BENJAMIN F. PERRY, UNIONIST OF GRENVILLE DISTRICT AND SOUTH CAROLINA

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One of my happiest teenage memories is that of attending the North and South Carolina Championship Tennis Tournament held at the Sans Souci Country Club in July, 1922. Life was carefree and prosperous for the Greenville so-called upper class in the early twenties and its athletic and social life centered in this beautiful old club house and the surrounding thirty-odd acres which contained a picturesque nine-hole golf course and ample clay tennis courts. The latter were of particular interest, for at this period Greenville was the "Tennis Capitol of the Southeastern States," and the six top seeded players of the club: Viv Manning, Bill Ellis, Luther Marchant, Bill Cely, Marshall Prevost, and Zenas Grier were the equal, if not the peers, of any sextet of tennis stars that could be named in the entire South. The grounds of the Sans Souci Club were located, as older native Greenvillians will recall, at the end of North Franklin Road about one block north of Clarendon Avenue. This entrance from the Old Buncombe Road had the perhaps unique distinction of being the first paved road in our county, brought about no doubt through the influence of certain economic royalists who were members of the club. Founded in 1905, the club operated here until July 4, 1923, when it moved to the present Byrd Boulevard site and became today's Greenville Country Club. In the early years of this century and prior to its purchase by the newly formed country club, the lovely old house and grounds called San Souci had been for some years the home of a fashionable girls finishing school which drew its students from all parts of the country.

Although perhaps best remembered to most present day Greenvillians because of the just mentioned history, Sans Souci was built by and was the scene of the last fifteen years of happy home life of Benjamin Franklin Perry, one of the most colorful and remarkable men to whom South Carolina has ever given birth. A brief description of this historic landmark of Greenville might help one to understand the most important Carolina Unionist. Acknowledged to be the handsomest residence in the

entire up-country, Sans Souci's rolling grounds were artistically landscaped with shrubbery, arborvitae, giant magnolias and spreading oaks dotting the lawn. In its prime the estate included the now-termed Sans Souci residential section of our city. A circular driveway from Old Buncombe Road led to the front entrance which faced toward Greenville while the back porch commanded a magnificent view of the mountains. These grounds also contained extensive flower gardens and an orchard of over a thousand fruit trees. The large brick mansion was built in the ornate style of the period with mansard roof, gabled windows, and a tall cupola in front. High steps led to the first story and a porch extended around all sides except the right front, from which a room with bay windows projected. Trailing vines shaded the veranda and ivey softened its walls. The front steps led to a spacious hallway which ran the length of the house. On the left were two large libraries connected by folding doors and which contained some five thousand miscellaneous volumes and over a thousand law books, many of them old and rare works. This library was one of the most extensive and best selected then existant in the state. High ceilings, handsome rugs and furnishings gave a luxurious appearance to these rooms. On right of the hallway were two airy bedrooms separated by a side hall, from which a circular stairway led to the second story containing numerous bedrooms. The dining room, resplendent with mahogany furniture and old silverware was in the basement.

Sans Souci represented to its owner a far cry from the frontier village atmosphere of the Greenville of five hundred population to which he had come as a young man fifty years before to seek his fortune in the field of law. And here, amid these gracious Sans Souci surroundings, on the third of December, 1886, died Benjamin Franklin Perry, staunch unionist, statesman, jurist, man of letters, first Provisional Governor of South Carolina under President Andrew Johnson, and concisely described by the eminent historian Allen Nevins in these glowing words:

> If ever American History exhibited an intrepid body of men, it was the Unionists of the lower South who, believing that secession was wrong alike to the nation and to southern interests, battled to the last against a movement that in 1861 became irresistible. Altogether too little justice has been done these men - and of all these unionists, Justice William Sharkley and James Alcord of Mississippi; Michael

> Hahn of Louisiana; James L. Pettigrue of South Carolina; Sam Houston of Texas, opposing the frenzy in the cotton states to the bitter end, none is more attractive, none had nobler qualities of mind and heart than Benjamin F. Perry. In no sense a genius, and denied by his unpopular opinions the opportunity to hold high office, he displayed through a long remarkable career a well rounded array of qualities backed by nerve, persistence and a keen consciousness of duty. South Carolina had in his time half a dozen men who will, and have remained more famous. But none loved South Carolina more warmly, and none did more for her intellectual, social, moral and political advancement.

The growth and development of such an independent citizen of Greenville and South Carolina well merits a short study and also through his life we may briefly obtain an early picture of the now "Textile Center of the World."

