

# Facts Concerning The Brodnax Family

By Samuel H. Brodnax, Walnut Grove, Ga.

September 1st, 1923

Edward Brooking Brodnax was born in Virginia, 1779, time of the Revolution. Married Frances Vivian Brooking, daughter of Col. Francis Vivian Brooking and Elizabeth (Brodnax) Brooking. They were first cousins. Lived near Petersburg, Va.; moved to Hancock county, Georgia, near Sparta in 1808. In 1824 he drew a lot of land from the State of Georgia, deeded to him by George M. Troup, who was then governor of Georgia, dated November 11, 1824. Said lot of land was located on Cornish Creek, near Cornish Mountain, known as Lot No. 365 in original Henry, now Newton county, containing 202 1/2 acres. In 1826 he moved from Hancock county and settled on said lot of land, which was in original forest. Had to build houses and clear the land and made a crop that year. He lived there until his death July 31, 1861, time of Civil War. He was 82 years old; buried near his home. He had three sons, namely: George, Samuel and Hamilton; two daughters, Lucy and Mariah. George and Hamilton died without issue.

Samuel was born April 1, 1810, in Hancock county and moved with his father to Newton county, Georgia.

Lucy and Mariah, also born in Hancock county, moved with him to Newton county. Lucy married William Mann; Mariah married Joseph Mann. He was a soldier in the War of 1812; also was in the Indian war and was wounded in battle with Indians in Florida. His wife, Frances Vivian, died about two years before he did and was buried near their home. She was a refined Christian woman, belonged to the Methodist church; taught her grandson, Samuel H. Brodnax, to read the Bible; had him to read the New Testament through, chapter by chapter, before he was eight years old. She was afflicted with rheumatism for 15 years; had to be moved about in a rolling chair.

## SAMUEL BRODNAX

GAR.

Son of Edward Brooking Brodnax and Frances Vivian (Brooking) Brodnax, born in Hancock county, Georgia, April 1, 1810. Moved with his father to Newton county, Georgia. Married Margaret Aycock, daughter of Joel and Rebecca (Bradford) Aycock, in Newton county, November 4, 1830. Lived with his mother and father until their death. He was very fond of hunting and fishing and fine stock.

They were blessed with 14 children. 13 of them lived to have families. Names and dates of birth as follows:

Joel Crofford, born December 15, 1831.

William Dawson, born November 26, 1840.

Samuel Houston, born November 27, 1844.

Robert Edwards, born October 12, 1850; died October 13, 1850.

Thomas Eves, born August 11, 1854.

Elizabeth Rebecca, born May 25, 1833.

Frances, born December 9, 1834.

Pheraby, born December 14, 1836.

Sarah Louisa, born September 20, 1838.

Mary and Nancy, twins, born July 25, 1842.

Eugenia, born September 18, 1846.

Eunice, born July 22, 1848.

Margaret Caroline, born September 21, 1852.

(All married and had families.)

He lived in the days of slavery and accumulated quite a number, and in June, 1865, just after the close of the Civil War, he collected them together under some large shade trees in the yard and read President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. He made them a good talk and set them free. He told them he was no longer responsible for them and they would have to care for themselves, but if they wanted to stay on and finish and gather the crop they could do so and he would divide it with them, and every one of them stayed. There were fifty-three of them. So he was left without anything except his lands and a few stock that the Armies didn't take.

But he didn't give up, although he had to start life over again, and he cleared more than he did with all those slaves. He was considered one of the best farmers and managers in his section; moved from the farm a few years before his death to Conyers, Ga., to be near the church. Was deacon of the Missionary Baptist church about forty years. He was not educated; never went to school but six months in his life, but could read and write and make his own calculations, but he believed in education and gave all his children the best education he could under his conditions.

He made a will a short time before his death and appointed Samuel H. Brodnax his executor and gave him power to set apart as much of his estate as he thought proper for a home and a comfortable support for his wife, Margaret, and she lived 17 years after his death. She was a very remarkable woman in many respects; never had a doctor to attend her until her last illness, and she didn't want one then—her mother always waited on her in all her other sickness.

She died at the home of her son, Samuel H. Brodnax, at Walnut Grove, Ga., March 19, 1897, at the ripe age of 87 years. Buried at the old Brodnax home in Newton county.

