

Rhodes, Elisha Averitt ^[1]

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by William S. Powell, 1994

7 Feb. 1791–24 May 1858

See also: [Rhodes, William Henry](#) ^[2]

Elisha Averitt Rhodes, county official and U.S. consul to the [Republic of Texas](#) ^[3], was born in [Bertie County](#) ^[4], probably the son of William and Elizabeth Averitt Rhodes for whom a marriage license was issued in Bertie County on 2 Oct. 1786. Nothing appears to be known of his education, but he served for a time as master in equity and was clerk of court for the county from 1819 to 1833 and in the period 1850–51.

He was U.S. consul to the Republic of Texas in Galveston from 7 July 1838 to 14 Oct. 1842. At some time prior to 29 Nov. 1838, the Department of State of the Republic of Texas issued him an exequatur (a formal document permitting him to act as a diplomatic representative). With a change in administrations in Washington, D.C., Rhodes was acting consul and then consul for a period after 1843, until Texas was annexed to the United States on 29 Dec. 1845. On 15 Dec. 1846 he signed a document as public attorney and notary public. Rhodes's correspondence dealt with Mexican military activity and the negotiations that led to the admission of Texas to the Union.

Rhodes's first wife was Ann Maria Jacocks, who died in 1826 before he moved to Texas. She was the mother of [William Henry Rhodes](#) ^[2] (1822–76). Other children were James G., Mark, Thadeus, and Laura. In Houston, Tex., on 9 Apr. 1838, Rhodes married a widow, Mrs. Mary Woodman Kimball Driggs, a native of New Hampshire. They became the parents of Cullen Capehart (a name in the family of Rhodes's first wife), Edward Averitt, and Robert H. The last two sons were Confederate soldiers, Edward being the one fatally wounded at [Gettysburg](#) ^[5]. The 1850 census of Bertie County also lists in Rhodes's household Mary Eliza (twenty-one) and Joanna Driggs (seventeen), daughters of Mrs. Rhodes and her first husband, Sherman Driggs, both recorded as born in New Hampshire. Family records, however, indicate that they were born in Trinidad, where Driggs was a pharmacist.

William Henry Rhodes indicated in a poem, "[The Love Knot](#)" ^[6] that he had two brothers who were killed in the [Civil War](#) ^[6], one on the Confederate side and one who fought for the Union. Descendants believe this is an example of poetic license, as both brothers served in the Confederate army. William wrote a very moving poem about them. He said that one was his mother's favorite and there was a suggestion that it was the (fictitious) Union one. The Confederate lieutenant (in reality Edward A.), was killed at Gettysburg on 3 July 1864. In the poem Rhodes refers to them as Eddie (Confederate) and John (Union), who conceivably was a stepbrother. Mary Rhodes, their mother, even though a native of New Hampshire, was loyal to the South; from her home in California she organized a relief association to aid sick and suffering Confederate soldiers in Northern prisons, mortgaged her farm for this purpose, and managed to confer with both Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis in this cause. She received a letter of appreciation from General Robert E. Lee for her work.

At the end of his service in Texas Rhodes returned with his family to Bertie County, where he was again clerk of court. In the same year he suffered a stroke and was left virtually helpless. The family moved to California, where Mary Rhodes ran a store, kept boarders, and farmed. Rhodes died at age sixty-seven in Stockton, Calif., where he was buried. They were members of the [Episcopal church](#) ^[7].

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Subjects:

Public officials ^[10]

Authors:

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