

HUGH LAWSON WHITE.

Hugh Lawson White was born in Iredell county in 1773, on the plantation now owned by Thomas Caldwell, Esq., about two miles west of Center Church, and five miles east of Beattie's Ford, on the Catawba river. The old family mansion has long since disappeared, and the plow now runs smoothly over its site. His grandfather, Moses White, emigrated to America from Ireland about 1742, and married a daughter of Hugh Lawson, one of the patriarchal settlers of the country. He had six sons, James, Moses, John, William, David and Andrew; many of whose descendants now reside in Iredell county. James White, the father of Hugh, was a soldier of the Revolution. About 1786 he moved to Knox county, East Tennessee, and was one of the original founders of the present flourishing city of Knoxville. When the Creek (Indian) war broke out he entered the army, was soon made a Brigadier General, and was distinguished for his bravery, energy and talents.

Hugh L. White's education was conducted under the care of Rev. Samuel Carrick, Judge Roane, and Dr. Patterson, of Philadelphia. After completing his studies he returned home and commenced the practice of his profession. By close attention to business he soon acquired eminence, numerous friends, and a handsome competency. At the early age of twenty-eight he was elected one of the Judges of the Superior Court. In 1807 he resigned his Judgeship and retired to his farm.

There appears, says a writer on biography, always to be a congeniality between the pursuits of agriculture and all great and good minds. We do not pretend to analyze the rationale of this, or why it is that patriotism exists with more elevation and fervency in the retirement of a farm than in the busy mart of crowded cities. The history of man proves this fact, that the noblest instances of self-sacrificing patriotism which have adorned the drama of human life, have been presented by those who are devoted to agricultural pursuits. It is the only pursuit that man followed in his state of primal innocence, and surviving his fall, allows the mind

"To look through nature, up to nature's God."

But his well-known abilities were too highly appreciated by his fellow-citizens to grant him a long retirement. Soon after his resignation of the judicial robes he was elected a Senator to the State Legislature.

In 1809, when Tennessee remodeled her judiciary department, and created the Supreme Court, Judge White was unanimously chosen to preside over this important tribunal of justice. He could not with propriety refuse to accept a position so cordially tendered, and highly honorable in its character. For six years he presided over its deliberations with such fidelity and strict integrity as to win universal esteem and unfading honors for his reputation. At the same time he was elected President of the State Bank. Under his able management its character acquired stability and public confidence.

The State of Tennessee was then severely suffering from the hostile incursions and savage depredations of the Creek Indians. At the darkest period of the campaign, when General Jackson was in the midst of a wild territory, and surrounded, not only by cruel savages, but enduring famine, disaffection and complaints, Judge White left the Supreme Court Bench, and with a single companion, sought and found, after days and nights of peril, the camp of the veteran Jackson. He immediately volunteered their services, and they were gladly accepted.

While Judge White was absent on this campaign he lost several terms of his court; and as the Judges were only paid for services actually rendered, the Legislature resolved that there should be no deduction in his annual salary as Judge. This continuance of salary, so gratefully offered, he declined to receive.

In 1822 he was appointed, with Governor Tazewell of Virginia, and Governor King, of Alabama, a commissioner under the convention with Spain, which position he accepted and held until its term expired in 1824.

In 1825, General Jackson having resigned his seat as a Senator in Congress, Judge White was unanimously elected to fill out his term. In 1827 he was unanimously elected for a full term; and in 1832 was chosen President of the Senate. In 1836 he was voted for as President of the United States.

He died, with the consciousness of a well spent life, at his adopted home in Tennessee, on the 10th of April, 1840, aged sixty-seven years.

Source: Sketches of Western North Carolina, Historical and Biographical
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