

WILLIAM HENRY LAWTON

WILLIAM HENRY LAWTON was born August 20, 1821, and died Nov. 3, 1893. He was the only child of Joseph Maner Lawton and his 1st wife, Mary Ann King, who preferred a college education to the plantation and negroes given his brothers. He was born on his father's plantation at Black Swamp, Beaufort Dist., S.C. and there raised. In time he was sent to Randolph Macon College - then in Boydton, Va., where he graduated with honors in the same class with his close friend, Robert C. Gilliam, 2 of his daughters later married 2 of William Lawton's sons. While in college in Va. he met his future wife, a native of Warren Co., N.C., just across the border of Mecklenburg Co., in which was Boydton. She was then in school in Charlottesville. His letter asking her hand of her uncle and guardian, Thomas Jefferson Green, of Mexican War fame, is still preserved.

He brought his young bride home to his father's plantation, "Thornhill", 8 miles out of Brunswick, Ga. Here malaria was so bad and conditions generally so hard that his father brought him home to S.C. and gave him another plantation, "Greenwood", on the Saluda River, near Ninety Six, where he lived until 1875.

His 1st wife died in 1852, leaving 5 small children and he there upon entered the ministry which he pursued until the end of the Civil War. *Sarah Ann Bolling Green - 1st wife*

During this period he met and married his 2nd wife and had 4 more children.

Despite Reconstruction he prospered in his plantation activities and his place was a marvel of production and abundance. He again took up religious work and preached at Salem Church, a few miles away.

He was a man of deep religious convictions, but tolerant and noted for his love, his disposition. He was about 6 feet tall, sparsely built, with keen gray eyes, a superb horseman and carried a gun with him always. A shot gun in the summer, a rifle in winter. His table was always served with an abundance of wild game of the region.

He was immaculate in his dress, even to his shoes, say those who knew him (wore size 6) and was never seen disheveled.

He was a fast friend of the leaders of the Nation and State and was accorded the respect of his neighbors. His funeral was the largest ever held in the "Up Country."

It is a family tradition that his 2nd marriage was not a happy one, but he always remained gentle, courteous and kindly toward all.

Until his day all of the Lawton's were a blond clan, but his 2 oldest children by his 1st marriage inherited their mother's dark coloring.