

MICHAEL GAFFNEY (1775-1854), UPSTATE PIONEER

Spartanburg Herald

Sunday Morning, September 28, 1958, p. C7

His Birthday Monday

Michael Gaffney Braved A Wilderness, Founded City

By John Black

GAFFNEY (Herald-Journal Bureau) – To some, the eventful history-shaping career of Capt. Michael Gaffney has become an epic legend.

Others look upon him merely as an Irish pioneer who for some indistinct reason, perhaps seeking a favorable climate, settled in the Cherokee Indian wilderness 154 years ago and established a crossroads that grew into the City of Gaffney.

But to all, though perhaps inconspicuous to some, Michael Gaffney and his generation left a legacy in influence that perpetuated their names.

A drive through the city is a good lesson in history.

Capt. Gaffney's original home-place, still a beautiful home, stands unpretentiously on the corner of N. Granard and W. Smith Streets. The Gaffney burial plot, containing the grave of Michael Gaffney, is located nearby on the northeast corner of W. Smith and N. Logan Streets.

All three of these streets derived their names from the Michael Gaffney era.

Capt. Gaffney married Mary Smith of Smith's Ford in Union County in 1803. This was in the year before he came to this locality, apparently seeking a favorable climate in which to make his home. He settled near Limestone Springs and lived there in the same house for 50 years.

Elizabeth Logan was the wife of one of Michael's sons, Henry G. Gaffney. Her brother, John R. Logan, was the surveyor who laid out the town on the home-site plantation which Michael's widow inherited.

Capt. Gaffney was born in Granard County, Longford, Ireland and was schooled in the County of Longford and later studied at Dublin University.

Monday is his birthday. There will be no commemorative service, no special tributes. The birthday of the founder of Gaffney will slip away quietly into the future of many more tomorrows, of many more birthdays. But his influence will remain for the life of the city.

Race Street, which runs between S. Logan and S. Granard Streets, probably got its name from the huge, oval race track that Michael once had here. Part of the course followed closely the route of the present Race Street.

Montgomery Street was probably named for Victoria Montgomery, wife of Michael's grandson William W. Gaffney.

Michael Gaffney left Dublin, Ireland, on July 31, 1797 aboard the "Slow Palace." The vessel was captained by Noah Wyeth, according to a local historian.

He arrived in New York in October, 1797, after a long delay by encounter with pirates and slowed speed due to lack of winds.

Michael had yellow fever in New York during an epidemic. He left that city and traveled to Albany, N.Y., up the Hudson River. He bought two horses at Mohawk Falls which he and a companion rode back to New York. Michael came to Charleston aboard

“The Marion” when a second epidemic of the fever hit New York. He set up a business in Charleston about 1800.

Fever again interfered with Michael Gaffney’s life and he left Charleston.

He joined a partner already in business in what is now Union County. He met Mary Smith at Smith’s Ford there and married her in 1803.

Michael came to what is now Gaffney in 1804 and established a store. The place became known as Gaffney’s Cross Roads, later “Gaffney’s Old Field” and subsequently Gaffney City.

The “City” was later dropped from the name. It was chartered in 1872.

Michael was a large property owner and a wealthy man by the standards of his day. He willed each of his children several thousand dollars.

The widow, who died 20 years after Michael’s death, in 1870 gave a 200-foot right-of-way to the railroad from Cherokee Ford on Broad River to Gaffney Cross Roads.

Michael Gaffney was commissioned a captain in 1809 by then state Governor Charles Pinckney. He was engaged in the War of 1812, largely around Charleston.

Michael Gaffney was a man of influence. He often received letters from prominent politicians soliciting local influential aid. This fact is attested to by Photostats of those original letters.

Many things are not known about Michael Gaffney. Countless other events of his life have not been recalled here.

[Contributor’s Note: The tombstone of Michael Gaffney shows the dates his birth and death to be Sept. 29, 1775 and Sept. 6, 1854. The city of Gaffney is the county seat of Cherokee County, South Carolina. Cherokee County was created in 1896 from a large portion of the eastern part of Spartanburg County and from smaller areas from northern Union County and western York County. For more details on the formation of Cherokee County see the Piedmont Historical Society quarterly (Upper South Carolina Genealogy & History) issue of August 2006, pp. 114-115, “Attributes of a Proposed New County” and of November 2006, pp. 169-171, “The vote to Create Cherokee County in !896”.]

