

DR. NATHANIEL HENRY RHODES

By the Rev. Robert E. H. Peoples

Nathaniel Henry Rhodes was born at Whale Branch Plantation, Port Royal Island, Beaufort, South Carolina on 2 February 1783, the third child, second son, of John Rhodes and his wife Mary Talbird. John Rhodes, his father, was born in Bridgenorth, Shropshire, England on 2 February 1747, a son of Nathaniel Rhodes and his wife Harriett George. John Rhodes arrived in South Carolina in 1758, a mere boy, and grew up to become a merchant in Charleston and Beaufort. On 11 June 1778 John was married by the Rev. Mr. Moreau, Rector of St. Helena's Church, Beaufort, to Mary, daughter of Henry Talbird and his wife Mary Ann, widow of James Doherty. Henry Talbird was the son of Sir John Talbot of Dublin, Ireland but changed his name to Talbird to conform to the name on a large land grant which he received in part compensation for building the first Tybee Island Lighthouse with bricks manufactured in his own brickyard near Beaufort and because of severe ill treatment he received from his brother in Dublin. Henry Talbird gave 1217-acre Whale Branch Plantation to his daughter Mary; both he and his wife are buried in the Plantation Cemetery. On 26 March 1778 John Rhodes was appointed Sheriff of Beaufort District by President John Rutledge. During the Revolutionary War he held a Commission as Lieutenant. In his Anecdotes of the American Revolution, Garden tells of Lt. Rhodes' being stationed at Page's Point opposite Roupell's Ferry and conferring with Brigade Major Paul Hamilton of the First Regiment prior to an action in which he was successful in capturing a sergeant's guard of British soldiers.

John Rhodes was a member of the House of Representatives from St. Helena's Parish 1800 - 1804. He was a Vestryman of St. Helena's Church for many years and represented the Church in the Diocesan Conventions

1801, 1812, 1813, 1814 and 1817, all of which were held in Charleston. His wife, Mary Talbird Rhodes, having borne him five children, died 19 October 1811 and was buried in Whale Branch Plantation Cemetery.

Meanwhile, Nathaniel Henry Rhodes had been sent to Edinburgh to continue his education and there he received his M. D. degree in 1804. He travelled briefly in England thereafter where he had a handsome miniature of himself painted as a special gift for his mother. On 14 January 1806 he was married by the Rev. Dr. Holinshead of Charleston to Mary, daughter of his Excellency, Governor Paul Hamilton of South Carolina and his wife Mary, daughter of Edward Wilkinson, a planter of St. Paul's Parish. Governor Hamilton was a son of Archibald Hamilton and his wife Rebecca, daughter of Ezekiel Brandford, a son of the immigrant John Brandford and his wife Mary, daughter of the immigrant Thomas Cater. Dr. Rhodes served as a Surgeon during the mobilization of forces for the War of 1812 and was a Justice of the Quorum. On the death of his mother in 1811 he became sole owner of Whale Branch Plantation. He was also legal heir of Christopher LeCraft, son of his mother's half-sister Mary Deherty who had married ^{Edward} John LeCraft.

The first child of Dr. and Mrs. Rhodes, Paul Hamilton Rhodes, was born 12 Nov. 1806 but died 4 January 1808, just four days before the birth of his sister, Mary Wilkinson Rhodes who grew up to marry in 1826 Lawrence Edward Dawson of Charleston. They made their home from 1830 to 1837 at Brandford Plantation which adjoined Cotton Hall Plantation in Prince William's Parish, but moved to Alabama in 1842 where he died in 1848 and she in 1851, both being buried in St. Paul's Episcopal Churchyard, Carlewville. They were survived by a son, Col. Nathaniel Henry Rhodes Dawson, born 14 Feb. 1829, died 1 Feb. 1895 in Selma, Alabama. Col. N. H. R. Dawson married 1st, Anne Elizabeth, dau. of Col. Joel Early Mathews; 2nd, Mary E., daughter of Benjamin J.

Tarver; and 3rd, Elodie Breck, daughter of Robert S. Todd, whose half sister was Mrs. Abraham Lincoln. Col. Dawson is survived by descendants of both his first and third wives.

The third child of Dr. Rhodes was born 11 April 1809, a son named John who grew up beautifully educated, receiving the M.D. degree. He died unmarried at the age of 21 at Brandford Plantation, home of his sister Mary W. R. Dawson, on 15 Nov. 1830.

Then two sons were born: Edward Leacraft Rhodes on 22 April 1810, dying 7 January 1811, and Nathaniel Henry Rhodes on 20 Nov. 1811, dying 8 July 1812.

