

ARMSTRONG STATE COLLEGE

A Biography

of

JOSEPH SAMUEL CLAGHORN

by

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Savannah, Ga.

May 94



Colonel Joseph S. Claghorn when older

PHOTO FROM: RUTH deTREVILLE

Abstract

Joseph Samuel Claghorn (1817-1879) was born in Conn. and came to Savannah with his family in the 1820's. He began commercial life in Savannah as the junior member of the firm of Wood & Claghorn. In 1848 he and Major John Cunningham formed a co-partnership under the name Claghorn & Cunningham, which continued until 1877. In 1856 he was elected Captain of the Chatham Artillery, which he held until 1862, when he was made a member for life. A person whom the community held in high regard, Captain Claghorn devoted time and money to support the Confederate cause.

A Note From The Author:

When I interviewed Mrs Livingston, the great-great granddaughter of Joseph, she told me that the book by her cousin Ruth deTreville was full of mistakes. She said that she thought Ruth made parts of the book up. Jo Thompson, from Wormsloe, also told me that he doubted the authenticity. I was not able to contact Mrs. deTreville but at the beginning of her book she stated that the book was to be more of collection of family stories rather than a book of historical value. She did however give thanks to the Georgia Historical Society for their help. Although oral history may be biased, I personally feel that it can hold alot of information that would otherwise be lost forever.

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Arrival in Savannah

Joseph Samuel Claghorn was brought to Savannah from Connecticut by his parents in 1827.¹ His father, Samuel Joseph and mother Philura Paine Spalding came to Savannah with their two children Joseph and Matilda in hopes of developing a shipping business in the warm port of Savannah.² As time progressed, Samuel Claghorn together with Orlando A. Wood formed a large and very profitable ship chandlery and grocery in the early 1800's.³ Joseph Samuel was sent to study at Yale but just before graduation his father became ill, therefore he returned home in 1840 to become a junior partner in the firm of Claghorn and Wood.⁴ Now that he was back in Savannah and doing well in the firm it was time to consider a suitable wife.

Marriage

On April 27, 1846, Joseph Samuel Claghorn married Miss Sarah Campbell Hunter of Savannah, Georgia.⁵ They were wed by Edward Neufille of Christ Church who served there from 1827 until 1851.⁶ The reception was held at the Hunter home on Reynolds Square.⁷

Sarah C. Hunter came from a long-standing historical family that can be traced back to Wormslow and Fort Wymberly on Isle of Hope, Georgia.⁸ Noble Wymberly Jones of Wormsloe, had a daughter Sarah Jones who in 1795 married Judge John Glen. They in turn had a daughter, Margaret Glen.⁹ She married William Hunter who was a son of a former Mayor of Savannah, John Hunter, also formerly of the British Army.¹⁰ Margaret and William had four children, the oldest being William P. Hunter.¹¹ William P Hunter married Elizabeth Sturges and had four children; their youngest child, born in 1826, was Sarah Campbell Hunter.¹²

