

Finley Holmes (Finlay) (Jr) ♂

Born: 1802, Mar 24 in Columbia, SC

Died: 1884, Sept 24 at Plum Point, MS on the homestead of Valley Grove - buried in [Elmwood Cemetery](#), Memphis, TN (moved from Mississippi)



age ~50 years
- about the portraits -

When Finley Holmes became 21 (in 1823) he moved from South Carolina to Georgia, near Macon. He married in Bibb County, Georgia and lived near Macon, Georgia until 1836 then moved to Mississippi.

Whether Jenny (Finley's mother) and her younger sons moved to Georgia at the same time that Finley moved to Georgia, or whether Jenny made the move at a later date, is not disclosed in the information we have. But we do know that Jenny did move from South Carolina to Georgia, and that she died in Talbot County, Georgia, about 1835 or 1840.

Finley met and married a Miss Emily Raines. They were married on December 17, 1823, in Bibb County, Georgia. Young Finley was a "hard shell" Baptist and Emily was a "blue stocking" Presbyterian. They continued to live near Macon, Georgia, where young Finley acquired considerable farm lands ¹.

In the year of 1836, young Finley decided to sell his holdings in Georgia and to take his family further West into a recently-admitted state that was often referred to as "Mississippi Territory."

The previous move from South Carolina to Georgia in 1823 and now the move further West in 1836, from Georgia into Mississippi, seems to have been in keeping with a trend of the times; a general migration from the Carolinas to the states which lay further inland from the Atlantic.

Finley Holmes with his wife and children traveled the long journey by carriage with their household possessions following in wagons, drawn by oxen. Upon their arrival in Mississippi, Finley bought several square miles of land from the [\[Chickasaw\] Indians](#) and started the construction of his new home ².

During the construction, and just about the time the foundation had been laid, some surveyors came through the countryside and informed Finley that

the spot which he had chosen for his home-site was actually in the State of Tennessee. Promptly, Finley dismantled the construction, moved his home-site a few hundred feet to the south, and proceeded with his building! . . . and thus came into being the beautiful *Georgian Colonial* home to which was given the name of **Valley Grove**. Thus came into being the little red-brick houses in the back yard, where the Tutor taught the children, and where the management of the plantation took place. Thus did it happen that the north side of the white plank fence around the big front yard lay on the boundary line between the State of Mississippi and the State of Tennessee.



Finley Holmes, age ~65 years



[More on Valley Grove](#) at Plum Point, Mississippi
built between 1845 and 1852

Finley and his wife, Emily, had a total of eleven children. Five were born in Georgia. Six were born at Valley Grove.

During their lives at Valley Grove, Emily and Finley lived through the period of the Civil War. Their son, **Thomas**, died of poison ivy while in the army. Their son, **Francis**, was wounded in battle, captured, and held in various Yankee prisons until the war was over.

As the years passed, five of their eleven children died. Five others married and moved away, so that when **Finley** died at Valley Grove on March 24, 1884, at the age of 82, only one of his eleven children (**Francis Holmes**) was still at the old home. In addition to the land in Mississippi, he owned 12,000 acres of land in both Desha and Jefferson Counties in Arkansas. At his death he left 2000 acres at Dumas and Walnut Lake, AR to each of his five (living) sons.

In summing up the accomplishments of Finley Holmes, **John Walt** reflected:

"When Holmes came from Georgia in 1836, he brought with him a great deal of capital and a large slaveholding. He had sold 1000 acres in Georgia, bought 640 acres in Mississippi, and came to the Territory with at least enough cash to buy

another 640 acres when he arrived. In addition to this, he brought with him 21 slaves. His 1250 acres and 21 slaves represented a substantial beginning for a thirty-four year old planter and a base from which he might grow along with the area."

