

Rhodes, John Melancthon ^[1]

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by Frank P. Cauble, 1994

29 Aug. 1849–20 Apr. 1921

John Melancthon Rhodes, textile manufacturer, temperance leader, and patron of education, was born in Gaston County ^[2], four miles north of the town of Dallas. Of German ancestry, he was the son of Caleb and Myra Hoffman Rhodes and a descendant of Frederick Rhodes (Roth), who came to America in 1752. Educated by Dr. Robert L. Abernethy at Table Rock Academy in Burke County ^[3] and at Catawba College ^[4], then located at Newton, he was elected register of deeds in Gaston County for the 1878–82 term and at the same time began his lifelong support of the temperance movement in North Carolina.

In 1889 Rhodes started his career as a textile manufacturer at Kings Mountain ^[5] and helped build the first cotton mill in that locality. During the ensuing years he was a leading figure in the erection of seven other textile plants at Cherryville ^[6], Rhodhiss ^[7], Lincolnton ^[8], and Kings Mountain. The town of Rhodhiss was named after John M. Rhodes and his partner, George B. Hiss. Rhodes was the mayor of Cherryville from 1894 to 1900 and promoted the establishment of the Cherryville High School. In all the communities where he resided he was a member of the Lutheran church.

Rhodes was one of the founders of Gaston Female College at Dallas in 1879 and served on the board of trustees of Lenoir Rhyne College ^[9] at Hickory ^[10] from 1891 to 1921. Prior to 1918 he was the largest financial supporter of the latter institution.

He married Susan Catherine Aderholdt (1847–1917) on 15 Dec. 1870 and was the father of seven children: David Polycarp, Myra Sarah Ada, Lillie Mae, Caleb Junious, Violet Almata, Mabel Rosalee, and Georgia Agnes. After Susan's death he married Nina C. Crowell of Lincolnton on 1 Sept. 1919. There were no children of this marriage. Rhodes was buried in the old Lutheran church cemetery at Lincolnton.

References:

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Additional Resources:

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