NOBLE WYMBERLY JONES

└─ DAUGHTER

Sarah Jones m. Judge John Glen

└─ DAUGHTER

Margaret Glen m. William Hunter

└─ OLDEST SON

William P. Hunter m. Elizabeth Sturges

YOUNGEST DAUGHTER

Sarah Campbell Hunter m. Joseph S. Claghorn

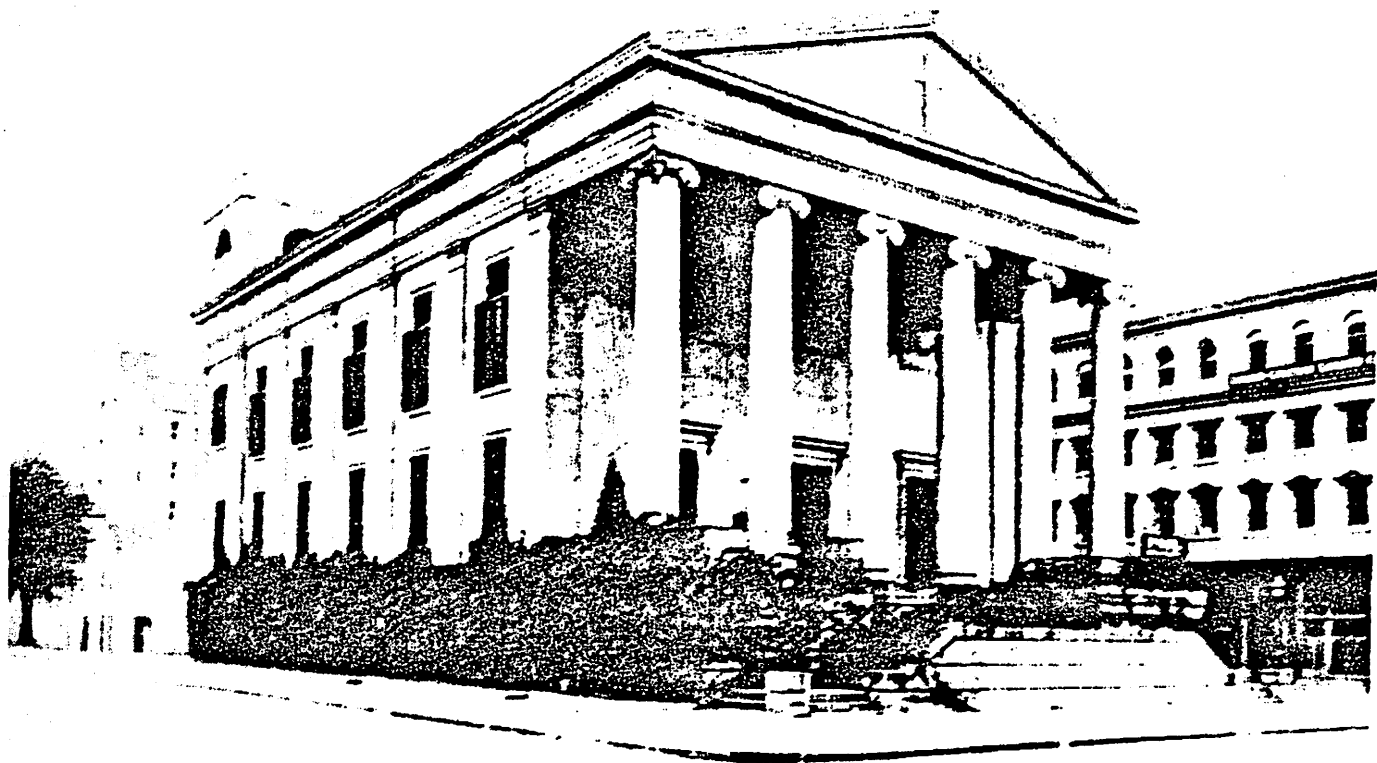
Sarah's parents, like other well-to-do families of Savannah, presented their daughter at the age of 18 years to the society and to eligible young men at a reception and dance. It has been said that Sarah and Joseph had already begun a courtship and enjoyed each others company on many occasions such as high tea and horseback riding with others.¹³

A family story about their courtship and his proposal to her states that one day the two were riding on an oyster shell road where, at one point, railroad tracks crossed.¹⁴ All of a sudden Sarah's steed took off toward the on-coming tracks that was carrying an approaching train and as Sarah let go of the reins to save her self, Joseph was there and caught her in his arms and proclaimed his love for her and she returned it.¹⁵ Eventually Sarah married Joseph and went to live with him and his mother on Oglethorpe Avenue.¹⁶

Joseph Claghorn is said to have come from noble lineage.¹⁷ Samuel Claghorn, Joseph's father, was a direct heir to the Barony of Claghorn in England, but in order to receive the title and lands, he must promise to occupy the premises and reside in England.¹⁸ This honor he politely but firmly refused and both his son Joseph and grandson Rufus also declined the honor, preferring to live in the United States.²⁰ Rufus, Joseph's son, has an original patent for

Claghorn, who was made a baron, which suggests their nobility.²¹

In the year 1848, Joseph Claghorn and John Cunningham formed a co-partnership, in the merchant and ship chanderly business, under the name of Claghorn and Cunningham.²² In 1856 he and Cunningham bought wharf lot (no. 6) which was east of and at the foot of Drayton Street, known as Woods Wharf, for \$20,400 from his fathers former partner, Orlando A. Wood.²³ For this time period, this was a very large sum of money, even for two business men to pull together. It leads me to the conclusion that he was a wealthy man who could be trusted. The tax digest of 1855 stated his basic worth to be \$43,320 including what capital he had invested.²⁴ In 1846 the firm Claghorn and Cunningham had \$35,100 in merchandise alone.²⁵ The location of the business was usually kept near Bay and Drayton. This partnership was dissolved by Claghorn in 1877, just two years before his death.²⁶²⁷



