

**Memoirs
Of The Early Life And Times Of
Judge Junius Hillyer**

Born: April 1807

Died: June 1886

Copied From A Manuscript
In The Possession Of The Family
And Presented To The
University Of Georgia

His Three Grand Daughters:

Ellen Hillyer Newell (Mrs Alfred Colwitt Newell)
Marion Hillyer Wolfe (Mrs. Bernard Wolff)
Minnie Hillyer Cromer (Mrs. James Dawkins Cromer)

And His Great Grand Daughter:
Eliner Hillyer

June 25th, 1937

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2nd generation transcription, attempting to maintain most spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, but adding bold type, paragraphs and spacing for easier read. Some corrections to spelling where error was apparently typographical in the first generation transcription Feb2 , 2010. Arthur Bowie, Bentonville Ark.

From other sources, and not within or part of this document:

Judge Junius Hillyer born 23 April 1807 at Petersburg Georgia
to Shaler Hillyer 1776 -1820 and Rebecca Freeman 1786-1843
died 21 June 1886, Decatur Georgia
married 6 October 1831 to Jane Selina Watkins 17 May 1807 to 11 Feb 1880
*** Original dated as written or completed Feb 25, 1874. ***
Junius Hillyer is grandson of John Harris Freeman 1756-1806 and Catherine Carlton 1767-1855
and great grandson of Holman Freeman 1714-1784 and Sally Anne Cox
see Rev. War, DAR list civil service in GA DAR PATRIOT INDEX, Part I, p. 1084.

trees.ancestry.com lists nine children of Junius Hillyer and Jane Selina Watkins,
...these are not confirmed, use with great care..

Eben Hillyer 1832-1910
George L Hillyer 1835-1927
Shaler (II) Hillyer 1837-1868
Mary H Hillyer 1839-1921
Catherine Rebecca Hillyer 1841-?
Harriet Hillyer 1843-1918
Carlton Hillyer 1844-1918
Henry Hillyer 1846-1926
Evalina Watkins Hillyer 1848-?

Chapter One

Children of Great Grandfather Freeman

Great Grandmother Freeman: I do not know the given nor the maiden name of my maternal Great Grandmother Freeman. I only know she lived to a great age and died at the place where she and her husband lived before the Revolutionary war.

Great Grandfather Freeman: My maternal Great Grandfather Freeman moved to Georgia from Virginia before the Revolutionary war and settled in the County of Wilkes about one mile Northeast of a small village called **Malorysville**. His name was **Holman Freeman**. He had five sons and four daughters that I know or heard of, to wit: **Holman, John, Williams, James and George**. I do not know the given names of any of his daughters except **Aunt Jinny**. She was weak-minded and never married. I knew her. She lived to a great age and I remember her as an old woman living with Uncle Holman.

Another daughter married a man named **Simmons**. Another daughter married a man named **George**. Another, the fourth, married a man by the name of **Wilson**. I will state what little I know of these relations.

My **Great Grandfather Holman Freeman** was a farmer. He had no property but his farm and what appertained to it. I suppose he with his five unmarried sons and four unmarried daughters could and did make a good living. During the Revolutionary war when the British armies over-ran and conquered South Carolina and Georgia all the old and infirm men who were unable to leave the country with our armies were compelled to submit to the authority of the British Government and my Great Grandfather who was very old had no alternative but to submit and took protection under the British military officers. This Protection however did no avail him; for the Tories, who infested the neighborhood, came to his house and arrested him because he had five sons in the American army. They beat him so cruelly that he died from the injuries he received. He and his wife were buried on his farm and I have often seen their graves and unless the country is very greatly changed I think I could now find the place where for nearly on hundred years have reposed my maternal Great Grandparents--Freeman.

Uncle James Freeman: My mother's uncle, **James Freeman**, was, as far as my knowledge goes, universally known as Uncle Jimmy. In 1815, brother John and myself were at Mr Skipwith's school near Malorysville - I will have occasion to speak further of this school in a future part of this journal - our custom was to go home every Friday evening (Malorysville being five miles from our house) and we returned to school on Monday morning. The public road passed through the yard of our school-house which was very large.

