boards. We helped with the farm work and all had chores to do. We had fresh milk from the cow and made our own butter and ice cream. Miss Mamie raised chickens and I remember that the baby chicks came by mail. Delco Lamps and party line telephones on which to listen in was all part of the lovely life on the farm. It was always a very exciting time when James Adam's Show Boat came up Nomini Creek and docked by the old bridge to put on the performances. If you as a child were allowed to go see the show with the grownups, you had "arrived."

Once a year, Grand Dad and Miss Mamie would have a big watermelon picnic party for family members and friends. At one of these parties Mrs. Ficklin from Tidwells and Mrs. Willing from Bushfield came by boat. They were so busy talking that they did not realize the boat was not close enough to the pier to get off and, as a result, in the water they went. Much of the balance of the party was devoted to getting them dried out. Miss Mamie had three maiden lady cousins, Minnie, Margaret and Ray Chase, who were school teachers from Westminster, Maryland. They had pooled their resources and lived together. They had "adopted" a colored boy by the name of Morris and he drove them around in a big Buick. I remember that they taught me to play solitaire. Grand Dad's sister, Annie, from Brooklyn NY and his sister, Jennie, from Arlington would arrive by steamer in Kinsale, VA. We would all drive down together to the local hotel and have dinner which was a great treat. We all wanted to ride in Grand Dad's Ford which he would have to turn and put in reverse in order to get up one of the hills on the way to Kinsale.

Other things I remember were the "homecomings" at Yeocomico Church which specialized in chess pies and chicken livers. The family would gather for the 4th of July and we would have

fireworks in front of the cottage. This happy custom continued until on one 4th a firecracker exploded in my Brother Bill's face and that was the end of the fireworks. My grandfather had a Model T Ford with the brass radiator and lamps which was sold to my cousin Wing Harrison and which he duly wrecked on his way back to college in Georgetown, Kentucky. His later 1918 Model T which I still have is in my garage and with a little work can be in good running condition. It was in this car and on my Uncle Norman's lap that I had my first driving lessons.

My father made the farm a very active place. He had become a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and often brought people to the farm for work as part of their program of rehabilitation. He also constructed a camp on one of the points of land and it was used as a summer camp for underprivileged children from Washington D.C. This camp was sponsored by the Mt. Vernon Methodist Church of Washington. Over the years many different persons lived in the tenant houses as they were employed as farm help. For a period of time my father made this a cattle farm and raised white raced Herefords. He later abandoned this project and returned the farm to growing various types of grain and so it is today. He was always aware of the beauty of the place and kept it in good condition by planting flowers, bushes and trees.

In 1952 my father gave me an acre of land and my husband, Walter E. Thompson, and I built a small cottage. The framing lumber for this cottage came from the trees growing on the land. During the next twenty years we always spent as much time as we could find living on the farm. The cottage was remodeled five times the last being in 1972 and many improvements were made including a large swimming pool. My husband died in November of 1973 but I continued to come to the farm as often as possible with my mother and Dad or other friends so I have always considered it to be very much a home for me. My father died on August 21st 1978 and the farm was transferred to my mother.

By this time the big house built by my grandfather had fallen into disuse as no one had occupied it for a number of years. The camp for children had not been used for many years and only the main camp house was used by my brother and his wife as a weekend summer home.

In 1986 my brother and I purchased the farm from my mother, my sister Francis expressing no interest in the farm. I took about 53 acres and the balance of about 600 acres was taken by my brother as I think he had plans to retire and work the farm. He made some improvements such as removing old barns and other small buildings. He had plans drawn for the renovation of the big house going so far as to have the whole house tented and gassed for termites and other bugs. All of his plans were, of course, abandoned by the untimely death of his wife Doris in April of 1990 and his own death just seven weeks later. I was born on July 6, 1917 in our home 638 North Jackson St. Arlington, Virginia as was my brother William P. Ames Jr. I attended Washington and Lee High School in Arlington and was graduated in June of 1934. I then attended Arlington Hall Junior College until May of 1936. Thinking of going into a teaching career I went to Farmville State Teachers College (now Longwood College), graduating in June of 1938. I then attended the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and got my degree in 1940. I worked

for my father in Murphy and Ames Lumber Co. for one year and then took a job as the Personnel Administrator for the Fourth Civil Service Region in Winston-Salem, N.C. until 1946. I married Walter E. Thompson in May of 1946 in the Mt. Vernon Methodist Church in Washington D.C. From 1947 to 1973 I was the Registry of Voters for Arlington County and retired from that position.

I married the Rev. Alfred S. Lee a retired Episcopal priest in June of 1984 in Yeocomico Church. Since that time we have divided our time between Naples, Florida and the farm with the longer period of time being on the farm. We now consider it to be our home. One of the many happy events since our marriage has been the dedication of Ameslee Hall, a social center for Yeocomico Church. This dedication took place on September 16th 1990 with hundreds of family, friends and church members in attendance. Our Rector Alan Hooker and Bishop Peter Lee of Virginia presided. This building was given by me in gratitude to God for his gifts of family, friends, joy and love.

As of this writing, September 1990, my brother's share of the farm is part of his estate and we must wait on the disposition of that estate. It is my hope that it will remain protected from over development and continue to bring joy and happiness to those who now live here and for others in the future.

Mary Farley Ames Lee

Note:

Mary Farley Ames Lee passed away December 10, 1999, leaving Hull Springs Farm and a modest operating endowment to her alma mater, Longwood University. The bequest states that the Farm shall not be subdivided for commercial or residential purposes and that it shall be used only for agricultural, archeological, forestry, natural resources conservation, and educational purposes.

Mrs. Lee is buried at her beloved Yeocomico Church.