

TITLE SEARCH CONCERNING THE HOUSE AT 2040 PIERCE DAIRY ROAD

1. A plat completed by Mr. William Whitley, surveyor, shows that this house lies in land lot number 318 of Morgan County land district number 15. This tract was at the time of the survey 22.398 acres, and lies at the corner of Mission Road and Pierce Dairy Road. For much of the time indicated in the later deeds the area was 28.4 acres, some of it having been later sold off.
2. In the Morgan County 1809 tax digest a John Towns is shown as owning 1,000 acres of land in what later became the Mann District. The drainage listed is Indian Creek. John Towns was paying tax on 20 slaves, and he was listed as paying a poll tax, which meant that he was in residence on the property. The 1812 tax digest indicated that he still owned the 1,000 acres, but now owned 29 slaves, still paying a poll tax. This property is shown to have been granted to "self and others", though I have not found a record of such a grant. This part of Morgan County was distributed by the 1807 land lottery.
3. On August 26, 1813, John Towns sold the 1,000 acres to Walter Taylor of Edgefield District of South Carolina. Specifically mentioned in the deed is land lot 318 in the 15th district, which was known as a "fraction" lot, having 107 acres (a full land lot had 202 ½ acres). I have found no reference to a house being on the lot when it was sold, though since Towns was obviously living on the property he no doubt had a residence somewhere. It is just possible that it was in lot 318. Taylor paid Towns \$4,000 for the 1,000 acres. It seems that land lot 318 was always a part of a much larger tract of land. This is recorded in Morgan County deed book number D, page 20.
4. Walter Taylor died in or about 1822, and in his will he left his place to David J.E.B. Butler. This will is recorded in Morgan County Probate Court.
5. On October 1, 1823, David Butler sold 2300 acres to Ann Taylor of Edgefield, South Carolina. The deed specifies that this was the "plantation of Walter Taylor, deceased". I do not know the relationship of Walter Taylor to Ann Taylor; she could have been a wife or sister. Of course, Walter Taylor was from Edgefield, too.
6. Then, on October 9, 1829, Ann Taylor sold 2,097 acres to Reuben Mann. The price he paid for this was \$6,000 (reference: deed book I, page 27). Mann, like most large plantation owners, also had a town house as well as a plantation house. When he died in 1850 he left his plantation to his wife, Elizabeth A. Mann. Now, I have not found any probate papers for Elizabeth Mann (she died in 1851, the year after Reuben), but the home site apparently devolved to their son, James N. Mann, for on January 12, 1867 he sold the home site included in 923 ½ acres to John Mosher of New State of New York. (Deed Book M, page 139).

7. John Mosher and wife Margaret sell the same 923 ½ acres to George E. Copeland, also of New York, the selling price being \$9,500. Date of sale was June 22, 1870, and the transaction was recorded in deed book N, page 6.
8. Three years later, on July 22, 1873, George E. Copeland made a killing by selling the same 923 ½ acres and the Mann home site to Alexander Monroe for \$14,000. Monroe was also a New Yorker. Reference: deed book N, page 245.
9. Monroe got his money back, barely, by selling the same place to Philip Kirby, another New York man. He got back his \$14,000 for the same 923 ½ acres. This is recorded in deed book O, page 237.
10. Kirby kept the place for 10 years, selling it to John Waring, of Monroe County, N.Y., on May 27, 1887. The same 923 ½ acres. Waring is shown in the census of 1880 as being 52 years old, and was a "lumber and coal dealer". Deed book reference is book R, page 7. In October, 1887, Waring had a plat made of the place, and it is recorded in deed book R, page 85. This is a very confusing plat, and contains a minimal amount of data, but the area covered by land lot 318 seems to be designated as section B of the drawing.
11. On January 17, 1891, John Waring sells the "Taylor Place", all of sections A,B,C,D, and F as shown on the plat in R/85, consisting of 499.92 acres, to Oliver H. Arnold. This is recorded I deed book S, page 419.
12. A couple of years later Arnold sells for \$1,500 to his son Wood Arnold the "Taylor Place". This was on January 3, 1893. This is in deed book V, page 50.
13. In December, 1902, Wood Arnold sells the "old Kirby or John Waring place" to William H. and Philip C. Clemons for \$2,480.29, "including the dwelling thereon". Recorded in deed book X, page 160.
14. William Clemons sells to Philip C. Clemons his half interest in "all that part of the old Kirby or John Waring plantation in the Mann District, designated as lots A & B, all of lot E, except 59.91 acres, 216 acres of land.....including the dwelling thereon". This transaction took place on November 20, 1906, and is recorded in deed book 2, page 153.
15. Philip C. Clemons died in his residence there in 1941, and his wife, Louise B. Clemons, sold the place, consisting of 474.2 acres, to R.M. Turnell on May 10, 1943. This is recorded in deed book 33, page 377.
16. The estate of R.M. Turnell, who had added considerable land to his holdings, sold to Norris Bryans, Maxie Conner, and Brooks Pennington 1,520.3 acres, which included land lot 318, where the house is situated. Reference to Turnell's will book H, pages 422-435, and deed book 101, page 505. There is also a reference to a plat in plat book 9, page 244, 245. Date of deed: May 31, 1979, recorded in

