The Mystery of the Hodges Family Legacy

Smith C. Banks

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THE MYSTERY OF THE HODGES FAMILY LEGACY

A COLLECTION OF HODGES LETTERS
REGARDING CLAIMS TO MONEY IN THE BANK OF ENGLAND

The following article will be submitted for publication by Society LIFE Member Smith Banks. He will welcome comments from interested persons, especially additional information regarding the Hodges Letters which continue to intrigue.

Kemp Mabry
Executive Vice President
Bulloch County
Historical Society
The History of the "Letters"

In 1966 I discovered that the Bible of Joseph Hodges, Revolutionary Soldier of North Carolina was in the possession of Miss Susie Hodges of Statesboro, Ga. (my hometown). I visited Miss Hodges, who kindly let me copy it.

On the New Testament title page was the note, "Joseph Hodges bought this Bible in Savannah, Oct. 1793." The Bible was printed in Edinburgh by Mark & Charles Kerr in 1789. I sent this to Judge Huxford and he published the record in Georgia Genealogical Magazine in July 1966, pp. 1391-1392.

In 1967 Mrs. Martha Boring, (Mrs. R. M.) of Gainesville, Florida wrote me to say that she had read the article and that she was a descendant and would like to exchange information. She also sent me two copies of letters written in 1891 by her relatives in Florida concerning the Hodges Family Claim to money in the Bank of England.

This was all news to me! I had never heard of the claim. I descend from two of the sons of Joshua Hodges, Sr. They are Joshua Hodges, Jr. and Joseph Hodges, who owned the old Bible. In all these 200 years, my branches of the family has never lived more than 15-20 miles away from where old Joshua Hodges, Sr. settled. The tradition of the money in England has not been passed down in either branch of my family. I later asked other Hodges in Bulloch County about this. Some branches had heard of the "money in England" but most had not.

Mrs. Boring's letters had been in my files for over 20 years, undisturbed, until last year when I "unearthed them" I immediately tried to call her and was pleased when she answered the phone. She has kindly xeroxed all of her copies that are shown below. I told a friend about my good fortune of locating these letters again and they told me that there was another in the Hodges-Keller Letters File at the Statesboro Regional Library. That letter predated Mrs. Boring's letters.

It seems that there was no one in our branch of Hodges Family--the Joshua Hodges, Sr. descendants--who ever received a penny of this legacy.

The letters are most interesting to read. The "Mystery of the Legacy" is even more interesting to ponder, but the genealogical information given in these letters leaves a
greater puzzle. There are so many contradictions and speculations. Despite all the speculations, it is my hope that these letters will help someone untangle the genealogical puzzles in their own branch of the Hodges family.

The descendants of Joshua Hodges, Sr. the Revolutionary Soldier of North Carolina and Bulloch County will easily number in the thousands today and are scattered all over the world. As yet there has been no proof as to his parentage. His grandson, Judge Raiford Hodges, said in his letter (Letter # 2), shown below that Joshua was the son of Joseph E. Hodges of England. I believe that this is wrong. A. W. Mizell states in Letter # 5 our Joshua’s father is Anthony.

It is my hope that someone will help us find the father of Joshua Hodges, Sr. I also would like to know if anyone was successful in establishing a legitimate claim to the legacy.

Can someone please help us solve this 200 year old Hodges Family Mystery??

Smith C. Banks
241 Donaldson St.
Statesboro, Ga. 30458

No footnotes and few references have been cited in this paper. All information was gleaned from the large collection of Hodges files in the Genealogy Section of the Statesboro Regional Library, where I have placed all my files.
Smith C. Banks
The Hodges Family of Bulloch County, Georgia

The Hodges family of Bulloch County, Georgia is one of the oldest families in the area. Joshua Hodges, Sr. came to Georgia in the 1780's. Early records say that he settled in Burke County and later moved onto lands on the western side of the Ogeechee River in that part of Effingham County that later became Bulloch County. Joshua Hodges, Sr. was a North Carolina Revolutionary War veteran and had been granted land in the New Bern District of North Carolina for services in the Continental Army. He also served in the Militia from Martin County, N.C. under Capt. Kenneth McKenzie on a tour of duty in 1780. He received a grant of land in Burke Co., Ga. for his service. His younger brother Hardy was a fifer in the Continental Army and had died either during or just after the Revolution, because the 1,000 acres granted to him for his services were allotted to Joshua as his heir. Joshua gave the land warrant to his eldest son, Joseph, on Jan. 1, 1790.

