
Appendix B Excerpts from The Heritage of Onslow County

Nathan William Humphrey Family Article 382

Nathan William Humphrey, son of Esther Humphrey, was born Feb. 11, 1829; died May 16, 1900. He married Aliff S. Rhodes who was born May 15, 1840; died May 20, 1906. Nathan and Aliff were married on September 21, 1858.

Their children were Henry, George Washington, Lizzie Foy, Aliff Rebecca Wilkerson, Nathan, Nancy Ellen Walton, Woodhouse Barnabe, Nathan B. who died in infancy, and John.

Very little is known about Nathan's life. He was raised by a slave, Peter Bradley, who refused to leave the family even after he was freed. Peter lived with the family until he died at the age of 117. Nathan had several brothers and sisters: William W., Elizabeth, Allen, George Washington, Tabatha Ann Brinson, and Sarah Rochelle.

Nathan was unable to fight in the Civil War because of a withered arm. He died in 1900 while his granddaughter, Ruth Humphrey Pittman, played at his feet.

Sources: Onslow Co. court records; family traditions. -- Eloise Walton

Humphrey Family Article 383

The name Humphrey is thought to be of Norman origin. It is said that a kinsman, friend and follower of William the Conqueror became known as Humphrey after he settled in England. For the next 300 years the Humphreys held estates near the border of Wales.

William Humphrey, the first of that name to come to America, arrived in Virginia in October of 1643, on the ship of Lt. William Worleidge. The Virginia Archives gives reference to one William Humphrey living in Gloucester County, Virginia, in the year of 1643.

Records show two related Humphrey families came from Virginia to Onslow County, one through Pasquotank and Craven Counties, the other, through Halifax and Bertie Counties. In 1729, Robert Humphrey and his wife Elizabeth, sold their homeplace in Bertie County, North Carolina to Nathan Joiner; the deed is dated February 2, 1729. Robert and Elizabeth came into Onslow County and purchased 140 acres on the south side of New River, which was a part of a grant to William Williams of Onslow County. Later this land was deeded to William Humphrey. It is through this William Humphrey of Onslow that this line of the Humphrey family is traced in this article.

The children of William Humphrey and his wife Sarah were: William Humphrey, Jr., Jacob Humphrey who served in the Onslow Militia in 1754, and Daniel Humphrey, who married Hester Williams. Also in the household was Jacob Wood, a son of Sarah's by a former marriage.

Jacob Humphrey served in the North West Company of the Onslow Militia, under the command of Capt. John Shackelford and Lt. Thomas Johnston.

Daniel Humphrey, son of William and Sarah, was born in 1750. He enlisted in the service of the Revolutionary War on March 18, 1776, and served for two and one-half years. He was very ill at Valley Forge and was discharged in September of 1778. Daniel Humphrey returned to Onslow and took up a land grant of 160 acres on the west side of the Northwest Branch of New River. He was soon married to Hester Williams, daughter of Jesse Williams of Onslow. Daniel and Hester were the parents of nine children: Cyrene who married Hardy Gregory, Daniel, Jr., Lott, Whitehead D., Hill, Williams, Polly, Jesse, and Esther Humphrey. Two of these sons represented Onslow in the House of Commons. Lott Humphrey was Onslow's Representative in 1812 and his brother, Whitehead Humphrey I, was elected to the same position in the year of 1821.

When Lott Humphrey made his will in 1823, he named his brother, Williams Humphrey as his Executor. He also mentioned the land he purchased from his wife's brother, Lott Ballard. Lott Humphrey's children were: Olive, Elda, Minerva, and Theresa Humphrey who married a Hatch.

Hester (Williams) Humphrey, widow of Daniel Humphrey, was soon married to John Giles. She made a final settlement with the Daniel Humphrey heirs in 1832. When John Giles died the court ordered the lands of John Giles (deceased) to be divided between the widow Giles and his son by his first marriage, so as to give her 1/3 of the land, commonly known as the Daniel Humphrey Plantation. But she did inherit the Obed Williams Plantation, in which she "held 1/2 interest forever," and the Shine Plantation. John Giles is buried in an overgrown cemetery, two and one-half miles west of Comfort, North Carolina, in an unmarked grave.