#### THOMAS E. BRODNAX

Youngest son and baby child of Samuel and Margaret (Aycock) Brodnax. Born in Newton county, Georgia, August 11, 1854. Lived with his parents until grown and started out as traveling salesman for first one business and another until his health failed him in 1916.

Married Miss Sallie Selman, of Monroe, Ga., December, 1878; has two sons and two daughters, all living and have families. His wife died in May, 1922, at Tupelo, Miss., and he has been living with his children since her death.

#### WILLIAM DAWSON BRODNAX

Son of Samuel and Margaret (Aycock) Brodnax. Born in Newton county, Georgia, November 26, 1840. Enlisted in 1861, at Monroe, Ga., in Captain Anderson's Company, who was elected Colonel of the 11th Georgia Regiment Inf., and Nunnally was elected Captain. Went to the Virginia Army; wounded in battle of Malvern Hill in Seven Days Battle at Richmond. Shot through the instep of foot; came near dying. In 1864 was transferred to Co. D., 2nd Regiment Georgia Cavalry and served under Gen. Joe Wheeler until the close of the war.

Married Miss Lizzie Leak, of Newton county; raised five sons and three daughters. All had families.

Died at Confederate Soldiers' Home in Atlanta, Ga., October 24, 1912.

#### JOEL CROFFORD BRODNAX

Son of Samuel and Margaret (Aycock) Brodnax. Born in Newton county, Georgia, December 15, 1831.

Began teaching school at the early age of 15 years and was a success from the beginning. Taught some of the largest and best schools in Walton county. Was professor of mathematics in So. Masonic Female College at Covington, Newton county, when the Civil War broke out in 1861. Went to Virginia with the Lamar Infantry August 1, 1861. Remained a few months and was discharged. The records also show that one J. C. Brodnax, private, Co. F. (Captain Jones' company) Coweta Cavalry, 2nd Willcoxson's Regt. Ga. Cavalry (Ga. State Guards), C. S. A., enlisted at Newnan August 1, 1864, and was mustered out with his company January 31, 1865.

He then moved to Newnan, Coweta county, Georgia, where he had married Miss Rose Thomas a few years before, and was elected clerk of Superior Court, which position he held to the close of the war, when he then engaged in the mercantile business until his death October 11, 1870. Was successful in everything he did.

Had two sons and three daughters, namely: Edward Brooking Brodnax, 2nd; John Hampton, Ada, Vivian and Essie. All lived to have families.

He was worth over fifty thousand dollars at the time of his death October 11, 1870, 38 years and 10 months old. Buried at Newnan, Ga.

#### SAMUEL HOUSTON BRODNAX

Son of Samuel and Margaret (Aycock) Brodnax, born in Newton county, Georgia November 27, 1844. Raised on the farm; was a student in Emory College, Oxford, Ga., in 1861, when the Civil War began, which closed the school and deprived him of a collegiate education.

In the Fall of 1862 Gov. Joseph E. Brown called for two regiments of volunteers to be known as State Troops, which had to be made up of boys under 18 years and men over 45 years. It took almost the whole State to form the two regiments. There was a company formed at Covington, Newton county, and there were men from 10 or 12 counties in it.

The Company was organized in November, 1862. Warren Maddox, of Newton county, was elected Captain. In January, 1863, the company was ordered to report at Griswoldville, where the 2nd Regiment Georgia State

Troops was organized. Captain Story was elected Colonel of the Regiment and our Company was known as Company G.

We were then ordered to Savannah and attached to a Confederate Brigade, and soon afterwards were ordered to Charleston, S. C.; thence back to Savannah, where we remained until Spring; then to Rome and the regiment was scattered along the W. & A. R. R. from Dalton to Ringgold, guarding the tunnel and bridges over Chickamauga Creek until after the battle of Chickamauga. We were then sent to the Chattahoochee River where we spent the winter. In March, 1864, we were ordered to join Gen. Joe Johnson, who was then falling back from Chattanooga, Tenn. We were attached to General Cummings' Brigade, Stephenson's Division. Saw General Polk killed. He, with his staff of officers, came riding along our line of battle and just in front of our company they turned and rode up the hill to an open space and dismounted and was looking over the enemy's lines when a shell struck him. I happened to be looking at them and saw him fall. Our line of battle then was above Kennesaw Mountain.

