John Lynch Martin - General Commission Merchant, Cotton Agent, and Planter
CONTENTS

Abstract 1
John Lynch Martin 2
Notes 7
Bibliography 10
Illustrations
   I. Elizabeth Wright Martin 4
   II. John Martin and Children 13
Appendix I
   The Family of John Martin
John Lynch Martin - General Commission Merchant, Cotton Agent, Planter.

John Lynch Martin was born on July 26, 1840 in Laurens County. He served in the Confederate Army, first as a Private in the Ogelthorpe Infantry and then as a First Lieutenant in the calvary, attached to the 62nd Georgia. He was wounded at Manassas and at the battle of Reams Station promoted to Captain for gallantry in action. After the war he worked as a general commission merchant and cotton agent before moving to Wrightsville in 1875. He married Elizabeth Wright in 1868. They had eight children. He became active in the United Veterans of the Confederacy and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He died on August 22, 1914.
John Lynch Martin was born on July 26, 1840 in Laurens County to John Lynch Martin of Ireland and Mary Ann Martin of Georgia. His parents moved to Savannah while he was an infant. His father bought and worked Modena, a plantation of about 1800 acres on Skidaway Island. On September 21, 1841 John Lynch Martin and his sister, Nancy Lynch Martin, were baptized into the Catholic Church. On September 26 their parents marriage was reaffirmed in a church ceremony preformed by Father John Barry, the impediment of "Cultus Disparitus" having been removed by Mary Ann becoming a Catholic.

The Martin family continued to live on Modena Plantation until the death of John Martin Sr. on January 29, 1860. He was 62 years old. Mary Ann Martin, acting as executrix and as instructed in her husband's will, sold Modena on the courthouse steps. The plantation was purchased by her son-in-law, William S. Thomas, who then returned a mortgage on the estate to her. The family moved to the City of Savannah.

John Lynch Martin enlisted on May 21, 1861 as a private in Captain Butler's Company of the Ogelthorpe Infantry of the
Confederate Army. At that time his occupation was listed as planter, on Skidaway Island.

Several letters written home during the war by John Lynch Martin show his dissatisfaction with some of the aspects of the war. He was most vehement on the subject of food, describing it in a letter to his mother: "our eating consists of buff flour and salt half I cant eat it for it makes me sick..."

John Martin served as a private with his regiment in the Shenandoah Valley and was wounded in the right arm and left hip at the battle of Manassas. He was given a medical discharge and pass home on December 3, 1861. In September of 1862, John Martin helped raise a company of calvary in Savannah and the surrounding area. He was elected First Lieutenant and attached to the 62nd Georgia, later known as the Eighth Georgia Calvary. He was on duty in Virginia and participated in Wade Hampton’s cattle raid. He was promoted to Captain for gallantry in action at the battle of Reams Station. John Martin was also part of President Davis’ escort through the Carolinas and into Georgia. He was paroled on May 31, 1865 at Ventonville, North Carolina.

Following the war, John Martin served one term as Clerk of Superior Court in Washington County. He then returned to Savannah and acted as a cotton agent and general commission merchant. During this period he met John B. Wright. John B. Wright was the founder of Wrightsville and had been one of the largest slave owners in the south. He served in the Georgia Legislature twice and introduced the law whereby property inherited by a woman remains hers after marriage. Wright had three daughters; his
favorite, Elizabeth was considered a tomboy. John Wright was fond of John Martin and in 1868 he took his daughter Elizabeth to Savannah to meet him.  

John Martin and Elizabeth fell in love and were married in Johnson County on November 26, 1868 by the Reverend J. W. Harris.

Elizabeth Wright Martin

The young couple moved into the Martin family home on Jones Street in Savannah along with Mary Ann Martin, Nancy Martin Thomas, her husband William A. Thomas, and their three children. Elizabeth, however, spent a great deal of her time in Wrightsville with her parents. John and Elizabeth's first child, Gertrude, was born in Wrightsville on October 2, 1869. In 1870 Elizabeth's mother, Mourning Wright, died and Elizabeth moved back to Wrightsville to be near her father. John Martin continued to work in Savannah until late 1874.