Benjamin F. Perry's strength of character that enabled him to stand steadfastly for principle in the face of unpopularity and repeated defeat, to fight on doggedly for a cause when he saw his party ever dwindling in his native state, to sacrifice personal ambition in an attempt to save the South as he saw it, came not by accident, but from the rugged independence of a long line of rugged forebears. Over two hundred years earlier an ancestor, John Perry, had joined the little band of Puritans who left England with John Eliot to seek refuge for their faith in a new land. Two grandsons, Benjamin and Nathaniel, after ably serving in the Revolutionary Army, left their native village of Sherborn, Massachusetts, and moved to South Carolina to work in a mercantile store in Charleston. Before long their Charleston employers suggested that they take an assortment of goods into the back country, as the Piedmont foothills were then called, and start a store there. This back country was then completely isolated, unsuited to commerce because of transportation difficulties with the coast. Barter was the common form of exchange. Successively Benjamin and Nathaniel Perry lived and ran a store in the Newberry section, on the Enoree six miles above present-day Greenville, and on Twleve Mile Creek near Keowee in Pickens County, before they finally came to rest on large holdings of lands which they purchased on the edge of the Tugaloo River, a branch of the Savannah, on the extreme northwest boundary of our state. No other possible location than this in the old Pendleton District could offer more striking

contrast to the aristocratic settlements of the low country from whence the brothers had started, a contrast which was to develop political overtones in the disagreements between the up country and the low. After years of bachelorhood, the migrant Benjamin married, and in November, 1805, Benjamin Franklin Perry was born, the third of four children. The boy enjoyed a happy family childhood in the remote wilderness. His father became one of the more prosperous farmers of the community and Benjamin led the normal life of a well-to-do country boy. Starting at the age of five, he attended several so-called schools until finally a visiting Pennsylvania teacher fired in him a love of reading which remained throughout his life. He bought books while in his young teens with every dollar he could scrape; and James Boswell, William Sheakespeare, Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, and Joseph Addison were familiar literary companions by the time he was fifteen.

Though he was practically in charge of his father's farms at this young age, the young Ben Perry had determined to be something more than a tiller of the soil. He longed to study Latin and Greek and to prepare himself for a profession. Thus, in the fall of 1821, the fifteen-year-old boy rode on horseback to Asheville, N. C., where he entered the Asheville Academy. He was an insatiable student. By studying sixteen hours a day, he memorized a Latin grammar in one week. In the first eight months he covered all the courses in classical studies offered. A second year at the Asheville Academy followed. Then, on hearing of the male and female academies recently established in Greenville,[1] he decided to enter the Greenville Male Academy to pursue the knowledge of mathematics and natural philosophy.

In the spring of 1823 Ben Perry came to Greenville, which was to be his residence thereafter. The beautiful mountain village, nestling in a verdant valley in the foothills of the Blue Ridge,

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[1]The land for the academies, a thirty-acre site now occupied by the Heritage Green complex of cultural institutions, was donated to the trustees by Vardry McBee. Public subscription of some $5,000 paid for the two "neat buildings." Peter Cauble, the blacksmith, was the low contributor on the lists with a subscription of $15. Cauble hammered out a fortune of at least $100,000 in his shop on the southwest corner of Main and Coffee streets. His heirs still own the property.

with the peaks of Paris Mountain, Table Rock, and Caesar's Head in the distance, completely captivated him. This village was laid out on the eastern banks of the Reedy River just where the falls tumbled over a cliff of ragged rocks, and meandered onward between banks shaded with a thick growth of Camperdown elms (thus name of our former downtown textile mill). From the river northward stretched the unpaved Main Street, with a two-story log court house in its center. Within a year this crude frontier structure was to give way to a brick building, remembered by many of us as the Record Building constructed on the lot now occupied by the old Liberty Life Building now the Insurance Building. A block to the east, in the center of Court Street stood a three-story jail. The scene presented a charming rural aspect; the streets were covered with grass, and handsome trees grew here and there. Yet this pastoral village was to hold a unique place in the economic and political life of the state and under the future leadership of our new young arrival was to become the stronghold of unionism in South Carolina during the period of sectional conflict. Economically, it depended partly on the summer visitors from the low country who sought the healthful and invigorating climate of Greenville as a retreat from their malaria-ridden plantations. Innkeeping was to become a major business, and note will be made of several leading hotels later. Another factor in the prosperity of Greenville at this period was its thriving trade with the Tennessee and Kentucky drovers who passed through on their way to Charleston and Augusta. Along the fifty or sixty miles of their route through the district the drovers provided a good market for the corn, fodder, and other food stuffs grown by local farmers. This western trade from over the mountains also built up the business of the mercantile establishments and mechanics' shops in the village. Thus Greenville, with its diversified activities, furnished a contrast with the low country districts which were devoted almost entirely to cotton or rice culture under slave labor. As in the other Piedmont districts the population in Greenville was predominantly white, and the surrounding small farms used very few slaves, if any. In 1823 the village population was only about five hundred. There were only two doctors, who had little practice as many residents had never taken a dose of medicine, and three lawyers. The three or four stores all kept

