[Best copy available]

SIMON MIRAULT
A Biography

HISTORY 300

by Tommy Huskisson
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Winter Quarter

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Minis Collection, Lane Library.
Armstrong Atlantic State Univ.
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ABSTRACT

Simon R. Mirault appeared in Savannah around 1849, possibly earlier. He was a mulatto who probably emigrated to this country from the West Indies, or more specifically from Santo Domingo. Simon was first employed as a pastry cook in 1849, later as a confectioner, and at the time of his death, as a cotton sampler. During the time he was in Savannah, he managed to accumulate a fair-sized estate. Simon R. Mirault died in 1875 at the approximate age of 60.
As far as I have been able to find out, Simon R. Mirault first appeared in Savannah in 1849. According to the city directory, he was employed as a pastry cook and resided at 128 Broughton Street at the corner of Whitaker. Simon was employed as a pastry cook at least until the 1850 census, where he is listed as a confectioner. It is possible that the term "confectioner" and "pastry cook" were used interchangeably or that Simon was self-employed by this time. At this time, he is listed as Simon Mirault, 35, Pailette, confectioner.

In 1851, Simon Mirault, a free man of color, was listed in the tax digest as boarding at the northeast one-quarter of lot number fifty, Brown Ward. In 1852 a house was built for Simon Mirault on lot number thirty-seven, Troup Ward, which was laid out in 1851. This house was later moved in 1963 to twenty-one Houston Street. Simon must have acquired a goodly sum of money to have purchased a house in just a few short years.

Simon Mirault then seems to have settled down for good when he married Elizabeth Faro on the second day of October, 1856, in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. The wedding was officiated by Father John Barry. Simon remained with Elizabeth until his death. Simon Mirault surely must have been married prior to his appearance.
in Savannah. This is supported largely by the fact that he had five children in 1850. There is also Jane Mirault listed, but it is not known whether she is his wife or not. It is doubtful that Simon would have married at such a late age if his previous wife had not died.

There is very little information on Simon Mirault between 1856 and 1871. In the 1858 edition of the city directory, there is no mention of a Simon Mirault, only Josephine Mirault of 35 Jones Street. The 1859 and 1860 editions show no Mirault's whatsoever. This could be attributed to the poor quality of the census-takers of that day or to the loss of those records pertinent to the history of Simon Mirault. As I did not discover this acute lack of information until very late, it is quite possible that there is some mention of this man in the newspapers of the day.

Simon later switches occupations and becomes a porter with the firm of Andrew Low & Company, commission merchants. From this he becomes a cotton sampler. A cotton sampler is something like a tobacco buyer in that he samples and selects the finest grade cotton available. He expertly examines each bale for fibre texture, length, and the other factors important to a cloth manufacturer.
Simon R. Mirault died on December 3, 1875, leaving his estate to his four remaining children. Simon's funeral invitation appeared in the next day's newspaper. "The friends and acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Simon R. Mirault, and Miss Josephine Mirault, and of Mr. and Mrs. James Anderson, are respectfully invited to attend the funeral of the former from St. Benedict's Church, at 3 o'clock, on tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon."14

With Simon's death came the disposition of the will. The heirs to his estate were Francis A. Mirault, Mrs. Laura Campfield, Mrs. Rosa M. Arteson, and Simon Mirault, Jr. According to the provisions of the will, Solomon Cohen was to be the executor of the estate. Unfortunately, he dies also. As a result, Francis manages to have himself appointed temporary administrator for the estate.15

However, things were destined not to proceed smoothly as Elizabeth Mirault contested the will on the grounds that there was no provision made for her in the will and that he was not of "sound mind and body" when he made out his will.16 The will was officially revoked on December 24, 1875, and recorded as such. Simon's will was written January 30, 1855, nearly twenty months before his marriage to Elizabeth. However, the will was not probated and admitted to record until December 9, 1875—six days after his death.17
This left the job of administrator of the estate still undecided. On December 30, 1875, Francis Mirsult, Simon's eldest son, applies to become administrator of the will and estate. The letters of administration are granted on February 7, 1876. At this time, an appraisal of the southeastern one-quarter of lot number 37, Troup Ward, was taken. The property and inventory were valued at approximately $2600.

