

Hoskins, Charles W. ^[1]

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by Meade B. B. Horne, 1988

January 1818–21 Sept. 1846

Charles W. Hoskins, army officer, was born in Edenton ^[2]. The records of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point indicate that he and his father attested that he was eighteen at the time of his appointment to West Point in 1832, but in two documents his son, John D. C. Hoskins, states that his father was born in 1818. His family was prominent in Edenton, and was connected with the patriot Richard Hoskins whose wife participated in the Edenton Tea Party ^[3]. His father, James Hoskins, was the son of Thomas and Mary Roberts Hoskins. His mother's name is nowhere listed in any official army documents, but she is mentioned in Ashe's *Biographical History of North Carolina* as having been a Miss Alexander. In Hathaway's *North Carolina . . . Register*, Charles Hoskins is referred to as the son of Mary Norcom who married James Hoskins on 22 Oct. 1775. This date is clearly erroneous and is corrected in another volume containing marriage bonds to 22 Oct. 1795. A Chowan County ^[4] tombstone shows that a Mary Hoskins, wife of James, was buried at the Strawberry Hill Cemetery, born 17 Mar. 1771. Unfortunately the date of death is partially obliterated.

Charles Hoskins lived as a boy at Pembroke plantation near Edenton and was educated at Edenton Academy. In April 1832 he was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy by North Carolina congressman William Biddle Shepherd ^[5]. He entered West Point on 1 July 1832 and was graduated fortieth in a class of forty-nine, receiving his commission as a brevet second lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry on 1 July 1836. He was promoted to second lieutenant on 13 Sept. 1836 and served under generals Scott and Wool in the Cherokee Nation ^[6] as a quartermaster, helping to prepare for the removal of the Indians to the West, from 1836 to 1839. During this time he was promoted to first lieutenant, on 30 Dec. 1838. He also served at Fort Gibson, Ark., from 1839 to 1841, in the Florida War from 1841 to 1842, in the transferral of the Cherokees to the West in 1842, and at Fort Scott, Kans., from 1844 to 1845. While stationed at Jefferson Barracks, Mo., he met and became friends with Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant. He also met Jennie Deane, who was born in Charleston, S.C., the daughter of Major John Deane of New Rochelle, N.Y. They were married in March 1845 and had one son, John Deane Charles, born on 17 Jan. 1846 in Potosi, Mo.

Hoskins served as regimental adjutant from 10 Sept. 1845 to 21 Sept. 1846. He was active in the military occupation of Texas during 1845–46 and in the War with Mexico ^[7], fighting in the Battle of Palo Alto, 8 May 1846; the Battle of Resaca-de-la-Palma, 9 May 1846; and the Battle of Monterrey, 21 Sept. 1846, during which action he was shot and killed.

Ulysses Grant recalled that during this battle to capture Fort Teneria he was the only man in the Fourth Infantry upon a horse. He met Lieutenant Hoskins, "who was not in robust health, found himself very much fatigued . . . and expressed a wish that he could be mounted also." Grant gave him the horse, but discovered a short time later that Hoskins had been shot by the enemy. Grant was then appointed adjutant in his place. Grant's regard for his friend was demonstrated some years later. When Hoskins's only son John Deane Charles applied for admission to West Point in 1864, General Grant asked that President Lincoln appoint the young man to the military academy; his request was honored.

Charles Hoskins was eulogized in the *National Intelligencer* of Washington, D.C., in a tribute that was reprinted in the Raleigh *Register* on 3 Nov. 1846, stating: "Lieutenant Hoskins possessed a quick and lively intellect; he cherished a nice and high sense of honor, and was remarkable for the generosity and chivalry of his character." A resolution ^[8] in his honor was entered in the Laws of North Carolina for 1846–47. His death at an early age was lamented because of his capability as an army officer and also because of his charm, wit, and "passion for humor." His body was transported from Monterrey to Jefferson Barracks, Mo., where he was buried in the National Cemetery.

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