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GROUP FLED WHEN SOUTH LOST Echoes of Dixie Found in Brazilian Cemetery

By **STEPHEN G. BLOOM**
Chicago Sun-Times

AMERICANA, Brazil—You can't find your way there alone, and even with someone who knows the backroads, you're likely to get lost.

On a hot day, the temperature reaches the high side of 110 degrees, and when a pickup truck scoots along the baked clay roads, clouds of red dust are likely to swirl up like a Georgia tornado in the making.

You go out to the city limits, take the first left, then the third right, jog around some chuckholes, and after 11 miles of cotton fields and sugar cane stalks, you finally reach it.

There they are—all 440 tombstones at the end of an old road that most people had long ago forgotten. For a Brazilian cemetery, the inscriptions are unusual. They are all in English, and they all mark the graves of a band of Confederate soldiers and their families who left the United States after the South lost the Civil War in 1865.

Some of their relatives—their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and even great-great-grandchildren—still live in this community, about 100 miles from Sao Paulo.

They have retained, to a truly remarkable degree, the lives their an-

cestors led. Many of these die-hard Confederates still speak English in their homes, even though none was born in the United States and few have ever been there.

Four times a year, the descendants of the Confederate immigrants hold a big potluck dinner at their cemetery, where they eat Southern fried chicken, biscuits, corn bread, pecan pie, ice-cold watermelon, and have, according to Judith Jones, 64, one of Americana's residents, "just a grand ole time."

Jimmy Carter, when he was governor of Georgia, came to Brazil in 1972 and after finding out about this city of 120,000 through an American-born employee at the U.S. Consulate in Sao Paulo, came here along with his wife, Rosalynn, and Press Secretary Jody Powell. After the governor gave a prayer in the cemetery's chapel, Rosalynn asked Jim Jones, 69, Mrs. Jones' husband, if anyone by the name of Wise was buried in the cemetery.

"We took her to see the headstone of a W.C. Wise, and, by golly, she got down and looked real close, and said "This is my great-uncle from Edgefield, South Carolina," Jones recalls.

Mrs. Carter's great-uncle, along with the other Confederates buried in



Times map by John Snyder

the American cemetery, was what the Brazilian government called a "heathen" (non-Catholic) and was not permitted to be buried in any existing cemeteries in the country.

From 1822 to 1889, Brazil was governed by two emperors. Catholicism was the only recognized religion. "We couldn't be buried in the cemetery here, and we couldn't be married here because we were Protestants," Jones recalls. "We buried our people on the farm, and later had to start our own cemetery."

Dr. and Mrs. Jones, both born here in Americana, like to sit every day on their veranda, looking out at their acacia trees, and when the seasons come around and the temperature drops, at their poinsettias. Hearing them both speak English in their deep, rich, Southern accents, one could think that the scene isn't Brazil, but a Dixie estate with lazy weeping

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RELICS OF DIXIE FOUND IN BRAZIL

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willows, gently rolling hills covered with thick, green grass, and the servants' quarters right around the corner.

Mrs. Jones' mother, 99, still lives in the same house. Elizabeth MacKnight is the oldest living descendent of the original settlers. Her father, Napoleon Bonaparte Alpine, left the United States for Brazil in his mid-20s, after running away from home in Alabama when he was 17 to fight in the Civil War under Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnson. Mrs. MacKnight was born in Santa Barbara, six miles down the railroad ties her family helped lay a century ago, and just as her parents did, she raised her children in a home where only English was spoken.

Although nearly 7,000 miles from their home, Brazil seemed to be a natural haven for disgruntled American Southerners after their loss to the Yankees. At that time, a land almost twice the size of the United States with just 9 million inhabitants and little talk of emancipating slaves, Brazil appeared to be the answer to many dreams.

And the Brazilian government helped foster those dreams. "They were trying their best to get American cotton farming know-how," Mrs. Jones says. The American South supplied practically the entire world with raw cotton, and during the Civil War, the Northern states imposed an embargo to cut off the South's principal livelihood.

The Brazilian consulates in the United States printed and distributed glowing accounts of unrestricted farming and vast regions of untapped farmland. "The consulates sent their representatives to speak at clubs, church gatherings, town hall meetings with invitations to American cotton farmers to emigrate," Jones says.

Brazil's emperor, Dom Pedro II, offered land to the Americans for as little as 22 cents an acre.

"My great-grandfather and grandfather came to Brazil in 1865," Jones says. "They arrived in Rio in December and went to a hotel near the port. While they were there, they heard a knock on the door, and in walked the emperor himself and welcomed them." After months of searching for arable cotton fields, they finally settled on the fields just outside of Americana.

Not all the Americans who emigrated were as lucky. There were other settlements that failed—and failed miserably. One group of Confederates went north the port of Belem, on the Atlantic coast where the Amazon River flows into the ocean. They went inland about 400 miles to Santerem. Most died of malaria. Those few who did not die made their way back to Belem and faced the humiliation of accepting passage back home on one of several Yankee warships in the southern Atlantic in 1870.

Those Americans who gravitated south to the Americana region began to prosper. Although now the community is mostly of Italian descent, and to an outsider's eye all vestiges of Southern influence have long since died, the town once was as Southern as any small village in Alabama.

"My daddy," Mrs. Jones' mother says, "he made us speak English at home. He didn't want us to associate with Brazilians. Portuguese was a foreign language, and they

(her parents) wanted to have everything as near as possible like it was in the United States."

Mrs. MacKnight said marriage outside the American community was frowned upon. "They wanted us to marry to our own kind. They felt they were much better than the Brazilians.

