

Jordan, Daniel William ^[1]

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by Percival Perry, 1988

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Daniel William Jordan, planter, collateral relative of John Jordan Crittenden of Kentucky, was born at Jordan Plains Pitt County ^[2], of English ancestry. One Thomas Jordan migrated from England to Manhattan Island in the early seventeenth century and later settled in Maryland. Descendants migrated to Virginia and Hyde County ^[3], N.C. Daniel's grandfather, John Jordan III, was a delegate to the Provincial Congresses ^[4] at Hillsborough and Halifax and was active in the American Revolution ^[5], served in the lower house of the General Assembly ^[6] after the Revolution, and established the plantation known as Jordan Plains. Daniel's father, Valentine Smith Jordan, was a farmer; his mother, Sarah Jones Jordan, was a woman of some intellectual refinement and ambition.

Jordan attended Yankee Hall, a well-known school run by northern teachers in Pitt County, and later a school in New York, receiving a diploma in double entry bookkeeping in 1827. Returning home, he clerked in a store but found the work dull. Possessing an adventurous spirit, he rode a horse to Mississippi in 1833 to "scout" the region for possible settlement. Unable to persuade his father to move, he migrated alone to Mississippi and entered cotton planting in 1834. In the panic of 1837, Jordan went bankrupt and fled his creditors; he returned to North Carolina about 1839–40.

In 1838 he married Emily Tuttle of Mississippi, and with her inheritance managed to recoup his fortunes by engaging in the naval stores ^[7] industry, then expanding in North Carolina. In 1844 he purchased 800 acres of land in Brunswick County ^[8] and entered the turpentine business with his brother-in-law, William Brinkley. Three years later he sold his interest and moved to a new plantation on Little River in All Saints Parish, Horry District, S.C., where he was said to have become the first large turpentine producer in South Carolina, turning out crude turpentine and conducting distilling and shipping operations. He was one of the few planters to attempt to solve marketing problems by constructing his own schooner and making direct shipments from his plantation to New York.

In 1860 Jordan sold his Little River plantation to N. F. Nixon and purchased Laurel Hill from Plowden C. J. Weston for \$85,000. This well-known country seat was situated on a high bluff overlooking the Waccamaw River. The house was centered as the hub of a wheel with avenues of live oak trees leading from it. In 1860 it was estimated that Jordan owned over 10,000 acres of cotton, turpentine, and rice land and had over 250 slaves. During the Civil War ^[9] he sold large amounts of rice to the Confederate government and engaged in salt manufacturing, with works capable of producing 50 bushels per day.

When Federal troops encroached on the South Carolina low country in 1864, Jordan, as other planters, took refuge with his family inland. He settled in Camden and engaged in cotton ^[10] planting, making no effort in the postwar years to regain his coastal plantation. In 1879 he began a successful merchandise business with his son-in-law, Henry G. Carrison, by obtaining credit through Lyon Brothers, commission merchants in Baltimore, and repaying them with cotton in the fall.

Always an ardent states' rights ^[11] Democrat ^[12], Jordan represented All Saints Parish in the South Carolina legislature for one term (1850–52) and held various local positions, such as commissioner of public buildings, free schools, and roads. He was a man of vaulting ambition and restless energy but at times failed to execute plans in detail. He sought always to live in the grand manner, and as he acquired wealth took his wife and daughter on a tour of northern resorts in 1853, indulged in expensive equipage, and ultimately became a member of the exclusive All Saints "Hot and Hot Fish Club." After his return from Mississippi he was usually addressed as "Colonel" but the source of the designation is unknown.

Jordan had five children: Sarah Malvina died in infancy; Sarah Victoria was drowned with her husband on their honeymoon in a Mississippi steamboat disaster in 1861; and a son, Valentine Smith, and daughters Cora Rebecca and Margaret Elizabeth survived him. Although of Episcopal heritage, he was buried in the Quaker ^[13] cemetery in Camden.

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