

Children of Finley and Jenny Downs Holmes

1) **James Holmes**, born in 1794, was the first child of Finley (b. 1765) and Jenny Downs Holmes (b. ~1770). He was born and raised in Columbia, SC. At the age of 21 his father died and the family decided to move to Georgia. James was in charge of settling the estate. It took a year or two to do the inventory of the household items and farmlands and to sell everything. Shortly afterward he was buying land near Macon, Georgia, for the move by the family. He, along with his mother and her other children, then moved to Georgia. James, around 1812, married a Georgia girl, Mary "Polly" Bryan, and in 1817 his sister, Mary Catherine, married David Bryan - brother to Polly. At some point the families relocated to Talbot County, Georgia. Talbot County, established in 1827, is in the west central portion of Georgia 30 miles north east of Columbus, Georgia. The families of James and his sister, Mary Catherine, lived in adjoining plantations in the county. James and Polly had five children. Polly died about 1831. Around the same time, James built a plantation house in Talbot County and remained in that house until 1852. He then moved to a farm at Pleasant Hill (east of Woodland, Georgia, in Talbot County) near the plantation of his brother, William Thomas Holmes. After Polly's death, he remarried in 1847 to Jane C. Gaither, a widow. They had two children together, Oliver Skinner Holmes and James F. Holmes.

For most of his life, James farmed the land. At his death late in 1854, James Holmes estate included 60 slaves valued at over \$30,000, and the plantation lands of more than 1400 acres were appraised at \$9800. Add in furnishings of the plantation house, other at other items around the plantation including crops, and cash on hand, it totaled to over \$50,000. According to his will, James passed on to Jane the plantation land and house and 405 acres of adjoining land. He also bequeathed to her slaves, household items, the family carriage and horses, and other various plantation items. Each of the children were bequeathed slaves. Jane lived until sometime after 1870. She is shown in the Talbot County census for 1860 and 1870, but not in the 1880 census. All of James' children by Polly and by Jane were born in Georgia and, as adults, could be found in Georgia, Alabama, or Mississippi.

2) The second son was **William Holmes** born in 1797. He probably died shortly after birth or in later infancy. His name, William, was used again for Finley's last child.

3) **Mary Catherine Holmes Bryan**, born in 1800 in South Carolina, was the only daughter in the family. She married David Bryan of Georgia in 1817 in Columbia, South Carolina. She and her husband settled in Talbot County, Georgia around 1830 where he farmed. As pioneer settlers of Talbot County, David and Mary prospered. In 1845, they built a mansion on the plantation land that was on land that adjoined the plantation of William Thomas Holmes, brother of Mary Catherine. David and Mary reared eight children, five are buried in Georgia and three in Texas.

Mary Catherine died in 1862 and David followed in 1864. At the time of his death, he had accumulated about 1,700 acres of land. The family owned 101 slaves, and the total estate was appraised at \$409,830. Mary Catherine and David are buried in the Ephesus Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Woodland, Talbot County, Georgia, with five of their children.

4) **Finley "junior"** (b. 1802) was the third son - see his narrative on the page: **Finley Holmes, born in 1802.**

5) **Robert Holmes**, the fourth son, was born in 1806 in South Carolina. He moved as a child with his mother and siblings to Georgia around 1818. The 1830 and 1840 census has him in Talbot County, Georgia; but he moved to Shelby County, Tennessee about 1844 and farmed there. He never married. In late December of 1883 he came to the nearby plantation of Francis Holmes, his nephew, and told him that he was ill and unable to care for himself. He asked if he could stay at Valley Grove - "from that time up to his death [Francis] cared for him in his sickness and supplied all of his wants."

Robert died late in February 1884. His land adjoined that on which Valley Grove stood. In total, he had 240 acres in Mississippi and 1157 acres in Tennessee near the river. He is buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis alongside his parents.

6) **William Thomas Holmes** (b. 1810 in Columbia, South Carolina) was the fifth son and the last child. When the family moved to Georgia, he was about seven years old. He met Mary Lucinda Owen, who was born in Georgia, and married her in 1829. They were pioneer settlers in Talbot County, Georgia, first buying 101¼ acres of plantation land there in 1829. Another 120 ½ acres were acquired in 1831 and 202½ acres in 1832. More land was added at later dates, as he prospered. For many years, his plantation was adjoining or near the lands of his father-in-law, David Owen. William T. Holmes farmed all his life. He and his wife had 16 children - one died at birth and five in infancy. Of the children, all stayed in Talbot County, Georgia, and are buried there.

William T. Holmes and Mary L. Holmes died about 3 months apart in 1888 and are buried in the Daniel Owen Family Cemetery in Bellview, Talbot County, Georgia.

Text by Paul W. Holmes
Paul W. Holmes holmesp@cofc.edu

Family Chart next page

First Finley's Family