Whitehead D. Humphrey I, son of Daniel Humphrey & Hester Williams, inherited land on Cowhorn Road and the west bank of New River. He married Susan Shackelford, daughter of George and Mary (Shine) Shackelford.

Whitehead & his brother Hill Humphrey operated a mercantile business in Upper Richlands. In the tax list of 1825, Whitehead listed: 5 Whites, 20 Slaves, and 1000 acres of land, valued at more than \$5,500.00.

Two years later, in 1827, Whitehead's estate listed by the administrator of his estate (Whitehead now deceased) as 1300 acres, value \$8500.00. Eli Cox was appointed as guardian for the Humphrey children.

Whitehead's two brothers, Hill & Lott Humphrey, both died within the next year. Whitehead's widow, Susan, was soon married to Mr. Eli Cox, guardian of her children. Mr. Cox died a short time later. He had already assigned property over to his unborn child, also to his wife, Susan. When the baby was born she was given the name Mary Cox.

In the meantime, Henry W. Thompson was appointed guardian to the Humphrey children. Thomas Battle was named as Administrator of the estate of the late Eli Cox by the Onslow Court.

Mary Cox, the daughter that Eli never lived to see, was first married to Bryant Berry, son of Bryant Berry, Sr. and his wife, Mary Ambrose. She married second, Shade Loftin of Kinston, N.C., to which a stained glass window was placed in his honor, in the First Baptist Church in Kinston.

Source: Encyclopedia Brittanica; Virginia Archives and History; Onslow County records; military, wills, deeds, etc.

-- Mrs. Roscoe Taylor

Whitehead D. Humphrey I Family Article 384

Whitehead D. Humphrey I, was born about 1787, the son of Daniel Humphrey and Hester Williams Humphrey. He married Susan Shackleford, daughter of George Shackleford and Mary (Shine) Shackleford. Whitehead Humphrey and Susan were the parents of three sons and one daughter.

Franklin Shackleford Humphrey, the eldest son, was one of the first County Commissioners when Jacksonville became the County seat. When his father's estate was settled he inherited the Askew land, in Feb. of 1832, and paid money to the minor heirs to make their portion equal to his own. On Dec. 17, 1833, Franklin Shackleford Humphrey was married to Mary Ann Murrill, with B. M. Barry signing the Marriage Bond. Their daughter, Alice Humphrey, married Dr. Nicholas E. Armstrong and they lived in a lonely old house at Tar Landing in Onslow County (the house is still standing today - 1982).

The second son of Whitehead Humphrey I, was Williams Shackleford Humphrey who married Pheribee Ward, daughter of the Richard Ward who died in 1829, and sister of George Ward. After the death of Pheribee, W. S. Humphrey was married to Susan Miller of Duplin County and they made their home in Onslow. Susan was the sister of Joseph Thomas Rhodes Miller.

The daughter of Whitehead Humphrey I, Susan Humphrey, was married to Emanuel Frederick B. Koonce on Dec. 20, 1843, with John Martin Frank, signing the Marriage Bond. Their daughter, India Koonce and her cousin, Georgia Humphrey were reared by their grandmother, Susan Shackleford Humphrey Cox. India married John Marshburn and lived at Catherine Lake all of her ninety years.

Whitehead D. Humphrey II (1817-1862) was the youngest son of Whitehead D. Humphrey I and wife Susan Shackelford. He was married to Eliza Jane Sylvester, daughter of Nathan Sylvester III and wife Mary King Sylvester.

*Source: Onslow County records.
-- Mrs. Roscoe Taylor*

Sheriff Whitehead D. Humphrey Article 385

Whitehead D. Humphrey II, son of Whitehead D. Humphrey I and Susan Shackelford, was born on Jan. 20, 1817. At the age of ten years his father died. When he reached the age of 21 years he was married to Eliza Jane Sylvester, daughter of Nathaniel Sylvester III and his wife Mary King, a direct descendant of Michael King who came to Virginia prior to 1694.

Fraternally, Mr. Humphrey was a Mason, and for the last 15 years of his life he held the position of Secretary of Lafayette Lodge #83, located in Jacksonville, N.C. Mr. Humphrey served as High Sheriff of Onslow County for more than 12 years and records of Onslow contain many references to him in his official capacity and in settlement of many estates and sales.

