

## ANDREW GIBSON HOUSE

Andrew Gibson (b. 1750 d. 9-26-1823) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, the son of James Gibson and Jane Fin. In his teens he was an apprentice to a silversmith who immigrated to Charleston, SC in 1765. Against his parents' wishes, Andrew joined the silversmith and years later opened his own store in Cheraw, SC. About 1775, Andrew moved and opened a general store in Guilford County near Gibsonville. During this time, Andrew sued a customer for a debt before Judge James Freeland in Orange County, NC. While visiting Judge Freeland's home, Andrew met his daughter, Jane Freeland and later married her in 1776. Andrew served in Capt. Arthur Forbis' Company of the Guilford County NC Militia. This company was periodically on tour against bands of Tories terrorizing the people in surrounding communities. This company even joined other troops in the 1776 Cherokee Expedition to suppress Indian attacks against settlers in western North Carolina and participated at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15, 1781. Family records state that he took part and was wounded in this battle. Andrew and Jane had the following children: James Gibson (b. 1777 d. 1843, m. Sarah Nix), John Freeland Gibson (b. 1780 d. 1820), Moses Gibson (b. 1783 d. 1857, m. Elizabeth Paisley), Joseph Gibson (b. 1785 d. 1857, m. Marianna Paisley), Robert Gibson (b. 1787 d. 1798), Elizabeth Gibson (b. 1790 d. aft 1850, m. William Causey), Jane A Gibson (b. 1792 d. 1873, m. Jesse Thompson), and Nancy Unity Gibson (b. 1806 d. 1857, m. George B. Clapp). The graves of Andrew, Jane, and most of their children are buried in a family cemetery, which is now part of the Gibsonville Cemetery.

Acquiring more than 2,000 acres of land over a period of years, Andrew Gibson became a prominent and successful farmer, merchant, church and community leader. He was considered quite wealthy for his day and owned several slaves. The census for 1790 lists eleven slaves under his ownership, and his will mentions a total of twenty-one slaves. Gibson was also a gold mining "entrepreneur," operating a gold mine known locally as the "Gold Hill" mine, which is located on the west side of present-day Springwood Ave. in Gibsonville.

Correspondence indicates that Andrew Gibson was a learned man. Among his personal papers it is recorded that Andrew Gibson gave one pound toward the construction of a meeting house (unidentified) in 1794. It is known that the Gibson family gave the land for the Cedar Creek Presbyterian Church in 1812, which relocated near Sedalia in 1815 and became Bethel Presbyterian Church. The Gibson family were active leaders in the church. The cemetery that remained from the

original church, where several members of the Gibson family are buried, became the present Gibsonville cemetery. The old gold mine site is located across the road from the cemetery. Other records list Andrew Gibson as a surveyor in 1808.

Gibson apparently built a new house in the early part of the nineteenth century, after he was already middle-aged. Located on the old stage road (now Highway 70), the architecture of the house dates it to this period. It is not known what became of Andrew's original homeplace, nor where it was located. Andrew's son Joseph Gibson later lived in the house, inheriting it and the plantation lands upon his father's death in 1823. Joseph married Marianna (Mary Ann) Paisley of Greensboro in 1812. He became a wealthy landowner and slave holder himself, inheriting his father's lands and acquiring more than 400 acres of land on his own. He also owned more than a dozen slaves.

Joseph Gibson was appointed a Lieutenant in the Guilford Militia in 1809. A learned man, Gibson served as the chairman and presiding magistrate of the Guilford County Court of Pleas and Quarter Session, with John Hanner as the Clerk of Court. He was also elected as county surveyor in 1820, and in 1821 he ran for the state Senate. Campaign literature is extant among his personal papers. Joseph Gibson also served as the chairman of the board of the Guilford County schools in 1841.

The Gibson family continued to operate the Gold Hill mine. Records indicate that the mine was in operation in 1827, and a letter dated 1829 between A.D. Murphy and Joseph Gibson discusses the construction of six to ten furnaces for the gold mine, which were to have hearths and stacks of soapstone, and "griddles" of cast iron. They were to be built on the property of Joseph's brother Moses, who had apparently inherited the tract of land containing the mine. Moses Gibson sold the mine property to the Boon family in 1841. Moses Gibson and his brother James Gibson, a prominent doctor in Guilford County who had served in the House of Commons in the North Carolina General Assembly of 1813, both migrated west in the 1840's eventually settling in Mississippi. The Boon family later sold the Gibson mine property to Dr. David Weir of Greensboro in 1860.