Christ Church, Savannah, Georgia

CHILDREN

Joseph and Sarah began their family one year after their marriage. Sarah would give birth to ten children between the years of 1847 and 1868.²⁸ There were to be 5 girls and 5 boys, two of which died very young. Anna Sturges Hunter was born in 1847 and she became the only child that did not marry.²⁹ She did however become one of Savannah's finest latin school teachers.³⁰ Rufus, the couples first son, was born in 1849.³¹ He married Margaret Elizabeth (Lilia) Hutcheson and had 4 children.³² The youngest of which was Lila Marguerite Claghorn who married Robert John Gilchrist.³³ They had four children, 3 of which are still living. I personally spoke with one of their daughters, a Mrs. Margaret Gilchrist Livingston of Skidaway Island, Georgia. Joseph S. Claghorn was born in 1851 and married a Julia Greg of South Carolina.³⁴ Augustus Wood was born in 1853 but died in 1865 at the age of 12 from typhoid fever.³⁵ Henry Clifford followed in 1857 and he married Josephine Newell and later separated but never divorced.³⁶ Philura Matilda, namesake of both Joseph's Mother and Sister, was born in 1858. She married Thomas P. Stafford.³⁷ Next was William Hunter who was stillborn in 1866.³⁸ Sarah Campbell Claghorn born in 1861 married a first cousin by the name of William Presstman Hunter.³⁹ Caroline Lee, born 1863 was a nurse that eventually moved to New York and married Dr. William McArthey.⁴⁰ The last child, Harriette Bassett was born when her mother was 42 years old, in 1868.⁴¹ She married A. S. Bacon

who's father was known as the lumber king of Savannah. 42

Joseph and Sarah Claghorn's

children:

Anna Sturges 1847

Rufus. Samuel 1849 m. Margaret E. Hutcheson

Joseph S. 1851 m. Julia Greg

Augustus Wood 1853 died at age 12

Henry Clifford 1857 m. Josephine Newell

Philura Matilda 1858 m. Thomas P. Stafford

William Hunter 1866 stillborn

Sarah Cambell 1861 m. William Hunter (cousin)

Caroline Lee 1863 m. Dr. William McArthy

Harriett Bassett 1868 m. A. S. Bacon

The arrival of the children was welcomed in their home on Oglethorp Ave but from 1858 until 1870 the family residence was on South Broad Street. 43 Eventually Joseph purchased "Wymberly" once called "Fort Wymberly" when he saw the need for a summer home for his growing family. This property, on the southern part of Isle of Hope, was once part of Wormsloe Plantation owned by Noble Jones. 44 On the property, there was only the Manor, the overseer's cottage, stables, dairy house, smoke houses and storage areas over the 62½ acres of land. 45

The original house has since burned down but supposedly the stable and overseers cottage remain at #1 and 5 Noble Glen Drive,

Isle of Hope. 46

CHATHAM ARTILLERY

In 1840, after returning to Savannah to become a junior partner with his father's firm, Joseph enlisted in the Chatham Artillery.⁴⁷ The young private rose up through the ranks to become elected as Captain of the Chatham Artillery in 1856.⁴⁸ When the company needed a place on which to train the troops, Joseph offered Wymerly to the members of his company.⁴⁹ Camp Claghorn, as it was called by the artillery members, was basically turned over to the new battery.⁵⁰ Every convenience was made possible for hospital purposes, preservation of quartermaster and commissary stores, erection of stables, kitchens and shops.⁵¹ When Robert E Lee inspected Camp Claghorn, he declared it to be one of the best equipped encampments of the Confederace.⁵²