One day while the school had recess and the boys were playing in the yard we observed a small old man with hair as white as the human hair ever gets to be and wearing cloths spun and wove and made at home and a little straw hat plaited of wheat straw and evidently also plaited and made at home with a very wide brim. He was going along the road driving a one horse cart and a small white horse which would have been much the better for better feeding. As he approached our playground there was something in his appearance that attracted our attention. He was so old - so small - so grayheaded - with his broad brim straw hat and copperas breeches and homespun cotton sack and his little gray horse so thin and poor and his little rickety cart; and with it all something in his countenance so quite and so friendly, that we involuntarily gathered near to the road so we might have a better and nearer view of him. When he came up to us, nearly the whole school had gathered in one group. He stopped after speaking a few common place words in a manner of great kindness and so gentle as to command the respect of thirty or forty very little boys, he opened a box and held out in his hands two or three nice looking ginger cakes.

I remember all the boys seemed pleased, and quite a number bought a cake; and I was anxious myself to buy one but neither brother John nor I had the small necessary coin so that we stood by and looked on. I was struck by the fact that while the good little man was talking in his kind and quiet way to the boys and offering his cakes he would every now and then make a full stop and look earnestly at me. I noticed this several times, and was embarrassed by it, being only eight years old. But I was still more surprised and embarrassed when in his peculiar, quite tone he spoke to me "Junius, come here; I will give you a cake." I did not let my modesty overcome me but stepped up to the cart and received from the hands of the good old man his offered token of kindness. I don't remember whether I thanked him or not, but one thing I know, if I did not thank him then I have often thanked him since.

The next Saturday while we were sitting at home in our front piazza - that is, my mother and Grandmother and perhaps brother John, I was telling Mother and Grandmother about the curious scene which I have related above and Mother and Grandmother were questioning me about the old man and his appearance and wondering who he could be. I looked up the lane leading to the house and exclaimed--"Law! Ma there is the same man coming here driving that same little gray horse."

Mother and Grandmother looked at him and watched his coming nearer. When he got near enough to be recognized Grandmother exclaimed --"Why, it is Jimmy." That was the first time I ever remember to have heard of Uncle Jimmy. He was my mother's own Uncle - My Grandmother's brother-in-law - the own brother of my Mother's Father.

They received him with affectionate kindness. I don't remember how long he stayed with us. I know we all enjoyed his visit; and I thought he was the best old man in the world. He said when he was selling cakes to the boys, he heard them call my name and he knew me by my name and it made him feel bad that he did not know his own brother's grandchildren; and he called me to him and gave me a cake, and determined he would visit us next Saturday.

Is it not manifest that he was a good kind man? That he was Aunt Jinny's brother and was like her, so gentle, so quite, so simple.

His wife's name was Rhoda - Aunt Roda - they had a large family of children. They were very poor. I used to know them but I have not heard from any of them for fifty years and can give no further account of them.

About the year 1819 brother John and myself brought home one morning a very fine string of fish which we had just caught. Grandmother said to us -- "Boys, Uncle Jimmy is sick. He is on his death bed. He has the dropsy and can't live long. I want you to carry these fish to Rhoda. She will be glad to get them and perhaps Jimmy might be able to eat some."

Brother John and myself took each of us a horse and as we had frequently been with mother and grandmother to visit Uncle Jimmy during his sickness, we knew the way. We went, I have no recollection where or how far, except that we were gone pretty well all day through we stayed several hours with Aunt Rhoda. She was delighted with the fish. As she lived a long way from the river she scarcely ever got any fish and these were very fine and a great treat. She told us that Uncle Jimmy was to sick to see us. We stayed with her in the kitchen and she roasted some sweet potatoes for us which were remarkably good and well roasted. We were both very hungry from our ride and we ate very hearty. We both ate too much and as we rode on home, brother John about fifty yards ahead and I following on in a slow walk, both of us leaning forward with our hands on the pommel of our saddle - neither uttering a word and both of us suffering perfect agony with heartburn. I had never heard of heartburn before, but brother John said that was it and from a long experience since, I know that was what was the matter with us. But we were young and healthy and it soon wore off, and we reached home well.

Uncle Jimmy soon after died and his family have all disappeared.

Uncle George Freeman: My Mother's uncle, George Freeman lived between Malorysville and Washington in Wilkes County, but not on the road. He lived off the road in a very retired country place. I never saw him. He died before I was born. I went once with Grandmother to visit his family about the year 1820. I saw his widow - I do not know her maiden name - I think her given name was Sallie but I am not certain of it. *(A few days after writing this page, I came clearly to remember that Uncle George's wife's given name was Frany. I felt doubtful about the given name in the text; and thought and tried to remember. Suddenly, while shaving on the next Sunday morning, it came clearly and distinctly as any other recollection, that her name was "Aunt Franky.")*

She and Uncle George had several children but I only remember two of them, Wesley and Allen. Uncle George was a farmer and succeeded in accumulating a competence. He was not rich, but independent. He had land and negroes. I always understood that he was a man of remarkably clear, strong, good sense, and great energy and probity of character. He was much thought of and respected. His wife from my recollection of her, which is very distinct, and from my recollection of the house and furniture and the appearance of her housekeeping was I think a plain, thriving, well-to-do, country woman.

