

DOCTOR WILLIAM SIMPSON

In her letter dated 17 April 1802, Mrs. Theodosia McCausland's of Fruithill, County Londonderry writes to Colonel Charles Stewart of York, England.<sup>7</sup> "William Simpson was the only child of his mother, after his exiled she pined for him, and that caused a great deal of local concern." Sir George Hill, Bart, opposed his possible return to Ireland. William's supporters in the Londonderry Gentry were Colonel Charles Stewart, Mr. Henry Bruce, Mr. Connolly McCausland and Mr. Marcus Gage. "Simpson maintained he did not want his commission in the United Irishmen, and stated he would never fight against the king. At the time of the rebellion he had in fact, done his best to prevent upheaval. He was, in short, 'merely a farmer.'"

When the United Irishmen learned that the American Congress repealed the Alien and Sedition Laws. The United Irishmen in British prisons, or living in European exile, applied for passports, to the new American ministers abroad, and received them. Among the new arrivals to the United States were Thomas Addis Emmet and Doctor McNevin. Thomas Emmet, an older brother of Robert Emmet, was arrested in 1798, for political activity. Thomas was a director of the United Irishmen, and was imprisoned in Scotland until 1802, when he was released on condition he leave the British Empire. After leaving Scotland, Thomas first settled in France for a short time. In 1804, he left Bordeaux, France, and sailed to the United States. Here he had a very successful law practiced in New York until his death in 1827.<sup>8</sup> Emmet and McNevin were joined by William Simpson, a native of Londonderry, who settled in New York in 1807. In 1808, Simpson published a collection of his miscellaneous writings, culled from "THE PRESS" and "STAR," the United Irish organs. Other distinguished United Irishmen who migrated to the United States, were John Caldwell, who settled on a farm beside the Hudson; Dr. Sweetman, made his home in Georgia; the son of Wolfe Tone entered the topographical service of the United States; and the Binns' brothers settled near Philadelphia.

William Simpson, according to family tradition, left Ireland with his wife Marguerite and settled in Madison County, Alabama, when it was still Mississippi Territory. On the voyage over, Marguerite gave birth to their first child, whom they named Mary.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Charles William Stewart (born 1778, died 1854), 3rd Marquis of Londonderry, soldier and diplomat; served in the Netherlands (1794), on the Rhine and Danube (1795), in Irish rebellion (1798), in Holland (1799); undersecretary for war (1807); cavalry commander (1808), adjutant general to Wellington in Iberian Peninsula until invalided home (1811); British minister to Berlin, and ambassador in Vienna (1814).

<sup>8</sup>Webster's Biographical Dictionary, (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, 1961), p. 481.

<sup>9</sup>Arthur M. Simpson to Grace L. Simpson, interview by author, 25 November 1983, Morro Bay, CA. Also, Elizabeth T. Hendricks, interview by author, 17 March 1977, Tulsa, OK.