On the evening of January 2, 1861 orders came from Governor, Joseph Brown, by letter that Fort Pulaski should be occupied and that Capt. Claghorn "has been charged with all matters relating to ordnance and ordnance stores and their supply".⁵³ On January 3, at 12 o'clock Fort Pulaski was taken by the confederacy, which included Joseph Claghorn as Captain of the Chatham Artillery.⁵⁴ The company of 125 men led by A. R. Lawton was then transported on Sept 28, 1861. back to Camp Claghorn.⁵⁵ Joseph led this company as Captain until 1862 when First Lieut. C C Jones Jr was commissioned as Chief of Artillery by Brig. General Mercer and ordered to the command of the light batteries in the military district of Georgia.⁵⁶

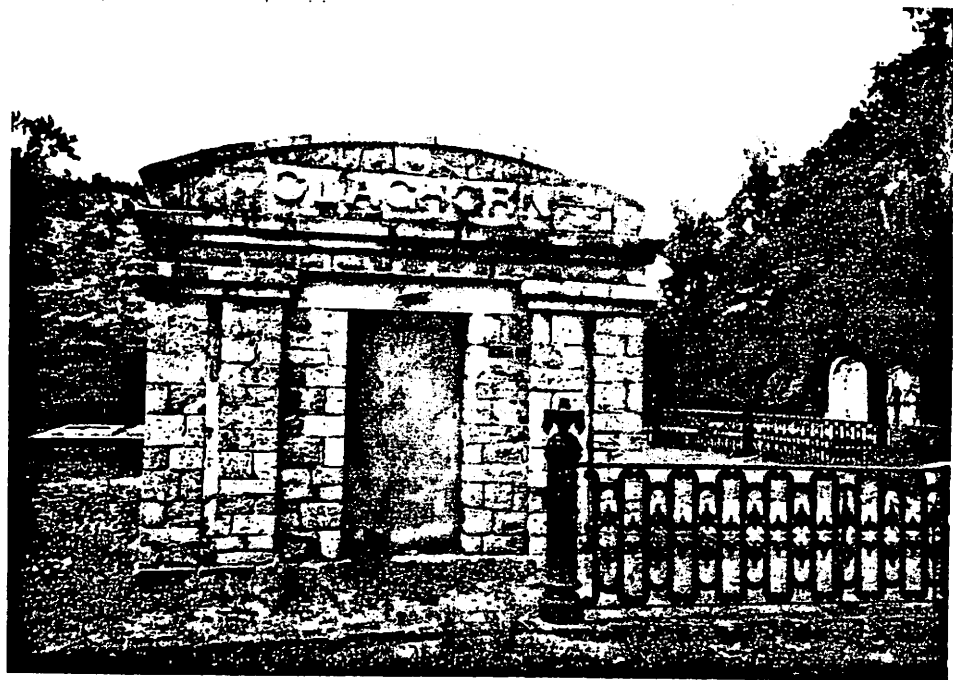
On Dec 12, 1862, Captain Joseph Claghorn resigned the Command of the Company, and thus accepted the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel, and Ordnance Officer upon the staff of Major General Gustavus W. Smith, Commanding General of the Georgia Militia and the State Forces. ⁵⁷ Although Joseph was made an honorary member of the Chatham Artillery, he would never quite get over the fact that C. C. Jones had been given a higher command than he had. ⁵⁸

DEATH

Once the military career was over and the ship chandlery business sold, Captain Claghorn spent his remaining days at Wymberly with his family.⁵⁹ In October of 1878, under advice from his doctor, 'Doctor Schley, he traveled to New York, to find relief from his illness; unable to recover, he returned home to his family in December.⁶⁰ His health steadily declined resulting in his death on April 8, 1879 at Isle of Hope.⁶¹ The cause on his death card said ulceration of the stomach.⁶² He was buried in Laural Grove Cemetery and was given full military honors by the Chatham Artillery and the Ancient Landmark Lodge F.A.M., of which he was a member, also attended.⁶³ Sarah eventually had to sell Wymberly because the war had hurt them financially.⁶⁴ She died in 1886 and was placed next to her beloved at Laural Grove Cemeter.⁶⁵



PHOTO FROM:
LAURELGROVE CEMETERY
LOT#1234



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- 50 Jones, p. 33.
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- 52 deTreville, p. 39. & Livingston.
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- 62 Chatham County Health Department, Death Records. Joseph
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- 63 S.M.N. 4-9-1879.
- 64 Livingston.
- 65 Chatham County Health Department, Death Records. Sarah
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