The U. S. census for 1860, for the Upper Southwest District of Onslow County, lists: Whitehead D. Humphrey, age 43, with \$3500.00 in real estate and \$25,000.00 in personal property. The family included: wife, Eliza Jane, age 41; Mary Susan, age 19; Nathaniel Sylvester Humphrey, age 15; Whitehead D. Humphrey III, age 13; Jane Elizabeth, age 11; George Franklin, age 8; John Williams Humphrey, age 6; Agnes Ward, age 3; and Mr. Thomas King, age 28, overseer.

Mr. Humphrey had built one of the most elegant three-story colonial homes, with large white columns to the roof, a curved balcony across the second story front, everything painted snow white, even the porch ceiling was plastered and then painted white. A wide winding staircase led from the front foyer up to the second and third floor of the Humphrey house. No finer edifice could be found in all Onslow. The 80 slaves kept everything in perfect order. This home was situated on a 500-acre estate, located on the Southwest, on the main road from Jacksonville to Wilmington.

During the Civil War, the Federal Officers marched up the long cedar lane leading up to the mansion and occupied the house; the foot soldiers were quartered out on the lawn of the estate. This insult was just too much for Mr. Humphrey!

On the 18th day of August of 1862, Mr. Humphrey sat down at his mahogany desk and composed his Last Will and Testament leaving everything that he possessed to his beloved wife; naming his "trustworthy friend," Nathan Sylvester as her assistant; and Joshua G. Wright and Col. Lott W. Humphrey as his attorneys to settle his estate.

A few days later, *The Wilmington Journal* carried the following obituary: "In Onslow County, on the 18th of August, Mr. Whitehead D. Humphrey died. He was in the 45th year of his age. Seldom have we known one who exhibited, in higher degree, the character of a good man than the excellent gentleman whose decease we have to record above. Modest and retiring in his disposition, he seemed to strangers distant and reserved, but to his friends and associates his character shone forth in all its native loveliness and virtue, arrayed in the light of its own inherent goodness. He was a good husband and a kind father.

"He was Sheriff of Onslow for twelve years, and, as an officer, none excelled him. He leaves a bereaved wife, eight children, and a large circle of relatives and friends to mourn their irreparable loss -- and we hope their loss is his gain.

"The gentle sufferer bowed his head and met death smilingly.

Oh, Lord, how could we give him up to any but Thee!"

After the death of her husband, the loss of her slaves, and the desecration of her home, Eliza Jane Sylvester Humphrey, the grieving widow, returned to her childhood home at Richlands where a house for her and her children was built across the street from her father, Nathaniel Sylvester, and here she lived for the next ten years. She died on Christmas Day of 1871.

A copy of her will is on file in Onslow County Courthouse naming her son, Whitehead Humphrey III, as executor of the estate. After the War Between the States was over, it was not unusual for the best families, who had always been accustomed to luxuries, to be lacking even in the necessities of life, but evidently this was not the case with Eliza Jane Humphrey.

In her will she stated that her daughters, Mary Susan Cox and Jane Eliza Mills, were already amply provided for, and she bequeathed to each of them the customary one dollar. She left the family bookcase and desk to her son, Nathaniel Sylvester Humphrey. To her youngest daughter, Agnes Ward Humphrey, she bequeathed \$600.00 and much furniture, and directed that Agnes be taken care of and educated by Whitehead D. Humphrey III. She left the Sylvester Plantation near Richlands, on the left side of the public road from New Bern to Wilmington extending all the way back to New River, to Whitehead Humphrey III. The other real estate, not otherwise bequeathed, which lay mostly on the Kinston Road, was left to her other sons, John William and George Franklyn Humphrey.

Source: Onslow County records; Masonic Lodge records; newspaper; Wilmington Journal. -- Mrs. Roscoe Taylor

Sheriff Humphrey's Family Article 386

Sheriff Whitehead D. Humphrey II and his wife, Eliza Jane Sylvester, were the parents of seven children, three daughters and four sons. Their eldest daughter, Mary Susan, was educated at Clinton Female College in Clinton, North Carolina, where she studied art and music. She was married to Dr. Cadour Cox of Richlands,

the son of Harvey Cox, Sr. and his wife, Mary Jane (Thomas) Cox. Their daughter, Minnie Cordelia Cox, was educated at Peace Institute, Raleigh, North Carolina. She was married to Walter Milton Thompson, who was educated at Trinity College (now Duke University). Walter M. Thompson represented Onslow County in the North Carolina Legislature and later he served as Superintendent of all Onslow schools for many years. Walter M. Thompson Elementary School, located on College Street in Jacksonville, was so named in his honor.

