

Hon. George Rhodes,
A Southern Planter
And His Family

by

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I

The Rhodes Family

It was not a sad parting in Shropshire
Rhodes and his wife, ~~Mary~~, climbed Henrietta
when John and Nathaniel helped their mother,
with their brother and sister, ~~Nathaniel~~
aboard the stage and climbed up after her
and Henrietta.

The ~~three of them~~ were leaving for America,

for South Carolina, where a new and abun-
elder
dant life awaited them. ~~Only~~ Their brother,

George ^{recently} ~~Thomas, recently~~ long since comfortably

married and settled on the patrimony,

remained behind, while they confidently

set out to establish ~~an old~~ a family,

of ancient lineage in the New World. #

Late in 1775 their boat landed at Port Royal, Beaufort, South Carolina where they immediately set up house, ready to begin planting in the Spring. ~~But they were not~~ long together for Henrietta ^{soon} married and moved to Charleston. They were to found a great family and great families of South Carolina were invariably those of planters. Near Beaufort they bought a plantation and set to work in earnest. But only a few months passed before romance came in with the Spring for Henrietta married the scion of an adjoining plantation and in continuing their traditions became lost to her ^{family} ~~brothers~~.

~~How did~~

~~How did John escape cupid's darts~~

for took to wife, Mary, a belle of a neighboring
plantation encouraged by the success of two
splendid seasons, John wrote for his favorite
nephew, Thomas Rhodes, who arrived in
1790
the colony in ~~1797~~. Being lately arrived from
England and people of gentility, it cannot
be denied that they were unpopular for
their Tory sentiments. But the family pros-
pered and in 1782 a son, Nathaniel Henry
was born to John and Mary.

But their ^{son} joy became sorrow at the death
of their brother, Nathaniel from ~~fever~~ summer
fever. Next they and their family suffered such
a fate in the year to come, John and
Mary sent their son to England to stay
with his cousin, Lord Balguy, who had
married young Thomas' sister, Frances.

Young Nathaniel Henry was to become a physician and return to his parents to serve in their new land.

Meanwhile, nephew Thomas was not long in successfully consummating his courtship ^{by marriage with} Mary Wright of a neighboring plantation ~~in marriage~~. Thomas had also prospered in America and due to a particularly severe crossing, had sworn never to recross the ocean. Mary Wright soon bore him a son, Thomas Wright Rhodes, and later a daughter, Sara Rhodes. But Mary likewise was soon placed in the family burial plot, beside the single grave of her uncle, Nathaniel. ~~Still a young man of 24, Thomas~~ the following year, ~~Thomas~~ married as his ~~de~~, the young widow,

Thomas married Mary Cater, who was born on June 25, 1776, the daughter of Thomas Cater and Rachel Miles. Their first child was born on January 11, 1802 at their home on Callawash Island and christened in the Episcopal church at Beaufort, George Rhodes.

The United States of America had just declared its independence of its mother nation, England, ^{around 1790} when a young Englishman ^{Thos. Rhodes} arrived at Beaufort, South Carolina to visit his two uncles, John and Nathaniel Rhodes and their sister, Henrietta. From County Shropshire to Beaufort was a long journey and coupled with an extremely bad crossing, young Thomas vowed to never cross the ocean again. ^{10 July 1795} Soon Thomas found a wife in the person of Mary Wright. She survived her marriage long enough to present her husband with a son, Thomas Wright Rhodes, and a daughter, Sarah Rhodes.

^{note 1790 com} Mary Cater, the daughter of Thomas Cater and Rachel Miles, became the second wife of Thomas Rhodes and the mother of our common ancestor, Hon. George Rhodes. On a plantation on Callawasseh Island, near Beaufort, George was born on January 11, 1802. Besides his half-brother, Thomas Wright, and half-sister, Sarah, George also had a sister Rachel, who married Ulysses Maner Robert; and a brother, Nathaniel, who married Sarah Julia Heygood. Not later than 1805, Thomas

Rhodes died and his very wealthy widow, Mary
Cater Rhodes married Rev. Winborn Asa Lawton. At
this time we find young George sent to his ^{mother's} ~~first~~ ^{first} ~~cousin~~
in Charleston, Mrs. James ^{Pringle} Pringle. Mrs. Pringle
may have kept him with her for some time or
packed him off immediately to the famous school
of Dr. Waddell at Willington, South Carolina.
~~This was not a school for wealthy sons of sons~~
~~of wealthy families because tales have come~~
~~down to us of the hardships of George's life there~~
~~as a student and when he reached manhood,~~
it is said he located at Lawtonville, South
Carolina as a teacher. At the tender age of 19,
young George married Thursa Evelina Robert,
b. Sept. 11th 1803, the daughter of Rev. James John Robert
and his wife (and 1st cousin) Charlotte Anne Lawton.
George Rhodes and Thursa Evelina Robert were the
parents of a son, James Pringle Rhodes, and two
daughters, Sarah C. and Mary Charlotte Rhodes.
After the death of Thursa Evelina Robert Rhodes,
George was persuaded by his pastor and father-in-
law to remain in the family by marrying ^a ~~another~~
sister of his deceased wife, the 18 year old Eliza
Jane Robert, born 30 Jan 1810.

