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The Jackson County Chronicles

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In this issue:

January meeting: The January 2023 Jackson County Historical Association meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 22 at 2:00 pm at the Scottsboro Depot Museum**. The speaker will be Heather Adkins, Manager of Special Collections and Archivist at the Huntsville/ Madison County Public Library. She will discuss resources related to Jackson County history in their collections. Heather was scheduled to speak to the JCHA last year, but Covid kept us from gathering.

Heather is a Certified Archivist who received her master's degree in Public History for Archives Management from Middle Tennessee State University. She has worked in the archives field for 13 years for various university and government entities, including the Tennessee State Library and Archives. She moved to Huntsville in 2018 to take on the role of Manager of the Special Collections for the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library (HMCPL) system. Since then, she has also participated in several local history groups, including the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society, for which she currently serves as president. Bring your Madison County library questions.

The HMCPL Special Collections is located on the 2nd Floor of the downtown Huntsville Library. The collection houses unique records relating to Huntsville, Madison County, and Alabama history. It also serves as the library system's multimedia resource center for genealogical and local history research.

Welcome to Guest Contributors: The *Chronicles* is happy to welcome two guest contributors. Little Rock realtor **Tony Curtis** fell in love with Jackson County history because of the S. B. Kirby house where his grandmother and a house full of surrogate grandparents lived. He has spent 20 years restoring this house. **Dr. James Reed** is a Jackson County native who has devoted considerable effort to researching his Paint Rock Valley Unionist ancestors. He contributed two pieces regarding his family's divided allegiances to the 2021 *Chronicles*. In 2022, he contributed a piece about the measles pandemic among Civil War soldiers. In this issue, he turns his attention to his family's service with the Confederacy.

Review of the Third Cemetery Stroll

The third Cedar Hill Cemetery, held on November 6, 2022, is now history. This was the most recent of the three cemetery strolls and the warmest. After a month of perfect, crisp fall weather, the week of the stroll was filled with humidity, heat, and intermittent rain. The four of us who organized the stroll held our breaths and waited...and checked the weather forecast every 15 minutes.

We appreciate all the citizens and out-of- town visitors who attended the cemetery stroll, and appreciate the generous donations that will enable us to repair some broken stones and ensure that the information on Cedar Hill headstones is not lost to history.

Nat Cisco is a stroll veteran, who once again portrayed Sheriff Matt Wann, the lawman who stood his ground at the Jackson County jail to prevent the mob lynching of the Scottsboro boys. Nat portrayed Matt Wann in the first cemetery stroll, turning his talents and his love of history to the enactment of another fallen lawman, U.S. Marshall Ed Moody, in the second stroll.

Dr. Andrew Hodges brought the swagger and self-confidence of his character, Jesse "HooDaddy" Floyd, to the graveside and recounted both fact and legend of the renowned daredevil and World War II veteran. HooDaddy died young, having lived his life hard and fast, and Andrew conveyed that recklessness with so much relish that audiences were left to wonder if the mild mannered physician might not harbor a bit of HooDaddy's personality under that subdued exterior.

Kurstyn Stewart created a very believable characterization of a demure and chastened woman who inadvertently brought ruin on her family and precipitated the murder of a prominent Scottsboro citizen. By meddling in her younger sister's mail only to discover an liaison the young woman was having with a married man, she set in motion a chain of events that ruined two prominent families.

This year, **Jerry King** once again portrayed Cedar Hill's Unknown White Male, reprising the same role he played in the first cemetery stroll in 2018. In the 2019 stroll, he portrayed Judge R.I. Gentry, a man he knew well and for whom he had worked when Gentry was the judge in juvenile court. As the unknown man, Jerry occasionally embellished the facts with speculation based on his interest and research on the man the unknown white man was suspected of being: the FBI's most wanted fugitive, William Bradford Bishop.

Alan Payne stepped into one of our most challenging roles, that of opera singer Jean Cox, as if he (both Alan and Jean) were stepping on the big stage once again. Alan brought an enthusiasm for the art form and admiration for the character that amazed his audience. He closed his monolog by singing a snippet of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" that convinced listeners he was a worthy understudy to the Jackson County artist. What a treat to have him in the stroll.

Sylvia Craft Coleman brought the quiet dignity and poise of her character, Mary Robinson Boyd Cothran, to the stroll. Mary Cothran was born into slavery and saw the growth of the town and her wide-ranging family, exerting a guiding hand in the growth of both. Sylvia discovered she was kin to Mary as she studied her history before the stroll.

Tracy Phillips has a flair for portraying brash women. She portrayed Scottsboro actress Lucille Benson in both this and the first cemetery stroll. In the 2019 stroll, she portrayed Virginia Brown, a woman who flaunted most of the rules of a restrictive Scottsboro society. Tracy brought Lucille's "all the world's a stage" personality to the role and charmed her audience, some of whom came to the stroll specifically to see her reprise the role.

Greg Bell once again shared his expertise of county sports figures to play the role of James "Shorty" Robertson, a standout player on the University of Alabama's post-war (1944) revived football program. Greg had on-site support from Mary Ben Robertson Heflin, Shorty's daughter, who created a comprehensive display of artifacts from her father's career. We hesitate to ask Greg for his help because he is so busy with the radio station and the hall of fame, but he never fails to help us out.

Steve Patrick, Jr. had little time to prepare for his role as his grandfather, WWII veteran pilot Richard Patrick, but pulled from the interviews Richard had done with two local historians and

added his own remembrances of his grandfather to tell an engaging story of harrowing experiences in 1945 when his B-26 bomber was destroyed on a bomb run over the Rhine River. The display of photos and relics his family provided added immediacy to the compelling story.

Bunny Mountain, also a veteran stroll enactor, took on the role of Margaret Brown Payne, a daring Civil War survivor who "borrowed" a horse to ride to her injured brother's bedside in Georgia and nursed him back to health despite deplorable conditions in the Confederate field hospital. She also did a bit of intelligence gathering on the side, she admitted later in life.

Paul Stevenson brought his own research to bear on his portrayal of U.S. Marshall Ed Moody, who was killed near the Scottsboro Rail Depot in 1921, the fourth of six county lawmen killed in the line of duty. Paul is a veteran Cedar Hill Stroll presenter, having previously portrayed James Skelton, the scion of a prominent Scottsboro family who conspired to murder Scottsboro banker R.C. Ross.

We are overwhelmed by the community support this event receives, and we want to thank everyone who helped make the stroll possible.

Thank you first and foremost to the Bynum Foundation for generously funding the cemetery stroll.

Thank you to Dr. David Campbell and Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC) for administering our grant and lending us the time and talents of Blake Wilhelm and Julia Everett, and for all the other NACC help. Thank you to the Mustang String Band for the music that created such a festive atmosphere. Thank you to the NACC Theater department for lending us actor Kurstyn Stewart. Thank you to Kent Jones and Justin Chambless who brought the golf carts from NACC and ferried our visitors to their cars. And these same nice guys helped us clean up when the stroll was over. Thank you to the NACC Presidential Hosts and NACC Library personnel. Thank you to Jarrod Blackwell, the NACC videographer, for spending the afternoon with us recording actors and posting them on YouTube.

Thank you to the Artlady, Sonya Clemens, for the artwork on our promotional materials and t-shirts.

Thank you to Benny Bell and his crew at Cedar Hill who had manicured the grounds of the cemetery and provided a pleasant setting for the stroll.

Thank you to the people who kept our actors and visitors safe. Thank you to Eddie Tigue and the Scottsboro-Jackson County Rescue Squad for opening the armory for our actors and visitors and providing parking assistance. Thank you to Highlands EMS for being on hand in case of an emergency. Thank you to the Scottsboro Police Department for keeping an officer with us the entire time, making the hazardous traffic along Cedar Hill Drive safe for our considerable pedestrian traffic.