In 1871 John Martin bought lot 37 in Jackson Ward and built a two-family house. He sold the western half to A. J. Miller and the eastern half to his father-in-law, John B. Wright. When John Wright died on August 9, 1874 John Martin regained title to the eastern half of the property. In December of 1876, he deeded the lot and the house to his wife Elizabeth "in consideration of the natural affection which...John L. Martin bears for...Elizabeth Martin his wife."
The second child of John and Elizabeth Martin, John Wright Martin, was born on October 7, 1871 in Wrightsville. In 1872 John Martin was elected to the Democratic Executive Committee of Chatham County as assistant secretary. On August 30, 1873 John and Elizabeth Martins third child, William Thomas Martin, was born in Savannah. In 1874 John Martin served on the February Grand Jury. Sometime before 1875 he closed his business in Savannah and moved to the Wrightsville area. John Martin farmed outside of Wrightsville, living in the historic Wrights-Phillips house.

In 1876 on April 24, a fourth child, Bessie, was born followed by Patrick Hampton on February 28, 1878, Thomas Oliver on May 14, 1889, Rosa Mary on August 14, 1882, and Nannie Lee on January 5, 1887.

In 1886 the family suffered two tragic losses. John Martin's mother, Mary Ann, died on January 15, and his niece Hortense died of typhoid while on a visit to Atlanta on November 12.

According to family tradition Nancy Thomas suddenly decided to visit her brother and his family in June of 1887. When the train arrived in Wrightsville she was unable to find anyone she knew. A Colonel Daily approached her and asked if he could help. He found a carriage and a reputable driver to take her to her brother's house. When she arrived she found John Martin and the children gathered on the porch steps. Elizabeth had died the day before on June 8. Nancy Thomas remained with the family until her death in February 1, 1913.

John Martin became an active member of the United Confederate Veterans. Camp Martin, No. 964, of Johnson County, United Confederate
Veterans was named for him. He was promoted to the position of Assistant Adjutant General with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, on the staff of Major General J. H. Martin, Commander Georgia Division, U.V.C.. John Martin was a popular speaker at local functions, especially at schools and U.V.C. meetings.  

John Lynch Martin died on Saturday, August 22, 1914, of "chills, fever, and general debility". He was 74 years old. The funeral was conducted by Dr. T. L. Harris, pastor of the Christian Church. He was buried in Westview Cemetery. His obituaries summed up his life and character in their descriptions of him. He was described as a true loyal confederate—a man who was intensely southern.
NOTES

1 Martin Family Bible. Now in the possession of Mrs. Arlie Frost of Wrightsville, Georgia. All sources listed as "Martin Family Papers" are in the possession of Mrs. Frost. Cathedral of St. John, Church Records, Book #22 Baptisms Nov., 1838 to June, 1855 Confirmations April to May 1854. 21 September 1841.


4 Cathedral of St. John, Church Records, Book #22 Baptisms Nov., 1838 to June, 1855 Confirmations April to May 1854. 21 September 1841, 26 September 1841.


7 Interview with Mrs. Arlie Frost, 12 February 1977. Confederate Discharge Papers 3 December 1861. Martin Family Papers.

8 This date is not clear. The Roster of Confederate Soldiers lists a John Martin who enlisted on the 25 July 1861, however, John Martin's Confederate Discharge Papers 3 December 1861 say that he enlisted on 21 May 1861. I am using the date from the discharge papers.

9 Confederate Discharge Papers 3 December 1861. John L. Martin, Martin Family Papers.

10 Letter from John L. Martin to Mary Ann Martin. 12 November 1861. Martin Family Papers.

11 Black Notebook. Martin Family Papers. This notebook contains a number of unidentifiable newspaper clippings, and writing concerned with John Martin and his family. Where possible I will cite another source to confirm the notebook. The notebook has been accurate in almost all cases where I have been able to find another source.
Confederate Discharge Papers, 3 December 1861. Martin Family Papers.