Sheriff Humphrey's eldest son, Nathan Sylvester Humphrey, was educated at Horner's Military School at Oxford, North Carolina. He married Fannie Foy, a direct descendant of Lt. James Foy and Henrietta Rhodes, daughter of Col. Henry Rhodes of Onslow County. Their only child, William Whitehead Humphrey died young.

Whitehead D. Humphrey III, son of Sheriff Humphrey, was also educated at Horner's Military School at Oxford, N.C. He married Greensy Ann Cox, sister of Dr. Cador Cox of Richlands. She died a few years later, leaving an infant daughter.

Jane Elizabeth Humphrey, daughter of Sheriff Humphrey, was an accomplished musician. She married John W. Mills, son of Uzza Mills and his wife, Mary Brock. John W. Mills inherited a large estate and accumulated much property. He represented Richlands District as a County Commissioner of Onslow. He and Jane Elizabeth raised up a large family of eleven children: Uzza "Tobe" Whitehead Mills, Ann Sylvester Mills who married Robert Lee Franck, William Clarence Mills, Estelle Mills who married Edward W. Summersill, Sr., Cador Mills, Lee Mills, Eliza Jane who married a Sandlin, John W. Mills, Jr. who married Eddie North, Leona Mills who married Lindsey Winstead, Sr., Jarman Mills, and the youngest son, Eugene Mills.

George Franklyn Humphrey, son of Sheriff Humphrey, was born on Dec. 12th 1851. He was educated by Leonard Groninger Woodward at the Richlands Academy. He became a large land owner and successful farmer. According to Duplin County Marriage Records, on Feb. 8th 1875, a marriage certificate was issued in Smith Township to Marena Ann Thomas, aged 19 years, and George Franklyn Humphrey, aged 22 years. The couple were married on Feb. 11th 1875 at the home of the bride in Duplin County, N.C. John Williams Humphrey, older brother of the groom was best man at the wedding and Mary Ruffin Thomas, sister of the bride was maid of honor. After his marriage Mr. Humphrey operated a mercantile business in Duplin County. Eventually he moved his business to Craven County and the family lived in New Bern. Their children were: Walter Davis Humphrey, Cyrus Thompson Humphrey, Annie Blanche Humphrey who married Frank Lee Abee and went to live in Florida, and their youngest son, Rodolph Jackson Humphrey. A few years before his death, George Franklyn Humphrey "came home" to Richlands, where he resumed the management of his property. He and his wife lived a leisurely few years before his death on the 15th day of February in 1891.

John Williams Humphrey, the youngest son of Sheriff Humphrey, married Margaret Player, daughter of Samuel Player and his wife Rebecca (Bannerman) Player of Pender County. She came from a family of staunch Presbyterians; Rannerman and Player both were Elders in the Mount Williams Presbyterian Church of Pender County. The newly married couple made their home on the N. E. Branch of the Cape Fear River in the Bannerman's Bridge Community. "Rear Garden," the ancestral home of the Player family stood near by. Here they reared their children: Rosa Humphrey who married a King, Rebecca Humphrey who married a Wheeler, Robert Franklin Humphrey, John Shackelford Humphrey, and C. Eugene Humphrey, who became a successful businessman in Tampa, Florida.

John Shackelford Humphrey and Robert Franklin Humphrey became business partners, engaging in logging, merchandizing and milling, in 1926 they bought out Harrell grocery business in Burgaw, and moved to that town. They were so closely associated that their business judgment always seemed to coincide. They married sisters, daughters of Walter M. Thompson of Onslow County. They all lived together in a large commodious house, and each brother had a son to perpetuate the name Humphrey. They were affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, the Masonic Lodge #138, and other civic organizations. John Shackelford Humphrey became the largest farmer in Pender County, personally overseeing his own lands. He also rented out many acres.

Source: Onslow Co. records; Duplin Co. records; and Pender County History by Bloodworth.

-- Mrs. Roscoe Taylor

End of Excerpts from The Heritage of Onslow County. 1983.