Thank you to the *Jackson County Sentinel* and WWIC and WLRH radio for advertising the cemetery stroll.

Thank you to our volunteers, who kept things moving smoothly, manning the gates, passing out programs, tending to the needs of the actors, and passing out bottled water to our visitors. Thank you to Tammy Bradford and Lennie Cisco of the JCHA; to Beth Presley; to the NACC Presidential Hosts; and to the Boy Scout Troop 18 and their leaders.

Thank you to Mayor Jim McCamy and the City of Scottsboro for allowing us to close Cedar Hill for the stroll and providing garbage service and police support.

Thank you to Unclaimed Baggage for allowing our visitors to use your parking facilities. Thank you to Margaret Gross and Century House for outfitting Alan Payne in his tux, and to Woods Cove Florists for providing such lovely and reasonably priced floral arrangements.

It was a wonderful event. It does indeed take a village to put on such an event, and we need to remember all these wonderful folks who provided such a pleasant afternoon of history at Cedar Hill.

Annette and David Bradford

The County School Documentation Project

Since its founding, Jackson County has been the home to perhaps 200 different schools. Many of these were "elementary" schools covering grades 1 through 6. Most of these were merged into obscurity with the birth of busing. Many of these schools still live in the memories or writings of county residents and their children and grandchildren. Their locations, teachers, and years of operation need to be documented before all connections to living people are gone.

Public schools followed a familiar pattern. New settlers bought land in an area and needed a place to gather. The community wanted to meet these needs and please God at the same time, so the first building in a new community was almost always a church. As the only building capable of holding more than a single family in a community, the building that functioned as a church on Sunday doubled as a school on weekdays. Sometimes a school was built near the church, but sometimes the church was the only building that community had and served as a school on weekdays. Sometimes, school had to be turned out so that revivals could take place.

The availability of school buses was a watershed event that changed the number and location of schools in the county. In 1924, before the days when students could be bussed, there were 110 rural public school districts, some with more than one school. Many can be tracked through newspapers. Some photos and information is available in yearbooks and school records. Area history books like *Growing Up Hard* by Dr. Ron Dykes are good sources.

African-American schools are harder to track but have always been part of the county's history. State law in 1869 mandated that there be at least one white school and one colored school per township. Colored schools received more support and public attention when Rosenwald schools were being established in the early 1930s; Rosenwald schools were located in Bridgeport, Stevenson, and Scottsboro, though there is evidence of a black school in Bellefonte in 1870.

I am researching these schools one at a time through newspapers and all the wonderful local history books our county has produced. I cannot bring a lot of new information to this discussion; I am simply researching what is there and documenting it. To see what I have learned about a particular school, go to **www.jchaweb.org**, click on the **Schools** button, and select a school. If you have information about a school or pictures of the student body, please contact me at **jcha@scottsboro.org**. This is your chance to have your local school remembered.

For the Love of a House:
Tony Curtis and the S. B. Kirby House in Little Rock, AR


Tony Curtis

It was unexpected to say the least to find a man so steadfastly focused on a story that took place in 1895 in Stevenson, Alabama that the JCHA had never covered: the ambush and murder of John Ross by the Skelton Brothers. Ann Chambless, always the soul of discretion, did not want to embarrass local families by writing about this scandalous 1895 event. Here is Tony's story of his love affair with the S. B. Kirby house.

My life took a different path, when by chance, I visited an apartment building from my childhood. The apartment building was in ruin, open to the elements as well as the transients. The local historical society had a three-page history of the dwelling with the simple phrase "House to be razed, site to become a parking lot or if feasible moved." This is how I learned that the house was "not significant." The words "not significant" struck my soul like a Roman sword in the arena. My childhood memories of this house were significant. Those jarring words on the page would eventually lead me to families with surnames of Kirby, Skelton, Tally and Neimeyer, surnames with faces, stories, and relationships to be uncovered and remembered, all of which were long forgotten in Little Rock.

The journey is to be told out of sequence but in contained blocks. This house with its stories of life, love, and despair, has consumed all my days and nights, literally, for the past thirty years. Next *Chronicles*, I will show you my house.


1221 South Louisiana Street in 1956

The Clise Apartment 1958-1992

The year 1958 brought relocation for Clara Bell Shumate Curtis. She had outgrown the small apartment at 607 S. Scott Street in Little Rock. She was the only female appliance salesperson at M. M. Cohn, referred to as "Cohn's" to the locals, sandwiched between the powerhouse department stores of Pfeifer and Gus Blass. All three had been in operation since the late 1800's. Clara found an apartment in the old house at 1221 South Louisiana Street. The arched transom window above the front door displayed the name of the building, "Clise Apartment."

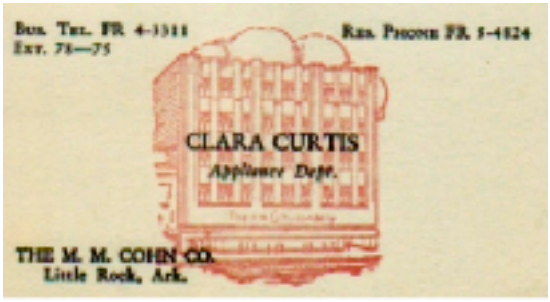
Clara rented apartment No. 1 on the first floor. The rooms were massive in scale with soaring 11 ft ceilings. The apartment contained three rooms plus an updated bath and a kitchen from the 1920s. This apartment had a large screened-in porch on the north side of the center room. The windows were all 84" tall and 30" wide and adorned with highly ornate trim.

Clise Apartments. Photo by Tony Curtis


Clara Bell Curtis Cole 1922-1995

Clara soon settled into life at the "Clise Apartment." She formed what would become lifelong relationships with Ron and Jeannie Batchelder, Elwood and Elizabeth "Duck" Koehler, and Dixie Rayburn from the

main house and the eight-unit dwelling in the rear of the property; Bert and Louise Landrum and finally Miss Mae Oakley joined later. Besides Clara and the Batchelders, none of those people ever had children.



M .M. Cohn ,founded 1874 and closed 2007

The walls of apartment No. 1 echoed with countless hours of laughter and fellowship. Duck worked at a liquor store just half a block away on Main Street and kept the group supplied with the best of the spirit shop.

In the late spring of 1965, Clara decided that home ownership was beckoning. She had lived in downtown Little Rock since the early 1940's and always within walking distance to her employers. This new chapter took her five miles away to a house located just off the new interstate highway.


Left, Ronald K. Batchelder and wife Jeannie, from daughter Michele Luster and Center, Bert Landrum & wife Louise "Lou" Meeks Landrum, from the Lou Landrum estate; Right, Mae Oakley from Tony Curtis.

Apartment No. 1 did not sit idle long, for the Koehlers relocated there from No. 3. It had been their home for over 16 years. They continued the tradition of entertaining begun by Clara. Even with the relocation to the suburbs, Clara, continued to spend hours and hours at apartment No. 1 on Louisiana St.

On May 24, 1965, Clara Bell's first grandchild arrived. His name was Tony. From birth, he was lavished with love and affection from the elderly inhabitants of the "Clise Apartment;" consequently, he was spoiled rotten. He soon had five additional grandmothers. He would spend hours and hours with the "old ladies" as they played the organ, sang catchy tunes, and drank shots of their favorite spirit. He stayed silent during the story hours of "Another World" and "As The World Turns" and listened as they discussed the ins and outs of life downtown and its colorful citizens.


Dixie Rayburn. Photo by Tony Curtis.

In late summer of 1970, a moving van arrived to return Dixie Rayburn to the Great Plains. Dixie had called apartment No. 4 home since 1943. On the morning of moving day, a five-year-old boy slowly made his way up the large staircase to say a tearful goodbye.