Joshua Hodges, Sr. was born Oct. 13, 1736 in North Carolina and married ca. 1756 to Ann Raiford of New Bern, N.C., born ca. 1738, died before 1800. (We have been unable to prove this marriage--family tradition and early DAR records give this name and the dates. Many descendants are named Raiford.)

Known children:


   Children:  James Carr Hodges  
              Joseph Carruthers Hodges  
              Benjamin Hodges  
              Bright Peacel Hodges  
              Hardy Bell Hodges  
              Judge Raiford Hodges (writer of one letter)  
              Doctor McCall Hodges  
              Nathaniel William McClain Hodges


4. Joshua, Jr—born ca. 1771, d. Sep. 7, 1841 m. Rebecca Fletcher, b. Mar. 11, 1777, d. after 1850, youngest daughter
of William Fletcher, R.S., and his second wife, Elizabeth McIntosh.

Children: Nancy (Ann) Hodges
         Joshua F. Hodges
         Frances C. Hodges
         Benjamin Hodges
         Moses L. Hodges
         John D. Hodges
         George Asbury Hodges
         Rhoda Hodges

5. Essunure ("Alcy") - b. 1776 m. 1801 John Dampier, moved to Lowndes Co., Ga.


Children: Ann C. Hodges
         Joshua F. Hodges
         Catherine K. Hodges
         Martha B. Hodges
         Mary C. Hodges
         Acenith T. Hodges
         Burrell Green Hodges
         Sarah Matilda Hodges m. Joab Carter Mizell
         Elizabeth Lavinia Hodges (twin to Sarah)
         William P. W. Hodges
         Wade Peyton Hodges /twins
         Nathaniel Flournoy Glenn Hodges

The Hodges family were a prolific clan! Many members of the family stayed in Bulloch County, but others moved on to "greener pastures" as the lands across Georgia, Florida, Alabama and the West were opened for new settlements.

With the above information, I will try to identify the authors and the addressees of the letters given below.


Mr. G.B. Farmer must have thought that he was a relative of Mr. Ely W. Hodges. We do not know how we are related to his family.

Mr. Ely W. Hodges of Millray, Ga. is Eli Washington Hodges of Millray, Bulloch County, Ga., son of Hardy Bell Hodges and grandson of Joseph Hodges, R.S., and Sarah Carr and great grandson of Joshua Hodges, Sr., R.S.
Letter # 2- J. R. Hodges, Gainesville, Fla. to J. H. Hodges of DeLand, Fla.

J. R. Hodges is Judge Raiford Hodges, son of Joseph Hodges, R.S., and grandson of Joshua Hodges, Sr., R.S.

J. H. Hodges is Dr. J. H. Hodges, who seems to be a grandson of Nathaniel Hodges who was born June 17, 1777 and Martha Whittington, and great grandson of Joshua Hodges, Sr., R.S. See Letter # 5.

Letter # 3- Bank of England to Dr. J. H. Hodges, Gainesville, Fla.

Letter # 4- E. R. Hodges, Johnston Station (no state given-Possibly Georgia) to Dr. Hodges, Gainesville, Fla.

E. R. Hodges—kinship is unknown.

Dr. Hodges is Dr. J. H. Hodges. See above.

Letter # 5- A. W. Mizell, Welborn, Fla. to Dr. J. H. Hodges, Gainesville, Fla.

A. W. Mizell calls Dr. Hodges-cousin. It is likely that Mizell is Dr. Hodges’ first cousin, a son of Sarah Matilda Hodges who married Joab Carter Mizell and grandson of Nathaniel and Martha Whittington Hodges.

Letter # 6- A. W. Mizell, to Dr. J. H. Hodges.

Mizell refers to “Uncle Glenn”. This is likely Flournoy Glenn Hodges of Bulloch County, a son of Nathaniel and Martha Whittington Hodges.

Letter # 7- J. Earle Hodges, London, England to Dr. Hodges. Mr. Hodges of London is likely to be the person that Dr. Hodges talked to in Jacksonville and referred to in Letter # 6.

I have copied the letters as they are written.
The Letters

These letters have been passed down in two branches of the Joshua Hodges Sr. family. The earliest dated was written in 1884 and was handed down in the Eli Washington Hodges family of Bulloch County. The remainder of the collection was written to Dr. J.H. Hodges in Florida in 1891.