On the 22nd day of June, the longest and hottest day we ever felt, we were on the extreme right wing of the army, when we were ordered double quick time down by Kennesaw Mountain and on through Marietta and down the Powder Springs road about four miles; formed line of battle and charged the first line of the enemy's trenches through a thick piece of woods. Shells and rifle balls were flying thick, killing and wounding our men, while we could not see a man of them until we got to their first line, which they had left and fell back to their second line of works. I went within a hundred yards of it, and being completely exhausted, I lay down behind a fence and remained there until dark; was right between two fires, as quite a lot of our men had stopped some distance back and were shooting over our men, who had gone on further and the enemy was firing at them, and we were between them, and when I succeeded in finding my company they had reported me killed.

We lost that evening over 100 men killed and wounded in our regiment. It was the first real battle we had been in and the worst one I was in during the war.

But we kept Sherman from getting in the rear of General Johnson. He was sent to hospital the next day, as he was completely broken down; was sent home as soon as he was able to leave the hospital and while at home General Gerard made his raid to Covington, destroyed the Georgia R. R., burned the bridges over the Alcovy and Yellow Rivers, and as he was cut off and some of General Wheeler's men were passing, he told his father if he would give him a horse he would join the Cavalry, which he did, so he joined Co. D., 2nd Georgia Cavalry, and was at the capture of General Stoneman a few days afterwards, where he got a complete outfit, a breech-loading rifle and metal shells, new saddle, bridle, halter, blankets and overcoat; helped to guard the prisoners to Macon. Gen. Wheeler returned and began his raid into Tennessee—passing through Walton county, Gainesville, Dahlonega and to Dalton, thence up the railroad to near Knoxville; then into middle Tennessee; went in sight of Nashville; then out through west Tennessee. Crossed the Tennessee River at Muscle Shoals in Alabama, then to

Rome, Ga., and back to Atlanta, just as Sherman began his march to Savannah. Was in battle at Griswoldville and came near being killed, which occurred in this way: There was a crowd of Yankee cavalry sent to burn up the town and a squad of our cavalry of about 20 men was detailed and sent around in their rear and surprised them just as they began to set fire to the houses, and when they discovered us, they fled as fast as their horses could carry them, and our men following as fast as they could until they reached a big reserve force they had, so we had to flee, and as he was in front going, it threw him in the rear getting back and a Yankee got his horses head up to his horse's tail with his sabre drawn over him, but could not get close enough to hit him and they ran in that position until the Yank was killed. He was more than a hundred yards ahead of any of his other men. Some of our men got his horse. Don't know whether it was bravery or his horse, as he was so far in advance of all the others. They burned up the town the next day. We followed Sherman on to Savannah and wintered in the rice fields of South Carolina, in sight of the city.

Early in March, 1865, Sherman began his march of devastation through South Carolina, burned all the houses where he went. We fell back along the Savannah River to August, Ga. Were in battle at Aiken, S. C. Sherman's cavalry started to Augusta to burn it, and Gen. Wheeler met them at Aiken and drove them back about two miles of more. We were in sight of Columbia while it was burning. We went on by Charlotte, N. C., and through the State to near Goldsboro.

It was the latter part of March, 1865, we were near Goldsboro, N. C. We were on a small river and my recollection it was Tar River, when an officer of our regiment was ordered with a squad of about a dozen picked men to cross the river. I was one of the squad and we had to swim our horses across the river. We were sent over to reconnoiter and find out the location of the Yanks. After crossing the river we went a short distance through a piece of woods, when we came to a public highway, which we followed and we had to go up a hill; we could not see over the top, and a squad of Yankee cavalry was coming up the hill on the opposite side, and we came very near having a collision before we saw each other. I think they discovered us first and they wheeled about and retreated as fast as they could and we right behind them. I don't think we were more than fifty yards apart. They ran about 300 or 400 yards down the road and ran into a whole regiment of their infantry that had stacked their guns and were lying all around on both sides of the road. It seemed to me there was a thousand or more of them. When we discovered what a predicament we were in we whirled about and retreated as fast as we could. They were so surprised or frightened we had got back nearly to the top of the hill when they had formed and began shooting at us, and some of their bullets came near enough to my ears to hear them as they passed. We soon turned over the top of the hill, which protected us. They never attempted to follow us.

