



WILLIAM SCHLEY

12-10-1786 -- 11-20-1858

WALKER - SCHLEY CEMETERY

RICHMOND HILLS ROAD AT BOBBY JONES EXPRESSWAY

AUGUSTA, GA

NAME:

WILLIAM SCHLEY

PERSONAL INFORMATION

OCCUPATION(S):

LAWYER, JUDGE, GOVERNOR OF GA 1835-1837

OTHER INFORMATION:

PART OWNER OF RICHMOND FACTORY, TRUSTEE OF MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA. BROTHER OF PHILIP THOMAS SCHLEY

MASONIC INFORMATION

LODGE(S):

ST PATRICK'S #8, WEBB #166 1852

ST PATRICKS #2 1820, ST PATRICKS #1 1829
SOCIAL #1? 1838

STATE OFFICES HELD:

GRAND MASTER 1826, 1828, 1830, 1831

CHAPTER(S):

UNION #1, AUGUSTA #2 (~~1844~~)

1838

STATE OFFICES HELD:

GRAND HIGH PRIEST 1822-1847

COUNCIL(S):

STATE OFFICES HELD:

COMMANDERY(IES):

STATE OFFICES HELD:

OTHER MASONIC ORGANIZATIONS:

OHP 1849

OTHER MASONIC STATE OFFICES HELD:

NATIONAL MASONIC OFFICES HELD:

MASONIC AWARDS:

OTHER INFORMATION:

UNTIL 1847, A MAN WAS REQUIRED TO OWN 500 ACRES OF LAND AND HAVE OTHER PROPERTY WORTH \$4,000 TO QUALIFY FOR GOVERNOR

William Schley 1835-1837

He subdued the Creek Indians

In 1835 William Schley, the Unionist candidate, defeated Charles Dougherty of the States Rights party by a vote of 31,177 to 28,606. The *Southern Recorder*, a critical newspaper, accused Schley of being a Federalist of the John Adams type—a charge he quickly denied. Although not a Federalist, he did believe in preserving the Union and was an uncompromising critic of Governor Troup's extreme states' rights views.

When Schley succeeded his friend Wilson Lumpkin as governor, removing Indians remained a major concern for Georgians. Although the Cherokee situation had been resolved, the Creeks continued to pose problems. When bands of marauding Creeks went on a rampage of murder and destruction, terrorizing the white settlers on the western frontier along the Chattahoochee River, he organized militia units and personally took part in the campaign against them. He remained at the Columbus headquarters for six weeks, assisting General Winfield Scott, whose United States army troops easily routed the Creeks.

Schley's administration also faced a serious conflict with the state of Maine. Two men from Maine aided and abetted a group of slaves in an escape from Savannah to Maine. Schley expected Maine officials to extradite the abolitionists to Georgia for prosecution and to return the slaves to their owners. When Maine refused to cooperate, Schley became indignant. Several sectional conflicts already had erupted over the institution of slavery. Almost without exception Georgia political leaders praised the institution of slavery as a positive good both for whites and blacks. The sectional conflicts, they insisted, resulted from the outspoken attacks on the institution by abolitionists, such as William Lloyd Garrison. The Georgia legislature found Garrison's fanatical insistence on immediate emancipation so repugnant that it passed a bill offering a reward of \$5,000 for his arrest and conviction. Schley not only signed the bill but also declared that Garrison and abolitionists were "a sect of crazed enthusiasts who are endeavoring to enlist insurrection and rapine, conflagration and massacre, under the banner of philanthropy."