deed book 101, page 505ff. There is a timber deed in deed book 101, page 515, which calls the place "R.M. Turnell Hill Top Farm". This was on May 31, 1979.

17. In the same year, on October 25, 1979, Bryans, Conner, and Pennington sold the house tract (designated as B-2 in plat book 9, page 258) to W.H. Sims, Sr. Recorded in deed book 102, page 837.
18. There is a warranty deed from W.H. Sims, Sr., to the "Hi Rail Service Company" the "Hill Top Farm" tract. This was on November 5, 1979, and is recorded in deed book 103, page 211.
19. There is a warranty deed dated January 29, 1982, from the High Rail Service Company to Richard D. Owings, M.D., of Fulton County, Georgia, for the section designated B-2 on the plat in book 9, page 258, 28.4 acres. The residence is situated within this area. Deed Book 110, pages 496 and 497.
20. On February 25, 1983, Richard S. Owings sells by warranty deed tract 1 of a larger area to the Oglethorpe County Historical Society. This is the tract designated as B-2 of Hill Top Farm, 28.4 acres. Reference: deed book 114, page 60.
21. On July 25, 1986, the Oglethorpe Historical Society makes a warranty deed to Allen R. and Sandra C. Karl for the B-2 tract, 28.4 acres. This is recorded in deed book 129, page 300. On the same day Richard S. Owings, Jr., and Helen Owings makes a quit claim deed to Allen Karl concerning the same property. This is recorded in deed book 129, page 296.

Please note: I have not tried to sort out all the deeds by and to Richard S. Owings and Richard D. Owings and the High Rail Service Company, but in the main the deeds shown above offer an idea of the sequence of ownership. (This document is not intended to be a title search for legal purposes).

Summary and Conclusions:

It may be possible that the residence house on this property had its beginnings earlier than 1809, for John Towns no doubt owned this property that early, and was apparently living there. Of course, whether or not this would be the same house as is present today is not known, but it is possible that the core of the house is that early. An examination of the structural details by a competent preservationist might answer some of these questions. Walter Taylor bought the place in 1813, and he, too, became a resident, and perhaps was living there when he died in 1822. Tradition says that the house was built in 1817, and, of course, it is quite possible that Walter Taylor built a new house for himself. Some details one might look for in trying to determine the year of construction would be the kind of nails used in the framework (hand wrought nails or early type cut nails), and the type of saw or adze cuts for the earliest framework cuts (rotary saws did not generally come into use in Morgan County until about the late 1840s, or early 1850s). No doubt

through the years alterations have been made to an original structure. Broken crockery collected from the yards could give an excellent clue as to the times of occupation, for such material is quite datable. I have never been to the house, so cannot make any judgment about these details.

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