of the family of Rev. James John Robert and his

wife, Charlotte Anne Lawton, I shall say little since they are ancient and honorable families. Indeed, Rev. Pierre Robert who arrived at Jamestown, S. C. in 1686 was ^{among} the 1st French Huguenot ministers in Carolina; while in 1684, Landgrave Thomas Smith, another ancestor landed in Charleston and in 1693 became Governor and Commander-in-chief of the province of Carolina.

The first child of Eliza Jane Robert and George Rhodes was George Milton Rhodes, born Oct. 17, 1829. (Why ^{was he} he was named Milton?) A second son was born on Jan. 18, 1832, Theodore Augustus Rhodes. (Origin of his name is also not apparent) Their first daughter was ~~named~~ for her deceased aunt, named Taura Evellina Rhodes when she appeared on Aug 5, 1833.

^{After} ~~Between~~ the time of his marriage in 1841 George Rhodes abandoned the profession of teaching and became a landholder, a slaveholder and a dealer in merchandise. Prior to 1831 he was elected a deacon of Pipe Creek Baptist Church for he had joined his wife's denomination having given up the Episcopal Church of his youth and his family. In later years his sister, Rachel Rhodes and her husband, Ulysses Mauer Robert, were tried for heresy, ~~and~~

condemned by their ^{own} Baptist father and thrown out of the Baptist Church. Your honorable ancestor George Rhodes, always kept the knowledge of their ways and aint from his children.

A third son, Joseph Nathaniel Rhodes was born in 1835 and was followed by two daughters, Henrietta Eugenia Rhodes in 1837 and ^{Phoebe} ~~Rachel~~ Miranda Rhodes in 1839. A fourth son, Thomas Willingham Rhodes appeared in 1841 and he was blessed with a new sister, Rachel Minerva Rhodes in 1843. George and Eliza Jane named their fifth son ~~John~~ John Robert Rhodes in honor of the baby's grandfather, the Rev. James John Robert

The following year, George's eldest son, James Pringle Rhodes married his cousin, Margaret Polhill Lawton on Dec. 17, 1846. This must have been a real ante-bellum wedding with all the trimmings because during these years the old south was in the height of its glory. By this time George and Eliza Jane lived in a beautiful ante-bellum home which we must suppose to have been typical. George was a large slaveholder, having ^{in 1860} ~~between~~ 150 and ^{no less than} 200 slaves and was now perhaps the largest landowner and most influential man in

in the community.

rest of George and Eliza Jane's

The ~~next three~~ children were girls. Adeline

Gertrude was born in 1847 and Rosalind in 1848.

Then in 1850 Julianna Cora Rhodes appeared,
followed by Eliza Jane (Lila) Rhodes in 1852.

The year 1856 was a sad one in the Rhodes home.

On Aug. 7th Joseph Nathaniel, a promising ^{young man of 21;} ~~lad of 15~~ died,
and on Aug. 24th, 18 year old Henrietta Eugenia died.

When the family returned from her funeral the next
day there must have been much weeping and
unbearable sadness for Thomas Willingham, a
bright young lad of 15 died also of typhoid. But in
the last of the year was a redeeming feature,
the birth of Ida Malinda on Nov. 28th. That year
the Democrats elected their last president for
many a year.

The crowning social event of 1857 must

have been the beautiful double wedding of
two of George and Eliza Jane's daughters, Theresa
Evelina and Phoebe Miranda to John Jenkins and
Richard Wight Rhodes, their handsome young
cousins. Then on Dec. 20, 1860 George Rhodes
was a member of the fateful convention that
dissolved the union and signed the famous
Ordinance of Secession. Thus his sons

hurried off to war, Theodore Augustus, being a member of Company A, 1st Regiment, South Carolina (killed in action at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3, 1863) and John Robert Rhodes, being a member of the Beaufort Volunteer Artillery.