Strange to relate, but it is true, that every one of our squad escaped being killed or wounded and only one horse was shot and he ran out with the rider before he fell and I took the rider up behind me and carried him back across the river. It seems like an act of Providence that any of

us escaped being killed, or it might have been that they were so badly frightened they didn't know what to do. That was my last encounter with the last Yankees I met during the war.

Was sent with a squad to guard a crossing on Nahunta Creek and while there on duty had the misfortune of having his arm broken and dislocated in wrist joint. It was done by kick of a mule and fall together. It was done about sunset and the officer in charge kept him there until late next evening and it was near midnight before they reached camps where he could have treatment and the surgeon told him he would never be able for any more service; bandaged it up and gave him a hospital certificate and told him home would be the best place if he was able to get there.

So he started out the next morning in that condition not knowing where he would land, but headed towards Raleigh, which was about 50 miles. Upon reaching Raleigh learned that General Lee had evacuated Richmond and all hospitals being full, he continued his journey toward home, and upon reaching Salisbury he relates a little incident of interest. It was about sundown and he was looking for a place he could spend the night, when he saw a gentleman and lady sitting on their porch and stopped at the gate and the old gentleman came out and he told him he was a wounded Confederate soldier and wished to find a place to stay all night and he began making excuses saying he didn't have any corn to feed his horse on, but as it was about night and he had been riding all day and was suffering, the old man sympathized with him and called a servant to put up his horse and he stated to the gentleman that he preferred to go with the negro and see about putting up the horse, and the old man went along with them to the lot and he told him that he was not fit to sleep in a nice bed and would stay in the barn, but he would not agree to that. So they went back to the house and supper was ready, and after supper the gentleman invited him to his room where there was a fire, as it was too cold to sit outside, and inquired where he was from and how he was wounded, etc., and he told him; also told his name and as soon as he heard the name he reached out his hand and tapped a call bell on the table. A negro man came and he told him to get a certain key and get a feed of corn and give his horse; never apologized, but said a Brodnax had married his daughter and he thought as much of him as he did of his own son, who was at home wounded and was a Colonel of a North Carolina regiment, and I was put in the room with him and treated very nicely and as well as if I had been his son. He prepared a lunch for me the next morning for my dinner. The old gentleman was Col. Hamilton Jones, a prominent lawyer and perhaps judge of the court. His son was also a lawyer. So that was one time in my life my name did my horse good, if it didn't do me any.

Had to pass through a bushwhacking section; spent two night in passing through it without being molested, so continued the journey in the direction of home, which was reached about the middle of April a few days after General Lee's surrender, and the war was soon over. Rode the same horse home that my father gave me when I joined the Co. D., 2nd Regt. Georgia Cavalry in 1864, and was appraised at three thousand dollars. Had rode him over ten thousand miles. Remained at home the bal-

ance of the year nursing my broken arm, which never had any medical treatment and have suffered with it ever since.

Made a crop with my horse in 1866, and sold him back to my father for \$200.00. Went to Walnut Grove, Walton county, in November, 1866, and engaged in the mercantile business with John W. Thompson, under the firm name of Brodnax and Thompson. Had no business experience and not much money. First of August, 1867, went to New York a perfect stranger, without any recommendations. Introduced myself to some of the leading wholesale merchants; told them I was a poor crippled Confederate boy with but little money, and wanted to buy a good stock of goods mostly on credit. Told them I had \$3,000 in cash, and strange to say, there was not a single firm but what was will to sell me all the goods I wanted, so I bought over \$10,000 worth of general merchandise, on two, three and fourth months' time, except what I paid cash for. We had a good trade, as the whole country was destitute of goods. Did our own work; worked 18 hours a day and just as fast as we got money enough to pay a note we sent it to New York by express; didn't wait for notes to mature, and managed to pay the last one before was due, and it gave us all the credit we needed from then on. Had no banks here then; had to have money sent here from New York to buy cotton with. Shipped all our cotton to New York. Kept an account there to draw on. Did a successful business for ten years, when I sold out my interest to Mr. Thompson. In 1871 built a good eight-room house and furnished it, and the 6th day of December, 1871, married Miss Edda Schman and turned it over to her to keep, but during Christmas of 1880 it was burned up with everything we had in it. In 1881 built another on the same lot, the brick house where we have lived since.

