

## **Martin, Robert, Jr.** <sup>[1]</sup>

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**12 Apr. 1784–25 May 1848**

Robert Martin, Jr., state legislator and planter, was the son of Robert and Martha Drennen Martin of Rockingham County <sup>[2]</sup>. He was the nephew of Alexander Martin <sup>[3]</sup>, an early governor of North Carolina and a U.S. senator. In 1825 Martin married Mary Settle (1798–1860), who was the sister of Thomas Settle, Sr. <sup>[4]</sup>, founder of a noted North Carolina political dynasty, and the aunt of Governor David S. Reid <sup>[5]</sup>. Martin owned extensive plantations on the Dan River in Rockingham County and on the Pearl River in Lawrence County, Miss. In Mississippi alone he enslaved nearly 150 people, and in Rockingham County in 1840 he had enslaved another 33 people. In addition to his plantations, he owned a gristmill near Wentworth.

In a predominantly Democratic <sup>[6]</sup> county, Martin, a Whig <sup>[7]</sup>, won seats in the House of Commons <sup>[8]</sup> (1822–26) and the state senate (1829–35). He was very active in the legislature, serving on several standing and select committees. In both the lower house and the senate he sat on the Claims Committee <sup>[9]</sup>, and for two sessions of the senate he was chairman. His chief legislative interest was banking, and during most of his terms in the General Assembly he introduced bills to establish a state bank. When the Bank of the State of North Carolina <sup>[10]</sup> was finally chartered, Martin became a stockholder.

Robert and Mary Martin had two daughters, Lucinda Settle (d. 15 Sept. 1846) and Martha Drennen (b. 1828), both of whom were educated in a Philadelphia finishing school. On a family visit to Washington, D.C., Martha was introduced by her cousin, Congressman David Reid <sup>[11]</sup>, to one of his close friends, Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, who became a prominent Democratic senator and a presidential candidate in 1860. Martha Martin and Stephen Douglas <sup>[12]</sup> were married in Rockingham County on 7 Apr. 1847; they had two sons, Robert Martin and Stephen Arnold, Jr., and a daughter who died shortly after the death of her mother on 19 Jan. 1853. The Martins were members of the Hogan's Creek Baptist Church, located east of Reidsville. Robert Martin died in Rockingham County and was buried in the Settle family cemetery.

#### **References:**

Stephen A. Douglas Papers (Library, University of Chicago).

Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (1973).

*Journals of the Senate and the House of Commons of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina* <sup>[13]</sup> (1829–35).

William R. Reece, *The Settle-Suttle Family* (1974).

Rockingham County Deeds and Wills (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

Settle Family Cemetery, near Reidsville.

U.S. Census, 1840.

#### **Subjects:**

Biographies <sup>[14]</sup>

Planters <sup>[15]</sup>

Public officials <sup>[16]</sup>

#### **Authors:**

Butler, Lindley S. <sup>[17]</sup>

#### **Origin - location:**

Rockingham County <sup>[18]</sup>

Reidsville <sup>[19]</sup>

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