liquor for sale.

Not only did the up-country and the low-country differ sharply in their economic life, but they showed an even wider contrast in their social life. The Greenville of this day was still a rude frontier village, whereas the old towns of the low-country had long been accustomed to wealth, refinement, and a rich intellectual life. Perry's description of Greenville as he first saw it is illuminating:

> I remember the first day I reached Greenville. I saw two drunken ruffians throwing stones at each other, on the Public Square, cursing and abusing each other with gross epithets for several hours. It was customary for the young men of the village and the old ones also to meet in the piazzas of the stores and sometimes on the sidewalks of the streets, and play cards all the morning or evening, drinking in the meantime toddy, which was very often placed in front of them on the table at which they were playing. I have seen thus situated Chancellor Thompson, Judge Earle, Col. Toney, Captain Cleveland, Warren R. Davis and others. Playing cards was the chief amusement of the village. There was very little business of any character to occupy the people, and scarcely any of them thought of spending their time in reading.

He goes on to describe the simplicity of the household furnishings:

> Col. Toney had in his drawing room an old sofa which was afterwards purchased by Captain Cleveland, and which I am sure, was the only one in the village, 'till General Thompson moved up from Edgefield. In the sitting room of Captain Cleveland, who was the wealthiest man in the District, there were split bottom chairs made in the country, two old tables and a book case with fifteen or twenty volumes in it.

There was only one carriage in the village, an old vehicle belonging to Colonel William Toney, and, so far as Perry knew, the only one other in the whole district was that of Judge Waddy Thompson. The village had only two pianos, and silver spoons were almost as rare.

After one year at the academy young Perry gave up for lack of funds his ambition to enter South Carolina College, and in March, 1824, entered the office of Judge Baylis J. Earle to read law. The little one-room office stood on the lot where the Downtown Baptist Church now stands. He vigorously applied himself to his studies, and lived economically using one of the

jury rooms in the court house as a bedchamber. Perry boarded at Crittenden's Hotel (on the corner where Carpenter Brothers Drug Store now stands) for one hundred dollars a year. In 1826 he journeyed alone to Columbia to stand his bar examination before the Court of Appeals. The test was rigid but he passed every question. His funds were so low he had to borrow fifteen dollars from his Greenville friend Elias T. Earle to return home. The next January found him licensed to practice law and thus he embarked on a career of professional and political activity that vigorously covered the next fifty-nine years of his life.

To cover Benjamin Perry's history from this time on would be to cover the entire nullification, secession, war and reconstruction phases of our state's history, so only brief mention can be made of his highlights. Progress as a young lawyer was at first slow, but soon success followed his professional efforts for there was a great deal of shrewd common sense in his make-up and a very practical business turn. Throughout his life rigid self-discipline and industry kept his goal continuously before him. As his fortunes improved, he entered actively into the social life of the awakening Greenville. A social center was the Mansion House, an elegant hotel, erected in 1824 on the site of the present-day Poinsett Hotel. It advertised to the low-country summer visitors rates of four dollars and a half per week for one gentleman, and two dollars and a half for one horse. It was to that day and time what the Poinsett was to the Greenville of the middle years of this century.

A summer treat in the village was to visit the Greenville Bath House (the 125-year-ago equivalent of the YMCA Health Club) located on the banks of the Reedy with rates of a dollar per month for hot and cold showers, or single shower for six and a quarter cents, and pool and shower for twelve and a half cents. Moonlight nights found the young romantic couples walking to the falls of the Reedy below the substantial foot log which served as our first Main Street Bridge. Early Perry romantic attachments included Caroline Cleveland and Mirian Earle, daughters of Greenville founders whose family names are most familiar to us today, but economic necessity postponed any thought of marriage. In 1837 he won the hand of Elizabeth McCall of Charleston, a niece of Robert Young Hayne. The

following year the couple moved into a new home Perry had built in the block on South Main Street where J. E. Sirrine was formerly located. Here for thirty-three years, and later at Sans Souci, their private life was one of interrupted happiness. To Perry, his wife was always perfect and to her Perry was the noblest man that ever lived in South Carolina. Whenever away throughout his life Perry wrote home by every mail and the Perry Letters, published by his wife after his death, are an important source for the history of this period. Seven children were born to the couple, one of whom, William, served with distinction in the South Carolina Legislature and in the United States House of Representataives. Another, Fannie, married William E. Beattie, a wealthy young Greenville merchant, and is affectionately remembered by many residents today as Mrs. Fanny Beattie.

