

WAGONER MAN OWNS PORTRAIT BY SULLY

William Alston Has Heirloom In Great Grandmothers Picture That Cost 1,000 Guineas—Other interesting Heirlooms.

Probably the only painting of the famous portrait painter, Thomas Sully in the state of Oklahoma is owned by William Alston, who lives four miles northeast of Wagoner.

Sully painted many portraits in his time, among them George Washington, Commodore Decatur, Thomas Jefferson, La Fayette and other famous men of America's early days. "Washington Crossing the Delaware," a group now in the art gallery at Washington, is of nation wide fame.

Sully lived in Charleston, S. C., for many years. He painted portraits of many of the planters and their families. Among these is the painting now owned by Mr. Alston. It is a portrait of his great-grandmother, Susan Elizabeth Smith, who was the daughter of John Rutledge, one time governor of South Carolina. She married a grandson of Landgrave Smith, son of General Monk, who commanded the parliamentary army after the death of Cromwell and assisted in putting Charles on the throne of England.

This painting of Susan Elizabeth Smith was painted in 1799 and for it Mr. Alston's great-grandfather is said to have paid Sully 1,000 guineas, about \$5,000 now, but a far greater sum in those early days of the 19th century, when dollars went much farther than they do now. The painting came to Mr. Alston as an heirloom; just what it is worth now he does not know. It would take an expert to say how much. Not many paintings of Sully are now in existence in this country. The painting is about three by four feet in size. Its lights and shadows are just as beautiful now as when first given life by Sully. Mr. Alston tells an amusing story of the picture. Soon after his removal from Georgia to Oklahoma the picture was sent him by express. The agent here notified Mr. Alston to come and get the picture. He asked what it was worth and Mr. Alston said "\$5,000" and the express agent replied, "Hell, there ain't no picture worth that much money."

The Alston family is one famous in American history.

A grandfather of Mr. Alston, also named William Alston, was governor of South Carolina. One of the Alston family married Theodosia, daughter of Aaron Burr. Theodosia was lost at sea on her way to England. Burr was Vice-President and killed Alexander Hamilton, the first treasurer of the United States. The Alston family is of English and Huguenot descent and traces its origin back to days of Richard the Lion Hearted on the French side. Its coat of arms is a star and crescent surmounting a shield containing ten six-pointed stars and the motto "Immotus." The Wagoner county William Alston went from South Carolina to Georgia and from there came to Oklahoma in 1889, settling northwest of Wagoner four miles when it was pretty much of a wilderness. Prairie chickens and wild deer roamed over the prairies. Mr. Alston tells of an amusing incident of the early days. One night he heard a commotion in the yard of his home and looking out he saw a herd of steers, wild longhorns, around the house. He knew better than to venture among the steers unmounted. He heard the steers lunging around the house and wondered why they did so. Next morning he found that the house, which was painted with whitewash, containing salt, had been licked clean, as far up as the steers could reach.

Mr. Alston has a number of relics of early 19th century. Among these is a mahogany table, used when his great grandfather, William Alston, entertained George Washington and La Fayette on a visit to his plantation in South Carolina.

Another relic of Washington and La Fayette's visit is a snuff box, with wooden hinges, used by them and his great grandfather. Mr. Alston also has a set of blue willow ware, made in England, that is over 100 years old, as well as many pieces of glassware and silverware of colonial times.

Mr. Alston is a courtly gentleman of the old Southern school and recalls clearly the scenes of his youth in South Carolina and Georgia, as well as pioneer days in Oklahoma. He now lives on the farm he acquired when he came to Oklahoma in 1889.