

Scales, Hamilton ^[1]

Scales, Hamilton

by Linda Mylan, 1994

20 Jan. 1821–7 Sept. 1890

Hamilton Scales, tobacco manufacturer and warehouseman, was the son of James and his second wife, Elizabeth Deatherage Scales. Young Scales's mother died in 1824, and thirteen years later his father married Charlotte Dalton. By his three wives James Scales was the father of eight children, all born in Rockingham County ^[2].

Little is known of Hamilton Scales's personal life. In 1850 he was still living in western Rockingham County with his brother Peter. The census for that year records his occupation as trader, and he possibly was associated with Peter, whose occupation was listed as tobacconist.

On 12 Aug. 1851 Scales married, in the Madison Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth Wall McAdoo, a widow. They were the parents of two children, Marvin and Raleigh. Raleigh was born on 1 Aug. 1853, and his mother died on 13 November.

Following his wife's death Scales moved to Stokes County ^[3], where, on 10 June 1861, he was commissioned captain of Company H ("The Stokes Boys"), Twenty-second Regiment of North Carolina Troops. After a brief period he was forced to resign because of ill health, but he soon became a major in the Battalion of Home Guards.

In 1870 he moved to Forsyth County ^[4] and began to manufacture plug tobacco in a converted carriage house on Liberty Street in Winston ^[5]. At the time there were no sales warehouses in the town, and he obtained his tobacco by buying directly from local and regional farmers. In 1873, in order to ensure a more convenient supply of tobacco for his factory, Scales established the Piedmont Warehouse, the first tobacco warehouse in Winston. His business associate in this venture was S. M. Hobson.

Scales enlarged his manufacturing operation in 1875 by building a two-and-a-half-story factory and including both a cooling room and a dry house. In 1876 his warehouse was taken over by M. W. Norfleet. The principal brands of plug tobacco made at Scales's factory were Aleck Stephens, No. 1, Bob Toombs, and Piedmont. By 1888 he was producing others named Ida Bryan, Spanker, and Rabbit Gum. In January 1890 he sold his factory to N. S. and T. J. Wilson and apparently left the business entirely.

Scales became a member of the Winston Lodge of Freemasons on 8 Apr. 1876 and was associated with the Presbyterian church most of life, probably through the influence of his stepmother, Charlotte. He died in Winston and was buried in the Salem cemetery.

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