

Biographical Sketch from the Historical and Genealogical
Magazine in the Caroliniana Library, Columbia, S.C.

Colonel James Henry Rion, son of the lost Dauphin of France, was born April 17, 1826 in Montreal, Canada of English and French heritage. His father was an engineer. He received intuitive knowledge from his father. He inherited a remarkable memory, habits of methodical religious belief from his mother. He and his mother were inmates of the John C. Calhoun home, which no doubt molded his character. When he was twelve he was remarkably advanced for his age.

In the Clarisophic Society in Anderson, he procured a scholarship of the Society. At the request of Dr. Brumby Rion gave the graduating address, an essay on teachings of modern geology, which he claimed did not contradict with the belief of the Bible. No graduate of the state of S. C. history in the S.C. College ever gave us so distinguished a student or more scholarly man.

He began teaching at Mt. Zion College in Winnsboro, S.C. - He entered college among the first. He was in the War between the States to the end.-
As a lawyer he had no equal.

Though great a soldier, lawyer, he was greater as a man. He gave the Chrisophic Society real scholarship. He was selected for many honors. He designated his own hymns for his funeral at Zion Presbyterian Church, where was sung - "I would not live always." Mrs. Alice Buchanan Walker, an intimate friend of the family, sang this at his request. The whole state was addened.

He was under the patronage of John C. Calhoun and William Preston. Rion worked out his own success with discipline or perseverance and determination in keeping with his intellect.

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He had 14 years finished "Analytical and Descriptive Geometry," in the French language. He was Anniversary orator of the Clarisophic Society May 1850, at the request of the students. He was appointed by the S.C. College faculty to deliver an address on John C. Calhoun.

He was admitted to the Winnsboro bar 1854. In 1857 he was offered the chair of mathematics at Mt. Zion Institute in Winnsboro. In 1858 he was Colonel of the 25th. Regiment of S.C. Militia. He was also President of the Planters Bank of Winnsboro in 1859. He answered the call of the 6th. Regular S.C. Volunteers. He resigned from the 6th. and raised a command for the War, there being no volunteer company in S.C. for over a year. - Col. Rion was a major in the company. He was raised to rank of Colonel Jan. 24, 1864. He received wounds at Morris Island. He was complimented several times by Beauregard and high officers in reports of many battles.

After surrender he returned to Winnsboro and resumed his law practice May 1865. He was never before the people as candidate for office. He was a delegate to Constitutional Convention of Conservative and Democratic parties. He was elected member of the National Executive Democratic Committee for S.C. in 1876

In private life Col. Rion was quiet, liberal and charitable. Many of the Confederate widows and orphans were grateful recipients of his liberality and kindness. In business he was systematic, punctual, with a somewhat reserved disposition. Shortly after graduation he married Miss Weir, daughter of Samuel Weir, an old Columbia journalist. Col. Rion was survived by five daughters: Floride married Jake Barron Margaret; Lucy married Edmunds - Kitty married Fleming McMaster; Hanna married W.V. Abell, Leroy Williams, Dr. Alphous Baker. His sons: Preston married Sallie Huffman, William married Mary Addison; Holbrook married Helen Berry.

Dates from Presbyterian Cemetery in Winnsboro, S.C.

Lucille Rion - 1888 - 1889 - William Calhoun Rion 1861-1889
Infants of E. H. and J. S. Rion - (no dates)
G. H. Rion 1881- 1923 - Sallie Hoffman Rion 1854-1943
Preston Rion 1852-1922 James Henry Rion 1828-1886
John Weir Rion 1869-1872