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State Historical Marker for Y Property

State Historical Marker to Commemorate Simpsonville Homestead

[Simpsonville, SC. AUGUST 29, 2011] – Sunday, September 25, figures to be an important occasion to the multitude of people whose lives are connected to the Austin/Vaughn/Rice homestead, located on Adams Mill Road east of Simpsonville. Thanks to the determined efforts of a cadre of volunteers and members of the families associated with the property, a state historical marker celebrating the site will be unveiled at a 3:00 PM ceremony. The public is invited to participate in the ceremony, which will be preceded by craft demonstrations, refreshments, and entertainment, beginning at 2:00 PM.

The Hollingsworth Outdoor Center—the official title of the site— is a 55-acre educational/recreational facility dedicated to providing programs that serve the local populace. The YMCA of Greenville owns this remarkable historic site.

Dr Thomas Austin built the home on what became known as Oakland Plantation for him and his bride Mary in 1823. Austin was born at nearby Gilder Plantation (situated at SC14 and Bethel Road), and after serving in the War of 1812, received his degree as a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Pennsylvania. He and Mary had eleven children. Dr Austin presided as the patriarch of Austin Plantation until his death in 1883.

The homestead remained in family hands until 1898, when it was purchased by Thomas Martin Vaughn. He and his wife Ida also had eleven children. "T.M." was a noted farmer who carried on the sterling legacy of Oakland Plantation. Upon the passing of Ida Vaughn in 1952, the house was purchased by daughter Lucille, who was married to Roy Rice. She remodeled the house, and cared for it until 2004, when she sold it to the YMCA of Greenville.

One of the most remarkable features of Oakland Plantation is the number of outbuildings, including an original springhouse, and an outdoor kitchen. Historian A.V. Huff noted that such an assemblage of well-preserved structures is extremely rare in the Upstate.

The 3:00 PM ceremony on September 25 will feature the unveiling of the historical marker by Ms Ida Vaughn, a niece of Lucille Rice. Participants will bring stories, remembrances, and photos of this historic structure to share with the Oakland Plantation community. Those interested in attending the ceremony can contact Greg McKee, Hollingsworth Program Director, at 963-3608, for more information.

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