Black Notebook. Martin Family Papers.
Interview with Mrs. Arlie Frost, 14 February 1977.

Interview with Mrs Arlie Frost. 14 February 1977.

Court of Ordinary, Marriage Book A. Johnson County, p. 103.
Martin Family Bible.
Savannah Public Library, Savannah Morning News, Savannah, issue of 3 December 1868, p. 2, c. 5.

GHS, (Microfilm M593, roll no. 141) 1870 Census Population Schedule Georgia, City of Savannah, p. 23
Interview, Mrs. Arlie Frost. 12 February 1977.

Interview, Mrs. Arlie Frost. 12 February 1977.

Martin Family Bible.
Interview, Mrs. Arlie Frost. 12 February 1977.

Letter from John L. Martin to Elizabeth W. Martin. Date is illegible. Martin Family Papers.

Georgia Historical Society, City Tax Digest, 1871, Savannah, Section M, p. 211.


Martin Family Bible.


Martin Family Bible.


John Martin is last listed in the 1874 Savannah City Directory. The last reference in the newspapers is of his serving on the February Grand Jury in 1874. Mrs. Frost was under the impression that he had closed the business in Savannah before 1874 and had joined the family in Wrightsville. There is a letter written to his wife in Wrightsville during this time, discussing the problem of his staying in Savannah while the family is in Wrightsville. Unfortunately the date is illegible.

29 Martin Family Bible.

30 Martin Family Bible.

31 Interview, Mrs. Arlie Frost. 14 February 1977.

32 Black Notebook.
    Martin Family Bible.

33 Black Notebook.
    Interview, Mrs Arlie Frost. 12 February 1977.

34 Black Notebook.
John Lynch Martin and his children on the steps of their home in Wrightsville.

1. John Lynch Martin
2. Portrait of Elizabeth Wright Martin
3. John Wright Martin
4. Gertrude Martin
5. William Thomas Martin
6. Bessie Martin (Willis)
7. Peter Hampton Martin
8. Rosa Martin (Kennedy)
9. Thomas Oliver Martin
10. Nannie Lee Martin (Dunlap)
SOURCES CONSULTED

Baptisms Nov., 1838 to June 1855, Confirmation April to May 1854 Book #22. Savannah, Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

City Directories. Savannah; various publishers, 1877-79, 1881-86, 1888, 1890, 1896, 1897, 1899.

City Tax Assessments. Savannah, 1871, 1873, 1875, 1876, 1878-79, 1900-1904.

City Tax Digests. Savannah, 1870-74, 1877.


General Index to Savannah, Georgia, Newspapers. Savannah, 1869-1868, 1871-1874, 1886, 1860, 1911.

Index to Marriages 1806-1957 (and files). Chatham County, Court of Ordinary.


Index to Estates A-Z 1742-1955 (and files). Chatham County, Court of Ordinary.

Jan 1839 to July 1871 & 1890 to Oct 1896 Marriages. Savannah, Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.


Marriage Record, Book A. Johnson County, Court of Ordinary.

Martin Family Bible. Mrs. Arlie Frost, Wrightsville,

*used only for names, dates are almost all incorrect
Georgia.

Martin Family Papers. Mrs. Arlie Frost, Wrightsville, Georgia.


1870 Census, Population Schedule Georgia, City of Savannah. Georgia Historical Society, microfilm m593, roll no. 141.

Personal Interviews with Mrs. Arlie Frost, Wrightsville, Georgia, 2/12/77 and 2/14/77.

* Indicated information from 1871 Tax Assessments is incorrect.
SOME SOURCES WHICH WERE NOT USEFUL

Baptismal, Marriage, Death Records 1816-1838 Book #21.
Savannah, Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

Bonaventure Cemetery Records General Index 1850-1830.
Savannah.

General Index to Savannah, Georgia, Newspapers. Savannah, 1870, 1875-1885, 1881-1911.