

PLEASANT, STRUGGLING POOR BOY, ASSUMED BURDEN OF SUPPORT AND EDUCATION OF FAMILY EARLY

Parents On Both Sides Represented Best In American Citizenship; Mother Gentlewoman of Fine Traits; Father Gallant Warrior In Ranks of South's Legions; Often Honored By Neighbors.

Ruffin Pleasant Worked On Farm In Boyhood; Gave Up Ambitions So He Might Send Brothers and Sisters To School; Served As Lieut.-Col. Of First Louisiana Regiment In War With Spain.

Ruffin G. Pleasant was born at Shiloh, Union parish, La., of parents on both sides who represented the best in American citizenship. His mother, in the language of Gov. Heard, who knew Mrs. Pleasant well as his life, was one of the best women with whom God ever blessed the earth. His father, long sheriff of Union parish, was of that pure American type which carried civilization into the wilderness and conquered the wild for posterity. Ever westward strode that red-blooded type of man until progress was barred by the vastness of the Pacific. Col. Pleasant's father was a boy of seventeen years of age when the call to arms sounded in the sixties and he answered the call, and until the close of the conflict, bore himself manfully in that titanic struggle which put to its supreme test the best manhood of the South.

Returning home at the close, broken in fortune, but with unbreakable spirit he set about to repair the ravages of war, to be met by the perhaps

sterner ordeal of reconstruction. In this contest he also bore himself after a manner to arouse the admiration of his neighbors, and when he and others had redeemed the State, his neighbors took him from the modest farm where his son, Ruffin, was born and elected him sheriff of Union parish, because the time demanded such a man for the place. For term after term he was re-elected, and his farm prospered so that he would have died a prosperous man but for his boundless hospitality.

Ruffin G. Pleasant was born June 2, 1872. He went to school at Concord Institute, Shiloh; at the public school at Farmerville; at Ruston College, in 1885; at Mt. Lebanon College, in 1887-1889, where he was graduated with the degree of bachelor of arts and was adjutant of both the cadet corps and captain of both the football and baseball teams. He taught at his alma mater for two years after his graduation, attending the Harvard summer school of law in 1895. He then attended the Yale law school for a term, when he learned of the condition of his father's finances. He at once threw aside his ambition, and returned to his native State to assist in the support of his father's family.

Given Position At State University.

With the knowledge of the young man's character possessed by the officials of the State University he had no trouble in securing a place in the faculty and was made professor of International and Constitutional Law and Civics, and was also assistant commandant of cadets from September, 1897, until he went to the Spanish-American war in 1898.

The struggle of the young student when he took upon himself the burden of his father's family is known only to those who were closest to him at the time. Securing a professorship at the State University, he resolved that his brothers and his sisters should receive the best education that his exertions could win for them. The older brother was carried through the preparatory courses and finally matriculated at the State University. Had Col. Pleasant's wishes been followed he would have been graduated from that institution and then have been given the advantage of a professional career. But the younger brother was composed of the same stern stuff that made up his elder brother's character. He did not think that he should be a source of expense to his struggling brother, and he left the university to carve out his own career. He is now an honored and useful citizen of Oklahoma.

Sends Another Brother To School.

The youngest brother was then taken in hand and Ruffin Pleasant determined that his education should be completed. He too was sent to school at the State University, but fate barred the way to the altruistic ambition of the older brother. The young student contracted illness and physicians advised that he could not live unless he was sent to another climate. Col. Pleasant sent him in care of his father to another State in the hope that his health would be restored, but the youth died.

The young college professor then centered his hope on his two sisters. The older died shortly after her graduation. The younger girl received the best education this State could afford, and, developing musical talent, was sent to the Boston Conservatory of Music, where she was graduated a finished musician. The young lady is now engaged in the useful profession of teacher in Bienville parish.

While serving as professor at the State University, the war with Spain broke out, and true to "form" Ruffin Pleasant again made a prompt decision. He resigned from the faculty and was made Lieutenant Col-

onel of the First Louisiana Volunteer Regiment.

After being mustered out of service, Col. Pleasant made his home in Shreveport, in December, 1898, and was admitted to the bar the following year. He became city attorney of Shreveport in 1902, and was re-elected in 1904 and 1906. In 1908, he made the race for Attorney General of the State, but was defeated by Attorney General Guion, the incumbent. Outside of the City of New Orleans, however, Col. Pleasant ran considerably ahead of his competitors. No hostility had been aroused by his campaign and he became the assistant to Gen. Guion from 1908 to 1912. He became a candidate for the office again in 1912, and was nominated by the largest vote ever given a Democrat in this State, carrying fifty-eight parishes and obtaining more than 70,000 votes.