Raised three boys. Joel Colley, born December 12, 1872; Samuel Edward, born March 11, 1875; George Hamilton, born March 17, 1877. All married and have families.

Joel Colley married Miss Lavada Harris, of Jersey Ga., November 30, 1898, and they have four sons and one daughter, namely: Joel Colley, Jr., born October 4, 1899; Benjamin Brooking, born February 14, 1902; Thomas Clark, born June 27, 1904; Orrin Samuel, born August 5, 1910; Mary Agnes, born November 17, 1917.

Samuel Edward married Miss May Stansell, of Conyers, Ga. Had two daughters, Sarah Belle and May Consell. (Died.)

George Hamilton married Miss Bessie Clay, of Walnut Grove, Ga., has two sons and daughter, namely: Samuel Augustus and George Hamilton, Jr., and Mary Rounelle.

He represented Walton county in the Georgia legislature in 1890 and 1891; entered the banking business with his son, Joel Colley, and the business is still running.

Celebrated their Golden Wedding December 6, 1921; had over 100 guests besides children and grandchildren. It was a happy day for til.

The Brodnaxes are a very ancient family, the name running back to Robert Brodnax, time of Henry V, 1420.

William Brodnax, born at Godmersham, England, February 23, 1673, came to Virginia in 1704; died 1727; buried on Jamestown Island. Have his picture, also one of his home in England, where he was born, which re-

mained in the Brodnax family for several generations. The last one of the name that owned it was Thomas Brodnax, who changed his name to Sir Thomas Knight in order to inherit a large estate, which was the law of England. William left two sons, Edwards and William, from whom all the Brodnaxes of America have descended.

He also has the family Coat of Arms. He has been a Mason 35 years and a members of the Christian church about forty-five years.

### JOEL COLLEY BRODNAX

Son of Samuel Houston and Edda (Selman) Brodnax. Born at Walnut Grove, Walton county, Ga., December 12, 1872. Engaged in mercantile business with C. D. Shelnutt, at Walnut Grove, 1890, at the age of 18 years, and in 1895 bought Shelnutt out and did business alone for about 10 years. Sold out and entered the business of Brodnax Banking Co., with his father. Said business running now.

Married Miss Lavada Harris, of Jersey, Ga., November 30, 1898. Has four sons and one daughter, namely: Joel Colley, Jr., born October 4, 1899; Benjamin Brook- ing, born February 14, 1902; Thomas Clark, born June 27, 1904; Orrin Samuel, born August 5, 1910; Mary Agnes, born November 17, 1917.

### SAMUEL EDWARD BRODNAX

Son of Samuel Houston and Edda (Selman) Brodnax. Born at Walnut Grove, Walton county, Georgia, March 11, 1875. Began book-keeping at the early age of 15 years for the Social Circle Oil Mill and Fertilizer Co. Went from there to Atlanta, Ga., where he has been engaged in the fertilizer business up to June 1, 1923.

Married Miss May Stancel, of Conyers, Rockdale county, Ga. Had two daughters, namely: Sarah Belle and May Stancel. (The latter died when about eight years old.) He is now making an extensive tour of the North-west and Pacific Coast.

I was making him a visit in Atlanta last year and he asked me to take lunch with him. I told him I would. He took me to the Rotary Club and this is the speech he made as he told me to stand up and put his hand on my shoulders: "This is the man who taught me to respect ladies and old age and make his word his bond, first, last and all the time; too brave to lie and too honest to steal. This is my father, Samuel H. Brodnax, of Walnut Grove, Ga."

### GEORGE HAMILTON BRODNAX

Youngest son of Samuel Houston and Edda (Selman) Brodnax. Born at Walnut Grove, Walton county, Georgia, March 17, 1877.

Married Miss Bessie, daughter of Hon. Augustus W. Clay, of Walnut Grove, December 9, 1896. Was chief Deputy Sheriff of Fulton county for eight years and re-signed said position in 1913 to accept the appointment of U. S. Secret Service Agent for the Treasury Department, which position he now holds. Has traveled practically in all the States and part of Canada.

Has two sons, Samuel Augustus and George Hamilton, Jr., and one daughter, Mary Rounelle. Lives at Hapeville, Ga.