

Sol Hollis Story - By T.J. Hall - STCC

Solomon "Sol" Hollis was the patriarch of the Hollis family. The son of a white slave owner and a slave woman of mixed African American and Creek Indian heritage, Sol was born in Georgia and spent most of his life in Alabama.

Born in the Kitchoffonee district of Marion County, Georgia, his father was most likely Ezekiel Hollis (1820-1886), a white plantation owner from Ezekiel also was a major in the Pike County Home Guards during the Civil War. Sol's mother was most definitely of mixed African and Creek Indian ancestry, as relatives attest to, although some say it was Seminole. Sol's mother is presumed to have died when he was a youngster; however her name is unknown..

Sol Hollis was a trained blacksmith, bee keeper, farmer, and freeman. Following the Civil War he accumulated over a hundred and fifty acre farm on which he raised numerous crops and was able to provide a stable environment for his family of twelve children. In 1863, the same year as the Emancipation Proclamation, Sol "jumped the broom" with Ann Carrol-Smith, who was a slave of Nathan Carrol. Ann and Sol were legally married December 10, 1865 by judge J.J. Long in Pike County eight months after the Civil War ended.

Grandpa Sol and Mama Ann had 14 children; however, only 12 lived past infancy. Before his death Sol was able to divide up his land amongst his children and provide them with the means to start their own lives.

Relatives say Sol was very overprotective of his children and grandchildren. When his children were adults he would remark" You can go where you want to go but bring my grandchildren back here". Sol's land was somewhat of a compound - "closed

off and far out”, remarked one of the descendant’s. Sol had a big house for the time period he lived in, and for a person of color.

When Sol and Ann got older, they gave up their land. Sol went to live with his son John. John built another house for Sol, out in a clearing a few yards away from his own home. Ann would stay a few months with each child. When she died on July 10, 1932 at the age of 82, she was living with her eldest son Mack.

On May 23, 1926 tragedy struck the Hollis clan when Solomon “Sol” Hollis Sr. died of a heart attack at the age of 82. Sol and Ann are both buried beside one another at Antioch cemetery in Banks, AL in the Hollis Family Plot.

When Sol died in on May 23, 1926 he had fifty four grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren. Many of his descendents would eventually come north and settle in and around Springfield, Massachusetts. Today, Sol Hollis’ legacy lives on in Springfield through family names such as legacy lives on in springfield residents with the last names- Spencer, Smith, Kyles and with TJ. Hall. Given the greater opportunity for African Americans and those of mixed descent in the North, Sol's descendents would go on to become teachers, engineers, doctors, porters, and nurses.