On ^{Dec.} Nov. 21, 1864 the despicable Sherman and his army entered Savannah. Probably earlier in the same year George and his family had packed a few things and fled to the home of ~~their~~ his son, George Milton Rhodes in Forsyth, Ga. En route the chest containing much of the family silver and plate was stolen and never recovered. When George and his family returned home in 1865 they found only ashes. With home, slaves, money, all his possessions gone and six of his seventeen children dead, George must have been a broken man for he was never an athletic man, leaning more toward the cultured side of life. The family lived in the old carriage house while the present house was being built. The basement floor was left bare dirt for some years for all lumber was hauled from Brighton at the almost prohibitive price of \$80 per thousand. But undaunted, at the age of 63 George gripped the plough that he had probably little used before and attempted to provide for his family and regain his fortune. But the situation was too desperate, broken in body and probably

11 Jan.

in spirit, Eliza Jane Robert Rhodes died in 1867, leaving
George a widower for the second time. His youth, strength
and health gone, George did not become bitter but lived
to be an octogenarian, known and loved by many
until his death in the right hand rear room of his
home in 1881. He now rests in Lawtonville Cemetery
beside his wife, ~~near his mother~~ and many of his
27 children, all of whom are deceased. He never
recovered his fortune but rather lived to see his large
estate well divided among his children. [Today we
are here to do homage to this forefather of ours
and to pledge ourselves to live the lives of those
who are the recipients of a noble heritage.]

Moses Waddel

native of Rowan County, N. C.

began teaching at Camden Academy at age of 14

Later entered theological school at Hampden-

Sydney College but not caring to continue minis-

terial work, established school at Applying, Ga.

in 1793. After several years moved to Vienna,

Ga. and in 1804 established his school at

Wilmington, County Seat of Albermarle County.

In 1819 he discontinued academy to become

president of Franklin College, later U. of Ga.

School had reputation for thoroughness of instruc-

tion, severity of discipline, effectiveness of work

of its students, and especially character of leader,

Moses Waddel. Those enrolled were Hugh Swinton

Lewis, James T. Pettigrew, John C. Calhoun, Wm.

H. Crawford, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet,

Des. Mc Duffie, Henry W. Collier and George
R. Gilmer. The latter said of the Academy,
"That school fills my notion of what a boys'
school ought to be. Plain dressing, plain eating,
hard working, close studying, close watching,
and when needful, good whipping, . . . the best
school in the United States".

The school was built on a ridge near some
beech trees where students often carried their
names. Boys stayed in boarding houses but had
little log huts which in many cases they had
built themselves and which were used for
sometimes for
recreation and sometimes for study. In cold weather
they studied in these huts, in warm weather out
doors where they had considerable freedom as
long as they remained within call. At a greater
distance from center of academy were houses for

literary recitations, class succeeded class,
without definite hours for study or recreation.
The emphasis was on the classics. When
hon. sounded students assembled to recite.
They learned grammar and syntax and facts
connected with Roman & Grecian antiquities.
Main building of Academy, flood at end of
street. Therein large recitation room where
"a solemn & appropriate prayer
imploing the Eternal in their behalf begins
& ends the exercises of each day." Also used
for "court" & general convocation over which Dr.
Waddel presided always. Room was "without
seats" and held 150 boys standing erect & close
pressed, leaving 6 ft circle at door for jigs and
cotillions at the teacher's Monday morning
"Soirées" Debating club met Friday afternoons,
considered most important by all

Boys arose with sun awakened by horn -
retired at 9 P.M. Food was coarse - corn bread
and bacon. Boys chopped wood & built open
fires. On Sunday they hunted squirrels &
turkeys at day and possums & coons at
night. Examinations attracted many S.C. &
Ga. visitors, who quizzed classes. Oratory
(3 classes according to age & advancement) took
second part. 3rd part was 2 dramatic pieces,
a comedy & a farce. Calhoun whose sister
married Waddel said, "I have been to many
schools & conducted according to various systems
of education, but nowhere have I witnessed
such emulation to excel."

X Jacob Fulk III (1772-1845)

Howard

X Copland

X Kearse

Weissinger

X Burr or Deer Michael + Lewis 33

Joseph Lawton 1 man 3 boys 3 females ²⁰ no slaves

Jonathan Norton (1705-

Dr. Geo. Mosse (1745-1807) 2 men 1 boy 9 women 10 slaves

Lt. John Pyles (-) 1 man 3 boys 5 women no slaves

Isalah 1 slave

Thomas Coker (1751-1803) 2 men 2 boys 6 women 50 slaves

miles ✓

John Roads Rhodes 4 men 3 boys 3 females 9 slaves

John Robert (1742-1826) 2 men 5 boys 1 female 34 slaves

Henry M. Coyle () 2 men 1 female no slaves

X Bird or Byrd