Meanwhile, in early 1878, Elizabeth abandoned all claims to the estate. This left the estate to finally be settled. The administrator's bond of Ross M. Artson, et. al., was paid and received February 18, 1892, nearly 17 years after Simon Mirlsult's death. It is also at this time that Francis finally receives permanent administratorship of Simon's estate.

The background and early history of Simon Mirlsult were difficult to trace. This was due largely, in part, to his curiously mixed ancestry. The lack of any available immigration records was a hindrance; however, a supplement hopefully will be added when the records arrive. The sources consulted, although primary ones, were sketchy, somewhat inaccurate, and sometimes of little or no use. But this is a problem common to all historical writers and must be overcome. I have enjoyed writing this biography and I wish I had more information and more time to do a better job.
Miraullt, Simon, 35, Mulatto, confectioner
  Jane, 36
  Laura, 12
  Rosa, 10
  Louis, 7
  Francis, 5 M
  Simon, 3
Miss Josephine, 40
  Louis, 10
  Mackay, 9 M
  James, 7
  Janet, 5
  Eliza, 1

Miraullt, Ann, 45, (see Garay, Hetty)

Miraullt, Aspasia, 50 M, Mulatto, St. Domingo

(380)

(851)
21 Houston Street  Northeast Corner Lot 10  Washington Yard

This house was moved on February 7, 1962 from 341 Habersham Street, Lot 27 Troup Ward.

1851 Troup Ward laid out
1853 Vincent's map shows no house on this lot.

1851 T. D. Charles Middleton P.M.C. bds. Lot 31, Warren
       Simon Mireault  P.M.C. bds. NE 4 Lot 50, Brown
1852 T. D.    "    "    "    "    merchandising (only)
1853 T. D. Charles Middleton    "    "    "    wine imp. 1/2 Lot 37, Troup
       Simon Mireault    "    "    "    $600 imp. Lot 37, Troup
1854 T.A. Guardian C. Middleton    "    "    "    $400 imp. NE 1/2 Lot 37
       S. Mireault    "    "    "    $1500 imp. NW 1/2 Lot 37

1857, Aug. 20, (3 & 498) Alvin Miller, Guardian of Charles
Middleton, sold the north half of Lot 37, Troup, to
William Mackay for $1200 subject to ground rent

1867, Sept. 1, (4 & 119) Mayor and Aldermen gave a separate
deed to the southeast 1/4 of Lot 37, Troup Ward, to Simon
Mireault

As Troup Ward was not laid out until 1851, and as Vincent's
map of 1852, which went to press in 1852, shows no house
on this lot, and as the first time improvements on the lot
appear in the tax digest is 1853; it seems this house
must have been built in 1852 for Simon Mireault, a free
man of color.
I am presently writing a reply from the Federal Records Center in Atlanta. I hope that the period prior to 1849 will be included in the reply.

The offspring of parents of whom one is white and the other a Negro. It is a word of Spanish and Portuguese origin meaning mulatto or a child of mixed origin.

This is merely an educational issue until it can be verified by the immigration records.

An occupation similar to that of a tobacco buyer. Purchases best quality product for the grower who commissioned him. I was unable to find a precise definition of this profession.

1850 and 1860 Directories of the City of Savannah. Available on Microfilm at the Savannah Public Library.

1850 Federal Population Census report for Chatham County, p. 280

Taken from word book of Warren and Washington wards. Available at the Georgia Historical Society. Look under lot 18, Washington Ward.

Records of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist marriages: Jan. 1800-Sept. 1806

1850 Federal Population Census, p. 280

Available on microfilm at the SPL

Patills Directory of the City of Savannah, 1871

City Directory, 1875

Exact duties of a cotton planer are not known. This is rare occupation in our area.

Microfilm Savannah Morning News Dec., 1875, p.3, col. 1

General Index to Wills, Administrations, Etc. of Chatham County, E-207, Dec. 10, 1875, Chatham Co. Courthouse
16. Taken from actual papers in will and from handwritten original. Contested Dec. 13, 1873, Courthouse.

17. Ibid

18. Ibid


SOURCES CONSULTED

Cemetery Records
Chatham County Marriages
Church Records
City Directories
Daily Georgian
Deeds
Federal Population Census, 1850
General Index to Wills, Administrations, Etc. of Chatham Co.
Marriage Records
Savannah Daily Republican
Savannah Morning News
Kills
Wilson's Annals of Georgia by Caroline P. Wilson