The consistency of Benjamin Pery's unionist convictions began to develop early in his public career. After the passage by Congress of the Tariff Law of 1828 the storm of anti-nationalism which had been brewing in other sections of the state through the 1820's finally burst upon Greenville in full fury. The first tariff protest meeting was held here in September, 1828, and with it Perry entered upon the stormiest period of his career. South Carolina was departing from the ardent nationalism it had championed under the leadership of John Caldwell Calhoun since the war of 1812. Calhoun now became the leader of the states right faction and advocated his famous Nullification Theory. The Nullification and Union parties were formed and party enmity became more bitter in the state election of 1830. Perry led the Unionists' fight in the up-country against Nullification. Two-thirds of the General Assembly elected that year were nullificationists, but Greenville County chose a delegation opposed to the principle. The session adjourned without any action being taken on the issue. But in1832 nullification swept the state and it was evident that more than two-thirds of the new legislature were advocates of the doctrine. The Union Party, however, won an overwhelming victory in Greenville District due to a fighting campaign led by Perry which warned that the calling of a state convention by a states rights legislature meant nullification and that nullification

meant disolution and civil war. The convention was called and the Ordinance of Nullification was voted to take effect in 1833. During the winter of 1832-33 Perry labored with indefatigable energy to promote the Unionist cause throughout the state. His fellow citizens in the Greenville District were no less determined than he. Union Societies were formed throughout the district, and the resolution adopted by one, the Paris Mountain Union Society, on January 5, 1833, is illuminating:

> Resolved, that in defense of the Federal Union, we have drawn our swords and flung away our scabbards. Resolved, further, that we have but two words by way of reply to the nullifiers, which are these, "come on."

Fortunately, the passage of Henry Clay's compromise Tariff Bill by Congress eased the burning issue of the time being, but left a feeling of intense bitterness between the unionist and the states rights men which was finally to terminate in secession. For the next two decades Calhoun dominated the state. But even as early as 1833 Perry wrote in his journal, "I sincerely believe that there is a disposition to dissolve the Union and form a Southern Confederacy. It will show itself more plainly in the next few years."

As a weapon in his fight Perry assumed the editorship of the Greenville *Mountaineer* owned by O. H. Wells, and for years it was a staunch organ of unionism. In his first editorial he stated the basic principles which governed his public career. He proclaimed his independence. He would not sacrifice his political opinions for the sake of popularity or patronage. Next, he disclaimed any intention of becoming a factionist for any party. He would serve no other flag than that of his country. And, finally, he dwelt on the two cardinal principles of his creed: democracy and unionism. The great influence exerted by The *Mountaineer* brought a mounting circulation, and contributions to its support came from unionists all over the state. Its constant editorial theme was an earnest entreaty to lay aside party strife for the preservation of the Union. Though Editor Perry pursued a courteous tone, his uncompromising position made him the target for attack by nullifier editors and politicians and involved him in a series of bitter personal controversies which he later deeply regretted. His position in Greenville was especially trying

since all his friends of prominence were nullifiers and his supporters were the so-called "common man." Being sensitive as well as high tempered, Perry came right to the point of actual dueling with such figures as Waddy Thompson, a life long friend; Dr. Frederick W. Symmes, the prominent editor of the Pendleton *Messenger* and grandfather of our late fellow citizen Fred Symmes; Dr. Henry H. Townes, of Calhoun Mills, an old school friend; William Choice, who was stabbed by Perry in a fight in Perry's own office. Such encounters were indicative of the perils of newspaper editing all over South Carolina at the time.

