

Hines, Richard ^[1]

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by Claiborne T. Smith, Jr., 1988

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Richard Hines, attorney and congressman, was born in the Old Sparta section of Edgecombe County ^[2], the son of Jesse Hines and his wife Celia, daughter of Colonel Jonas Johnston. His grandfather Richard Hines, a native of Sussex County, Va., had moved to North Carolina and settled on Town Creek, Edgecombe County, in 1770. Jesse Hines died intestate in 1793, and his widow married Elias Carr ^[3].

Hines seems to have been educated locally. He was admitted to the bar in 1816 and for several years practiced in Washington, Beaufort County ^[4]. He returned to Edgecombe and represented the county in the House of Commons in 1824. He was elected as a Democrat to the Nineteenth Congress but lost his bid for reelection in 1826. Hines became a strong Whig ^[5] and continued to be interested in politics, though he never again held office. He later moved to Raleigh and was involved in the reception given Henry Clay there in 1844.

The historian John H. Wheeler ^[6] described Hines as a "gentleman of great personal worth and liberal feelings." The Hines residence in Edgecombe County, the Hermitage, is no longer standing. Areta Ellis of New Bern, who visited the estate in 1838, wrote her family from "The Hermitage near Sparta" on 2 May: "Just as the sun was setting we drove up the avenue of a quarter of a mile leading to Mr. Hines' house. I can give you no idea of the place, unless I possessed some of the descriptive powers of those who have written of the style of English scenery. It was far superior to anything in our little town. Caroline and Mr. Hines are extremely kind and attentive, and Miss Hines one of the most accomplished and interesting young ladies I have ever met."

Hines married first a cousin, Susan Wilkins. She died in 1819, leaving a daughter Susan who never married. His second wife was another cousin, Ann Edmunds Spruill, who died in 1830. They had a daughter, Rowena, who never married, and five sons: Peter Evans ^[7], Benjamin S., Jesse Davidson, Elias Carr ^[8], and Richard, Jr. Peter, who became a prominent physician in Raleigh, married Frances Iredell Johnson but had no children. Benjamin, who attended The University of North Carolina ^[9] in 1842, never married. Jesse married Elizabeth Poole and left issue. Elias ^[8], who received A.B. (1847) and M.A. (1850) degrees from the university, was for many years solicitor of the Edenton District; he died in the Civil War, leaving a widow, Margaret, daughter of Thomas F. Norfleet of Bertie, and two sons. Richard, Jr., who received an A.B. degree from the university in 1850 and in 1852 was appointed tutor in ancient languages, became an Episcopal minister and in 1867 was given a D.D. by his alma mater; he married Helen Huske and later moved to Memphis, Tenn.

The third wife of Richard, Sr., was Caroline Snead, of New Bern, who left one son to reach maturity, John S.; he received an A.B. degree from the university in 1856 and settled in St. Louis, Mo. Congressman Richard Hines was buried in the Old City Cemetery, Raleigh.

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