Schley's message to the legislature in 1836 urged the state to undertake a comprehensive geological survey, maintain an asylum for the

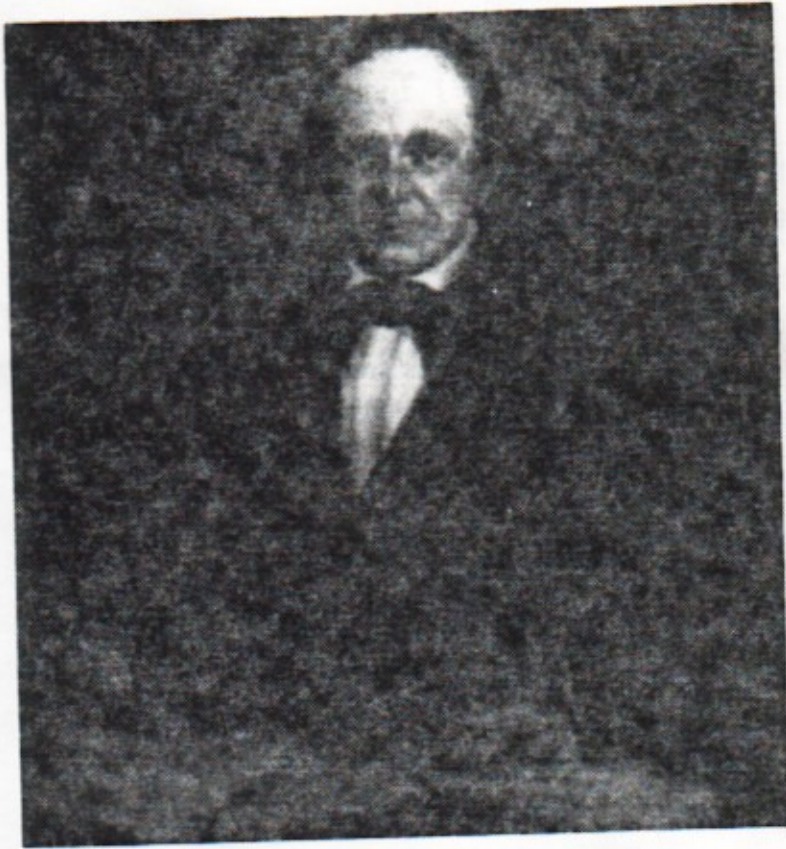


Fig.24. William Schley

insane, organize a supreme court, improve river navigation, provide education for the deaf, and sell the Altamaha Canal. He strongly recommended the construction of the Western and Atlantic Railroad and had the pleasure of signing the bill authorizing its construction. He also had the responsibility of building the new executive mansion in Milledgeville. Projected to cost \$15,000, it actually cost \$50,000 when completed in 1838. Perhaps the most important accomplishment of his term was the compilation of a digest of English law for use in Georgia.

In 1837 Schley lost his bid for a second term to former Governor George Gilmer, the States Rights party candidate, by a margin of 700 votes. In a quiet and close election, Schley received 33,417 votes to

Gilmer's 34,178. Following his defeat he retired to private life and a career of business. He established and operated the Richmond Factory, which manufactured cotton and woolen products, and at the time of his death was president of the board of trustees of the Medical College of Georgia.

Schley's career followed the general pattern of governors of this period in that he was born north of Georgia, was reared in a frontier region, practiced law, and served in both the state legislature and Congress. The son of John Jacob and Anna Shelman Schley, he was born in Frederick, Maryland, on 10 December 1786. Educated at academies in Louisville and Augusta, he was admitted to the bar in 1812. He practiced law in Augusta until 1825, when he was elected judge of the Superior Court for the Middle District of Georgia. In 1830 he represented Richmond County in the state legislature; in 1832 he was elected to the Twenty-third Congress as a Democrat. Reelected in 1834, he resigned from Congress to run for governor. Also typical of Georgia governors of this period, he lived a full life of almost seventy-two years.

Schley married Elizabeth Sarah Hargrove on 2 April 1822, and they had four children: Anna Maria, William, George, and Henry Jackson. Mrs. Schley died on 11 February 1845, and a year later he married Sophia Kerr. He died at Augusta on 20 November 1858.

Less than a year before his death, Georgia honored Schley by creating a new county and naming it for him.

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