

Robert Reid Hemphill in his SC Senate robe about 1886.

Senator Hemphill was born 3 May 1840 at the Hemphill homestead called "Lindo" about ten miles south of Abbeville. It was named in honor of his mother, **Hannah Smith Lind**. He graduated from Erskine College with first honors in 1859. He began teaching in the academy at Lewisville, GA, and studying law in a law office there. He answered the call to arms in May, 1861. When he reached home a number of companies had already been raised and shipped out. He went directly to Richmond where his uncle, **John Hemphill**, a CSA Senator from Texas, bought him a uniform. He joined Gen. Bonham's staff and I believe he was with the General when they entered the outskirts of Washington and their artillery fired on a troop train two days before the First Battle of Bull Run. Robert joined Co. G, Orr's Regt. which was his brother's, **John Lind Hemphill's** company. Robert always served as an aide or courier as he was only 5' - 4" tall and weighed only 95 pounds. He also had one leg that was crippled and shortened by a boyhood accident. Their unit was the rear guard protecting the armies' retreat back across the Potomac after Gettysburg. John was captured and spent the rest of the war in prison. Robert was wounded, spent time in the Baltimore hospital and prison, and then was exchanged. He rejoined company H and served with them in all of their battles until he was discharged at Appomattox 22 Apr. 1865. After the war he opened a law office in Texas, but returned and settled in Abbeville in 1869. He and his brother, James, with a little help from their father, established the *Medium* newspaper in 1871. After a few years James became the editor of the *Charleston News and Courier*. Robert was the editor of the *Medium* until his death in 1908. Robert and James were prominent in the activities of organizing the Democratic Party in Abbeville in 1876. Robert was elected to the SC Legislature in 1876 and served in what was known as, "The Wallace House." He was in the SC Senate from 1886 to 1894. He introduced a bill to limit state debt. He introduced an unsuccessful bill in 1892 to give women the right to vote. He was a friend of Susan B. Anthony and was the speaker at the 1895 woman suffrage meeting in Atlanta. After losing his senate seat in 1894 he served as Clerk of the senate. He married Eugenia Cornelia Taylor Brewton in 1870. She was born a Taylor, but was adopted as an infant by the Brewtons of Spartanburg. Robert and Eugenia had nine children. See family picture 42G and chart 42T.

