

Rhyne, Abel Peterson ^[1]

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by Frank P. Cauble, 1994

29 Feb. 1844–29 Oct. 1932

Abel Peterson Rhyne, textile manufacturer, Confederate soldier, and patron of education, was born on a farm near Mount Holly ^[2] in Lincoln (now Gaston) County. Of German ancestry, he was a descendant of Jacob Rhyne (Rein), who came to America in 1753, and the son of Moses H. and Margaret Hoffman Rhyne. On 22 Mar. 1862 he enlisted in Company H, Fortyninth North Carolina Regiment, for Confederate service and fought in fourteen engagements, including Antietam and Fredericksburg, but was never wounded. At the end of the war, however, he was at home on sick leave. He had a congenial disposition and after the war enjoyed attending many reunions of both Confederate and Union veterans.

His father was a pioneer cotton manufacturer and, along with five associates, began to operate the Woodlawn cotton factory in Gaston County ^[3] in the summer of 1852. Young Rhyne purchased his father's interest in the business in 1869 and after several years, in partnership with Ambrose Costner and Daniel Efird Rhyne ^[4], his father-in-law and brother, erected a new mill near where Dutchman's Creek enters the Catawba River ^[5]. The town of Mount Holly ^[2], which he named, grew up in the vicinity and he served as one of its first mayors. He eventually owned a controlling interest in a number of textile plants and was a leading figure in the rapid expansion of the textile industry in Gaston County.

Although he attended high school for only one year, he taught school for a while and in 1879 was one of the founders of Gaston Female College in Dallas. He was a member of the board of trustees of Lenoir Rhyne College ^[6] at Hickory ^[7] from 1895 to 1898. Both of these institutions were affiliated with the Lutheran church, of which he was a lifelong member.

He married Martha Jane Costner (1854–1939) of Lincoln County ^[8] on 22 Oct. 1872 and was the father of seven children: Augusta G., Walter G., Henry A., Lily C., Susie M., Helen A., and Mary C. Rhyne was buried in the Mount Holly Cemetery.

References:

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Charles L. Van Noppen Papers ^[10] (Manuscript Department, Duke University Library, Durham).

Additional Resources:

"Daneil E. Rhyne 1852-1931." N.C. Highway Historical Marker O-65, N.C. Office of Archives & History. <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?MarkerId=O-65> ^[11] (accessed August 22, 2014).

Rhyne, Abel Peterson. *Reminiscences: Abel Peterson Rhyne, 49th North Carolina Infantry, Company H*. 1862-03-22; 1862-09-28; 1862-09-19; 1863-12. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/reminiscences-abel-peterson-rhyne-49th-north-carolina-infantry-company-h/590255> ^[12] (accessed August 22, 2014).

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