The "Clise Apartment" remained unchanged until Friday evening July 20, 1973. That night, as the living room filled with the friends of two decades gathered for festivities, Elwood complained of a pain in his arm. He assumed he had pulled a muscle while working at Arkansas Foundry Company. Elwood had for the past 26 years worked as a master steel detailer. He had detailed all but two of the steel columns in the new 30 story First National Bank building at Capitol and Broadway in downtown Little Rock. Alas, he would not see the completion of the construction. He would suffer a stroke and pass away in the early hours of July 21. Shortly afterward, Elizabeth relocated to Williamson County, Texas to be near her family. That day the adults loaded up the car to take Duck to the airport for her flight to San Antonio.

When Tony walked around the house for what he thought would be the last time, he found Duck had left him a troll doll in her bedroom. Trolls were always awaiting his arrival at 1221 Louisiana. His first troll was


Elwood and his wife Elizabeth "Duck" Koehler. Photo from Tony Curtis.

a redhead. Thus he forever referred to them as such and not by the proper name of "troll." It was a sad moment in an eight-year-old's life. He had lost all but one of his beloved grandmothers from the house.

For the next 13 years, the house took a back seat to a young boy becoming a teenager and eventually a young man. The young man borrowed money from the bank that employed his neighbor in Grant County: Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan. The address for Madison Guaranty was 1501 Main Street. This bank would in 1992 be the central figure in the Whitewater controversy. The Whitewater dealings are still a focus decades after the real estate deal closed in 1978.

All of Tony's life, the road to and from downtown was the "new interstate," I-30 via Roosevelt. Today I-630 runs in the heart of the former neighborhood taking out almost the entire 1100 block. Exits into downtown are currently plentiful; however, in 1986, I-630 (known as the Fannie Foxe Freeway) was still under construction. Roosevelt and East 9th were the only access points to downtown. Fannie Foxe, a former stripper, was thrust into the spotlight when she was the center of Arkansas Congressman Wilbur D. Mills' 1974 sex scandal. Until the scandal, Mills was one of the most powerful men in the House of Representatives.

After paying off the loan on September 19, 1986, Tony, while at the stop sign at 16th and Main, made a decision to turn right. Roosevelt and the way to the expressway were to the left. This new route took him north, and he made a passing comment to his sister and passenger, "Grannie used to live somewhere down here, 1221 something." Upon reaching West 13th Street and looking up and down the street, he caught a glimpse of the rear portion of the familiar apartment building.

He pulled over beside the house and parked. The "Clise Apartment" and the adjacent eight-plex were vacant, the grounds covered in debris, windows broken, no blooming flowers, and the four-car garage had slight fire damage. The property looked like a war zone. Undaunted, Tony and his sister cautiously entered the open door to apartment No. 1. The scene was a repeat of the exterior. The structure was damaged from a leaking roof, and the handrail was missing from the staircase. They were shocked. This was not the place they knew from their childhood.

Tony called the local tax office to inquire about current ownership. To his surprise, it was Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan, the same institution where he had just closed a business deal. The real estate department at Madison gave him a listing price for both buildings at $45,000. The real estate agents did not work weekends. Therefore, Tony would have to come into the bank on Monday to make an offer. He felt anxious about leaving the house open to the elements and foot traffic, and he obtained permission to lock up the property and to begin cleanup.

On Sunday September 21, Clara Bell returned to the "Clise Apartment." She had not been back in over a decade. She too was upset with the current scene. She recalled life decades earlier and was upset by the condition of the property. Clara's reaction to the state of the building, which mirrored his own, confirmed his belief that the house had to be saved.

Tony's air castle dream of rehab was dashed when a stranger appeared, claiming he was the owner. Undaunted, Tony replied, "According to the bank the house is for sale." He added with a cavalier attitude that he "had an appointment to purchase the next morning at 8 o'clock." The stranger left the property.

Monday morning, Tony arrived on time and was so excited to begin this quest of home ownership. His lack of capital did not dampen his dreams of owning 1221 Louisiana. As he entered, the office, a man gave a slight nod of "hello" and then departed. This was the man he had met when he visited the house on

Sunday! The ladies from the real estate office came out and introduced themselves. Tony proudly proclaimed he was there to purchase the "Clise Apartments" at 1221 Louisiana. Exchanging glances, the elder of the two, delivered the news that the man who was walking out had an made an offer that was accepted. That would be a first of many such disappointments that would accompany the struggle to buy the property.

Unfazed by his defeat, Tony followed the real estate person's advice and visited the local historical society, the Quapaw Quarter Association at 1321 S Scott Street. The employees were excited to hear about his plan. Tony felt at ease. Dorthy Dutton assisted with the history file on 1221 Louisiana. The file contained two photos from 1976, a listing of the occupants from 1887 thru 1923, and a letter from the Quapaw Quarter Association to an attorney, Jim Guy Tucker. The letter requested that Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan not demolish the house, and the last piece of paper had a note scrawled on it: "House to be razed, site to become a parking lot or if feasible moved." Demolished! That word was a common theme in all the correspondence. Panic overtook Tony as he reviewed a few pieces of information on the house. On the last page, after the occupants were listed, his eyes locked on "built by Samuel B Kirby, who invested heavily in real estate." Who was this Samuel B. Kirby? Could this house be saved?

Tony Curtis

Who was Samuel B. Kirby? Samuel Bowman Kirby was born January 16, 1848 in Marshall County, Alabama near Hillians Store, the son of Francis Marion Kirby and Mary Cowan. He was appointed postmaster there in 1867. In the 1870 census he is listed is a merchant working with his merchant father at Hillians Store. He operated a hardware store on the Scottsboro square in the early 1870s, a store remembered for the roller rink upstairs.


THE RINK! THE RINK!!

THE RINK over the Store of S. B. Kirby & Co., in Scottsboro, Ala., will be open on Mondays and Fridays at seven o'clock, and close at 10 o'clock, P. M.—

It is the purpose of the proprietors to adopt rules and regulations that will secure good order and decorum at all times; and all parties engaged in skating, or present as spectators, will be required to comply with these rules most rigidly.

ap 29-tf S. B. Kirby & Co.

Alabama Herald Scottsboro, March 1872

Kirby was an agent for the Wilson and White Sewing Machine Company. On August 30, 1875, he married one of the prettiest and most eligible young ladies of good family in Scottsboro—Miss Dovie Skelton, the daughter of James T. Skelton and Charlotte Scott, the granddaughter of Scottsboro founder Robert Scott. They moved almost immediately to Little Rock, Arkansas and built the home on South Louisiana Street.


Samuel and Dovie Kirby and sons about 1890

For seventeen years Kirby had been the traveling representative of the White Sewing Machine Company of Cleveland, Ohio, for Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and the Oklahoma Territory. To Scottsboro history buffs, his home is known for the site of the disastrous snooping that Dovie did, reading her sister Annie's mail and exposing her affair with married Scottsboro banker John Ross. Dovie immediately telegraphed her brother Robert, and Robert and other siblings and cousins ambushed Ross and shot him at Stevenson Railroad Station, and were not convicted. It was a crime of honor. Dovie died soon thereafter.

Next *Chronicles*, look for photos and the story of the restored Kirby House in Little Rock and the family portraits and reunions that Tony has created, celebrating the families and the house he loves.

Widows Creek and Widows Bar Dam

For most of us living today, the place name "Widows Creek" conjures up visions the massive 1.6 gigawatt coal-fired power plant that closed in 2015 after 63 years (1952 to 2015) of operation by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Two industrial giants have dominated the landscape around Widows Creek, the TVA power plant on the Stevenson south side of Widows Creek, and the Google data center that opened in 2022 on the Bridgeport north side of the creek. Today, the coal plant is gone, all four of its smokestacks imploded, its coal reserves buried by bulldozers, and the plant leveled, replaced by rolling hills masking the computing power beneath.