Their sons, Wesley and Allen, from my earliest recollections until about the year 1823, I saw frequently. They were about the age of my mother, and were very well-bred genteel men. They were very much respected and were good clever men. They were farmers - were well off - always dressed fashionably; and were in their dress and manners gentlemen. They were very frequently at our house; but they were grave, serious, religious men - both Methodist. They seem sincerely attached to Mother and Grandmother and in their intercourse with our family and so far as their history came to me, I can't remember any incidents or conversations to relate concerning them.

About the year 1820 their Mother died; and some time after that - about 1823 - they came to our home, on their way to the country somewhere about Griffin. We frequently heard from them and of their inquiring about us and it is pleasant to me to remember that through their long lives they kept me in their remembrance. I often heard of their inquiring about me with interest, whenever they met anyone from the section of country where I lived, and expressing their gratification at my success, etc. They were living in the early part of the war and must have been nearly eighty years old. I have not heard of their death; but doubt not they are both dead, as if living, they must be near ninety years old. This is all I know about the family of Uncle George. They have all disappeared.

Uncle William Freeman: My Mother's Uncle William Freeman lived, after the Revolutionary war, in Augusta. He was a merchant. I never saw him. I have heard him spoken of as a very prosperous in early life - as a gentleman in his manners and appearance and as a very sensible, thriving, upright man. Uncle William died in middle life while his children were very small and whether he left his estate embarrassed and insolvent or whether his widow squandered it I do not know but I do know that in her old age she was in extreme poverty. I remember when my Mother and myself were going after the death of my father from our home in Wilkes to Washington, Mother proposed that we should leave the direct road and go by Aunt Sally's. That was the name of Uncle Williams's wife. Mother knew the way from which I infer that she had been to Aunt Sally's house before, though I never heard of her going there. She was living alone with an old family negro woman named Vice. Her children had all grown up and left her. She was evidently very very poor, and was living in a small house built of round logs and a log and dirt chimney. The yard was clean whit and enclosed as well as the garden with a low rail fence. When we arrived, Aunt Sally received us with great kindness and true country hospitality. She seemed to be glad to see us. She recognized my Mother at once which makes me know that she and mother had at some former period met. It was about twelve o'clock when we got to Aunt Sally's and she immediately called up Vice (who also knew my mother and seemed glad to see her) and told her to get some dinner. In a short time dinner was served up and consisted of collard greens, fried ham and some excellent cornbread and milk. I remember the greens and bread and milk I thought were excellent though I was hungry and in good health and had a good appetite. My mother asked Vice how she got dinner so soon. She replied that she fried the greens and that was just as good a way to cook them as to boil them and much quicker. That was the first time I ever heard of fried greens, and I have never know them to be cooked that way since.

Some time after dinner Mother and I went on to Washington. I have never heard from Aunt Sally or any of her children since. They have all disappeared. (*I heard my father say just four days before his death, that he had recently had news of some grandchildren of Uncle William Freeman; and that they were living in or near Augusta --JH.*)

Aunt Wilson: One of my Grandfather Freeman's sisters married a man by the name of Wilson. He lived in south Carolina - I think in the neighborhood of Ninety Six. I never saw him nor my Mother's Aunt. They had a daughter named Rebecca Steinback - about the age of my Mother. I never saw her but have often heard my Mother and Grandmother speak of her. She seems to have spent much of her early life with my Grandfather and Uncle Holman. My aunt had a son named **Littleberry Wilson**. He was once at our house while we lived in Athens. And there was another son whose given name I have forgotten, who was also about my Mother's age. He was a lawyer and lived I think near Culloden. I knew him. He seemed to be a good man. I have not heard from him for more than thirty years.

While I was on the bench in 1844, I held court for Judge Tracy and while on my way to Houston Court I passed through Culloden and my cousin Wilson happened to stay at the same house with me. I remember it was a pleasant October day. I was traveling by myself in a buggy and I overtook two very pretty country girls walking along the road. I struck up a conversation with the girls, and in the course of it, I proposed to them to take a seat in the buggy and ride with me as far as we traveled the same road. The girls accepted my offer and both of them got

into the buggy; and while enjoying their company, though somewhat crowded, who should come into the road right upon us but my Mother's cousin Wilson. He made no comment but kept with us till the girls got out and then he and I went together till night and stayed at the same house. I have never seen him since nor heard of him nor any of his family. They all disappeared.

