

CLIMBING THE FAMILY TREE

The Daily Press NEW DOMINION
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Sunday, February 24, 1974

HUDGINS FAMILY

HUDGINS FAMILY OF MATHEWS AND GLOUCESTER COUNTIES, VIRGINIA. This data continues from the previous issue of this feature and we do hope that all persons who have Hudgins connections will be saving this information and previous issues, as well as future issues that will include the name. We now continue:

"Over the years "Clifton" became the center of interest and activity of the ever-growing and diverse family of Houlder Hudgins, I. Eight of his children and most of his grand-children were born in the house, for he was first and always a great family man. As time passed he encouraged his family to build on the estate and several homes were added. Surrounding places were acquired and added to "Clifton Manor", including his father's Hesse Castle which adjoined "Clifton." Houlder Hudgins, I, left the manor houses and property to his family upon his death. He left "Clifton" itself to his son, Houlder, II, who left it to my grandfather, Charles Houlder Hudgins."

"Houlder Hudgins, II, gave my grandfather one of the manor houses, known as 'Freewelcome,' as a wedding present. Here my father, Houlder Hudgins, III, was born. A picture of this house taken by my mother in 1908 hangs in my study in Boston."

"During the War between the States the manor house at "Clifton" was occupied by a regiment of Union troops. The havoc wrought by these men all but destroyed the place. It was never habitable again. However, the economic destruction of this was so completely wiped out the fortunes of the family that it is doubtful if they could have supported such an enormous establishment in any event. The Manor House burned down in 1888 from a fire which swept the entire 'Clifton' community out of existence."

"Many of the other manor houses of the family of Houlder Hudgins, I, are still existence, and I have seen each of them."

"There is 'Bellefield,' which in my childhood belonged to Thomas Jefferson Hudgins, father of Annie, our dear Annie with whom I

corresponded for over fifty years up to her death at the age of 94 in 1957. Nearby was Milford Haven, a second home of William Hudgins, later the home of Houlder's first son William Houlder Hudgins. 'Milford Haven' was located on the river and was, in fact, the prior name of the locality in which 'Clifton' itself was a part. 'Seaford' down the river about three miles from 'Milford Haven,' was the home of Colonel Thomas Hudgins, Houlder's fourth child. Further down the river on a magnificent piece of river bottom land lay a stately and large mansion called 'Leamington,' where I spend many days of my childhood during the school vacations. This was built by Houlder Hudgins, I, for his last wife, Harriott Whiting, who did not like the all-too-numerous family at 'Clifton.' Later it became the home of Robert Hudgins of Hampton (Va.) who was the sixth child of Houlder Hudgins, I. When Langley Field was build by the United States Air Force, 'Leamington' was sold to the Government and is now the officers club at the field. It is still a place of great beauty and charm."

"There have been many changes in the land of the Hudgins of Mathews County, Virginia. The restoration of Williamsburg (Va.), once the seat of government of the Old Dominion, the development of Jamestown, the National park at Yorktown Heights, the growth of the entire area of Tidewater Virginia as a locality of resorts and tourists have changed the landscape materially. Added to this is the enormous growth of military and naval establishments since World War II. All these things have brought an influx of population which dwarfs the sparse numbers of pre-war Mathews County (Va.). New superhighways, new bridges and new automobiles have shortened distances which once seemed to take hours to traverse into places that are 'just around the corner.' Changed, too, are the creeks and cover where once the family fished and oystered from their silent bugeye schooners, now replaced with outboard motor boats and dazzling power cruisers fouling

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the land and the waters with diesel
smoke and noise."

(NOTE: This interesting account
of the Hudgins will be continued in
the next issue of this feature. We
wish to thank Mr. Edward A. Hudgins,
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