The sixth child was Anne Henrietta, born 12 March 1813; she was married on Christmas Day 1830 by the Rev. Mr. Young in Grahamville, S. C. to Dr. Morton A. Waring, Jr., a first cousin since his mother, Rebecca, was also a daughter of Gov. Paul Hamilton and Mary Wilkinson. The Warings made their home at Chelsea Plantation, near Black Oak in St. John's Parish, Berkeley County until after the Confederate War when they moved to Florence, South Carolina where both died and were buried. Their son, Dr. Morton Nathaniel Waring was married by Rev. Samuel Gilman of Charleston on 19 Nov. 1857 to Rebecca Hamilton Webb; the only surviving child of this marriage was Eliza Ladsen Waring, born 11 March 1861. Another child of Dr. Morton Waring, Jr. and Anne Henrietta Rhodes was Mary Rhodes Waring who was married by Rev. J. J. Sams in Florence on 28 Nov. 1871 to Robert Young Hayne Henagan; their two children were: Annie Rhodes Henagan, born 22 Oct. 1873, and Mary Gibson Henagan, born 11 Feb. 1880.

The seventh child, Rebecca Brandford, was born 12 Sept. 1814; she was married in Charleston by the Rev. Christian Hanckle on 22 Feb. 1831 to Hon. Frederick A. Porcher of St. John's Parish, Berkeley County, who died in Charleston 16 Oct. 1888. Rebecca Brandford Rhodes Porcher

died 27 October 1834 leaving no children.

An eighth child, Julia Henrietta Rhodes, was born on 20 May 1816, the same year Dr. Rhodes began representing St. Helena's Parish in the South Carolina House of Representatives; she died on 18 Apr. 1818.

Early in July 1817 Dr. Rhodes contracted Yellow Fever and on 9 July made his Will, leaving 1217-acre Whale Branch Plantation to his beloved daughter, Mary Wilkinson Rhodes Dawson. Also in his estate were many slaves and much property, including an additional 600-acre plantation on Port Royal Island adjoining Whale Branch Plantation which he had bought from Charles J. Colcock, two lots in Beaufort formerly belonging to Thomas Bowman deceased, a four-acre block in Columbia bounded by Wheat, Gadsden, Blossom and Wagner Streets, another four-acre block in Columbia bounded by Gervais, Henderson and Pickens Streets, and a plantation and slaves on Euhaw and houses and lots in Columbia belonging to the late Christopher Leacraft of whom he was legal heir.

Dr. Rhodes was buried in his Whale Branch Plantation Cemetery where his epitaph reads:

In memory of
Nathaniel Henry Rhodes
son of
John & Mary Rhodes,
who died at Beaufort
on the 10th day of July 1817
after 3 days severe illness
in the 35th year of his age.
Nihil quod timet non eravit.
Reader! Within this tomb the relics lie
of one who nobly lived nor feared to die.
His genius, science, eloquence combined
with rarest virtue and a polished mind,
Noblest faith and works by Grace approved,
an humble, honored and beloved
Husband, Father, son, Physician, Friend
was his course and full of hope his end.

Hon. James L. Pettigrew, a long-time friend of Dr. Rhodes, began his Obituary thusly:

"Died in Beaufort, S. C. on Thursday, the 10th of July 1817,
Dr. Nathaniel Henry Rhodes, after a short illness.

The departure of age and infirmity is expected, and we therefore without difficulty subdue our feelings to the event. But the mind recalls from the sudden prostration of vigorous manhood, in the full career of activity and usefulness, and with all the charities of life entwined and flourishing about it.

Such is the death of Dr. Nathaniel H. Rhodes. Never was one more profoundly lamented. The sorrow of a community has deeply sympathized with his afflicted family in that desolation of heart which accompanies the loss of what has long been the center and object of our hopes. They have lost whatever is excellent and invaluable in the fondness of a brother, the tenderness of a husband, the anxious affection of a father, and the reverential love of a son..."

Dr. Rhodes was also survived by a younger sister, Henrietta, born 24 June 1790, who had married on 30 May 1809 Paul Hamilton, Jr., M.D., son of the then Secretary of the U. S. Navy, Paul Hamilton. Henrietta was recalled by her grandnephew, Col. Nathaniel H. R. Dawson, as "a woman of very superior intellect and culture". She and Dr. Hamilton were the parents of two children: Mary Rhodes, born 13 Jan. 1811, baptized 21 July 1811 by the Rev. Mr. Campbell and died young; and Col. Paul Hamilton who married 13 Sept. 1837 Catherine Campbell and left numerous children and grandchildren. Dr. Paul Hamilton died on October 5th following the death of his brother-in-law, Dr. Nathaniel H. Rhodes. His widow, Henrietta Rhodes Hamilton, married in June 1830 the Rev. William Taylor Potter; she died 26 March 1852 and he survived her until 8 Mar. 1879. Their one daughter, Henrietta Rhodes Potter, died 11 Feb. 1834 in infancy. Mother and daughter are buried in Whale Branch Plantation Cemetery, the Rev. Wm. Potter in St. Helena's Churchyard.

Dr. Rhodes' widow, Mrs. Mary Hamilton Rhodes, married on 9 Dec. 1819 Dr. Richard B. Scriven of St. Paul's Parish. They were the parents of two children: Eliza Hamilton, born 20 Oct. 1820 who married Dr. Jacob Strobhart, and Dr. Benjamin Smith, born 21 Nov. 1821 who married Miss Archer of St. Luke's Parish and died in California in 1848.

The Rhodes name in the male line is extinct except for descendants of John Rhodes' nephew, Thomas Rhodes who died 25 April 1809 in Beaufort District, father of the late Hon. George Rhodes.