Jackson County has a long relationship with Widows's Creek, and TVA and Google were not the first to recognize and exploit the strategic benefits of its location. Before there was a Google or a TVA, a Native American woman, Widow Onatoy, lived on this land. In the early 20th century, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built a lock and dam at the confluence of Widows Creek and the Tennessee River to improve the year-around navigability and utility of the river.

Ann Chambless wrote this summary in the 2016 *Chronicles* about the area's earliest history and answered the question, why was this creek named Widows Creek more than 200 years ago?

According to JCHA member Patty Woodall, North Alabama's premier Cherokee Indian historian, all the creeks in Jackson County were named by the Cherokees long before Alabama was admitted to the Union in December 1819. Ms. Woodall gleaned this knowledge through years of in-depth research of Bureau of Indian Affairs records.

In reading the Cherokee records relative to Daniel Thorn's 640-acre reservation, Ms.Woodall discovered that Widows Creek was named for the Widow Onatoy (sometimes spelled Annatoi). This record stated the Widow Onatoy lived on the creek near Daniel Thorn's reservation that was located slightly southeast of Russell Cave.

Who was the Widow Onatoy? Patty Woodall stated she was a widow by 1806, as confirmed by the following Bureau of Indian Affairs record: Onatoy's widow received a small spinning wheel from Southwest Point. It was one of the items delivered by Richard Fields to Cherokees in his neighborhood. Ms. Woodall further stated she does not know where Richard Fields lived in 1806, but he ended up living in what became Alabama and probably died in 1806. He may have passed by the Widow Onatoy's house going to his home.

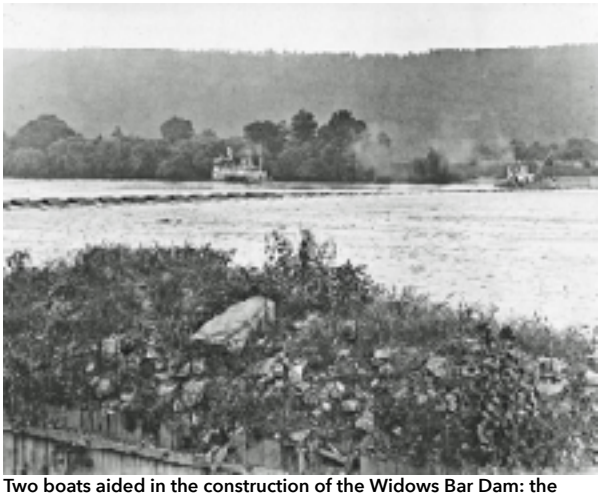
Ms. Woodall stated: "Based on records of the 1813 fight at her home that involved John Tally (a white man who lived in Franklin County,Tennessee, in 1813), the Widow Onatoy was well respected and may have operated an inn or at least allowed travelers to stay at her home overnight." The exact location of her house is unknown, but Patty Woodall stated it was probably at or near where the Indian trail crossed "her creek."

In the 1813 record, the Widow Onatoy was called an old woman. Cherokee records indicate her husband was born circa 1725 to 1730. The Widow could have been close to his age or perhaps five to ten years younger than Onatoy. If she was born between 1730 and 1735, she would have been in her eighties and had earned the right to be called an old woman in 1813.

Ms.Woodall stated the last mention of the Widow Onatoy is found in 1819 records. Since the widow does not appear on any of the rolls of Cherokees who voluntarily moved west, Ms. Woodall stated the widow may have moved across the Tennessee River after the Cherokee treaty of 1817 ceded land that led to the

creation of Jackson County in 1819, but there are no records to prove that. Perhaps she simply died in late 1819 or in 1820.

Jump ahead now a hundred years to 1923 and the first engineering project on this site. To understand the reasons behind building the Widows Creek Lock and Dam, we'll look at the article by Charles Head, which appeared in the January 20, 2017 *South Pittsburg Hustler*. Charles has posted other photos and information on history on his Facebook page. His 2017 article and photos are reproduced here by permission of Charles and the *South Pittsburg Hustler:*



Two boats aided in the construction of the Widows Bar Dam: the steamer *McPhearson* on the left and the derrick boat on the right.

Up until the early 1900s, the Tennessee River transversing the Sequatchie Valley was either a raging torrent of water that was dangerous to travel, or a calm shallow stream that one could drive a horse-drawn wagon across. The unpredictable and hazardous river caused much grief to commercial river traffic to the point that Hales Bar Dam was constructed at Guild. While the dam put an end to the "Suck" and the dangerous rapids in the Grand Canyon portion of the Tennessee River between Chattanooga and Jasper, it did little to improve the flow of water from there down to Stevenson, Alabama.

The problem below Hales Bar Dam was that the Tennessee River was so shallow that most steamboats were too heavy to travel it. Unless they had a small draft, the depth of water a boat draws, especially when loaded, the steamboats of that era could not safely travel down the river. There was such a danger of getting grounded that most riverboat traffic was conducted during late fall, winter, and spring when ample rains caused the river to rise, making for a safer passage. As the population of river towns grew, that became a real headache as people and freight needed to move during the summer months as well.

L to R., construction of the Widows Creek bar and dam; Men setting the last crib; and construction of the lock. Photos owned by Marion Lloyd.

The further one got into Jackson County, Alabama, the more shallow the Tennessee River became. At Caperton's Ferry just below Stevenson during the summer, one could wade across the river almost as fast as one could ride the ferry across. Only the very lightest of steamboats could make the passage. Freight and passenger traffic were almost nonexistent at times.

To alleviate this problem, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers decided to build a lock and dam at the confluence of the Tennessee River with Widows Creek, which was situated half way between Bridgeport and Stevenson. Construction on Widows Bar Lock and Dam began in the spring of 1923 and was completed on September 8, 1924. It was serviced by a 60 foot by 265 foot navigation lock. The *McPherson*, a wooden stern wheeler tow boat, was used in the construction of Widows Bar Dam. The steamboat was

built in the early 1880s; it was 115 feet long, with a 23 1/2 feet beam and a 3 1/2 foot draft, which was important when navigating the shallow waters of the Tennessee River.

Widows Bar Dam was such an attraction that it soon became a draw for parties and picnics, and not just for local folks either. The August 28, 1930 edition of the *South Pittsburg Hustler* newspaper featured a story about the dam on the front page: MERCHANTS AND BUSINESS MEN PICNIC AT WIDOWS BAR LAST THURSDAY ROLLICKING SUCCESS.

On last Thursday afternoon at 1 o'clock, all the business houses on Cedar and Elm avenue closed their doors for the remainder of the day, and the employees together with their families went to Widows Bar Dam on the Tennessee River near Stevenson for a picnic and general good time.

Everybody had a marvelous time either swimming in the placid waters, viewing the magnificent scenery that surrounds the government project, jumping the rope, pitching horse shoes or indulging in some one of the other sports provided by the promoters of the gala event.

There was everything on the grounds in the way of eats and drinks to make you enjoy yourself. Mr. H. K. Fowler, local Coca-Cola king, had several cases of his famous drink on the grounds for all who wanted Coca-Cola and also Mr. D.Y. Conaster was serving his Nu-Grapes and good old fashioned lemonade to a large crowd of thirsty men and women.

We have heard it said that South Pittsburg may fall down in lots of her undertakings, but when it comes to any kind of a feed, she is there with the goods. One of the most inviting spreads with most every kind of delicious and palatable foods was laid at this picnic. Fried chicken, caramel cake, potato salad, stuffed eggs, pickles, ice cream, and many more things that tickle a hungry man's appetite were included in the spread...."

When the Tennessee Valley Authority took care of flood control and navigation improvement operations in the Tennessee Valley in the mid 1930s, Widows Bar was considered too high maintenance, and it was dismantled as part of the construction of Guntersville Dam.