* * *

Estate File of James Madison Gaffney, Son of Captain Michael Gaffney

Source: Spartanburg County, SC Probate Court File 1120

{Excerpt from Capt. Michael Gaffney’s will – FOURTH: It is further my will and desire that the property and estate herein before devised and bequeathed to my said wife (including the issue and increase of slaves) except what may have been consumed or worn out in use, shall on her death be equally be divided amongst and between all my children, the children of my daughter NANCY R. HENDERSON, and my son JAMES M. GAFFNEY, taking as before provided the share their parents would have respectively taken if living.}

File #1120: {MF AD996}

[Note: Original spelling has been maintained in the transcription below.]

James M. Gaffney, Decd, Henry G. Gaffney applied for Administration Nov 19th, 1844
State of South Carolina }
Spartanburgh District } To R. Bowden, Ordinary of Said District.

The petition of Henry Gafney showeth that James M. Gafney, late of Said District, Deceased, died intestate Leaving at his death a personal Estate Subject to administration.

Your petitioner therefore pray for ^letters of ^ administration be Granted to him of the Estate above named Your Petitioner further pray that a citation do issue forth from your Court requiring the Kindred and Creditors of said Deceased to be and appear in the Court of Ordinary to be held at Spartanburgh to show cause if any they can why said Letters should not be granted to him.

Nov 19th – 1844

s/ H.G. Gaffney

Administration Bond

Know All Men By These Presents, That We

Henry G. Gaffny, R.C. Poole & John Moore are holden and firmly bound unto R. Bowden, Ordinary of District of Spartanburgh in the full and just sum of Six Hundred Dollars dated: Second Day of December 1844.

Now the Condition of the Above Obligation Is Such

That the above bound Henry G. Gaffney Administrator of James M. Gaffney Administers according to law.

s/ H.G. Gaffney

Sealed and delivered, in }

s/ R.C. Pool

the presence of }

s/ John Moore

s/ James (Selman?)

Warrant of Appraisal

To Messrs. J.R. Ellis, Esqr., James M. Sarratt and M.C. Stacy

Memorandum, That on the 18th day of December 1844 Personally appeared before me J.R. Ellis, one of the Justices assigned to keep the peace in Spartanburgh District, James M. Sarratt & M.C. Stacy, being two of the appraisers appointed to appraise the Goods and Chattels of James M. Gaffney late of said District. s/ J.R. Ellis, Mag. & Appraiser

An Inventory and appraisement of the Goods and Chattels of the perishable Estate of James M. Gaffney (Decd) made by us whose names are hereunto subscribed **the 18th day of December 1844.**

3 Columns Totaling: **\$992.45**

Amt of Cash on Hand _____ 19.26

Notes and Accounts Supposed good:

1 Note on J.G. Gaffney, due 29th Jany 1845 for _____ 5.17

1 Note on J.G. Gaffney bearing interest from 25th Decr 1843 _____ 25.00

{ 1 Note on G.M. Stewart due 23rd Feb 1844 for _____ 11.41

{ with two credits, 1 28th June 1844 of \$3.00 }

{ the other credit, 20th July 1844 or \$500 }

1 account on William Henry, secured by Jas. L. Pearson _____ 3.00

Other accounts supposed good _____ 8.75

Accounts to be discharged by 3 kegs of nails _____ 15.00

Notes and accounts supposed to be Desperate:

1 Subpoena on Hiram Lockhart _____ 1.32

1 Note on Reubⁿ Wilson due 4th Nov 1837 _____ 10.00

1 Note on J.Q. Sarratt due 19th Decr 1839 _____ 2.75

1 Note on O.B. Trimmier due 18th Aug 1836 _____ 100.00

1 Note on Sion Moss due 15th Jany 1825 _____ 21.03

1 Note on Nathan Mason due 12th Jany 1842 _____ 5.00

1 Note on J.B. Moore, due 9th May 1838 _____ 60.00

1 Note on Nelson Moss, due 5th May 1839 _____ 20.00

1 Note on J.C. Wilson, due 18th July 1835 _____ 4.12

1 Note on John Hague, due 10 th June 1837_____	24.50
1 due bill on T.F. Smith, due 30 th Oct 1834_____	5.00
1 account on Willis Blanton_____	4.63
1 account on Enoch England_____	2.50

We the undersigned Appraisers Certify the within to be a true Inventory and appraisement of the perishable property of the Estate of James M. Gaffney decd, as Shown to us by the administrator, Decr 18th 1844. s/ J.R. Ellis s/ M.C. Stacy s/ Jas. M. Sarratt

December 2nd 1844: Petition to sell the Personal Property of James M. Gaffney.

