

# CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES

## ELIZABETH PHILIPS WPA ORAL INTERVIEW

American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940

[Judge Henry Bethune Philips]

Life History Jax-Red Bank Plantation?

June 6, 1940.

Mrs. Elizabeth (Smith) Philips

1955 Largo Place

South Jacksonville, Florida.

(Widow of Henry Bethune Philips, owner of Red Bank Plantation, now Colonial Manor Subdivision)

Personal Interview.

Rose Shepherd, writer.

JUDGE HENRY BETHUNE PHILIPS

RED BANK PLANTATION

- : -

"Henry Bethune Philips, born November 29, 1857 at Red Bank Plantation -- the old house is still standing and known as No. 1230 Greenridge Road, Colonial Manor, South Jacksonville -- was the son of {Begin inserted text}{Begin handwritten}/{End handwritten}{End inserted text} Albert Gallatin Philips and Margaret Ann (Hendricks) Philips. He was the youngest child," said Mrs. Elizabeth (Smith) Philips, his widow.

"Judge Philips was long identified with roads and public works and development of Duval County, and was not much interested in its history. If you would ask him did he remember such-and-such a family or incident, he would answer 'sure, I do,' but he would be worrying about steel for the new bridge or when some roadway would be laid out and hard-surfaced {Begin inserted text}/more{End inserted text} than {Begin deleted text}{?}{End deleted text} historical incident. {Begin handwritten}C. 4[md;]12/21/40 Fla{End handwritten}

"He had an older sister, Mary, who made her home with us, dying at the age of 86. She had a wonderful memory, going back to skirmishes with the Indians, and knew much of early plantation life in Florida. It is a great pity I did not salvage a connected story of her memories, as she was a most interesting conversationalist, well-educated, entertaining, and reliable, but I can only recall snatches now of the many things she used

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to tell us about.

"Of the Philips' family genealogy, great-grandfather David Philips was born in Surry County, Virginia, in 1758, and died in Walker county, Georgia in 1819. His wife was Mary Catharine (Graham) Philips.

"Their son, Matthew Henry Philips was born in 1778, and was buried in Black Creek (Middleburg) in 1842. He came with the Bethune family from Virginia to Florida, the date I do not know.

"The following is the obituary notice published in the Florida Christian Advocate, official organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1842, n.d.:

Devauld County, East Florida,

'died at Black Creek (Middleburg)/in September (1842) a short time since, Mr. Mathew Philips and his wife, Mrs. Martha Philips. He died in the 64th year of his age. She was in the 60th year of her age. They were separated only eighteen days. They both united themselves with the methodist Episcopal Church in Baldwin County, Georgia, in 1800. They both lived consistent members until the Lord called them to live in the Church above.

Brother Philips was a man of mild disposition and bore the ills of life with Christian fortitude. Upright in all the relations of life, his last moments brought glory to God in whose service he had spent 38 years.

'sister Philips was like her husband, an affectionate wife, a kind mother, if anything, too indulgent. Carefully

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she ever endeavored to instruct the children in the way to Heaven. She enjoyed much of the religion of Jesus. She oftentimes praised God aloud, though much persecuted by the world for it. Her last illness was long and severe, but through it all she never murmured. She wan truly a child of God.'

) S. P. Richardson.

"Albert Gallatin Philips was the son of Mathew Henry and Martha Philips. It was he who built Red Bank. He died on January 2, 1874, at the age of eighty. His wife, Margaret Ann (Hendricks) Philips was born November 20, 1814, joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1826 or 1827 and died January 31, 1869.

"The following is the obituary of Albert Gallatin Philips, Andge Philips' father, also published in the Christian Advocate:

'ALBERT GALLATIN PHILIPS died at his residence at Philips Point, known formerly as King's Point, on the 2d of January, 1874, in his 69th year. His friends and acquaintances are invited to attend the funeral services, which will take place today at St. Pauls' M. A. Church (now first methodist) at 11 o'clock.

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'the subject of this obituary notice was born in the State of Georgia and removed to Florida in early manhood, where he married Miss Margaret Hendricks, daughter of Isaac Hendricks, Esq., and where he continued to reside to the time of his death.

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'He was eminently practical, of remarkable foresight and energy; and distinguished for his executive ability. His integrity was universally recognized and proverbial.

'so strong and prominent was his sense of honor and honesty that while comparatively a young man, his father becoming embarrassed on account of having been surety for a friend, young Philips himself hauled into court and the public sale of every article of furniture the family possessed, and then undertook to support his parents, brothers and sisters, often working until the blood would trickle from his fingers from his torn and wounded hands.

'He first settled near Middleburg, on Black Creek, and carried on a traffic in country produce, [oat?]., in a wagon driven by him {Begin inserted text}/self{End inserted text} between that place and Tallahassee. His life in this way was for years one of continuing exposure, labor and danger -- often waking to find his camp fire surrounded by Indians. He won the confidence of even the savages by sharing with them his crust of bread, and exhibiting courage and manliness.

(By his industry he accumulated a large property, in the use of which he was liberal, generous and hospitable. H

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'the education of his children was an object of special attention with him.

'He was for many years a consistent and active member of the Methodist Church, and his house was always the home of the ministers and their families, while his purse was the bank of his church.

'For two years previous to his death he was a great sufferer, having been paralyzed, and for most of the time confined to his room and to his bed. It was a great trial to one of his active habits. He exemplified the faith he professed, and died a noble Christian hero. His life and his death illustrate the triumph of bearing unswerving integrity and truth. He was a bright example of manly, Christian character.

