

“Rosedale”

An Early Beech Grove Landmark

This article was first published in the June 1996 Backroads newspaper after the owners, Matthew and Peggy Elliott, were interviewed about Rosedale, the Beech Grove farm they bought back in 1972 and restored to its original beauty.



Rosedale as it was in 1996 when the Elliotts were interviewed

Rosedale was the country home of John Perry Hughes of Beech Grove, Virginia, who built it when he returned from the Civil War. The 125-acre tract, willed to John by his father, James B. Hughes, was originally part of a 1,200-acre land grant from the King of England although it is not known if the grant was given to James himself or an earlier relative of the Hughes family.

Each of James' children were deeded a portion of the original tract when he died at an early age. Each child's share was put into a land trust that could be claimed when they came of age. The daughters' portion was deeded over to their husband if and when they married. In addition to the land, the children were also deeded a number of slaves belonging to their father. John Perry Hughes was given five slaves; three females and two males valued at \$2,900.00.

It is recorded that John was deeded his 125 acres in the year 1860 and after he served in the Civil War, came home to claim his property and to build the country home referred to as “Rosedale”.

John Perry Hughes' War Record

John volunteered in April of 1861 and went from Arrington to Wytheville across Cotton Mountain into the Kanawha Valley. In battle with General Floyd at Carnifax Ferry. Retreated. Ran into an ambush at Hawk nest, West Virginia. Retreated in bad order. In battle at Princeton, Virginia at Giles County and battle was won by the Confederates. In battle at Lewisburg, Virginia with General Heath. Retreated. In 1862 was a courier for General Robert E. Lee from Lewisburg to White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. In 1863 he hired a substitute and came home to be married to Sallie Temperance Goodwin. He was again drafted into the Confederate Army on August 1864. Went east and joined Co. A-19th Virginia Infantry. Capt. J. C. Culin of Charlottesville was commanding officer. Was in Hunton's Brigade, Pickett's Division. Camped between Richmond and Petersburg in the battle of Hatcher's Run near Petersburg the 31st of March, 1865. Retreated towards Lynchburg and was captured 12 miles away from Farmville, near the Frazier farm. April 6, 1865, was taken to Point Lookout, Maryland and held in prison until June 14, 1865. He reached home by Richmond and spent the night in Libbie Prison on June 16, 1865.

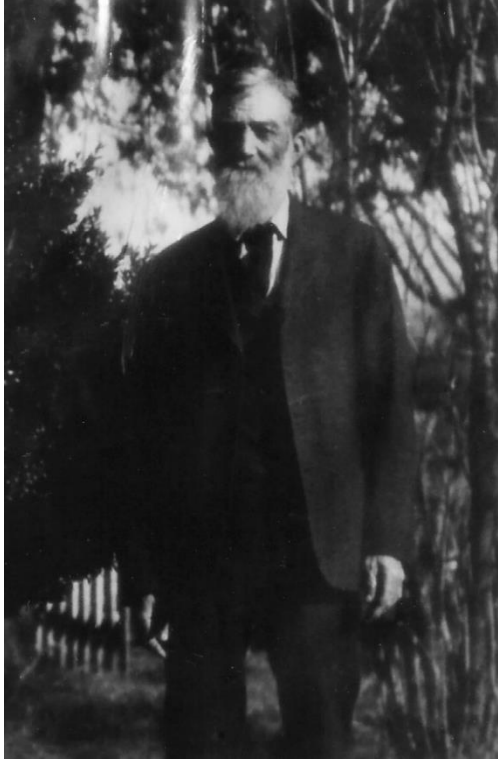
After he and Sallie were married, they started their life together in Beech Grove and had 13 children, ten of which lived to adulthood. They are as follows:

Charles G. Hughes (eldest son)
John Lester Hughes
C. Metford Hughes
Napoleon Hughes
Edwin P. Hughes (youngest son)
Maude P. Hughes (eldest daughter)
Annie B. Hughes
Bessie H. Hughes
Mamie P. Hughes
Hope V. Hughes (youngest daughter)

None of the boys were able to get more than about the equivalent of a seventh-grade education. It is said they were lucky to get that in the first twenty years after the Civil War. The women who were able to make it through college; Annie, Mamie and Hope, were helped by the older boys and became school teachers. Annie taught school just down the road from the farm at the schoolhouse located at the fork of Cub Creek. Many of the boys went to work for the Southern Railroad Company and were conductors on that railroad line.

