

Samuel Edward Hope - A Pinellas Pioneer and His Family

By J. Charlie Grandmaison

The preceding issue of *The Pinellas Genealogist* included an article about Dr James M Baggett, the sailing "Beachcomber Dentist". His wife was Clare Virginia Hope, a daughter of Samuel Edward Hope. The colorful and active history of Samuel E Hope and how he became a Pinellas Pioneer is presented in this issue. Many of the items and episodes that make up the history of this man are derived from a personal family history record that was written in 1919. The author's name does not appear on the manuscript. The manuscript was donated to the Gulfport Historical Museum in 1947 by William Baggett Boyd, a grandson of Captain Samuel E Hope. Some of the writing is so artistically descriptive, that I will present you with a quotation from the first paragraph of the manuscript of this anonymous author. The original article on file at the Gulfport Historical Museum and is available for reading by serious researchers.

The history begins with a vivid allegory of the times and changes that have occurred during the years prior to when this manuscript was written.



Captain Samuel E. Hope, pioneer, Civil War veteran, legislator, and Tarpon Springs citizen

Pinellas County Pages



"The year 1833 is nearly eighty-six years passed. When we say that a man is 85 years old, it means that however vigorous he may be, however well preserved, he is an old man. When we speak of 85 years in the life of a state or nation, ordinarily it would be a trifle in the point of this time, but when we apply it to south Florida, it means the difference between an unbroken wilderness and a condition of high civilization." Anonymous author.

That is the time span during which Samuel E Hope was to live. This family history begins in Pennsylvania shortly after the end of the American Revolution. William Hope, grandfather of our pioneer Samuel E Hope, had served in that war. He was now prepared to relocate his family from Pennsylvania and go to Liberty County, Georgia. William Hope was a member of a Dutch Colony that relocated to Georgia at that time. Although William Hope lived among the Dutch Colonists, his heritage was English, and not Dutch.

The father of Samuel E Hope was also named William Hope. This William Hope was born in Georgia in 1810. He became a farmer in Liberty County, Georgia, and had married Susan Mitchell Harrill. Samuel E Hope was born in Liberty County on 17 September 1833. When Samuel was just 3 years old, the family moved to Florida. The entire household consisted of the father, William, his wife Susan, the young 3-year-old Samuel, a 2-year-old colt, and a horse cart. The family settled on Brandy Branch on Christmas day. This is a small area near to Newnanville, and just 3 miles from Jacksonville. The family lived there until 1842. William Hope served with the army in the Seminole War, which raged from 1836 to 1842. At the close of the Seminole war, William Hope and his family became the first settlers in what is now Her-

nando County. William also later married Mary Jane (Hope). William died in Hernando County on 2 August 1898, at the age of 90 years! A measure of his business ventures is recorded in a Civil war tax book that lists significant land possessions and one hundred and fifty seven slaves.

Samuel Edward Hope, born 1833, initially attended local country schools. In later years, he was sent to the Alexandria Boarding School in Virginia until he was 17 years old. In 1856, Samuel was a Quartermaster in the Florida State Militia, and served as a First Lieutenant in the Florida Mounted Volunteers. He served at Fort Munroe in Hernando County. In 1858, Samuel joined in the family mercantile business, and also worked as a civil engineer and surveyor, platting lands for the government in Florida. He was one of the first surveyors to map the Anclote River.

Samuel E Hope married Mary Henrietta Hooker on 1 May 1860. She was born 15 November 1842 in Columbia County. Mary had been educated at the Covington Masonic School in Georgia. Her father, William Brenton Hooker was a delegate from Hamilton County, in the convention that framed the first Constitution of Florida. William B Hooker had also served in the Seminole war from 1836 to 1842. At the end of the war, William B Hooker moved his family to Hillsboro County. He was very successful in raising cattle. It is recorded that in 1861, he sold his stock of cattle for forty thousand dollars.

When the Civil War began, Samuel entered the Confederate Army as a Captain in the Sixth Florida Battalion - Ninth Regiment, serving under Brigadier General Joseph Finegan. One of the problems for the Confederate Army in central Florida was a group of Union sympathizers, Confederate deserters, and escaped refugee slaves, who carried out raiding parties from a base near to Cedar Key. In 1864, a group of deserters from Fort Brooke (Tampa), and some escaping slaves, made their way to the Anclote River. They hoped to be picked up by a Union Gunboat that was known to patrol that coast. In order to attract the attention of a ship that might pass, they built a large bonfire on a hill near to the shore. They did not realize that they were on property near to

the land where Samuel E Hope had his plantation at Anclote. At the next low tide, Captain Hope and a small band of soldiers crossed the river at night and captured the surprised fugitives. (Yes, the captives were all hung! No prisoners.). Samuel Hope continued to serve in the Confederate Army until he was wounded at Petersburg, Virginia, just three months before General Lee surrendered at Appomatox.

He was a member of the Florida Legislature in 1864/65 and also in 1879. In 1865, he represented Hernando County at the Florida Constitutional Convention, and was a member of the Second Constitutional Convention in 1885. Captain Hope settled with his family at Anclote until 1905, at which time the family moved to Tarpon Springs. Samuel Edward Hope died at Tarpon Springs, Florida on 5 June 1919. Mary Henrietta Hooker lived on until she died in Tampa on 14 August 1926. This family lives on in Pinellas and Hillsboro County with many descendants to carry on the heritage of this Pioneer Family. Additional members of the Hope family and their vital statistics may be found in the microfilms of the Pinellas Pioneers in the Special Collections, Genealogy area, of the Largo Library. Some of the surnames to look for are:

Baggett, Griffin, Harrill, Helveston, Hooker, Hope, McCleary, Mickler, Mitchell, Thompson, Trask, Wilson

The information for this short family history of Samuel E Hope was obtained from the files of:

Gulfport Historical Museum; files and notes of William Baggett Boyd.

Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society; files and notes of Gene and Barbara Vinson.

Tarpon Springs Library; Tarpon Springs; "Florida" by Stoughton.

Largo Library; Pinellas Pioneers Microfilms.