Col. Pleasant was married on February 14, 1906, to Miss Anne Ector, youngest daughter of Gen. Matthew D. Ector. His charming wife is a woman of culture and splendid personality. Mrs. Pleasant's father, Gen. Ector, entered the Confederate army at the very outbreak of the war as a private in Company B, Third Cavalry, Col. Cumby. The regiment was attached to Ross' Brigade. Private Ector was later elected First Lieutenant of his company and soon became Adjutant of the regiment. He was twice promoted for gallantry on the field, first to Colonel of the Fourteenth Texas Regiment and later to Brigadier General. He commanded his brigade until he was seriously wounded at Atlanta, Ga. When he was able to return to duty President Davis ordered him to take command of the Confederate troops at Mobile. On his way there news reached him of the surrender of Gen. Lee.

Gen. Ector returned to Texas and resumed the practice of law. He served as District Judge for several years. Later he became a judge of the Texas Court of Appeals, and at the time of his death he had for several years been the presiding justice of that court.

In 1909 Col. Pleasant was made president of the alumni society of the State University and still holds that position. This is characteristic of the man. The men of his university who knew him intimately, as only school boys can know each other, have given him the highest position in their gift, and the soldiers of the First Louisiana Regiment, both officers, and enlisted men, are almost unanimously with him, heart and soul, in this campaign.

Has Done Much For Louisiana.

As attorney general, Col. Pleasant had been of vast advantage to his State, and in one conspicuous effort, the winning of the Shreveport Rate Case in the highest court in the land, brought about jurisprudence that was of great advantage to the business and agricultural interests of Louisiana. Not in recent years has the Supreme Court of the United States rendered such an important and far-reaching decision. This is only one of many unusual and successful activities in the Attorney General's office.

Decision of character, frankness of disposition, and a subordination of self to the interests of the mass has always been the guide of Col. Pleasant's conduct. There had been no general demand for a Constitutional Convention.

With his usual decision and his usual frankness Col. Pleasant opposed the Convention. He went to Baton Rouge and fought the scheme from the beginning. He asked for the defeat of the measure on the ground that it was impossible to call such a convention in the midst of what was certain to be a hot political campaign, when matters of the gravest importance to the interests of the people of the State would be subordinated to the selfishness of politicians. He was temporarily blocked in his efforts, but he continued the fight and succeeded in defeating the main purpose of the protagonists of the scheme by compelling those who were trying to fasten a constitution of their own manufacture upon an unwilling people, to agree to submit

AS GOVERNOR of the State of Louisiana I am going to serve all the people of the State. I will take the oath of office, unpledged to any man, set of men or interests, other than the citizens of my State and the platform pledges of the Democratic party. When I leave the Governor's chair I will have served you honorably and faithfully, and to the best of my ability.

RUFFIN G. PLEASANT.



Louisiana's Next Governor

the question of calling the convention, and later the adoption of the instrument, to a vote of the people. Thus he won the main battle before the Legislature and later won the complete campaign before the people in a contest of particular brilliancy and with odds against him that made his opponents gasp at his success.

Mass of People Behind His Leadership.

In this campaign Col. Pleasant cast his political future into the balance, when he might easily have remained neutral. But dodging an issue is foreign to the character of the candid Attorney General. He strode sturdily forward as the protagonist of the mass of the people, and they fell into line behind his leadership and defeated the attempt to fasten a Constitution upon them without their consent. As he fought that fight so we confidently believe, he will fight all other fights.

We cannot better conclude this brief sketch of Col. Pleasant's life and activities, than by the following quotation from his address opening his campaign at Shreveport:

"In conclusion, let me say that I was born and reared and educated in the State of Louisiana, and her interest shall be my interest, her welfare my welfare. There is no ambition so noble as to be at the head of her long line of loyal sons. She has been perhaps kinder to me than I deserve, but I know that I have tried to serve her to the best of my ability, and shall always carry with me the very deepest sense of gratitude for the confidence that has been reposed in me. In offering for the high honor of becoming the State's chief executive I do so with some trepidation, but I here make the solemn pledge that I shall render the very best service that is in me, and shall consecrate to that service my hand, my head, and my heart, and I trust that, being guided by an All-Wise Providence, I may leave a record, un tarnished, which shall reflect credit upon the Democratic party and shall result in the general good of the entire State."