"They didn't want us to speak Portuguese," says MacKnight, who is still limber at 99. Her eyes have a glow and she laughs like a little girl when she talks about growing up here.

She may be the last remnant of the Southerners who decided to flee instead of facing Yankees. She says she thinks that her great-great grandchildren will probably be the last to carry on the heritage of the South.

"As years go by, the old ones die out, and the young ones don't care much for the old tradition. They're Brazilians," she said while cooling herself with a hand-held fan. MacKnight first went to the United States when she was 67 and met many of her relatives in Alabama.

"Some of my cousins thought my father did the wrong thing by coming to Brazil, but I've enjoyed my life here. When I went to the United States, I felt like someone who had been gone a long time, and had come home."

Her father came here from Alabama, having left from Galveston, Tex., in 1867 on an old converted steamer. But just 100 miles off the Florida Keys, the Americans ran into a storm, and their ship sank. No lives were lost, and they rowed themselves into port at Havana, Cuba. The group's leader went to New York to arrange passage. The families left Havana for New York, and then sailed south again to Brazil.

Dr. and Mrs. Jones have known each other practically all their lives. He went to dentistry school here in Brazil and practiced for 40 years. After he retired, he decided to go back to college, and four years ago graduated with both his daughter and son from law school. Jones' brother, George, was killed in August, 1932, in a military uprising that resulted in Getulio Vargas' deposing Brazil's president and becoming the country's dictator. His wife has written an historical account of the founding of Americana, published in Brazil and soon to be released in the United States.

She says she gets many letters from Americans who think she and her husband may know about long-lost relatives. Once, Jones says, he received a letter from "a fella in —what's the name of that place? I think it was Missouri. He wrote to me and asked if I had heard of a relative of his by the name of John J. Klink. I looked up the name in the telephone directory, but nothing was there. I was just about to give up when I met someone who told me that there was a tombstone with the name Klink on it in some cemetery not too far from here. So I wrote to the newspaper and asked them to put in an announcement, asking if there were any heirs to John J. Klink. Well, they turned out in droves. One took a taxi all the way here. But it turned out, after all, the Missouri fella wasn't related.

"I enjoy that kind of stuff," he says.

"We sort of think of ourselves as the last chapter in a gradual ending to a story," his wife adds.



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Moved From Firetrap

Precious Brazil Historical Records Get a New Home

By BRUCE HANDLER, *Associated Press*

RIO DE JANEIRO—This country's most important historical documents, now decaying in a 165-year-old, termite-infested firetrap, are getting a new home.

The government recently decided to move thousands of irreplaceable historical papers to a modern, air-conditioned, fireproof building.

"It's the realization of a longtime dream," said Celina Moreira Franco, director of Brazil's National Archives.

Danger of Destruction

"We were in danger of losing the written records of our history and traditions," she said. "The archives would not have lasted much longer where they are now."

The present building, built in 1818 as a residence for a baron when Brazil was still a colony of Portugal, has begun to crack on overburdened foundations. It had to be fumigated against termites, "and the fire department has condemned it," the director said.

Documents currently in precarious storage conditions but which will move to the new quarters include the 1888 imperial Golden Law that freed Brazil's slaves, originals of most of the nation's constitutions, land deeds granted by the Portuguese crown and 8,000 historical maps.

"The National Archives has had seven different headquarters, none of which offered the minimum conditions for preserving these priceless records," Moreira Franco said. "Now, not only will we be able to protect our historical papers, but we also will be able to display them properly for scholars and the general public."

Out of Public View

Now, for example, the original hand-lettered Golden Law, signed by Princess Isabel, the daughter of the Emperor Dom Pedro II, while her father was in Europe, lies far from public view, locked in a safe on the present building's ground floor. Nearby are a large fire extinguisher on wheels and a "hot line" phone to the central fire station.

Rio's tropical heat and humidity have caused splotches to appear on the emancipation proclamation's parchment. But Moreira Franco says she can't turn on the air conditioners, "because all the wiring in the building will explode."

Showing the Golden Law to a visitor, the director remarked, "It's a little more yellow than it was when I took over the archives." That was in 1980.

The new headquarters for the National Archives will be in what until recently was the National Mint, across from the present building in downtown Rio on the other side of the Plaza of the Republic.

Site for Expositions

That building features a palm-lined, neoclassical entrance hall built in 1865, which will be refurbished and used for historical expositions and lectures. But more important, the former mint complex includes a secure, modern, seven-story office-type building, built in 1967, where Brazil's precious papers will be stored.

The director said she hopes to have all the documents transferred by early next year.

The next step, she said, will be to try to collect and organize countless thousands of additional historical documents said to be scattered throughout the nation, in private hands or under the jurisdiction of other government agencies.

She added that the documents could change Brazilian history.

"The true history of Brazil is yet to be written," Moreira Franco said. "Researchers don't have the slightest idea of how many records really are available or what might be in them."

The National Archives now contains 11 miles of historical papers if they were laid end-to-end, the director said, "but there are at least (125 miles) more lying around in federal offices, just in the city of Rio de Janeiro."

"There might be some interesting surprises," she said.

"The concern for preserving historical documents is important not only for Brazil but for all of Latin America," she said, "especially in view of the fact that in just nine years we will be celebrating the 500th anniversary of the discovery of our continent."

The archives director, who is a granddaughter of the late Brazilian president and strong man Getulio Vargas, said Brazil is studying modern archives methods in Canada, Britain and West Germany and will share the techniques with other Latin American nations.

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