LETTER #1: (From the Hodges-Keller Family File at Statesboro Regional Library). From B. G. Farmer of Shorterville, Alabama to Ely (Eli) Washington Hodges of Bulloch County, Georgia, dated June 12, 1884.

A.J. & B.G. FARMER
Dealer in
Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots, Etc.

Shorterville, Ala.
June 12, 1884

ELY W. HODGES, ESQ.
Millray, Ga.

I am in possession of some marked (?) evidence that in 1782 one Joseph E. Hodges died in England and left a large amt of money to the descendants of his brothers, Howell and Anthony Hodges. Howell Hodges was the father of six children with names as follows: Patience, Betsey, Rhoda, Mary, Ben and John. Patience married a Hodges, Betsey married a Brown, Rhoda married a Cason. I can't ascertain whom the sons married. Ben Hodges had two sons, Richard and Stephen. There was no children of Anthony except Edmund K. as we can learn, and he married his first cousin, Patience Hodges. There is an old lady living in your state some where by the name of Sallie Cason who was a relative of the Hodges in some way and the oldest of the family living. I do not know where she lives and would be glad that you give me some information touching this point. She no doubt could give full information. The money was left by will with the testimony that it should remain in the bank a hundred years and be then distributed among the heirs as (two words illegible). There is a gentlemen by the name of DeLoatch connected with it in some way and you will please write me full particulars touching all matters of (?) in the case.

Write me.

Yours, G.B. FARMER

I am a great grandson of both Patience and Edmund K. Hodges.

(Written in margin) Howell and Anthony Hodges came from
England and settled in N. or S.C. Do you know of any Hodges in N. or S.C.?

Xerox copies of the other six letters were sent to me by Mrs. R. R. Boring of Gainesville, Florida.

LETTER # 2: To J. H. Hodges, Gainesville, Fla. from J. R. Hodges of DeLand, Fla. dated January 13, 1891.

DeLand, Fla.
January 13, 1891

Mr. J. H. Hodges
Gainesville, Fla.

Dear Sir

Your favor received and answer the best I can Relatif to this Heirship of Our Family to the Claim in England. We may be able to do something if the case is followed up close. In regard to our claims of a certain amount of money deposited in the Bank in England by Joseph E. Hodges of England for his heirs. Sons who came over from England to America at the commencement of the Revolutionary War. My Grandfather was Joshua Hodges, the names of the other two boys names I cannot recollect but think one of they names was Richard Hodges. I only can remember but little as I was then very young. The reason why the 3 brothers could not get they money from the estate of Joseph E. Hodges, their father was that he was opposed to his sons fighting for the American Cause and Deposited that portion of they Estate in the Bank of England so the could not use it for one hundred years and the time of deposit has expired several years ago. I am the son of Joseph Hodges and the grandson of Joshua Hodges who was the son of Joseph E. Hodges of England. I was born in Bulloch County, Georgia in AD 1810. My father, Joseph Hodges was with his father, Joshua Hodges in the Revolutionary War and they was honorably discharged. And you can find out something more at Washington City by searching the old pay rolls and records of the War of 1776. You might find out something by searching the records of the State of N. C. at the Capitol and also the records at States Borrough Bullock County, Georgia.

You may find some paper on deposit that will shed some light on the matter. I think that the Record in Washington City would give you more light than any other way.

My Grandfather, Joshua Hodges, lived in North Carolina when the war closed and then moved to Georgia to Screven County and moved again to Bullock County, Ga. and there he died. If they is anything that I could do to aid you in
looking up evidence in the matter I can identify myself as being the Grandson of Joshua Hodges. They is one case which my father brought suit against some of the heirs of Joseph E. Hodges of England for his part of the estate. This law suit was brought against some of the heirs North of the Blue Ridge Mountains probably in Virginia or Tennessee but I am not certain where or in which state. This is the best reference I can give you at this time. Probably I could recall something more after awhile that would give you some clue that might be some use to you in this matter.

They is no doubt that the money was deposited for the heirs and they is no doubt of us being some of the heirs to that estate if we could get our claims in proper shape. We will do in the matter all in our power to assist you in looking up matter.

Your Cousin,
J.R. HODGES

P.S.
We are all well and Pa is not very well. Tell Mattie Tison that Pa is not well about as usual
S.J.H.

(Note by Smith C. Banks: J. R. Hodges is Judge Raiford Hodges, Mrs. Boring's great grandfather and Mattie Tison is Mrs. Boring's grandmother, Martha Jane Hodges, daughter of Judge Raiford Hodges. The initials, S.J.H. are unknown but might be a daughter of J.R. Hodges.)