Joseph Gibson was instrumental in bringing the railroad through what was to become Gibsonville. In 1851 he contracted with the State to lay three and one-half miles of roadbed for the North Carolina Railroad for the sum of \$4,000 per mile. Slaves owned by Joseph Gibson undertook part of the construction work. A depot was completed in time for the arrival of the first train in 1855. Although Gibsonville was not incorporated as a town until 1871, the name had been applied since completion of the depot and the

opening of a post office there. According to local tradition, the depot was named for Gibson because he had no sons to carry on the family name, and the other members of his family had migrated west by that time. Local tradition also indicates that some people thought Gibson was vain to allow the depot to be named after him, however, he reportedly countered that Gibsonville was named in part for the "distinguished English DeVine and jurist, Bishop Edmund Gibson" (1669-1748). The railroad depot at Gibsonville was located one mile north of Joseph Gibson's house.

Gibson wrote in 1853 that a company had been formed to extend the railroad from the Atlantic Ocean to Tennessee. In correspondence dated 1856, he wrote to his nephew that *the railroad was in full operation, with cars arriving in Gibsonville daily. Freight cars were arriving three times a week and area crops commanded high prices, to be shipped on the trains.* Joseph Gibson reported:

"We have done great Business at Gibsonville, -- our Village is increasing & our property rising in Value, our people have become frantic & frenzied with railroad prices."

Joseph Gibson died the following year, in 1857, two years after the coming of the railroad. He bequeathed shares of North Carolina Railroad stock to each of his three sisters valued at a total of \$3,600.

Joseph left the bulk of his estate to Rufus B. Gibson. It is stated in his will that Rufus was the son of Nancy Hanner, who had lived with the Gibson's for many years, and that Joseph Gibson had raised Rufus as a son. It can be surmised that Rufus was perhaps a relative and took Gibson's name for his own. The census for 1850 lists a B.B. Hanner, age 10, living with the Gibson's along with Nancy Hanner. The census for 1860, however, lists an R.B. Gibson, age 19 and a student, as living with R.M. Sloan, Sr. R.B.'s property holdings listed in the census were valued at \$15,000. Joseph also left Rufus his "library of books and pamphlets," along with the land and the slaves. No record of Rufus B. Gibson after 1860 can be discovered. In 1883, a Rufus A. Summers deeded the Gibson tract to Margaret P. Summers. No estate records or the like could be discovered for Rufus Gibson, therefore, it can be surmised that Rufus Summers was a relative of Gibson's and was his namesake, inheriting his estate upon Gibson's death,

The old Gibson home place was sold to D.E. Clapp in 1895. In 1927, the tract—which

Included 100 acres—was sold to Lara Neal and Mabel Baynes. Portions of that tract were sold to J. H. Barnwell in 1938 (80 acres), and in 1948 a portion of that tract (73 acres) was sold to Paul Ingle. The house has served as a tenant house since that time, and the land has been farmed. The house and surrounding acreage was bequeathed to Lena Ingle in 1974. Upon her death, her nephew Randy Ingle inherited this property.

In summary, Andrew Gibson, a first-generation immigrant, was a successful entrepreneur. Andrew served in the Guilford County NC Militia and was wounded at the Battle of Guilford Court House on March 15, 1781. A memorial marker was placed on his grave by the DAR on May 15, 2011. His home ca. early 19<sup>th</sup> century is very important historically. It may be the only surviving house known to exist in Guilford County that was built by a veteran of the Revolutionary War.

Equally important is Andrew's son Joseph Gibson, for whom the Town of Gibsonville was named. Besides his business and community endeavors, he was contracted to build the roadbed for the NC Railroad. This work was done by his enslaved laborers for 3 ½ miles along both sides of Guilford and Alamance County line, through what is now the center of Gibsonville.