

FROM JIM RION IN COLUMBIA  
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file in Col. James Rion

## Anecdotes of Col. James Henry Rion

Born posthumously of a British Army Officer, Henri Rion, in Montreal, Canada.

His mother traveled with him to Savannah, where she ran a high class boarding house/hotel, and then to Charleston, where she was John C. Calhoun's housekeeper. The story is he was learning calculus at 12. In his obituary, the Winnsboro Herald referred to James H. Rion as an "inmate" of Calhoun's establishment.

I've heard stories from family as follows:

He fought a number of duels before he was 21.

He was wounded four times in the front in the War.

The first regiment he raised and officered voted him out for being too aggressive.

He left Appamatox with his troops-over 600, which was more than Brigadiers were commanding at the end of the war.

When practicing law in Winnsboro at some point after the War, he generally worked from 10 to 12 went home for lunch and returned to work from 2 to 4.

Southern Railroad built a platform in front of his house and sent trains to pick him up and take him back for court appearances throughout the state.

Some Camden dentist was frequenting Winnsboro, and said Mrs. Rion sang like a bird. The Col. told him not to come back or he'd shoot him down on the street like the dog he was. He did and the Col shot and killed him. He was tried and acquitted.

The grandson of the ol' guy who usually cleaned his office, cleaned out the huge spider web which had been spun over years to cover a whole ceiling corner. The Col threatened to get his gun and go shoot the grandfather.

Maybe the same grandson came running, "Col., they're about to lynch Joe on the SRR platform." The Col. grabbed his civil war revolver, jumped on his horse, raced down to the station, jumped up on the platform, drew his revolver and said, "I'll shoot the first man who lays a hand on that son-of-a-bitch." After the crowd dispersed a delegation of respectable citizens led by the Pres. Minister, "Col., that was the bravest thing we ever saw. If we'd had the courage we would've stopped it. If there's ever anything we can do for you, just say. To which the Col. Replied, "Do any of you gentlemen have any clean linen?"

I also believe he quarried granite on my, easternmost, next to the old road where it forded Taylor's Creek, piece of his plantation for the plantation house I read he built somewhere thereabouts.

My father says the story came down that the Col. was instrumental in the deal with Tilden re the Tilden/Hays Pres. election which was thrown into the House, whereby the SC delegation voted Tilden in return for withdrawal of the federal troops.

He was President of the SC Bar in 1886.

According to James Henry Rion on his death bead in 1886, he was the son of the lost Dauphin. Mademoiselle Rion D'Orleans , lady in waiting to Marie Antoinette, switched a deaf and dumb beggar boy for him in the Bastille. He took the name Henri de Rion. Thus the Rions were of the lines of the Bourbon and Hapsburg dynasties, and maybe the Merogovian, etc.

The Col. had some knowledge of some of the Dauphin's jewels, etc., but there is no evidence of his putative Army Engineer father in English Army Records.

Then the DNA evidence from Marie Antoinette's hair and the putative preserved heart of the so thought dauphin fours cold water on that legend.

In a way that leaves the story extant at the time:

that the Col was the illegitimate son of John C. Calhoun, his patron.

Or that part of my lineage is a dead end

My mother's people and the rest of my fathers' were Celtic/Anglo Saxon-farmers, planters, ranchers, pioneers, merchants, military, doctors, lawyers, judges.

Recently a skilled, reliable genealogist found two more interesting lineages- Pocahontas and Robert the Bruce.

I always wanted American Indian blood, and honored, admired, and resembled ,Robert the Bruce. He is an warrior king archetype for me- as is Col. Rion.

Of course the genealogy re-awakened my old interests in Indians and the Bruce

This is especially true as, when a child, and in the last fifteen years, I have spent a lot of time wondering and working the woods.