

Mallett, Charles Peter ^[1]

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by Agnes R. Burhoe, 1991

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See also: [Mallett, Peter](#) ^[2]; [Mallett, Charles Beatty](#) ^[3]

Charles Peter Mallett, planter and merchant, was born in Fayetteville, the son of Colonel Peter Mallett, commissary general of North Carolina during the [Revolutionary War](#) ^[4], and his wife, Sarah Mumford (1744–1836). Thirteen years later his father died and left him the ward of two Fayetteville friends, through whom he acquired a private education as a "genteel and relatively affluent birthright" should have afforded him. He was later instructed in mercantile management.

As a merchant in Fayetteville, Mallett had many business ventures, including an extensive stagecoach line and several textile mills. In 1836 he took over the Merchant Mills on Blount's Creek, near Fayetteville, where his father's old mill stood, and converted it into a cotton spinning mill. He was the first successful producer of spun cotton in [Cumberland County](#) ^[5]. In 1837 Mallett and several partners chartered the Rockfish Manufacturing Company, which was authorized to establish factories for the manufacture of cotton, wool, flax, hemp, and other products on Rockfish Creek. During the [Civil War](#) ^[6] these mills provided cloth for the South, but all of them were burned by General William T. Sherman in 1865. The Rockfish Manufacturing Company was reestablished after the war under that name by a Northern officer from Sherman's troops who recognized its potential. It eventually became Hope Mills, the largest textile mill in North Carolina at the time.

Mallett opened a third mill, the Phoenix Company, in 1839 for the spinning and weaving of cotton. He was also a major stockholder of the Union (Cotton) Manufacturing Company and president of the Fayetteville branch of the [Bank of North Carolina](#) ^[7]. In 1853 he left the state to attempt a business venture in New York. When it failed three years later, he returned to North Carolina to open a textbook store in Chapel Hill. He was in Chapel Hill when Union troops were there and left a diary of the Union occupation. After the war he left the state to help his sons reestablish themselves financially on a farm in Bastrop, La., where he died.

He had six children by his first wife, Sophia Sarah Beatty (1796–1829): Caroline Eliza, [Charles Beatty](#) ^[3], William Peter, Alexander Fridge, Peter, and Edward. By his second wife, Sarah Green, he had three sons and a daughter: Richardson (who died at Gettysburg), Cecil, Herbert, and Margaret (Meta) Wright. William Peter became a physician in Chapel Hill and was the grandfather of the late dean of the medical school at [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[8], [Dr. William de Berniere MacNider](#) ^[9].

Mallett was a prominent member of Fayetteville society. He was one of the first communicants of St. John's [Episcopal Church](#) ^[10], sat on its first vestry, and served often as a delegate to the diocesan convention.

References:

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Subjects:

[Biographies](#) ^[12]

[Business leaders](#) ^[13]

[Industry](#) ^[14]

[Merchants](#) ^[15]

[Planters](#) ^[16]

Authors:

[Burhoe, Agnes R.](#) ^[17]

Origin - location:

[Cumberland County](#) ^[18]

[Fayetteville](#) ^[19]

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[1] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/mallett-charles-peter> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/mallett-peter-jr> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/mallett-charles-beatty> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/american-revolution> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/cumberland> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/history/cw-1900/civil-war> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/state-bank-north-carolina> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/university-north-carolina-chapel-hi> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/macnider-william-de> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/religion/episcopal-church> [11] <http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/m/Mallett,C.B.html> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/business-leaders> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/industry> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/merchants> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/planters> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/burhoe-agnes-r> [18] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal--4> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-48> [20] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no>