

November 9, 2007



James Henry Rion was one of the greater sons of Fairfield County, and is most deserving of the tribute paid to him today-being the installation of his portrait in the Fairfield County Courthouse. This honor was recommended by the Fairfield County Bar whose President is W. Thomas Sprott, Jr., a great great grandson of Colonel Rion.

Colonel Rion was born on April 17, 1828 in Montreal, Canada. As a young man he grew up in Savannah, Georgia before moving with his widowed mother to the home of John C. Calhoun. Calhoun at the time was the United States Secretary of State. Rion was chosen to give the eulogy for Calhoun when he died in 1850.

Rion graduated from the South Carolina College in 1850 and married Miss Kitty Weir in 1851. After graduation, Rion was appointed as professor of mathematics at Mt. Zion College in Winnsboro. Also at this time he began legal studies under W.W. Boyce a Winnsboro Attorney. He was admitted to the law courts of South Carolina in 1853 and to the equity courts in 1854.

Rion served in the Civil War from 1861 to 1865 where he was wounded twice.

He was elected to the South Carolina constitutional convention in 1866. In 1876 he was a member of the committee sent by Governor Wade Hampton to Washington D.C. to successfully consult with President Rutherford B. Hayes regarding the removal of northern troops from South

Carolina. In November of 1886 he was elected as President of the South Carolina Bar Association. He was also a trustee of the University of South Carolina from 1877 to 1886.

Colonel Rion was a director of the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad, the Planter's Bank of Fairfield, and the Central National Bank of Columbia. Colonel Rion also secured the right-of-ways for the Rockton and Rion Quarry. The Fairfield County Community of Rion is named after him. Colonel Rion was also the attorney that prepared the Will of Thomas Green Clemson, a Will that established Clemson University. Colonel Rion died on December 12, 1886 in Winnsboro.

From Article By Matt Conrad