

Story of James Riley: soldier and preacher

By SYBIL MCRAV
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In the publication "History of the Chattahoochee Baptist Association 1826-1955," by T.H. Robertson, James Riley is named as one of eight preachers present when the association was organized at Hopewell Church Friday, Mar. 1, 1826. He was a resident of Hall County and represented organizational meeting. James Riley was elected as the first moderator of the association.

"By reason of his age, James Riley served only two terms as moderator. He died in 1834. The following resolution appears in the record concerning his death: 'Resolved. That we lament the death of our father in the Gospel, James Riley, who departed the last year. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War (said to have been with Washington at Valley Forge), and was probably the oldest person in our Association.'"

James Rylee Sr., a Revolutionary soldier living in Hall County, drew two land lots in the 1832 Land Lottery. The land was located in Cherokee County and were numbers 181-7-1 and 198-22-2 and probably known as gold lots.

The will of James Rylee Sr. is recorded in "Minutes 1819-1839 Misc. Book A", pg. 211.

"Georgia, Hall County. Will of James Rylee, Senr., 14 January 1835. I will and bequeath to my beloved son, James Rylee, five Negroes and all my books... To beloved son, John Rylee, \$50. To son, Lent Rylee, \$200 and his support provided he applies for same in person and if not it is to go to son, James Rylee.

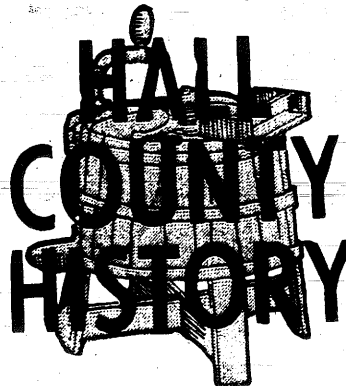
"To my daughter, Letty, wife of Leroy Guthrey, \$400 in cash. To daughter, Peggy wife of Wilson Howington, \$1 in cash. To Morgan, \$1 in cash. To daughter, Polly, wife of John Guthrey, \$50 cash.

"My Negro woman, Chany, has been a faithful servant to me and my family and is now to be a servant to no one. Her daughter, Caroline, is to remain with her mother until age 15, and she is then to belong to my son, James Rylee. My son, James, is to care for the provide for Chany for the rest of her life.

Executors, son, James Rylee and son-in-law, Wilson Howington. Witnesses, J.H. Gill, W.R. Thorton and P.P. Casey."

The will was probated 8 July 1835. It is assumed that son, Lent Rylee, evidently went West, or his whereabouts were unknown. He possibly never applied for the \$200 left to him by his father because in "Minutes Book 2," Hall County Courthouse (p. 17) William H. Rylee and James I. Rylee apply for the money and claim lineal descent to Lent Rylee.

James Rylee Sr. applied for a pension as a veteran of the Revolutionary War:



"Ga. Hall County... On this the third day of September 1833, personally appeared in open court of said county of Hall in said State of Georgia now setting, James Rylee resident of said county of Hall and State of Ga., aged seventy-six years who being first duly sworn according to law doth upon his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

"That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated that he was drafted in the Militia line in the state of North Carolina Caswell county, under Capt. Hubbard, Major Dunnahood and Colo. William Moor and that he served nine months in that capacity. Which service to the best of my recollection was done in the year 1777 or 8, this was the last duty that I done personally but hired a substitute who done duty in my place for the term of twelve months....

"Interrogations. Propounded by the Judges of the Inferior Court of said county to James Rylee.

"When and in what year were you born? James Rylee answers he was born in Halifax County and state of Virginia in the seventeen hundred and fifty-five.

"Have you any record of your age or if so where is it? Answer: I never had any record of my age. I judge from the information received from my parents.

"Where were you living when

called into service and where do you now live? I lived in the state of North Carolina Caswell Co., when called into service. I then lived in the state of Virginia, Halifax County, then in the state of Georgia, Elbert County. I now live in Hall County, state of Georgia.

"State some of the persons in your neighborhood to whom you are known and who can testify to your character for veracity and then belief of your services as a Revolutionary Soldier. (answer) Rev. James Whitten, David H. McCleskey, John Moor, Benj. R. McCutchen. (signed) James Rylee, M.G."