

Dickins, Samuel ^[1]

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by Sarah E. Holeman, 1986

ca. 1775–22 July 1840

Samuel Dickins, [surveyor](#) ^[2] and congressman, was born in [Person County](#) ^[3] near Roxboro, the son of Robert and Mary Dickins. His father was the younger son of a family belonging to a mercantile firm in London, "Granville and Dickins," and became a partner in its American operation in Norfolk, Va. Robert Dickins served in the Revolutionary Army as a colonel and married Mary Brown, daughter of an Englishman of Norfolk or Petersburg, Va. They settled in Caswell (later Person) County, N.C.

Samuel Dickins was the fourth of his parents' eight children, three sons and five daughters. He may have attended Solomon Lea's Boy's Academy at Leasburg, N.C. He married Jane Vaughn of Mecklenburg County, Va. His name appears in records of Person County as early as 6 Jan. 1799 when he served as bondsman for the marriage of James Paine to Polly Williams, and on 26 July 1808 when he witnessed the will of William Tapp of Person County. His father was a landowner and wealthy citizen of Person County; in his will he left to Samuel his silver watch "which was purchased of John Stout and has his name in the face of her." Robert Dickins ordered his land sold at public auction, leaving the bulk of his wealth to his son Jesse. He appointed his sons Samuel and William executors of his estate in 1804.

From 1813 to 1815 and again in 1818 Samuel Dickins was a member of the North Carolina House of Commons, where he served on the House Finance Committee and on a joint committee to inquire into the advisability of increasing the banking capital of the state. He was elected to the Fourteenth Congress of the United States to fill the vacancy caused by the death of [Richard Stanford](#) ^[4] in April 1816. He served in the House of Representatives from 2 Dec. 1816 to 3 Mar. 1817.

Dickins had nine children by his first wife, who died four or five years after the family moved in 1820 to Madison County, Tenn., to what was then called the Chickasaw Purchase. He established himself as an efficient surveyor and locator of land in western Tennessee and in 1821 was appointed by [Archibald D. Murphey](#) ^[5] and [Joseph H. Bryan](#) ^[6] to locate and sell the Tennessee land claims of [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[7]. His partner was Dr. Thomas Hunt; their firm, "Hunt & Dickins," employed numerous young men to help with the work. Dickins was compensated for his services with the usual 16 2/3 percent of the value of lands surveyed. For selling, collecting, and paying he received 6 percent and later 10 percent, all payable in land. In an 1823 meeting of the university's board of trustees it was noted that he had sold 25,000 acres of land, something over the amount specified. His actions were approved and commended and other sales were authorized from time to time.

On 2 Aug. 1831, Dickins married Frances H. Burton of Williamsborough in [Granville County](#) ^[8], the sister of Governor [Hutchins G. Burton](#) ^[9]; they had no children. He died in Madison County, Tenn., and was buried beside his first wife, the spot having been designated by him for that purpose when he first moved to Tennessee.

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Additional Resources:

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