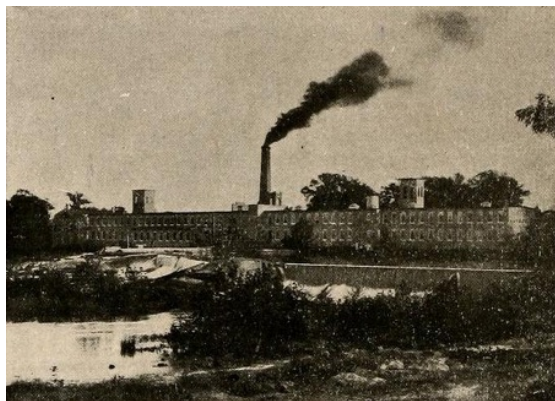


Battle, Joel ^[1]

Battle, Joel

by Anastatia Sims, 1979; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, April 2023

16 May 1779–25 Aug. 1829



"The Rocky Mount Mills," photograph, [circa 1911]. From *Rocky Mount the Gateway of Eastern North Carolina*, p. 32, [published 1911] by the *Rocky Mount Record*, Rocky Mount, N.C. From the Braswell Memorial Library, presented on Archive.org.

^[2]Joel Battle, planter, merchant, militia colonel, and cotton manufacturer, was one of the three children of William Butler and Charity Horn Battle. He was one of the founders of the *Rocky Mount Mills* ^[3] at the falls of the Tar River in *Nash County* ^[4], the second textile mill to begin operation in North Carolina and the oldest mill still in operation at its original site.

Few details are known of Battle's life. He attended *The University of North Carolina* ^[5] from 1798 to 1800. On 9 Apr. 1801, he married Mary Palmer ("Polly") Johnston (14 Jan. 1786–23 Feb. 1866), and shortly afterward they moved to Shell Bank Plantation on the Tar River.

In 1816, Battle, along with his brother-in-law Peter Evans, *Henry A. Donaldson* ^[6], and John Hogan, began buying land around the Falls of Tar River. Hogan sold his share to Battle in 1817. A stone mill was constructed at the falls in 1816 or 1817 and expanded in 1819. By 1820, Battle and his partners owned the entire area, and the mill was in full operation. In that year they got a license to build a dam at the falls. Dissension among the partners in the 1820s led to Donaldson's buying Evans's interest in 1821 and then, in 1828, selling his share to Battle. The Battle family continued to control the mills for a number of years.

Joel and Mary Battle had eleven children, nine of whom lived to adulthood: *William Horn* ^[7], Amos Johnston, Richard Henry, Catharine Anne, Benjamin Dossey, Christopher Columbus, Isaac Luther, Susan Esther, and Laura Carolina. Battle was buried at the Oaks, his *Edgecombe County* ^[8] home, but in 1872 his remains, along with those of his wife, were moved to *Oakwood Cemetery* ^[9] in Raleigh.

Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina:

This person enslaved and owned other people. Many Black and African people, their descendants, and some others were enslaved in the United States until the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in 1865. It was common for wealthy landowners, entrepreneurs, politicians, institutions, and others to enslave people and use enslaved labor during this period. To read more about the enslavement and transportation of African people to North Carolina, visit <https://aahc.nc.gov/programs/africa-carolina-0> ^[10]. To read more about slavery and its history in North Carolina, visit <https://www.ncpedia.org/slavery> ^[11]. - Government and Heritage Library, 2023

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Daniel L. Grant, *Alumni History of the University of North Carolina* (1924).

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Additional Resources:

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Battle, Montgomery, Ala., The Paragon Press, 1930: <https://www.worldcat.org/title/battle-book-a-genealogy-of-the-battle-family-in-america-with-chapters-illustrating-certain-phases-of-its-history/oclc/2579075> [19]

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#). [26]

1 January 1979 | Sims, Anastatia

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