"But the expansion and success of Valley Grove, even with such favorable beginnings, was not assured by the fortuitous circumstances in which Holmes found himself. It required yet another vital ingredient the proper planning of Holmes, the entrepreneur. Bringing Valley Grove to its point of supremacy in Desoto County in 1850 to 1860 required timely and astute buying and selling of land, buying of slaves, crop substitution, cotton sales, buying and selling of investments, and many other crucial decisions. These decisions Holmes made and carried out with obvious skill and shrewdness. Further indication of Holmes's business like ability and proof that Valley Grove was prospering is found in his purchase in 1859 of a tract of land and a building on the corner of Butler and Tennessee Streets in Memphis, and his purchase of 60 shares of stock in Union Planter's Bank of Memphis. "

"Clearly the one factor that separated Holmes from most of the other 1294 farmers and planters in Desoto County in 1860 was his outstanding business sense and his apparently unflagging energies in pursuing business objectives. Holmes could in no way be characterized as the leisure-loving aristocrat that many historians have characterized the southern planters of the preCivil War era to be, Holmes was a hardworking entrepreneur of the first degree and would likely have succeeded in whatever business pursuits he might have chosen."

Information from Irene Beasley's *AS I REMEMBER THEM* - , a letter to James E. Holmes MD by Mrs. F. H. Fant of Coahoma MS dated April 10, 1973, and John Walt's *Case Study of a Plantation of the Antebellum South*.

Finley's Family

Spouse: Emily Goodwyn Raines Holmes

Children: Georgiana Holmes [Wood] Bott, Robert Raines Holmes, Alpheus Cadmus Holmes, Finley Holmes, Laurentius Holmes, Thomas A. Holmes, >> Francis Holmes, Abercrombie Holmes, Nathaniel T. Holmes, Marcia Elbertina Holmes Beardsley, Winfield Holmes

Finley's Heritage

Parents: Finley Holmes, Jane (Jenny) Downs [Downes] Holmes

Siblings: James Holmes, William Holmes, Catherine Holmes Bryan, Robert Holmes, William Thomas Holmes

- **Georgia Property Tax Digests - 1818, Pulaski County GA** - Holmes James for Holmes Finley minor — Printed Document
- **Georgia Property Tax Digests - 1835, Bibb County GA**
- **Georgia Property Tax Digests - 1836, Bibb/Crawford/Carrol [sic] Counties GA**
- **Land Sale · 1835 - 1836, Jones County GA**