The Widows Bar Dam site is currently occupied [2017] by Widows Creek Power Plant, a coal-fired plant built in the early 1950s. What remained of the dam after its dismantling is now submerged under Guntersville Lake. While few folks in the Tennessee Valley have ever heard of the Widows Bar Dam, for 10 years it served as a navigation aid and greatly boosted the economy of our local communities. That the site was a wonderful spot to swim, have a picnic, pitch horse shoes, eat fried chicken, and drink Coca-Cola didn't hurt its reputation either!

Thank you, Charles Head, for these memories and analysis. According to the TVA website, the Widows Creek Fossil Plant was indeed named for a creek that flows through the plant site and was located on Guntersville Reservoir on the Tennessee River in northeast Alabama.

"Ground breaking for the plant occurred on March 28, 1950," the TVA website explains. "The first of the original six units began generating power on July 1, 1952. The 500 MW Turbo-generator on unit seven was placed in operation in February of 1961 and was the world's largest at the time. Unit 7 brought new technology to TVA including cross-compound turbines and steam driven boiler feedwater pumps. The final operating unit, Unit 8, began operation in February 1965. With the addition of Unit 8, Widows Creek Fossil Plant became the largest generating station in the country with the capability to produce 1750 MW. Unit 8 would go on to become the first TVA unit to be retrofitted with scrubber equipment. Units 1 through 6 were retired in stages between May 2012 and July 2013. Unit 8 was idled in October 2014. The last of the eight operating units, Unit 7, was removed from service in September of 2015."

Google purchased the property north of Widows Creek on June 24, 2015 and announced its plans to build a $600 million data center on the site formerly occupied by the TVA Widows Creek Fossil Plant. The project broke ground on April 2018 and was completed in 2022.

Ann Chambless, Charles Head, and Annette Bradford

Sauta Cave and Recovery of Bat Habitat

It is not often that you start a story in 1976 and end it 46 years later. But this is what happened to David, my husband, and me this fall.

Sauta Cave in 1978 from the inside out. Photo by David Bradford.

In 1976, I worked for Idita Blanks at the library, and David was writing first for the *Daily Sentinel* and later for the *Huntsville Times*. We were newlywed cavers, and Sauta Cave was one of our favorite weekend haunts. David wrote a feature for the *Daily Sentinel* Weekend supplement, which brought us into contact with a woman we barely knew—Ann Chambless, the history lady of Jackson County. In 1977, when we went to the cave to shoot pictures for a second feature, we found that someone was blasting in the lower cave, and the historic cave smelled of diesel fumes and was filled with toxic carbon monoxide. There were dead bats everywhere.

Those of you who know the cave know that there are really two connected caves, the lower cave, known as Blowing Cave, and the upper cave, known as Sauta Cave or Saltpeter Cave. The blasting was going on in the lower cave, Blowing Cave. When the workmen left, we walked through and picked up stalactites crumbled on the floors. Thousands of years to form by dripping liquid limestone, gone in an instant. We investigated and found that the owner of the lower cave was blasting out the cave to create a trout farm. Benny Bell told us that his uncle Herman Bell did the early work on the cave for Mr. Hoover. He had torn down the remnants of the old night clubs and started setting dynamite charges. Benny described his uncle as a farmer with no blasting experience or expertise.

David located a bat expert, Dr. Merlin Tuttle, who needed photos of the hibernating bats to identify the species and confirm that they were indeed endangered, giving them the leverage needed to stop the blasting and close the caves. David took the pictures of the Grey Bat and the Indiana Bat that Dr. Tuttle needed. We emerged lightheaded from carbon monoxide. Two weeks later, the blasting was stopped and the cave was closed with a court order.

David did a second article about the caves after he started work for the *Huntsville Times*. It turns out that the blaster had decided he was not building a trout farm but an entire amusement park, and that the $325,000 the U.S. Department of the Interior offered him for the cave was not at all adequate. He wanted $625,000 for all the vast improvements he had made in the cave and all the revenue he would lose from his planned amusement park.

About that time, we left the area to go to graduate school in upstate New York. It took several years and a lot of lawyers, but ultimately Sauta Cave was bought through the Department of the Interior and protected. It was closed to human traffic to protect the bat population from human-born pathogens like white nose.

And then, 45 years later, Mary Scott Hodgin from Birmingham Public Radio showed up at our door doing a story on the Sauta Cave bats. She came to town to see the migratory bats swarm out of the cave at sunset and interviewed us for a story about the recovery of the bat population at Sauta Cave. You can hear her story by searching for the podcast on the WBHM web site and searching on “gray bat."

Here is David’s history story from the 1977 *Daily Sentinel:*

Of all the caves of Jackson County, probably none has received as much attention as Sauta. The two entrances to the system, commonly known as Saltpeter and Blowing caves, have long served as recreation sites and sources of legend for an audience far exceeding the boundaries of our county. No history book, no folklorist can long recount the story of Jackson County without at least passing reference to the caves, and evidence of its function in the development of a young nation are still very evident.

The first mention of Sauta Cave in official documents occurs even before Alabama achieved statehood. An early 1780's legal suit charged Richard Riley (a Cherokee Indian) with breach of contract in connection with mining operations in the cave. Mining continued through the early 19th century, but was escalated with the coming of the Civil War. John B. Boren began the 1860's operations, but the Confederate government soon took control as the insatiable need for the mineral increased. According to John Robert Kennamer Sr. in his book *The History of Jackson County*, Captain James Young of Larkinsville was in charge of mining, supplied by W. T Bennett with 17 kettles used for boiling the nitre.

Extracting saltpeter was a complex process. It first involved removing nitrogen-rich dirt from the floor of the cave and rinsing it in water from the nearby Blowing Cave branch of the Sauta system. This water dissolved the saltpeter compound and left it in solution. The nitrate bearing liquid was then boiled with wood ash, usually the ashes of hardwood, and the mixture was allowed to cool for 24 hours. At the end of that period, the nitrate bearing solution would crystallize, and the saltpeter could be scooped from the top.

We can assume that the Sauta Cave mine was fruitful since it was raided by the Union General O.M. Mitchel during his campaign through Jackson County. In anticipation of his raid, the Confederate troops removed several of the kettles and reportedly buried them in the vicinity of the Sauta Creek. The exact location of the kettles that should remain is unknown, but reports say that at least some ended their service as watering troughs for livestock.

I was told by Mr. Matt Smith that in the early years of Captain Young's mining operation, the entire nitrating process was performed within the cave. The blackened ceiling of the mining area supports such a belief. But the smoke of the wood fires proved too thick for the workers.

Mr. James Clemens, in explaining the process of nitrating, told me that in his youth he had talked with one of the men who supplied the works with hardwood. John Dulaney, a Confederate veteran, told Mr. Clemens that the wood burning operations were finally moved to the mouth of the cave and were fueled from forests located on Gunter's Mountain. This was undoubtedly a dangerous move late in the war since it called attention to the location of the works.

Mr. Julian Clemons told an interesting story, one that was substantiated by three other sources, about a slave who was killed in the mines before the arrival of General Mitchel. To remove the dirt from the deepening pit, the miners had to use mule teams to pull carts up an incline. The mules pulled against metal rings, which were attached to boulders by means of something resembling rock climber's expansion bolts. At least one mule proved stronger than the cave's rock and a massive boulder buried both slave and mule.

Area around Blowing and Salt Peter Cave in 1941, from the Lloyd Royal "Hollywood Tour of Scottsboro" movie, commissioned by Robert Word, Sr.

Mr. J. O. Carter, a man who has had considerable experience in the cave, believed there is some truth in the story. The white oak rails that lead into the cave are diverted by the large rock that perhaps serves as headstone for man and beast, and newer rails were diverted around it.