Bank of England
London, E.C.,
16th February 1891

The Chief Accountant begs to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Hodges letter of the 4th inst. and in reply begs to say that no examination of the Bank books can take place until information of a more definite character is furnished.

A copy of a memorandum, which has been drawn up for the guidance of persons believing themselves entitled to Unclaimed Stocks and Dividends is enclosed.

J. H. Hodges, Esq. M.D.
Gainesville, Fla.

Note: This was a form letter.
LETTER # 4: To Dr. Hodges (no address) from E.R. Hodges, Johnston Station (State not given--maybe Georgia) dated Feb. 21, 1891.

Johnston Station
Feb 21, 1891

DR. HODGES,
Dear Sir,

I received your Feb. 1 and have neglected to answer until the present. I did not hear of Hodges meeting Va. neither have I been to England. About two years ago I came in possession of property being England. My two oldest brothers knew about this property being in England left to the three brothers who came to country and was not to be (?) by the heirs until one hundred years. All the information I have is my brothers told other persons of this matter. My father was named William and my grandfather was Joseph. We may yet get this matter straightened.

Yours truly,
E. R. HODGES

Note by Smith C. Banks: It seems that Dr. Hodges is J. H. Hodges of Gainesville, Fla. The handwriting is difficult to read.

LETTER # 5: To J. H. Hodges, Gainesville, Fla. from A. W. Mizell, Welborn, Fla. dated March 4, 1891.

Welborn, Florida
March 4, 1891

J. H. HODGES
Gainesville, Fla.

Dear Cousin:

I have written several letters since the receipt of yours of 4th Ult. but have had a reply to none yet. I will give you the following which I obtained from one of our relatives--Kennedy (not certain I've spelled the name correctly) who attended the first meeting of the heirs.
"Anthony, Howard and Stephen Hodges came to America, from Europe, prior to the Revolutionary War. Stephen died during the said war (was killed) without issue. Anthony and Howard both moved to N.C. after the war, and settled somewhere in the N. Eastern portion of the state. Anthony had three sons--Edmon K., Joshua, and Stephen."

Now, this man Kennady, I spoke of, sprang from Edmon K. he said. and Lafayette Hodges. (and Judge R. is the same) said he sprang from Stephen and I hardly have any doubt, but that you and I, sprang from the other--Joshua-- but this, we need to know. This Joshua, as you suggest, is very likely our great grandfather. Our Grandfather's name was Nathaniel Hodges.

I have not heard anything from the meeting in Richmond. With kind regards to your mother,

I am very truly, etc.

A. W. MIZELL

LETTER # 6: To Dr. J. H. Hodges, Gainesville, Fla. from A. W. Mizell, Welborn, Fla.

Welborn, Fla
April 28, 1891

DR. J. H. HODGES
Gainesville, Fla

My dear Cousin,

Yours of recent date rec'd and contents noted with interest and since we are equally interested in the case ... (one line of letter illegible)...it would be wise for us to furnish the Bank any information in reference to the matter unless we were sure we were absolutely correct. And in regard to the Hodges you saw in Jacksonville recently from England. I question very much if he has any interest in this matter at all, while he might have descended from the same general stock, his ancestors were in all probability, only distant relatives to the Hodges who put this money on deposit.--From the fact that the money put on deposit was only the money belonging, rightly, to the Brothers who came over, and settled in America and withheld from them, because the oldest Bro. was displeased at their entering in the Revolutionary was on the American side and I have no information to the affect, that any of them even went back, after the said war, and settled in England. Hence the money should all come to America.

It seems to me, we would do well not to....(line
illegible)... have, to anyone, seeming to be interested unless we are certain of such interest, for this delay of six years has been on account of two bogus claims that have been set up for the property. One by Hodges and the other by Hedge. These parties failed to substantiate their claims and have been set aside and what there is now, in the way, I do not know.

There are a number of our relatives out in Ala. and Texas and perhaps in some other the other states out there. There is a lawyer (word illegible) them and he, I think, is at work at this matter. There is one old man Hodges of the connection in Tex. about 90 years old said to be worth one millions dollars and is looking very anxiously after this matter. There are still others of the relatives in Virginia, some in or about Washington City. I have heard that they sent... (line illegible)... Record there and that the Record there and in Washington corresponded. Now it seems to me that what we need to do is to keep up with what they are doing. If you are going to New York soon, I believe you can learn something about the matter by going to Washington which you can do without much additional expense. I will try to get the name of a man or two at Washington interested and send them before you get off if I can. It is said that a part of City of Washington is built on a land grant belonging to the same estate and that the property in Washington is known as the Hodges property, that it is leased, etc. and that there is land in Virginia the same way, some of it very valuable, but of course we say but little about these letters until we know more. All the connection in the U.S need to work together in this matter and I suggest that you... (line illegible)... Claims Agency, until we find you what is actually being done.