- **Tennessee Early Tax List Records - 1837 - Shelby County**
 - **Tennessee Early Tax List Records - 1838 - Shelby County**
 - ***The Tri-Weekly Memphis Enquirer* - Sep 8, 1846** — "We are pleased to quote the first sale of new Cotton, from the plantation of Findley [*sic*] HOLMES and Mr. SHACKLEWORTH, 8 bales, at 97-16 and 12 ½ cents. Sold at auction"
 - **Mississippi County Tax Rolls - DeSoto County • 1850 - Land**
 - **Finley Holmes Arkansas Land Grant • 1850, June 10**
 - **Appointments of US Postmasters - 4 Oct, 1850 • Valley Grove, Lafayette, MS**
 - **Comment on Wheat Produced - *The Daily Crescent*, New Orleans, LA - 1851**
 - **Arkansas Land Record of Purchase - 1854**
 - **Swamp Land Patents Arkansas • 1857**
 - **Tennessee Tax List Records - 1862 - Shelby County** "Holmes Finley" - 9 lines from bottom
 - **Arkansas State Donation and Swamp Land Sales - Desha County, Jefferson County AR**
 - **Map of Shelby County — 1863**
 - **Finley Holmes Petition for Amnesty and Pardon - 1865**
 - **Proclamation Granting Full Pardon and Amnesty - to Finley Holmes - 1865**
 - **Railroad Meeting Cited in the Public Ledger - 1868** Finley Holmes and extending Memphis - Charleston railline
 - **Land Transfer** by Finley Holmes to his son, Francis Holmes - DeSoto County, MS - November 1873
 - **1850 Slave Schedules** DeSoto County MS - Slave Owner: "Finley Holmes" and [next page](#)
 - **1850 Slave Schedules** Desha County AR - Slave Owner: "Finley Holmes"
 - **1860 Slave Schedules** DeSoto County MS - Slave Owner: "Finley Holmes" and [next page](#)
From LARGEST SLAVEHOLDERS FROM 1860 SLAVE CENSUS SCHEDULES: **DeSoto County MS** - HOLMES, Fenley [*sic*], 118 slaves
 - **1860 Slave Schedules** Desha County AR - Slave Owner: "Finley Holmes / A.C. Holmes (Agent)" and [next page](#)
From LARGEST SLAVEHOLDERS FROM 1860 SLAVE CENSUS SCHEDULES: **Desha County AR** - HOLMES, Finley, A. C. Holmes Agent, 67 slaves
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- **1830 Census** Bibb County GA - line 8 "Holmes Findley [*sic*]" [continue on, next page](#)
 - **1840 Census** DeSoto County MS - line 15 "Holmes Finley"
 - **1850 Census** DeSoto County MS - line 19 "Finley Holmes"
 - **1860 Census** DeSoto County MS - line 5 "Finley Holmes"
 - **1870 Census** DeSoto County MS - line 1 "Holmes Findley [*sic*]" with his wife Emily
 - **1880 Census** DeSoto County MS - line 14 "Holmes Finley"
 - **Finlay Holmes *Last Will and Testament*** — DeSoto County MS - 1884
 - **Finley Holmes *Probate Records*** — DeSoto County MS - 1884 - 1906 (for final sale of Bounty Lands)
 - **Map of Mississippi — ~1838 — 1895**
 - **Family Record by Mrs. Emma Holmes Austin - 1926** (daughter of A. C. Holmes) from Anita W. Pawley
 - **Letter to James E. Holmes — From Mrs. F. H. Fant (wife of Frank Holmes Fant) - 1973**
 - **Information From an Old Sheet Found in the Attic at Valley Grove** — transcribed by J. E. Holmes
 - **Historic Houses of Memphis . . .** in the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* - 1934
 - **Finley Holmes Place in *History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee*** - 1936
 - **Dumas Observess 50 Years of Incorporation - 1954** - Findley [*sic*] Holmes gets deed in the Dumas area in 1851

- **Findley [sic] Holmes of Mississippi Was Original Owner of Land in Dumas** - Dumas Clarion - 1954
- **Information on Valley Grove and Photographs** of the old homeplace built by Finley Holmes
- **Surviving Valley Grove Home Furnishings**
- **Case Study of a Plantation of the Antebellum South** by John Walt
- **Finley Holmes, Jr.** in the THE HOLMES FAMILY LINE section of Irene Beasley's *AS I REMEMBER THEM*
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- **Registry Book from Elmwood Cemetery** - Finley Holmes Jr. — Enlarged
- **Family Marker at Elmwood Cemetery — Finley's Individual Grave Marker**

Find A Grave Memorial #8599460

Reference to Colonel Finley Holmes, the "grandson of Lord Charles Holmes of Ireland" in *Tennessee: The Volunteer State 1769-1923*.

¹ **Bibb County Deeds** (<http://files.usgwarchives.net/ga/bibb/deeds/deedab.txt>); Page 74 - State of Georgia 21 July 1823; Grantor: English Smith of Washington Co. Ga.; Grantee: Finley Holmes of Bibb Co. Ga.; \$919. Lot 265, 202 1/2 Acres, 13th Dist. Monroe Co. Ga. - More purchases and sales are shown here **Land Sale · 1835 - 1836, Bibb County GA** and **in this letter** from the *Clerk Superior Court of Bibb County* to **J.E. Holmes**, September 20, 1974. Also see above: *Georgia Property Tax Digests, 1835 - 1836, Bibb County GA*

² One report says that Finley bought the land from Tal-ho-cha, a Chickasaw Indian, under the treaty between the **Chickasaw Indians** and the United States Government. The land was taken over upon the removal of the Chickasaws to the west. From: *History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee*, compiled by the Garden Club of Nashville. Edited by Roberta Seawell Brandau. Published for the Garden Study Club of Nashville by Parthenon Press, 1936, reprinted 1964.

A Brief History of DeSoto County Mississippi - from the DeSoto County Geneological Society