Sale Bill of the Estate of Jas. M. Gaffney, decd, Dec 19th 1844.

Buyers: (Items bought only, amounts paid are **mostly** omitted.)

Minerva Gaffney/ M. Gaffney :

1 Keg, 1 Box & Corn; handsaw, 1 Barrell; 3 jars, candles, coffeemill, Barrel & Salt, Barrel & flour, meat, 1 Loom & gearing, 1 Reel, 1 wheel & cards, 1 lot vessels, 1 lot potware, 1 Churn, 1 set round(tables?) \$3., 1 sideboard \$23.00, 1 Clock \$13.00; 1 Cupboard \$15.00, knives, forks & spoons; Sugar & Coffe, 2 pitchers & 1 dish, 1 lot glassware, dish, bedstead & furniture, \$10.00, 1 trundle bed & furniture, 12 cts, 1 bedstead & Cover, 5.00, 1 lot bedclothes, 2.50; 1 bag Cotton, 1 lot leather, Bureau, 1 sidesaddle 3.70, set Dog irons, Shovel & Tongs, 6 chairs, 1 Bible 3.50; 3 Sheep; Spotted sow & 5 pigs, 2.75, 2 hogs in pen, 6.12; 1 small walnut table.

John W. Ross/ John Ross :

Axe, Mattox & Ploughs, hoes & spade, 1 lot ploughs; 3 scythes & cradles, 1 lot plowstocks {transferred to M. Gaffney}, Iron Wedge {transferred to M. Gaffney}, 2 Candlesticks & Snuffers, 4 second Choice Shoats, \$4.31

M.C. Stacy : 2 Grass Scythes, 1 Keg, 1 riflegun & Bag \$7.60,

Ross Turner : Drawing Knife, 1 lot Augers,

P.H. Byars : Axe, 1 cutting _?_, handsaw, 1 Saddle,

Claborn Humphries : 3 Kegs, 3 third choice hogs, 6.35

Wiley Arnold : Corn & barrel {transferred to H.G. Gaffney},

Isaac Peeler : 1 lot shoe tools,

H.G. Gaffney, H. Gaffney :

2 Chisels & file {transferred to M. Gaffney}, 1 Pot, 1 dog chain, 1 folding table \$6.35, 1set Silverspoons;

Henry Gaffney : Candlemoulds 43 cts.

James Pearson : pair Saddle bags, 1 lot Corn @50cts, 20.00

Michael Gaffney :

1 sewing Table, 1 trunk, 2 Brushes, 1 Bay Mare \$13.00, 1 sorrell colt \$42.00, 1 Mule \$50.00, 1 Blind horse, \$2.00, 1 c. sorrel mare, \$31.00; 1 Brown Cow & Calf, \$13.10; 1 Black Bull, \$3.00,

Thomas Poole : Decanter

James Young : 1 looking glass 25cts

John Gray : 1 lot Seed Cotton \$1 pr 100 lbs, 965 lbs, \$9.65, 3 chairs

Benjamin Price : To Powder 18cts {transferred to widow}, Waggon & Hind Gear, \$35.50

George Byars : 1 Brindle Cow & calf with Brindle face, \$9.30

Richard Cooper : 1Red cow & calf, 7.31

George Bartee : 1 Choice Hog \$4.65

John Cole :

2 second choice hogs, \$8.45, 1 White sow & 4 pigs, \$1.00, 4 second choice Shoats, 3.15, 1 lot 40 bushels corn @50, \$20.00, another lot 40 bushels corn @50 cts, \$20.00.

Christopher Burns : 1lot corn 40 bushels @50, \$20.00

Lewis Cleary :

(J?)R. Richards:

Aquila Jones : 1 Pocket Book, transferred to widow.

Sworn to and subscribed before me Jany 3rd 1845. s/ R. Bowden, Mag ExOff s/ H.G. Gaffney(Admr)

On a final Settlement (of the Estate of J.M. Gaffney Decd) the admr being present, the heirs at Law all being cited, the following is the result.