By now the nullifiers realized they could not hope to win in the Greenville District if Perry were left unmolested, and they determined to establish a nullification newspaper to counteract the influence of the *Mountaineer*. From this move came one of the most famous duels in South Carolina history. Turner Bynum, a brilliant young editor from Columbia, became editor of the rival paper, the *Southern Sentinal,* and shortly began to attack Perry severely. Bad led to worse, and Perry issued a challenge to Bynum which was accepted. They met on an island in the Tugaloo River between South Carolina and Georgia at sunrise on Thursday, August 16, 1832. Perry's first shot found its mark. The extent of Bynum's hurt was not apparent at the time, but the following evening he passed away. For unknown reasons he was buried Saturday at midnight in the Old Stone Church near present Clemson University in a heavy rainstorm. The setting was dismal and the newly dug grave was half filled with water. Perry was tremendously affected by the tragic occurance and forty years later wrote in his autobiography that his killing of Bynum was the most painful event of his life. It is significant though that the *Southern Sentinel,* Bynum's paper, ceased publication within two months after his death. Thus at bitter personal cost, Perry had won a respite from personal attack by the nullifiers.

In spite of his intensive political activity, Perry enjoyed an extensive legal practice throughout the years. By far his most sensational case was the "Yancey Trial," famous in Greenville legal history. William Lowndes Yancey was a young attorney who had read law in Perry's office and served for a time as

editor of the *Mountaineer*. During the political campaign of 1838, young Yancey attended a rally near Greenville at which Waddy Thompson, a candidate for Congress, spoke. While conversing with a group of men, Yancey made a remark about Thompson that was resented by Thompson's seventeen-year-old nephew, Elias Earle, who called Yancey a liar. Yancey slapped the lad and young Elias returned the blow with a riding crop before they were separated. The next day Yancey went to Elias' father, Dr. Robinson M. Earle (he was also Yancey's wife's uncle), told the circumstances of the fracas and expressed his deep regret. Yancey thought the affair ended but soon afterward Dr. Earle started the quarrel anew, called Yancey a liar, and came at him with the handle of a train cradle, shoving him off the porch. As he fell, Yancey pulled a pistol and fired on Dr. Earle, mortally wounding the six-foot, two-hundred-pound doctor. With the Earles, one of Greenville's most prominent families, involved, interest in the subsequent trial was at fever heat in the up-state. Perry defended his friend and protege Yancey and won a verdict of manslaughter. Shortly after, the governor pardoned Yancey provided he would leave the state. He migrated to Alabama where he had a distinguished career, eventually becoming known as the "Father of Secession" and as the author of the "Yancey Resolutions" of 1860 which split the Democratic Party.[2]

Perry's almost hopeless fight against the rising tide of secessionism continued on through the antebellum period. In 1834 he campaigned for a seat in the United States House of Representatives on a Unionist Platform. The campaign was bitter but Calhoun's candidate, Warren Davis of Pendleton, won by 70 votes out of 7000 cast. Perry swept Greenville District by four to one, but lost heavily in the Pickens and Anderson districts, due to a still strong resentment there, according to many observers, over his killing of young Bynum two years before. Davis shortly died, and Perry re-ran for the seat, this time against his fellow townsman Waddy Thompson. Calhoun, genuinely alarmed at the closeness of the earlier race threw his every effort behind Thompson. Unfortunately, early in the race Perry suffered a

[2]A colorful account of the trial is given by Joseph Hergesheimer in his popular Civil War work *Swords and Roses*.

severe accident with a run-away horse which crippled and incapacitated him for six months. Again Perry went down to defeat though holding Greenville District to the Unionist cause by over three to one. While he sought national office only once more until after the Civil War, Perry with his mountain constituency solidly behind him was for twenty-five years longer to wage a valiant fight against the dominant states rights party in South Carolina. During the long battle there was no office or honor within their gift that the people of Greenville District did not confer upon him for the asking.

Events rushed on and 1838 found Perry, this time on the side of Thompson, a candidate for re-election against a new Calhoun candidate, Judge Whittier. For once Perry's cause triumphed. Politics and time produces strange bedfellows and by 1847 Perry was seeing eye to eye with his old enemy Calhoun on national issues. Threatened interference by Congress through the Wilmot Proviso had aroused his Southern blood. During this heyday of friendship with Calhoun he became once again a candidate for Congress against Colonel James L. Orr. Perry's unpopular opposition to Zachary Taylor for president, and the suspected turning by Calhoun of secret support to his opponent caused Perry's third Congressional defeat. Once again he carried his own Greenville by over four to one but lost in the western districts. On the state political level there was a different story. Except for three brief absences totaling in all only five years Perry served in the state legislature from 1836 to 1865. He was never defeated in this period, and nearly always led the ticket. During this period he fought a manly, but hopeless, battle against the planter aristocracy for democratic reform of state government.

