

CLIMBING THE FAMILY TREE

The Daily Press NEW DOMINION
Newport News, VA

Sunday, September 29, 1974

HUDGINS FAMILY

HUDGINS FAMILY OF MATHEWS COUNTY, VIRGINIA AND RELATED FAMILIES. This writer has had so many requests for more data on the name of Hudgins from those in the Tidewater area of Virginia, as well as from out of state with many telephone calls. So we continue with additional data on Houlder Hudgins from issues of this past Spring.

"In 1788 Houlder Hudgins severed his official connection with the Kingston Parish Church and, due to the influence of his brother Robert Hudgins and Cales Hunley, both of whom were Baptist ministers, he affiliated with the Baptist Church. He was extremely active in this new connection, was a deacon of the church, attended all Baptist conventions. His sons William, Thomas, John and Houlder Hudgins all became prominent and influential Baptists."

"Politically, Houlder Hudgins was what might be called a 'Solid' Democrat of the Jeffersonian School. He was a member of the House of Delegates of Virginia from Gloucester County (Va.) from 1790 to 1796 and was thereafter a member of the State Senate to his death in 1815. He encouraged his sons to participate in civic affairs and his sons Thomas and Houlder followed in his footsteps as Members of the House of Delegates serving Mathews and Middlesex Counties for over thirty years. Other members of the family to do so were Dr. A. G. Hudgins, William Todd, Judge Thomas J. Christian, George Yeatman Hunley and Julian Todd Christian. Both Houlders and Thomas took an active part in their party, attended national conventions representing their districts and Houlder Hudgins, II, seconded the nomination of Martin Van Buren for the Presidency."

"Late in the Spring of 1812 the British once again were threatening the shores of Mathews County (Va.) as part of their assault on the Potomac River and Washington, D.C. Once again, Houlder Hudgins took

steps to defend his County, as evidenced by the following article in the 'Virginia Argus' of July 10, 1812: 'The County of Mathews is exposed to the inroads of the enemy, if any enemy dare to pollute our threshold by his tread. Lying between the waters of the Pianketank, the Chesapeake, and Mobjack Bays and the North River it includes Gwyn Island, one of the scenes of the infamous raid and ravages of Lord Dunmore during the Revolution. General Andrew Lewis with the aid of patriotic citizens of Mathews, particularly Capt. Houlder Hudgins of Clifton.

'The citizens of Mathews have lately held a meeting presided over by Mr. Hudgins at which they requested him to apply to the Governor, Hon. Barbour, for arms and field pieces. Mr. Hudgins has preferred his application and Mr. Barbour has promised to send down the arms and field pieces.'

"There are 85 'Silver Greys', all veterans of the Revolution, capable of doing duty, who will be organized into two companies for the home defense, one under the command of Mr. John Patterson of Popular Grove and the other under the command of Mr. Houlder Hudgins.' (Note: This ended the Argus article. - Ed.)

"Houlder Hudgins I, Esq., planter, ship-builder, seaman, merchant, churchman, judge of the Court of Mathews, State Delegate and State Senator, member of the Committee of Public Safety of Gloucester County during the Revolution, patriot and fighter against invading enemy on two occasions and sire of a large and still expanding corps of descendants died on December 12, 1815, at the age of 77, was buried in the family burial ground at Clifton."

"Besides raising a large family of his own, Houlder Hudgins, I, amassed a great fortune in lands, manors, houses ships and slaves. Of the latter he left 200 slaves to his heirs. (Note: - At the time of writing this paper; 1958, modern

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industry considers that a common laborer may be equated at cost to a capital investment of \$30,000 in machinery and equipment. On this basis, Houlder Hudgins' slaves have a present value of \$6,000,000. Land in Mathews Co., Va. is presently worth \$250 an acre, Houlder's holdings of some 12,000 acres would be worth today an additional \$3,000,000.)"

"I have in my possession a copy of his will certified by his friend and fellow justice of the Court of Mathews County, John Patterson, witnessed by three of his neighbor, James Vaughn, John Merchant and David Valentine (each of whom married one of his granddaughters) and signed in his own hand on the 29th of February, 1815, at Clifton."