Sometime around 1893, the Hughes family must have gotten into some financial straits and the Farmer's and Merchant's Bank held a lien on the property at that time. One of the older sons eventually paid the \$195.00 debt and the land was deeded back to the parents.

Rosedale is a post-Civil War "period house" with two floors. Originally it is thought to have had only one room downstairs and one upstairs because of the way the floors were laid out. The



other rooms added at a later date. It is a typical post and beam style construction. The upstairs windows are half-size and close to the floor with hinges that swung the windows inward for ventilation.

Rosedale at one time had a large apple orchard, growing the famous “Albemarle Pippins” that were shipped to England in large wooden barrels.

It is not known when but a small portion of the land was given to start Beech Grove Christian Church and cemetery. There were two church houses up on Cub Creek where the cemetery is still located, but later on, the church was moved to its present location on Route 664.

After John and Sally were deceased, the remaining children had control of the farm and several of them, such as Annie B. Hughes Anderson and C. Metford Hughes lived in the house for a time.

Early photo of John Perry Hughes Rosedale came on down the line in the Hughes family tree and after a time fell into disrepair when no one was occupying the old home. In 1972, the last owner of Rosedale, Mrs. Isabel Anderson Gardner, sold 115 of the original 125 acres to Matthew and Peggy Elliott. The remaining ten acres went to a family member.



Peggy and Matthew Elliott, the new owners of Rosedale

The Elliotts have lovingly breathed new life into the old home and are slowly renovating each room as close to the original as possible. The two-story structure now boasts two bedrooms upstairs on either side of a central hallway and two rooms downstairs in the same layout. There is now a bedroom and bath where a back porch used to be and a kitchen and dining room towards the back of the house, opposite the bedroom-bath. Peggy said there used to be an old pantry just off the kitchen but it was in such bad condition it had to be removed. The original interior walls were made of hand-split lathe stripping with plaster over top of the wood. The Elliotts have rebricked both chimneys of the home and have replaced or redone everything from flooring and doors, to hardware and trim work.

Although they bought the farm as land, house, and contents, someone broke in before they could take possession and took most of the furniture that was inside the home. However, amongst the rubble they uncovered a few old Hughes family photographs and papers. It was enough to spur Matt and Peggy's interest in their newly acquired property. Peggy spent quite a bit of time at the courthouse looking up old documents and they've been in touch with several close friends of the Hughes family and several actual members of that family have been able to piece together and preserve much of the family's early history.



Unknown child & cows at Rosedale in 1909



Photo of Rosedale in April of 1930

After they bought the farm, the Elliotts renamed it Fox Hill Farm, which is what it is called today. Matt said that after the first couple of years of mowing grass, he wanted to start raising some type of cash crop so they decided on a Christmas tree farm and put in their first trees in 1975. Twenty-one years later Fox Hill Farm is known statewide as one of the nicest places to come and cut fresh trees for the holiday. Matt is retired from DuPont now and although Peggy is still employed at Century 21 Real Estate, she is a vital part of everything going on at the farm.

The Elliot's have done an excellent job of restoring the farm to its original beauty. They maintain the grounds and outbuildings and take an interest in replanting fruit trees and gardens that were once a part of Rosedale's existence. The Hughes family graveyard stands at the entrance to the farm and Peggy pointed out the intricate rockwork in the walls of the cemetery, noting the initials and date carved into one corner; 1939 H. Q. The rock work, like so many



The Hughes graveyard rock wall by Hawthorne Quick



1939 rock cornerstone at cemetery

other structures in the area, was done by a man by the name of Hawthorne Quick, a well-known rock mason in the Beech Grove area



John P. Hughes: 2/12/1841 – 11/11/1917



Sallie T. Hughes: 6/5/1847—1/19/1894



Another view of the grave stones inside the rock enclosure at the Hughes cemetery

In closing the interview, Peggy Elliott summed up just how she felt about the old John Perry Hughes farm known as Rosedale;

“When I think of the big family with those ten children, I try and imagine what life must have been like for them back then. Obviously, they had some hard times, struggling to keep the farm within the family, and as the first people to own the property outside of the Hughes family, we are doing our best to preserve what we feel is important not only to them but to us as well.”



