Mangum, Priestley Hinton, Jr. [1]

Mangum, Priestley Hinton, Jr.

by H. Thomas Kearney, Jr., 1991

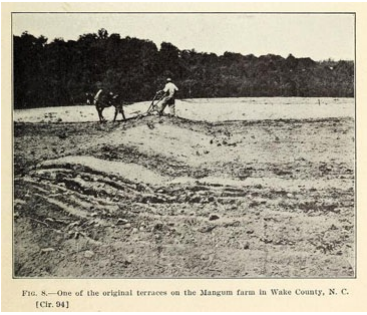
21 Aug. 1829–26 Feb. 1907

See also: Mangum Terrace [2]

Portrait of Priestley Hinton Mangum, from Samuel A. Ashe's *Biographical History of North Carolina*, Vol. 5, p. 263, published 1906, printed by Charles L. Van Noppen, Publisher, Greensboro, North Carolina. Presented on Archive.org.

[3]Priestley Hinton Mangum, Jr., farmer and agricultural promoter, was born in Wake County [4], the son of Priestley Hinton and Rebecca Hilliard Sutherland Mangum. He was the brother of Willie P. Mangum, Jr., and the nephew of Willie Person Mangum [5]. Priestley Hinton, Jr., attended the Bingham School [6] in Orange County [7] and was graduated from Wake Forest College [8] in 1851. For the remainder of his life he was a farmer in northern Wake County.

As a farmer Mangum was a student and an advocate of progressive agricultural techniques. In particular, he found success in the practice of and fame in the promotion of terracing as a form of erosion control. In 1885, on his farm two miles west of Wake Forest, Mangum constructed the first examples of what became known as the "Mangum terrace." Two factors had pushed him to this development. The first was the wasted land necessary for the ditches then used in the southern Piedmont to control water runoff from farmlands. The second was the advent of farm machinery that could not be used efficiently on ditched land. Consequently, Mangum constructed his "terraces" as broad ridges with a gentle slope that would break the flow of water yet permit the growth of crops and be accessible to machinery.



Photograph of "One of the original terraces on the Mangum farm in Wake County, N.C.," from J.S. Cates' *The Mangum terrace in its relation to efficient farm management*, p. 9, published 1912 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry. Presented on Archive. org.

Initially, the news of Mangum's method of erosion control spread by word of mouth. Within a decade, however, his terraces were being publicized by the Agricultural Experiment Station of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts [10]. By 1912 the Mangum terrace [2] had gained the support of the U.S. Department of Agriculture [11]. Thereafter it was so widely used that both the second and third editions of *Webster's International Dictionary* (1934 and 1961) carried "Mangum terrace" as an entry.

In 1856 Mangum married Mary Thomas Price, and they became the parents of six children. In his politics Mangum was a Whig before the Civil War and a Democrat afterwards. He was a member of the Episcopal church [12]. On his death he was buried in the family cemetery on his farm. This cemetery is now located on the Horsecreek Golf Course on U.S. Highway 1 west of Wake Forest.

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A. T. Holman, "Terracing Farm Lands," North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service, *Circular 173* (1935).

P. H. Mangum, "My Father Invented It," *Country Gentleman* 107 (1937).

Raleigh *News and Observer*, 3 Mar. 1907.

W. Turner Ray (Wake Forest), interview, 11 Apr. 1981.

Additional Resources:

"Mangum Terrace." N.C. Highway Historical Marker H-58, N.C. Office of Archives & History.https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?sp=Markers&k=Markers&sv=H-58 [16] (accessed July 17, 2014).

Image Credits:

Ashe, Samuel A. (Samuel A'Court). *Biographical history of North Carolina from colonial times to the present*.Greensboro, N.C.: C.L. Van Noppen. 1905. 263.https://archive.org/details/biographicalhis05ashegoog [13] (accessed July 17, 2014).

Cates, J. S; United States. Bureau of Plant Industry.*The Mangum terrace in its relation to efficient farm management*.Washington, D.C. : U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry. 1912. 9. https://archive.org/details/mangumterraceini94cate [15] (accessed July 17, 2014).

Subjects:
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1 January 1991 | Kearney, H. Thomas, Jr.

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