



**CORNELIUS A. RICE**

**Cornelius A. Rice (1834-1897)**-physician and surgeon-1895

[Dr. Rice treated Savez Read in Meridian, MS, before he died.](#)

Cornelius A. Rice (1834-1897) was born at Russellville, Kentucky. He married three times but sired no children. His spouse at the time of his demise in late March 1897, was born Miller. Her brother was Charles "C.C." Carroll Miller (1849-1908), a prominent attorney, at Meridian, Mississippi. Dr. Rice was a kind and gentle man and easily made solid friendships throughout his peripatetic life. He was well read, had an engaging mind, and was an excellent conversationalist.(The Biloxi Herald, April 3, 1897, p. 8)

In 1850, Cornelius A. Rice was domiciled at Yazoo City, Mississippi with his family. His widowed father was Dr. Joel C. Rice (1798-1850+), a native of Tennessee. Dr. Rice's known siblings are: Joel W. Rice (1831-1850+); Llewellyn Rice (1831-1850+); and Nolan S. Rice (1837-1850+). At this time, Joel W. Rice and Llewellyn Rice were both medical students. Nolan was born in Mississippi circa 1837 and his older brothers natives of Tennessee.(1850 Yazoo Co., Mississippi Federal Census R M432\_382, p. 481b, image 975)

[In 1860, Dr. Rice was a resident of Raymond, Mississippi and a physician.](#) (1860 Hinds Co., Mississippi Federal Census R M653\_582 p. 62B, image 160) [\(He lived at the Oak Tree Hotel in Raymond\).](#)

Dr. Rice was a graduate of Transylvania University at Lexington, Kentucky and in 1884 received an honorary degree in medicine from the Louisville Medical College at Louisville, Kentucky. He began to practice medicine in Mississippi in 1855 and with the exception of two years domiciled at Jefferson, Texas and service during the Civil War, his entire medical career was shared with the people of Mississippi.(The Biloxi Herald, April 3, 1897, p. 8)

C.A. Rice was a member of the Mississippi State Medical Association and had been corresponding secretary for the Medico-Legal Society of New York since 1888, and vice-president for the State of Mississippi of the American Health Association since 1882; he was one of the earliest members of the Mississippi State Board of Health and was elected president in 1878 while a resident of Brandon, Mississippi; was a State sanitary commissioner and supervising inspector from

1881-1884; Rice was a member of the State Board of Censors for examination of applicants to practice medicine in Mississippi from 1874-1884; he was supervising inspector for the National Board of Health in 1880, and was placed on the list as a permanent inspector. Since 1855, Dr. Rice had been a member of the Masonic order and in 1859 had been conferred the Templar degree.(The Daily Picayune, September 19, 1878, p. 8 and The Biloxi Herald, April 3, 1897, p. 8)

### **Civil War**

In 1863, Dr. Rice was commissioned a surgeon in the Confederate States Army. He was post surgeon at Washington, Georgia at the time of surrender in 1865. It was as a surgeon that Dr. Rice excelled. His experience and knowledge of hermetically sealed wounds-gunshot, fractured, lacerated or contuse and especially in gunshot wounds of the lungs and chest, was stellar. In 1889, when the Confederate Veterans was organized, Dr. Rice was unanimously elected Surgeon General of Mississippi.(The Biloxi Herald, April 3, 1897, p. 8)

As an author and inventor, Dr. Rice contributed to the medical literature with his articles, 'Resuscitation from Death by Chloroform', 'Ovariotomy', and others. His inventions were: a tourniquet for field service, which was adopted by many of the surgeons of the Confederate service; a gag to be used on insane persons during the introduction of the stomach pump; and a speculum for operating in vesico-vaginal cases. (The Biloxi Herald, April 3, 1897, p. 8)

### **Vicksburg**

In 1880, while a resident of Vicksburg, Mississippi, Dr. Rice was selected by the National Board of Health and sent to New Orleans as an acting supervisor and inspector. While working in the Crescent City, he became involved in an issue with the Louisiana State Board of Health when he insisted that New Orleans was an infected port and prohibited a shipment of coffee from the *Excelsior*, a bark, to be sent to New Orleans to Mobile. Ports in Mississippi were also included in the ban. Louisiana health officials vehemently disagreed and threatened Dr. Rice with legal action, if he persisted in the

matter.(The Vicksburg Daily Commercial, August 3, 1880, p. 1 and The Daily Picayune, July 29, 1880, p. 1 )

In 1881, Mississippi passed a statue requiring all doctors to register with the Circuit Court in the county in which they lived. Dr. Rice registered in Warren County, Mississippi in July 1882. (The Vicksburg Daily Commercial, July 19, 1882, p. 4)

### **Meridian**

In 1884, Dr. Rice was appointed Superintendent of the East Mississippi Insane Asylum at Meridian, Mississippi. He remained in this position until 1890.(The Biloxi Herald, April 3, 1897, p. 8)

### **Biloxi**

Dr. Cornelius A. Rice had come to Biloxi circa 1895. He was an invalid at this time and aspired that Biloxi's climate would ameliorate his physical ailments. Unfortunately he expired here on March 27, 1897. After a short service at the home of the Reverend H.M. Crain, Dr. Rice's body was transported to the Biloxi Cemetery for internment under the auspices of the local Masonic order. Many of Biloxi's leading citizens attended Dr. Rice's funeral attesting to his prominence and respect as a physician and gentleman.(The Biloxi Herald, April 3, 1897, p. 8)

### **REFERENCES:**

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