I was taken sick on the road and did not hold Houston Court.

Aunt Simmons: One of my **Grandfather's sisters** married a man by the name **Simmons**. (Her given name was **Anne Freeman**.) They lived in **Elbert County** not far from a village called Ruckersville, after the father of Tinsley Rucker of Athens.

Soon after I was admitted to the Bar, while I was living in Lawrenceville with Mr. Chester, of whom I will speak more further on in this history, we were employed by a man by the name of **Thomas Chambers** to sue a man by the name of Alstom, for a number of negros in Elbert County. We sued out bail trover, and I went with the Sheriff to the place of rendezvous to make a demand and have the writ served. When Mr. Alston came over the river in a boat, I met him on the bank and read over a list of the negros and demanded them for my client. He refused to give them up and I told the Sheriff to execute the writ. The Sheriff immediately arrested Mr. Alston and took possession of the negros.

This was in the **fall of 1828**, and when I got through my business an old man came up to me. He was of medium height, thick-set and heavy-built but no copulent. His face was broad and flat, his hair was very gray, and he had all the marks of a very old man. He said his name was **Simmons**, that he had **married my Grandfather's sister**, and gave me a pressing invitation to go home with him, saying his wife was still living, and she would be glad to see me. I have ever regretted that I did not accept his invitation but I did not so did not see my Aunt Simmons. I knew **one of her sons**. His name was **Holman Simmons**. I understand Uncle Simmons was one of the wealthy substantial planters of Elbert County. He was a plain country man. **His son Holman** was one of the finest looking men of that day - remarkably stylish man- very popular and very much respected. Soon after I grew up **he moved West**, and I lost sight of him. He visited Mother and Grandmother while we lived in Athens; but I have heard nothing from him for forty years. If he is living he is very near eighty years old.

Aunt Simmons had a daughter who married **John Richardson** of Nacoochese, White County. Richardson is very wealthy and he and his family are among the best people. I have been to his house while electioneering for Congress. He lived in fine style with every appearance of wealth and respectability. They are both living, near ninety years of age. I know nothing of their children and nothing more of my Mother's Aunt Simmons. He owns a gold mine in Nacoochee which was considered one of the richest mines on the continent.

Aunt George: One of my Grandfather's sisters married a man by the name of **George**. They lived for many years after their marriage in Elbert Co. but I do not know what part of the county. They were wealthy. I never saw either of them. About the time I was born Uncle George and his wife moved to Louisiana and carried all the family with them except two daughters - one married **Mr. Winston Johnson**. He lived in Oglethorpe County near Lexington. The other daughter married **David Witt** and lived in Jefferson, Jackson County. They had but one child - Middleton Witt.

I remember in 1812 at the commencement of our last war with England, in the summer, my Mother and Grandmother took brother John and myself in the carriage, and went from our home in Wilkes to Jefferson, Jackson County to visit Mrs. Witt. I was in my sixth year. I very distinctly remember our journey, and many incidents. I don't remember Granby or our little brother being along. Granby was in his third year and Rober was a baby.

It was about sixty miles from our house to Jefferson. We stayed all night in Lexington, and while there, at the hotel - I don't remember whether the evening of our arrival or the next morning - we hear the drum and fife, and saw from the upper verandah of the hotel a company of volunteers parading in the square, and starting for the war. I remember everybody seemed serious and solemn; and many men, and it seemed to me all the women, were in tears. I looked on with wonder. The company paraded about the public square for a time and then filled off on the road leading in the direction of Athens, amid the shouts of the crowd and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs.

We resumed our journey, and the next scene, that is still clear in my memory, was our rising Karr's hill and coming in view of Athens. The only point in the scene, that I retain, is the appearance of the college. The view of the college is just as distinct upon my memory as any event of my life. Brother John was eight years old remarked, "It is a bull's eye." I at once understood him to refer to the large round blue window in the gable of the college. This large round blue window impressed me very powerfully, and was in my mind a very striking point of the scene, and I looked at it with wonder amounting to awe. I never forgot it; and in 1820, when I went to Athens to school, and rose the same Karr's hill I came in view of the college standing in the same place, with its great round blue bull's eye

*****END OF AVAILABLE TRANSCRIPT OF HILLYER MEMOIRS*****