Decr 19, 1844 – Cash on hand_____ \$ 19.26

	Int to 1 Jan 1845	.03	19.29
Jan 1, 1845	to amt recd per 1 st Return	15.18	34.47
Jan 1, 1846	deduct amt paid {Ordinary} on 1 st return	.13	
Decr 19, 1845	to sale bill	693.13	693.26
	Interest to 1 Jan 1846	1.47	694.73
Jan 1, 1846	Nothing Rec'd pr 2 nd Return; Paid out	37.65	657.08
	Interest to 1 Jan 1847	45.99	703.07
Jan 1, 1847	Rec's per 3 rd Return	39.00	742.07
	Deduct paid pr 3 rd Return	28.62	713.45
	Interest on \$667.45 to 1 Jan 1848	46.72	760.17
Jan 1, 1848	nothing Rec'd in 1847; Int 1848 to 1851	151.84	912.01
Apr 1851	Received in 1851	.62	912.63
	Deduct paid in 1850 & 1851	29.50	883.13
2 nd page	Brot Over – Due the Estate		883.13
	Deduct Ordinary's Commissions	50.66	832.45
	Deduct Paid Ordinary for 4 th Return	17.75	814.70
	Deduct H.I. Dean's Council Fee	10.00	807.70
	Deduct Balance of Ordianry	4.00	800.70
	One Third of \$ 800.70 for Widow's share		
	Deduct Widows One Third	266.90	533.80

There being 2 Distribitees \$533.80 divided by 2 is \$266.90

The Widows Share is \$266.90
Deduct amount of Debts being
her purchases at the sale, see Sale Bill on record
including interest to 1 April 1857. \$139.66 \$127.24, due the Widow
Deduct Costs in the Case against
Bobbit as per agreement 15.00 \$112.24 {Evidently Minerva had died}
Due the Widow's estate \$112.24
There being 3 Distributees, 1/3 of 112.24 is \$37.41 each

To be paid C.N. Burns {Evidently his wife had died} -- he receives 1/3 of \$112.24: \$37.41
leaving \$74.83 to be divided among his 3 Children who received \$24.94 each.

Due Joseph Gaffney of the Estate of M. Gaffney, Decd \$266.90
Due Joseph Gaffney of the Estate of his mother 24.94 Total \$ 291.84.
Due Thomas (Gaffney) as above Total \$ 291.84

Due Honor Burns of the Estate of her mother \$24.94
Due C.N. Burns \$37.41 Total: \$646.03

State of South Carolina } **6th day of March 1851**
Spartanburg District } To C.N. Burns & Manerva Burns (Late Gaffney), his wife,
Joseph Gaffney, Thomas Gaffney and Honor M. Burns, heirs at law of the Estate of
James M. Gaffney, Deceased, you and each of you are hereby required to be and appear at the
next Court of Ordinary for said District to be held at Spartanburg Court house on the 28 day of
this instant (March) to show cause If any you can the Estate of the said James M. Gaffney Decd
should not be settled.

Given under my hand and seal of Office this 6th day of March 1851 s/ R. Bowden, O.S.D.

It is hereby ordered and decreed that C.N. Burns be appointed Guardian ad lit um for Honor M. Burns,
Minor

Given under my hand and Seal of Office this 6th day March 1851 R. Bowden, O.S.D
I, C.N. Burns do hereby accept the appointment of Guardian Ad it um for Honor M. Burns, minor and also
accept the service of the within Citation in her behalf. s/ C.M. Burns {Seal}

March 28, 1851 {Marked "Satisfied in full"} **\$101.98** On or before the 19th of December next we or either of us promise to pay H.G. Gaffney (admr) of the estate of James M. Gaffney (decd) on order One hundred and one Dollars and 98 cents for value received, witness our hands and seals this 11th day Jany 1845.

s/ C.M. Gaffney {S} s/ C.N. Burns {S} {probably to pay for C.N. Burns purchase at the Estate sale}

Return 28 March 1851: difficult to read

1851 March 24. Paid D.B. Ross on account_ \$1.27½

1851 March 28. Paid J.T. Kirby on note _____ 2.25

Paid Ordinaries & Printer's Fees _____ 17.75 s/ H.G. Gaffney s/ R. Bowden, O.S.D.

Jany 1, 1852. Settlement **of a portion of** Estate of J.M. Gaffney, Decd

Paid 35.00 for tombstones

The balance remaining on this return was \$90.04, paid widow 1/3 -- \$30.01 leaving \$60.03

one Distributee, Joseph being decd.

Thos E. Gaffney's share \$10.00 {?} added making Thos E. Gaffney's share \$70.03 {See Note}

C.N. Burns's share being one third \$10.00 – there being 2 Distributees- share of each child, \$10.00.

End of File #1120

* * *