Workmen were unable to move the boulder, and as early as 1900 the rock was known as "Jack's Rock" after the man buried beneath it.

It's just that it is often hard to distinguish fact from legend in telling the story of Sauta Cave. Various accounts say that the cave was the first seat of young Jackson County and that it was at the site at which Sequoia introduced his alphabet to the Cherokee tribe.

Mrs. Ann Chambless, of the Jackson County Historical Society says that the cave itself was probably never used as the county seat, but it is likely, she added, that the first county seat was somewhere near the community. Records show that a plot of land either nearby or purchased for the project, and Julian Clemons remembered being shown the remaining log building which he was told was the legendary first courthouse.

The cave certainly figured in early county government; it was designated in 1821 as one of three polling places in Jackson County where the pioneers were to elect a clerk of circuit court, a clerk of county court, and a sheriff.

Most of the chilling tales of death and entrapment in Sauta Cave are also fiction. But Matt Smith told of a rescue effort around the year 1900. A group of unidentified explorers entered the cave for a Sunday outing and took a wrong turn on the return trip. When the rescuers located them, they were, according to Mr. Smith, "having a regular camp meeting." They were "shouting and praying." Their dramatic conversions were unnecessary, however. They were less than 200 yards from the entrance.

Numerous rescue operations in the past decades have netted only shaky victims with expired flashlight batteries: no injuries and no deaths.

The story of the cave's utility does not end with the Civil War operations. In fact, one of the most interesting chapters in the cave's history was written when the Army Corps of Engineers surveyed the cave for use as a fallout shelter in 1963. The cave was one of nearly 50 Jackson County caverns considered for use as emergency shelter, and one of 19 finally designated for the purpose.

The estimated capacity of Sauta Cave was 2,639 persons with provisions.The experimental effort to stock the cave proved fruitless since the high humidity rusted the cans in which the food and water were stored.

When I visited Wheeler Wildlife office in Decatur in April 2019 to talk about efforts to save the dogtrot cabin at Sauta Cave, I reviewed the organization's Sauta Cave file, copying the best of the information I found there. Ann Chambless also had a big file of Sauta Cave history and research, and the fruits of her 20-year collaboration with Marion O. Smith. This information needed to be more accessible, so I created a Sauta Cave notebook and brought these materials to the Heritage Center. I also discovered that William Varnedoe had written a book about Sauta Cave for the National Speliological Society, and I bought copies of this book to have available for sale at the Heritage Center. While doing this research, I discovered some value resources that people interested in this cave might want to know about.

The beginning of serious academic research on Sauta Cave was a 1930 article by Virgil Carrington "Pat" Jones. When he wrote this article, Jones was city editor of the *Huntsville Times*, a post he held from 1931 to 1937. In his long career, he was a reporter and staff writer on a number of illustrious publications, includes the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and NASA. He wrote a book *True Tales of Old Madison County* in 1970 which can be downloaded from the Huntsville Historical Collection here: https://huntsvillehistorycollection.org/hhc/docs/pdf/hhq/HHQ-Vol-XVIII-34-Fal92Win93.pdf.

Jones wrote nearly a full page article about the cave, filled with excellent research and verifiable facts. Virtually everything else written about the cave quotes Jones' facts and history without attribution. Much of his information came from "recently discovered records in the courthouse at Huntsville." This article, though truncated, was part of Ann's records. One wonderful piece of this 1930 article is its pre-TVA description of the area around the cave.

In a small, deserted cove between high mountains this cave is located. The floor of the valley upon which it opens feels the rays of the sun only part of the day, and stretches out a treeless area at the feet of the giants around it. A single stream —Sauta creek—named for an Indian who once lived on its banks—breaks the smoothness of the valley. This trickles from a rocky opening at the foot of Gunter's mountain on the west, and then steals away through the underbrush to the high road on the north. Some will state that the main body of this little branch starts up in the saltpeter cave, 300 yards directly above and that one can gain entrance to the mine by following the route of the subterranean channel.

And indeed this is true. Bill Varnedoe in his Sauta Cave book states that he once entered the upper cave and came out the lower cave an hour later, but he rappelled downward to accomplish this feat.

A second scholar, Peter Alexander Brannon, writing for the *Montgomery Advertiser* in 1934, also did solid research about the history of Sauta Cave. According to the *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, Brannon contributed to the Alabama Department of Archives and History collection for 50 years as a curator and was also a prolific author. The history column he wrote about Sauta is one of the 878 columns he wrote about Alabama history, all of which can be found in the digital collection at the Alabama Archives, at https://digital.archives.alabama.gov/digital/collection/voices/id/6795

The Sauta Cave system is now administered by the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge. The cave's history as a saltpeter mining facility is documented in the work of caver and Civil War scholar Marion O. Smith. Smith collaborated with Jackson County historian and *Chronicles* editor Ann Barbee Chambless over a 20-year period, helping each other with research and enhancing information about our county. That collaboration is documented in the article that follows.

Annette and David Bradford

Top Row: Captures from the 1941 Word Movie. Bottom Row: Pictures from Sauta Cave: A 200+ Year History by William W. Varnedoe Jr.

Collaboration Between Ann Chambless and Marion O. Smith

Marion Smith, a scholar who has published a great deal of information about Jackson County caves, died November 30, 2022. The loss of this friend to Jackson County prompted me to look at the collaboration between Marion Smith and *Chronicles* editor Ann Chambless.

When the JCHA was organized late in 1975 and began publication of the *Chronicles*, Ann Chambless was quick to seize upon the historical significance of Sauta Cave. Ann wrote her first story about Sauta in January 1977, a story in which she put on her myth-buster hat (which she enjoyed wearing...) and set out to debunk the myth that Sauta Cave was the first courthouse and that Sequoyah had stood at the entrance and developed the Cherokee alphabet. There is even now in someone's garage a discarded historical marker stating this incorrect information that I am sure Ann had a part in removing.

In October 1978, Ann wrote her first serious story about the history of Sauta Cave, though her major contribution to scholarship about this cave would come in October 1980. This 1978 story was just after the cave had been in all the state newspapers as bat expert Dr. Merlin Tuttle filed an injunction to stop Harry Hoover's blasting in the cave, the first step in creating the Sauta Cave Wildlife Management Area.

Perhaps it was this controversy that put Sauta Cave on Marion O. Smith's radar. Ann began her correspondence with Marion Smith some time before March 1984. The first letter from Marion to Ann is dated March 6, 1984, but it is clear that there had been earlier communication. "I have been trying to gather info for an article, somewhere, about the lesser saltpeter caves of Jackson County, of which there were around ten that I know of. Maybe someday I'll get it finished. Marilyn, I believe, has already asked you if you could send me with info about the Coon Creek Saltpeter Cave on Sand Mountain."

An article titled "The Sauta Cave Confederate Niter Works" by Marion appeared in the April and July 1984 *Chronicles*, where Ann introduced the author by saying: "Marion O. Smith is a research associate on the papers of Andrew Johnson at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and an active caver. He spends an average of two weekends each month exploring Jackson County caves." His article in the 1984 *Chronicles* had been published previously in the December 1983 *Civil War History* academic journal.

Their collaboration continued, and Marion was the speaker for the January 1986 JCHA meeting. Ann's introduction to him noted that Marion explored more than 300 of the 500 caves in Jackson County, and had researched and recorded their folklore, mining history, and graffiti. The April 1986 *Chronicles* noted that attendance at this meeting had set a JCHA record.

Marion O. Smith from the *New York Times,* Dec 16, 2022

In February 1986, Marion wrote to Ann again, having produced two short pieces specifically for the *Chronicles*: "Additional Sauta Cave Niter Works Information" and "Request for Jackson County Saltpetre Cave Information," which ran in the April 1986 issue. In his letter, he noted, "The last two weekends in Feb. were spent in Jackson Co., mapping in a deep cave near Hollytree we found Jan. 4 and cave hunting. Not much has been found, but we'll, as usual, keep trying."