After the end of the nullification controversy in 1833, the states rights supporters rapidly became advocates of secession, and the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1850 was solidly in favor of this cause except for Perry and the Greenville delegation which stood almost alone against the calling of a convention to pass a secession ordinance. Fortunately, the Clay compromise and an unexpected wave of conservatism throughout the South postponed the final action for another ten years.

Just prior to this, Perry and his supporters established

another Union paper in Greenville, *The Southern Patriot,* to rally the Unionist party. When a mob of secessionists threatened to destroy the paper's office, and to tar and feather the editor, Perry replied, "*The Southern Patriot* will go on if it sinks every cent of property I have in the world and sacrifices my life in the bargain." In the indecisive National Democratic Convention at Charleston, S. C., in 1860, Yancey introduced his famous resolutions. They were voted down by the Northern members, and all South Carolina delegates but Perry and one other left the convention. Perry addressed the convention and pleaded for a reconciliation of Northern and Southern Democrats. Violently booed and hissed at first by secessionist sympathizers in the galleries, he won their silence by his courage and bearing after all efforts by convention officials to quiet them had failed.

With the final coming of the War for Southern Independence, Greenville District and Perry, despite of the long fight made against secession, rushed to the defense of the Confederacy. Perry wrote to Pettigru, his long-time fellow Unionist, "I have been trying for the last thirty years to save the state from the horrors of disunion. They are now all going to the devil, and I am going with them." Before the war ended, Greenville District, former Union stronghold, had furnished more than 2,000 soldiers to the Confederate Army out of a total voting population in 1860 of only 2,200. Perry sent his own son to war with Hampton's legion, and served the state and Confederacy well in various civil offices.

In the weeks following the end of the War there was chaos in South Carolina. A movement first started under Perry in Greenville to obtain a provisional government for the state. While a delegation from Greenville, including Perry, was on the way to Washington, they received word that President Andrew Johnson had appointed Benjamin F. Perry as the Provisional Governor of South Carolina. The people of the state gave general approbation to the appointment and both old friends and old foes from Charleston to Pendleton joined in congratulating the Provisional Governor. Wade Hampton, for example, declared the appointment of Perry was "the only gleam of sunshine which has fallen on the state since this black cloud has spread over our horizon." After twenty-five years of being the voice of the

minority, Perry found himself the center of affairs of the state as all South Carolina turned to Greenville and its leading citizen.

The administration of Governor Perry lasted six months, and during that short time the Constitution of 1865 was adopted; members of a General Assembly were elected; a new Governor, James L. Orr, was chosen; civil officers of every nature, both state and federal, were appointed and inducted into office. Perry would not allow his name to be used for candidate for governor, but he was overwhelmingly elected to the United States Senate under the 1865 constitution. Thaddeus Stevens and the radical element in the Congress prevented Perry and other elected Southern Senators from taking their seats. Later, when elected to Congress from his home district, Perry was again denied his life long ambition of service in the national body. Ten years of horror now began for South Carolina, and during this period Perry took his stand with the uncompromising opponents of the radical regime. Finally, at seventy-one, Perry saw his new cause triumph as he campaigned with all the ardor of his youth for Wade Hampton in 1876. Everywhere he spoke he drew huge crowds, attracting over 6,000 listeners at Honea Path in a Hampton Day Rally.

From his heavy cares during the reconstruction period Perry found well earned repose in his beloved Sans Souci. Agriculture, lecturing, and extensive writing filled his days until in 1886, just one month after he saw the Republic safe again in the hands of the Democratic Party through the election of Grover Cleveland, the "Old Roman," as Perry was sometimes affectionately called, laid down his battle-scarred arms and shield for the last time.

Though he had been denied such tribute through most of his life, statements of universal esteem for Benjamin Perry's service to South Carolina now poured forth. The South Carolina General Assembly adjourned in honor of his memory. Of the thousands of tributes voiced throughout the state, the one from a longtime bitter enemy of his political views and acts, the Charleston *News and Courier,* perhaps expressed best the feelings of his fellow citizens: "Governor Perry was in many respects without peer in our public life and in nothing that was

worthy and of good report had he any superior." Few men in our history have openly, constantly, and defiantly opposed the enthusiastic will of a great majority of their fellow citizens without losing at any time their respect and confidence. Yet such a life-long stand and record is, above all, the enduring monument of A Carolina Unionist, Benjamin Franklin Perry.