Christmas trees at the Elliott's Fox Hill Farm with a backdrop of Three Ridges Mountain

More Information About the Hughes Family

On October 13, 1990, I received a letter from George Granville Hughes, the second child born to John Lester Hughes and wife Elsie Mae Howerton Hughes, that gave a more in-depth history of the family. John Lester was the second son of John Perry and Sallie Hughes pictured in the above story. This information from deed book #27, page 120, at the Nelson Co. Courthouse.

Charles G. “Charley” Hughes, the oldest son, lived in Washington, D.C. and was a carpenter by trade and never very close to the family. He had no children.

John Lester Hughes was the second son and my father. He did not marry until he was 39 years old. Mother was 19 when they married. He was a Railroad Passenger Conductor and lived in Spencer, North Carolina. Their four children were Carlton, the eldest, who died early. He was born May 16, 1908 and died on June 20th of that same year. Myself, George Granville, born April 4, 1909, followed by Claude Perry, born April 13, 1911 and died in 1972. Thelma Pauline was born on October 8, 1915 and died August 8, 1984. My father was born on November 1, 1868 and died February 8, 1937. My mother Elsie was born December 29, 1888 and died July

28, 1932. She was an orphan raised by Tom and Maggie Wren in Benaja, North Carolina and met my father on the railroad spur while selling meals to the crew members.

C. Metford Hughes was my grandparent's third son. He was a railroad conductor and lived in Washington D. C. His wife was Sally.

Napoleon Hughes. The fourth son. I never knew him. He was killed on the railroad. I believe there was at least one more son killed while railroading.

Edwin P. Hughes was the youngest son in the family. He was a railroad conductor. He and his wife Josie had three children; Temperance, Margarete, and E. P., Jr.

Maude P. Hughes was the oldest daughter. She married Garnet Ewing when she was well on up into middle age. They lived and worked in Nelson County for most of their years. He was an apple orchard farmer and later a storage house operator. They had no children.

Annie B. Hughes. She was the second daughter and the woman we called "Aunt Tiny". She married an Anderson man but divorced after only a few years. After marriage she went by the name of Blanche Anderson. She had two children; Isabel and Charles Anderson. Charles was a merchant seaman and Isabel married a man by the name of Gardner. I don't believe they had any children. Annie taught school in Leesburg, VA until her retirement.

Bessie H. Hughes. I think her name was actually Ressie. She died at about age 27 of cancer. She lived at the old homeplace. She baked the best spoon bread I have ever eaten and us kids would simply gorge ourselves on this product, which was her specialty. As I remember, she never seemed to feel very good.

Mamie P. Hughes was the next to the youngest child, and a woman with much drive. She married a Mr. Givens who was Superintendent at the Beckley, West Virginia High School. Mamie was the principal of the school. They had one child named Wallace who was a physics professor.

Hope V. Hughes was the youngest daughter in the family and she, too, finished college. She married an architect by the name of Riggs and they lived and worked in D. C. They had one child named Metford Riggs, who is a jeweler in Washington, D. C. Hope died when still quite young of Tuberculosis and it is thought she divorced before she became terminally ill with T. B.

A Note from Lynn: Today the old Hughes farm, known also in earlier years as "Rosedale" and currently "Fox Hill" is still owned by Matt and Peggy Elliott's son Kevin and his wife Emily. They were kind enough to send four photographs of the old home built by John Perry Hughes as it looks today in the different seasons. When Matt and Peggy passed away, the world lost two generous and talented people that are still greatly missed to this day.



The John Perry Hughes home in summer



The old home in early autumn



Late fall/early winter with snow beginning to fall



Fox Hill Farm in the solitude and beauty of winter