

Transcription - Jesse Bowden Hancock's Autobiography (written around 1911)

My full name is Jesse Bowden Hancock. I was born near Atlanta, Ga. August 24, 1838. My father's name was William Garrison Hancock, who was born at Chesterfield, Newberry County, SC. He married Mary Bowden in 1836 or '37, and they lived near Atlanta. He [William] was born in 1816 and died in 1845. My father volunteered in a company to go to Mexico and fought in the Mexican wars.

My grandfather, James Hancock, who came from England, said he was a half-brother of John Hancock, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and was a major general in the Revolutionary War. My grandmother was Sarah Scaife, who lived at Charleston, SC.

I volunteered in the Henry Blues at Old Columbia, Ala. in May 1861 and took the boat June 1st for Corinth, Miss. I was mustered into service there and sent at once to Manassas Gap, Va. and was there until the next spring. I was sent to Yorktown, Va. and was in the retreat to Richmond, the fight at Seven Pines, and the seven days around Richmond in the march to Maryland. I got there Sept. 14, 1862 and was promoted to First Lieutenant of Co. A of the Ala. Regiment.

I was wounded badly at Sharpsburg in my legs. My sister Sallie (B.M.) came to see me the day before they were to cut my legs off. I told her where the swords were, and she went and got two and slipped them out. When they came the next morning to amputate my legs, we both drew our swords on them, and today I limp only in one leg slightly.

I have been a magistrate in both Ala. and Arkansas. I am a Methodist, a Democrat, and have been a Mason since 1866.

Notes:

- 1) Jesse's father was actually named Albert Garrison Hancock; being pretty old when he wrote his autobiography, he must have confused his father with his son, William Garrison Hancock.
- 2) Jesse's father, Albert, was more likely born near Chester in Chester Co., SC.
- 3) We have not been able to prove any relation of our James Hancock (1789-1868) to John Hancock (1737-1793), signer of the DOI.
- 4) Sarah Scaife did not live in Charleston, SC when she met James; she was living on the William Scaife Plantation near Baton Rouge, Chester Co., SC., only a short horseback ride east from James' land nearer to the Broad River.
- 5) (B.M.) is an abbreviation for "Big Mama" -- Sallie Hancock's nickname. Someone in the Askew family retyped Jesse's original text.