

JOHN IRVING HOOKER 1822-1862

Researched, compiled & contributed by Kyle S. VanLandingham, Box 1779, Ft. Pierce, Fl. 33450, a great-great-great grandnephew of John I. Hooker.

John Irving Hooker, a son of Stephen and Elizabeth (Brinton) Hooker, was born in Georgia, Sept. 23, 1822. He moved with his parents to Ware County about 1825 and in 1830 moved to Hamilton County, Florida.

South Florida was opened for settlement after the Armed Occupation Act passed Congress in 1842, and John Irving Hooker decided to apply for land there. His elder brother, William, moved to south Florida about the same time. John Irving's application is dated Feb. 17, 1843 and on March 25 he received Permit number 297 for 160 acres in Hillsborough County described as follows: the $W\frac{1}{2}$ of the $NE\frac{1}{4}$ and the $E\frac{1}{2}$ of the $NW\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 8, Township 30 S, Range 21 E. He resided on the land for a short time, cultivated it for three years and applied for a patent on Feb. 10, 1849. The permit was granted though by this time he had apparently moved on to a nearby tract in Section 30, Township 29 S, Range 22 E.

On Feb. 1, 1849, in Hillsborough County, John Irving Hooker was married to Cuthbert Wayne C. Lanier, daughter of Lewis and Mary Lucretia (Ross) Lanier. She was born in Georgia, March 8, 1833 and moved to Hillsborough County, Fla., with her parents during the 1840's. John Irving and Cuthbert (Lanier) Hooker had the following children:

1. Lewis William Hooker, born 1856; died Apr. 27, 1924; married Elizabeth Roberts.
2. Mary Ellen Hooker, born May 23, 1858; died May 27, 1912; married Stephen M. Sparkman.
3. John Jackson Hooker, born Feb. 12, 1862; died Feb. 1933; married Annie Swearingen, Jan. 30, 1889.

John Irving Hooker was one of Fort Meade's earliest settlers. The community's original pioneer, Francis A. Hendry, told about this in a letter from the year 1908: "Louis Lanier, my father-in-law, very soon moved to Fort Meade and settled very near the bridge on the pretty Peace River, then known as "Peas Creek". (After the U. S. Soldiers left the Fort in 1854) (t)he buildings and improvements fell into the hands of Mr. John I. Hooker, this gentleman using one of the officers' quarters, a splendid double-penned log house, as a residence. In the meantime, quite a number of settlers had occupied the country and the outlook for a promising community was good. Little did we people know the troubles in store for us in the near future. Just after Christmas day, 1855, courier was dispatched from Tampa, informing us, and all frontier people, that an Indian war was upon us and to care for ourselves the best we could. This was a veritable clap of thunder from a clear sky. The people were excited and quickly congregated for self-protection. Mr. Hooker, with his great, large, generous heart, opened the doors of their Government buildings, most of which being still habitable, and invited the whole community to come and take shelter."

During this third and last Seminole War, John I. Hooker served as private in the company commanded by his brother. He was enrolled Jan. 3, 1856 at Fort Meade and was mustered out on Aug. 20, 1856.

John I. Hooker was a prominent cattleman and registered the 22 brand Feb. 17, 1852 and the AH brand, Sept. 15, 1854, both in Hillsborough County. The 1860 census for Hillsborough County shows John I. Hooker as owning \$1400 worth of real property and \$20,625 in personal