'He left six sons and two daughters, with many friends to mourn his loss.

""The hands softly folded,

the kindly pulses still,

the [cold?] lips have no smile,

The kindly heart no trial,

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His pillow needs no smoothing,

He grieves for no more care,

Love's tenderest entreaty,

makes no response there,

A grave in the valley,

Tears, where sleeping

record another lesson taught,

That love may not forget.

From us forever hidden,

The race forever run,

"Dust to Dust" the preacher saith,

And the good man's race is run."

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....."Albert Gallatin Philips was hooked severely by a cow from the herd of Red Bank Plantation, so that he was paralysed and confined to his bed for two years before he died," said Mrs. Philips.

....."By a strange coincidence, my grandfather Smith, of South Carolina was also hooked by a cow, and my own father was killed by being trampled on by a bull. It is not strange, therefore, that both Judge Philips and myself had an uncontrollable fear of these beasts. Dehorning, and the breeding of hornless cattle, milk in bottles and cans, is one of the great advantages of modern [civilization?].

....."The children of Matthew Henry Philips and Martha (Barnes) Philips were:

(1) Albert Gallatin, who married Margaret Ann Hendricks.

(2) Mary Allen, who married George Branno.

(3) Lucinda H. who married Thomas Ledwith. (Their children were Malvina and William Ledwith)

(4) Hardy H. (Unmarried). Buried in St. Nicholas Cemetery.

(5) Millicent, who married ----- Stephens.

(6) Nancy, who married [?]. O. Goodwin.

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(7) Andrew Jackson, who married Penelope T. Blake.

(8) Rebeckah, M. (Unmarried).

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....."Of the death of Margaret Ann (Hendricks) Philips, the Christian Advocate states:

'SISTER MARGARET ANN PHILIPS was born November 20, 1814, joined the Methodist church in 1826 or 1827 and died January 31, 1869. She displayed many noble traits of character and exhibited numerous virtues. She was greatly beloved by her family, greatly respected in society, and enjoyed the confidence of the church. Self-sacrifice, piety, and enlarged views of usefulness, marked her Christian course.

'Her light shone brightly beside the bed of suffering, in gentle ministrations to want and sorrow, and generous hospitality in active seal.'

The following is copy of a letter from the Commissioner of Lands at St. Augustine, regarding title to Red Bank:

LAND OFFICE

"St. Augustine, May 28, 1840.

"[Sir?]:

I am directed by the commissioner of the Land Office to inform you that the following difficulties exist in relation to the pre-emption proved -- under the Act of 1834.

"The pre-emption was approved under the Acts of 1834, but not entered until May, 1838.

"The property in also taken in the name of Matthew Philips, but it is signed Matthew H. Philips. When you write, give your middle name at full length.

"The delay in making the entry was, I presume, occasioned by the Indian Wars.

"I am, sir, very respectfully, your obt. servt. W. A. SIMMONS."

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The letter was folded so that the outside made the envelope, and was addressed as follows:

Post Mark

St. Augustine

May 31,

1840.

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Matthew H. Philips,  
Jacksonville,  
Florida.

The postmaster having acquaintance with the residence of Mr. Philips is requested to give this a more particular direction.

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The following is copy of deed to Red Bank:

OUTSIDE -- DEED - Isaac and Catharine Hendricks

To

Albert G. Philips.

[??]

1829, December 4.

Acknowledged by Isaac Hendricks and Catharine Hendricks

Recorded in BOOK (A) -- at Page 365.

ATT: Isaiah D. Hart, 6th Duval County Court.

Recording price, \$1.50.

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INSIDE OF DEED.

Territory of Florida )..... ( Duval County..... )..... THIS INDENTURE made this 14th day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine between Isaac Hendricks and Katharine Hendricks of the County and Territory aforesaid, of the one part, to Albert G. Philips, of the same places, of the other part, WITNESSETH:

That the said Isaac Hendricks and Katharine Hendricks for and in consideration of the sum of Five Hundred Dollars to them in hand paid, at and before the sealing and delivery to them present, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have granted, bargained, sold, and conveyed, and do by these presents {Begin inserted text}/grant{End inserted text} bargain, and convey unto the said Albert G. Philips, his heirs and assigns that tract or parcel of land situated along and bing of the county aforesaid on the St. Johns River, containing one hundred and twenty-tree (123) acres more or less, being part of the tract of land grant to Solomon King, describes as follows:

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VIZ: beginning at a water oak on the St. Johns River, F. Bethune corner, then along the line East 55 chains to a pine, a corner, thense along the line North 75 [feet?] East to a branch, then down same branch to the St. Johns River, then by the bank of said River to the beginning,

To have and to hold said tract or parcel of land unto him, the said Albert G. Philips, his heirs, together with all singular, the rights or members and appurtenances thereof, to

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the same in any manner belonging to his and their own proper use and benefit and behoof forever in fee simple.

And the said Isaac Hendricks and Katharine Hendricks have themselves, their heirs and executors and administrators, the said bargained premises unto the said Albert G. Philips, his heirs and assigns will warrant and forever defend the right and title thereof and against claim of other persons whatsoever[;?]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the same ISAAC HENDRICKS and KATHARINE HENDRICKS have hereunto set their hands and seals this day and year above written, signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of

) S ( ISAAC HENDRICKS

KATHARINE HENDRICKS

(x) (Her mark)

MATTHEW H. PHILIPS, J. P.I. D. [MART?]