



From the Collections: The Cainhoy Riot as Remembered by Jim Alston

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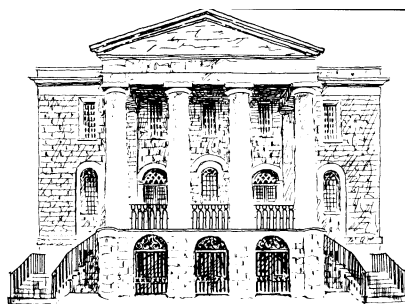
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From the Collections



FIREPROOF BUILDING, CHARLESTON

THE CAINHOY RIOT AS REMEMBERED BY JIM ALSTON

ELISE PINCKNEY

The Agatha A. Simmons Collection contains a scrapbook labelled *Stories Collected from Slaves*. This is an oral history and folklore transcription made by her mother Leonarda J. Aimar in the 1920s.¹

One of the pieces transcribes Jim Alston's recollections of the riot he was in the midst of at Cainhoy.² Alston identifies himself as living at Hampton Plantation on the South Santee, and having "bin tru de war" with Col. Henry Rutledge.³

The first portion of the interview is given below. The recollection continues with some repetition and with a review of the continued kindness of some of the white men present the day of the riot who still "care for me." Alston insists on the point that the men had been told not to carry guns to the meeting that day.⁴

Riot at Cainhoy, S. C., related by Jim Alston in 1926

The riot started this way.

Solicitor [St. Julien] Jervey was the first speaker, then as soon as he got through, then this colored man Mr. [W. J. Mc] Kinley, as he got up, all he could say was, "Fellow Citizens, hear what I got to say," and right from then the drum keep beating. And the first news we know after the drum beating, four or five of these little boys from the city, white boys, one tall white gentleman was with them, and he made them take the guns from a little vestry house that [is] broke down now and form a line.

My wife Jane Alston and Susan Martin were there. Dey make de out cry dat dese boys taken de gun and one ole man — colored — by de name John Lachicotte walk up to dese boys wid me. We walk up, I and him to

¹ *Stories Collected from Slaves*, SCHS, MS 28-541/, pp. 11-17. For a description of the Simmons Collection, see this *Magazine*, below, pp. 161-62.

² See Melinda Meek Hennessey, "Racial Violence During Reconstruction: The 1876 Riots in Charleston and Cainhoy," this *Magazine*, above, esp. pp. 107-09.

³ *Stories Collected from Slaves*, pp. 23, 25.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 29.

dese boys. The old man say "Gimme mi gun." As he walk up de boy hole de gun in his hand and de ole man walk up to him and de boy fire de gun off and hit him right in bress — whole charge. An I was rite there next to him when it happened, close as I is to you. Dat started de shooting.

After de shooting commenced everything stir in such way — some running — some shooting and firing at one another. Mr. Sam Sanders an Mr. Venning an Mr. William Simmons. They run in the little vestry house.

All de niggers you know say tis Mr. Sanders caused de riot. He were one ob de chairman; dey say: kill Sanders. Mr. Sanders an Mr. Venning ran out so they git clear, but Mr. William Simmons he stood in de house. Dat ole man didn't have any idea anybody going to injure him. The colored people put de gun tru de windows and fired, an Mr. Simmons get killed en dere — shot badly, didn't dead right away. I take um an brung um to de school house to de villege; died there.

Mr. Simmons was de last one I took out of de house, ah! Some time when I talk about de ting, de ting grieve me.

Five got shot around de church an fall on de groun cripple so they couldn't move. The fuss I brought to de school house was a little boy — good size chile. I tink he mother don't know where he is. I bring he to the school house; died there.

Dave Pregnall all shot in back.

I been all shot through the coat sleeve, an as I hole my han up a ball passed through my fingers, an then de niger hallo bout me; but I know de boy an he parents an I did not care what they say, I gain to help him. He came to town an lived long time, but he died on count him wounds.

Mr. Hammond Fairchild can tell all de name. He come after Riot hunting up the dead.

What caused me to get de buggy is: I put Dave down side the branch an tell um: stay here till I get de buggy and come for you. I come to Mr. Edmund Holmes to git de buggy and gone back for Dave. After I git in buggy, Mr. Holmes [and] all dem been to de school house, and dey tell me must bring dem all what I can get. Now Dave move from de place I leave him. I couldn't fine un, an I went back to the church. Pick up the other men and bring them; make different trips. But — Mr. Simmons, after I bring him and lay him down there — Mr. Ingraham horse rear, fast walk off, and caused the other leg to catch in de wheel and broke [it], and carried him to de school house an he died there.

One of de men dat died left money for me. Mr. Creighton the saw mill man told me, but I never did get it. All um promised to take care of me.

De nigers all said dey would kill me — no more than for fun.

Jis [after] Mr. Jervey come from him stan[d], all de colored man say [was] "Fellow Citizen." The white boy never intend it. He jus hole de gun and as my wife say, "Dem boys got de gun," ole John Lachicotte said "Gimme my gun," and as the boy hold de gun it went off some way. He didn't take aim, an de gun jumped way out his han as it went off.

Mr. Boliver Furman was there as de ole man got shot. I tell you what happened to de ole man what make dem boys take de guns. As de man fall de blood from de ole man shot all over his face and he hollered, "Boys look at that." It bloody my coat. My coat all shot up. I would not take \$10.00 for dat coat to-day. My wife say she don't want no blood in de house. "You Bring dem buckra blood in dis house here." I say "What you do with it?" She said, "I throw it over board."

All de niggers dat done dat mischief dead.

RECENT MANUSCRIPT ACCESSIONS

HARLAN GREENE

The format of these descriptions is the same as in the *South Carolina Historical Society Manuscript Guide* (1979). The abbreviations are standard and may be found in many dictionaries.

The number in the left margin of each description is the call number of the collection or volume being described. The heading or collection designation is in bold face type on the first line of each description. The second line indicates whether the entry describes a body of miscellaneous "papers," correspondence, a journal, or some similar manuscript item or group. This indication is followed by the inclusive dates for the material and then by the approximate size of the collection in number of feet or number of items.

The descriptions are intended to be specific, yet concise. As a rule, the larger and more diverse the collection, the less detailed the description. Nevertheless, for both large and small collections, the types of papers, the general topics, the individuals, and the places that figure most prominently are mentioned.

The descriptions suggest some of the kinds of materials the Society collects and needs to make available to researchers. Contributions of similar materials are always welcome and are classified as deductible gifts for income tax purposes. The Society also welcomes the opportunity to microfilm for its researchers manuscripts in private possession.

- 28- **Porcher-Dinnies family.**
 539/ Papers. 1820-1957. 1 ft.
 540 SC lowcountry and Mars Bluff, Darlington District family. Mostly letters to Elizabeth Ashby Shackelford Porcher (d. 1904) and her husband Dr. Edward Porcher (1814-1874) from various members of the Porcher family, including his father Isaac Porcher