I have heard from Uncle Glen Hodges recently. He said our Great Grandfather was Joshua, as you believed. He wrote me he would try to get up the family record from as far back as he could.

Like to hear from you anytime. Remember us kindly to the family.

Your Cousin,

A. W. MIZELL

LETTER # 7: To (no name) from J. Earle Hodges, London, England, dated May 2, 1891.
My Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 18th came to hand this week. Perhaps you do not know that the amount of money deposited here, waiting for claimants, is very large, and the particular seems very numerous, and in a case like the one in which you are interested, it requires a good deal of tracing back to get at the facts. The work which has to be done, would be difficult and would require a lawyer to do it. I have neither the time nor the experience necessary for the purpose. You will understand it is not like America where everything is comparatively new, and it is easy to search any official record. Here it requires experience and technical knowledge. I should think that to arrive at any satisfactory result would cost $250.00 for which sum a respectable lawyer could be found, who would search back the old records, and give us a full account of the exact state of the case. If you and the rest of the heirs in America have enough interest in the matter to expend such a sum, I shall be very glad to use my knowledge here, to procure the services of some first class lawyer and instruct him what you want to do. I think it is hopeless to expect to arrive in any other way at a true knowledge of the state of the case.

The story of the hundred years that was to elapse before the division was made is probably a mistake. The law here does not allow money to be tied up longer than a life in being, and twenty-one years thereafter.

If I can be of any further service to you in the matter, I shall be glad to do so. I do not anticipate that I or my family have any interest in the matter.

Yours faithfully,

J. EARLE HODGES.
Additional Notes to Ponder Over in Regards to Relationships Given in the Hodges Letters

The Three Brothers of Joseph E. Hodges of England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anthony</th>
<th>Stephen</th>
<th>Howard (Howell)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ch:</td>
<td>Ch:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Edmon K. m. 1stcoz) (died in Patience Hodges Rev. War)</td>
<td>1. Patience m. Edmond K. Hodges, son of Anthony</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stephen</td>
<td>2. Betsy m. a Brown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Joshua (Maybe ours??-b.1736)</td>
<td>3. Rhoda m. a Cason</td>
<td>4. Ben Ch:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our's Children:
1. Catherine m. Jackson
2. Joseph m. b.1763 m. S. Carr
3. Benjamin m. D. Carr
4. Joshua,Jr.b.1771 m. R. Fletcher
5. Sarahure m. J. Dampier
6. Nathaniel m. M. Whittington

Above chart done using Letter of G.B. Farmer (Ltr #1) and A.W. Mizell (Ltr #5). Farmer said he is grandson of Edmund K.

I have discounted J.R. Hodges' statement about Joseph E. Hodges being father of Joshua. And that Richard was a brother to Joshua. The only Richard is in Farmer's letter.

Letter #2--J.R. Hodges said his father, Joseph, brought a suit against some heirs of Joseph E. Hodges. How--When???

Letter #4--E.R. Hodges of Johnston Station said that his father was William and grandfather was Joseph. Is it possible that he is a son of Nathaniel William McClain Hodges, son of our Joseph??

Letter #6--W.A. Mizell mentions "a man, Kennedy"--we know that Hodges men married Kennedy women. There was also an Edmund Kennedy in early Bulloch County. Also mentioned in Lafayette Hodges--I don't know who this might be.

Letter #1--Mentions Sallie Cason of Georgia and "a gentleman of DeLoatch connection"--the DeLoach family (my ancestors) were prominent in Bulloch and Tattnal County. But there is another set of Hodges in Tattnal County and our branch has never established a family kinship with these Hodges."

Of all the letters I tend to favor the statements made by Farmer and especially Mizell's in Ltr #5 about the legacy--he gives in quotations: "Anthony, Howard and Stephen came to America...Stephen died...Anthony and Howard moved to N.C...Anthony had 3 sons--Edmon K., Joshua, and Stephen."

The relationships of our Joshua's descendants, in my opinion are already established.

-------Smith C. Banks