On one his Jackson County trips, Marion had visited Marion Lloyd in Bridgeport and borrowed his collection of documents from late 1800s Bridgeport. Marion copied Mr. Lloyd's history notebook and had it added to the UT Specials Collections in Knoxville.

Marion's support of Ann went beyond their collaboration on

caves and saltpeter mining. In the April 1986 *Chronicles*, Ann included the roster of Captain Thomas Snodgrass' 1838 Cherokee Emigration (aka Trail of Tears) volunteers that she was able to compile from microfilmed letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs from 1824 to 1881 that Marion had provided to her from the library at Knoxville. Another time in July 1984, she thanked Marion in her footnotes for a map showing Hunt's Saw Mill drawn during the Civil War by a Federal mapping engineer, found in the University of Tennessee map collection.

In the July 1986, Ann ran a query about Wheeler Cave requested by Marion in the *Chronicles*, indicting that they covered topics on the phone that were not recorded in letters. "Marion found a reference to this cave in a Civil War document….Mr. Smith would like to correspond with Wheeler researchers and historians. He is preparing a paper on the lesser caves of Jackson County, Alabama."

It was January 1989 when Marion wrote to Ann again, he expressed regret that he did not get to Jackson County as often as he used to and regaled her with tales of his descent of a 965-foot pit cave in British Columbia. He was also planning a visit and needed her help. "Sometime during the next few months I'd like to bring my copies of the Sauta Cave payrolls, etc. to show you….I also have 2 or 3 months' worth of payrolls of the South Sauta Epson Salts Works. Only a few men worked at this operation and I'm not sure exactly where it was, but obviously it was somewhere along S. Sauta Creek near the Jackson-Marshall-DeKalb County lines." In July 1989, the *Chronicles* included another of Marion's article, "Early Saltpeter Mining in Jackson County."

Ann and Marion were in constant contact at the end of 1989. On November 7, 1989, he sent her another short article for the *Chronicles*, "More Sauta Cave Data." All of the time since their communication began, Marion was writing about saltpeter mining in Jackson County and his research had produced documents too long to be included in the *Chronicles*. His new article included "much about the visit of Gen. Rosecranz and his soldiers to Long Island Saltpeter Cave," noting that the handwritten article was already 45 pages. This would eventually becomes the 47-page article "Saltpeter Mining and the Civil War in Jackson County, Alabama," which appeared in the *Journal of Spelean History* in the April-June 1990 issue. The article can be accessed here: https://asha.caves.org/issues/078.pdf

On November 28, he wrote again, clearly helping Ann research a Sanders murder. He told her, "I've done all that an outsider can do to research the people in my Jackson County saltpeter articles." Ann and her son, Heath, were in Europe when he wrote to her, and he was about to leave with a group of 15 cavers to raft the 90 miles of the Usumacinta River in Guatemala. Marion's father had died on October 21 at age 90, and Marion and a group of cavers had found an unexplored cave in Boxes Cove and named it O. B. Smith Cave as a memorial to his father. With this letter, he sent her pages from his upcoming Jackson County book to review.

He wrote again on December 15, giving Ann information about W. L. Ronsaville, one of her kinsmen, and details about some of the Jackson County people he had found working on saltpeter mining sites in the county in his study of Sauta payroll information. He eventually turned this information into a 45-page handwritten document titled "Personnel of the Sauta Cave Confederate Saltpeter Works 1862-1863." We cannot find a published version of this work, but scanned this document and made it available on the JCHA website: http://www.jchaweb.org/downloads/SautaMiningPersonnelBlack&White.pdf.

Their next correspondence was September 28, 1994, when Marion asked Ann for help determining the given names of people he had encountered in his Jackson County research, giving her excellent references to microfilmed information in the National Archives. "I still go caving," he told her, "but I rarely do long or 'hard' trips. My last significant trip to Nov. 1993, in northern Mexico where a dozen or so of us finished exploring a 2,207 foot deep cave with over 30 pits in it." He sent her a copy of his *Civil War Tour for Cavers Sewanee to Chattanooga*, which is included in the Heritage Center notebook on Sauta Cave.

In October 1994, Ann ran this query from Marion in the *Chronicles*, asking if anyone could determine or knew the given names of the three men who were saltpeter contractors, Snodgrass, Bynum, and Bellomy.

Ann received one more letter from Marion, with a new address in Rock Island, Tennessee, in October 2004. Marion had retired and was missing the easy access to research that his teaching positions had given him. He sent her the Sauta Personnel document. "Do you think my Sauta Personnel article could be inserted in installments? That is, if anyone is willing to convert it to print. I remain one of the few people who is 100% computer illiterate and don't plan to become any different." He invited Ann to make corrections or additions to the document. In the letter, he mentioned speaking at the 1958 Jackson County High School Reunion at Sauta Cave in June 2003. Over the last six years, he had been involved in the mapping of Rumbling Falls Cave near Spencer, Tennessee. He had been in Jefferson County recently documenting Indian petroglyphs.

Jackson County benefited greatly from the interest that Marion Smith showed in the saltpeter operations throughout the county. He and Ann Chambless shared a mutually beneficial collaboration reflected (though not totally captured) in the letters Ann kept, letters that documented 20 years of shared interest. Jackson County lost a friend when Marion O. Smith died on November 30, 2022.

Marion O. Smith from the *New York Times*

Here are photos of the man and his *New York Times* obituary by Clay Risen:

Marion Smith, a relentless, irascible subterranean explorer who was believed to have visited more caves than anyone else in human history, died on Nov. 30 at his home in Rock Island, Tenn. He was 80. The cause was congestive heart failure and chronic lymphocytic leukemia, said his partner, Sharon Jones.

His fellow cavers called Mr. Smith "the Goat," and he certainly looked the part, with a compact, wiry body and a wispy caprine beard dangling below a well-cragged face. He was likewise goatish in his implacable determination to keep going through mud and cold and scraped shins, with little patience for those who couldn't keep up. He was still caving long past the age when most people would decide to hang up their head lamps: His personal record for most cave visits in a year — 335 — came in 2013, when he turned 71.

But mostly he was the Goat because he was roundly considered the Greatest of All Time. He explored 8,291 separate caves — far more than anyone on record, ever. He climbed up and down some two million feet of rope. He was especially taken with vertical caving: He descended more than 3,000 underground pits deeper than 30 feet, often dangling freely in the abyss on a rope no thicker than a thumb."If caving were a professional sport, Smith would possess the lifetime stats of a Wilt Chamberlain or Ted Williams," Michael Ray Taylor wrote in a 2003 profile of Mr. Smith in Sports Illustrated.

Humans have been going into caves since the origin of the species, but it was only in the 1960s that cave exploration took off as an organized activity in the United States. The Europeans came earlier, in the 1930s and then again after World War II, with high-profile expeditions by Spanish and French explorers into the vast caverns of the Pyrenees.

Some of those cavers wrote books, and their accounts, translated and published in America, helped set off a wave of interest among college students and other young people. Caving became especially popular in the South, and in particular the triangular region where Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia intersect, beneath which lies a vast deposit of cave-friendly limestone.

It was also home to Mr. Smith, who grew up outside Atlanta and studied history at West Georgia College (now the University of West Georgia). He entered his first cave in 1966 and was immediately hooked. With the advent of space travel, the last unknown parts of the earth's surface would soon be revealed. But

the earth's interior was still a mystery, and every cave was full of surprises: exotic creatures, underground rivers, tiny passages that opened suddenly to cathedral-like spaces.

"Every day, he wanted to create an adventure," Chuck Mangelsdorf, a lawyer and fellow caver, said in a phone interview.