"Not only had his enterprises given support to endless members of his family and friends during his lifetime, he was more than generous in providing them with homes and slaves, and to each he left a good share of his worldly goods. To each of his sons he had previously conveyed life tenancy in their homes and sizable tracts of land. Now he gave them his personal property and slaves pro rata and of average selection, except that certain slaves which had expressed their own preference of owner were satisfied. He took particular care to provide his daughters and grand-daughters with life tenancy of homes and slaves, but further provided that these should revert to his sons in the event that women had male issue. He rather pointedly took care of his last wife, Harriott, and her daughter, Charlotte Lewis Hudgins, and equally pointedly cut out his grand-daughter Mrs. Martha Frances Gayle unless she divorced her husband John Gayle, for whom Houlder had no use whatever, remarking that he 'was cruel to slaves'. Martha was his first and, up to the time she ran off with John Gayle, his favorite grandchild."

"In closing this story of Houlder Hudgins I, one must observe that here is a story that so completely

fulfills our every our every expectation of what an American Saga should be that it fully deserves the space given here to it. Here was a man, born of the best, given every educational and social advantage, who did the utmost to justify the faith that had been reposed in him. He stopped to learn and having learned he used his wisdom to expand both himself and all those around him. He ended his life honored and loved by his family and friends and respected by his descendants." Signed: Houlder Hudgins, IV, 1958.-

Now we continue with more of the genealogy of the Hudgins family:

"The Family Of Houlder Hudgins I, of Mathews County, Va. Houlder Hudgins I (1738-1815) married four times:

"Married 1st in 1769, Mary Hunley (1742-1773), had two children: William Houlder Hudgins (1771-1840); Nancy Yeatman (1773-1838).

"Married 2nd in 1774 to Mary Gwyn (1744-1793) had three children: John Lewis Hudgins (1775-1871); Thomas Hudgins (1788-1862); Mary Gwyn Hudgins (1792-?).

"Married 3rd, 1794 to Elizabeth Anderson (1774-1804), had three children: Ariadne Elizabeth Hudgins (1795-?); Robert Hudgins (1797-1859); Houlder Hudgins, II, (1799-1868).

"Married 4th in 1806, Harriott Whitting (dates unknown); one child Charlotte Lewis Hudgins (1807-?)."

"Mary Hunley Hudgins (1742-1772), first wife of Houlder Hudgins I, was the daughter of James Hunley and Mary Morgan of York County. James Hunley was the son of Capt. Philip Hunley and Ann Pettus, daughter of John Pettus (of the Council of Virginia, whose family was related to the Berkleys, Manuns, and Pages). James Hunley was a Vestryman of Kingston Parish. Member of the Gloucester Committee of Public Safety, neighbor and friend of William Hudgins."

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"Mary Hunley's brother, Caleb, Hunley, married Elizabeth Smith of Abingdon and they had a son, Robert Taliaferro Hunley. This son was born in Gloucester Co., Va. in 1775, died 1841; married Sarah Robinson Yeatman in 1804, the daughter of Thomas Muse Yeatman and Mary Tompkins."

became a most distinguished Virginian." Readers, besides reading this Hudgins data keep all copies for future family records.

"Robert Taliaferro Hunley and his wife Sarah had a son named Thomas Muse Hunley who became a prominent Methodist minister. Thomas Muse Hunley was born in 1817, married Mary Miller in 1843 and left a large family. He later became a Baptist divine and was minister of the Church of Mathews County. The Robert Taliaferro Hunleys had two daughters, Sarah Robinson Hunley, (1803-1830) and Elizabeth Virginia Hunley (1814-1841) both of whom married Houlder Hudgins, II, (Elizabeth being my grandmother, whose portrait hangs in our living room.)"

"Caleb Hunley and Elizabeth Smith Hunley had a son, Robert Yelverton Hunley whose daughter, Mary Yelverton Hunley (known as Polly) married Walter Gwyn Hudgins, grandson of Houlder Hudgins, I.

"William Boulder Hudgins (1771-1840), son of Houlder Hudgins, I, and Mary Hunley, married Frances Gwyn of Gwyn's Island in 1795 and had two children: Martha Frances Hudgins (1797 -?); Walter Gwyn, Hudgins (1799-?). "

"Martha Frances Hudgins was Houlder Hudgins, I's first grandchild and his great favorite. He had great social hopes for her but she fell in love with a man named John Gayle, who Houlder felt was cruel. She threatened to run away with Gayle, which so displeased her grandfather that he cut her off from his will. He stipulated, however, that if she would rid herself of Gayle she was to receive a large interest in property, 20 slaves, and a share of the profits of his business. She married Gayle and they had a son, Levin Gayle, who