Mr. Smith developed a reputation as the guy who seemed to be everywhere, every weekend, constantly announcing new finds, pushing into unknown spaces without a whiff of fear. In 2014 he was pinned under a boulder for nine hours. Three years later he was hit in the temple by a fist-size rock that fell from 40 feet. In both cases he went to the hospital, and in both cases he was back underground within days.

Like most serious cavers, he was offended by the term "spelunker," which to them denotes unprepared, unserious subterranean venturing. He enjoyed the tedium of cataloging and mapping every inch of a cave as much as he reveled in pushing through to the next unknown.

In 1998 Mr. Smith was part of a team of cavers who discovered a 4.5-acre, 350-foot-tall underground chamber in East Tennessee they named the Rumble Room. They kept it secret for four years while they explored and mapped it, and they revealed it to the public only when a nearby town threatened to use an adjacent cave as part of a new sewage system.

"I didn't want to let the cat out," Mr. Smith told *The Tennessean* newspaper in 2002. "I wanted to keep it in the bag longer."

Marion Otis Smith was born on Sept. 24, 1942, in Fairburn, Ga., the only child of Otis Smith, a farmer, and Bernice (Stephens) Smith, a homemaker. His parents later divorced, and he was mostly raised by his grandparents.

After receiving bachelor's and master's degrees in history from West Georgia College, he entered the Army and served two years in South Korea. He was discharged in 1969.

Back in Georgia, he spent several years working different jobs, the sort that paid little but asked little in return, allowing him to spend as much time as possible underground. Eventually he cleaned up, a bit, and in 1974 he was hired as an assistant editor at the University of Tennessee, charged with preparing the 16 volumes of President Andrew Johnson's papers for publication. He retired in 2000.

With Ms. Jones, he finally bought his first home in the early 2000s, on a backcountry trail north of Chattanooga called Bone Cave Road. He was married once, but just briefly. Ms. Jones is his only immediate survivor.

Caves were his life, but exploring them was not his only passion. He was perhaps the world's leading expert on the history of mining for saltpeter, a primary ingredient in gunpowder, which in the 19th century was often harvested from caves.

In the 2010s he joined with Joseph Douglas, a historian at Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin, Tenn., in a project to document the thousands of signatures left by Confederate and Union soldiers in Mammoth Cave, in central Kentucky. Mr. Smith was particularly taken with researching the men themselves, and he ultimately wrote about 80 miniature biographies.

Annette Bradford and Clay Risen

The Jackson County Giant

The illustration accompanying this story is not a drawing of the actual Jackson County giant. No illustrations have been found.

The articles reporting the phenomenon of the Jackson County giant received wide distribution in 1877: A fearsome giant, assumed to be man-eating, was roaming Jackson County. The original discovery and public announcement was made by Col. John Snodgrass, businessman and depot agent, and W.H. Payne, druggist, while on a fishing trip near Bellefonte. On the river bank, they found footprints 34 inches long and 14 inches wide, covering seven cotton rows at a stride.

"The news spread like wildfire over Jackson County, over Alabama, and even into other states. Beaten trails were made across the hills of Jackson by residents bubbling over with curiosity. They stared in wide-opened concern at the tracks . . . and then went home to bar their doors against an ogre who, from the looks of things, could have blown open the barriers with a single blast from his mighty nostrils. In some cases, entire families gathered at night to sleep in one room. Men left their plows standing idle in the field. Dogs were chained in the yard, to bark at the first faint thunder of the mighty footfalls," reported *The Huntsville Times* in a retrospective published May 31, 1936.

A contemporary account in the *Montgomery Advertiser* of July 17, 1877 noted "Men feared to go abroad lest they should be gobbled up, for it was evident that the creature, if he was disposed to feed upon man, could easily take one in at a single meal."

Shortly after the initial sighting, a group of men, including the Rev. R.D. Shook and D. King Caldwell, both of whom the newspapers cited as men whose veracity could not be doubted, set out to verify the claim. Starting from the Hollywood plantation of Addison White, the men moved toward Bellefonte. Their report claimed "a series of giant human tracks stretched out before them. The imprints descended to the bottom field, passed across it, through a fringe of saplings, and disappeared in the leafy carpet of a forest on the opposite side. Seen in the dying sun of late afternoon, they caused chills to run over the men's backs and led them to glance unconsciously at the wood slopes in the background, as if expecting the head and shoulders of the misplaced Colossus to appear above the treetops."

According to *The Huntsville Advocate* and *The Montgomery Advertiser*, a posse of 300 men and over 400 dogs shortly mustered near July Mountain where Col. Snodgrass patiently scoured the riverbanks with a telescope. After about 25 minutes of searching, Snodgrass told the gathering he had sighted the giant about six miles away.

The *Advertiser* noted that the search party found the giant "...snoozing in the shade . . . in blessed ignorance of the impending danger. . . . . It was evident from the bones and horns . . . that he had partaken of his repast."

The story continues by stating that the giant "dashes forward, and reaching out (his arm being seven feet nine inches long) begins to seize the dogs and hurl them at the horsemen, several of whom are knocked from their horses, but happily no one is mortally wounded."

The accounts claim that the giant retreated down a ravine that became so narrow that the giant was wedged in. He was tied with ropes and drawn into an "open glade . . . where he is viewed with profound wonder by the three hundred men."

In captivity, the giant is measured as over 21 feet tall with fingers fourteen inches long. His head is said to be the "size of a flour barrel" with a beard six feet long.

His pupils were cat-like and vertical rather than round, and eight inch tusks protruded from his mouth.

"After the measurement was finished," the *Advertiser* reports, "a discussion arose as to what should be done with him. He decided it for them. In a moment, when all had come to regard him as quite tame, he snapped his cords . . . and was soon out of sight. He made for the river, which he crossed near Bellefonte, and is now supposed to be roaming somewhere in the Sand Mountains."

The giant was never seen again. However, he reappeared in a retrospective in *The Huntsville Times* published in 1936. "The incidents surrounding the giant footprints became more or less a myth, told about the hearth in the blazing glow of a log fire. Then 25 or 30 years ago, a man, speaking with rapidly fading voice, told a story from his death bed that solved the mystery. He was Plez Clendenon, caretaker of the farm where the tracks first were found."

Clendenon admitted making up the story in an effort to dissuade poachers from stealing chickens and produce from the plantation of Addison White. Plez abandoned the hoax early on, but his son, John, carried it out by cutting our boards to mimic the giant's feet and using stilts to cross the cotton fields.

E.H. Caldwell, 77 years old when he spoke of the incident, recalls it "was just a tale. Half a dozen or so [men], not 300, did go out with some dogs and look over the tracks after Mr. Shook and my brother, King, came back with their account, but they didn't do anything. They knew it was some trick. None of the better educated . . . folks ever said much about it. They knew what it was and let it go at that. It might have been a joke, but it surely did stop that stealing."

Both the *Advertiser* and the *Advocate* quoted the story from *The Scottsboro Herald*, edited by Alexander Snodgrass, a cousin of Col. John Snodgrass, one of the original perpetrators of the hoax. Unfortunately, not all of the reporting in the 1877 *Herald* can be retrieved from the archives, so the full story can be gleaned only from 1877 reprints and a retrospective that was printed 59 years after the events.

The story is, of course, ridiculously improbable, but reputable sources of the time gave it credence. *The Montgomery Advertiser* affirmed the story by stating "We did not think much of the story when we saw it reported in the *Scottsboro Herald*, thinking that our facetious friend Col. Snodgrass had submitted to the hoax willingly, so that he could enjoy the big-eyed wonder that it might excite in others. Later we have met with some reliable parties from Jackson County and have learned a great deal more about the giant. We find that the half had not been told us, and that there was no hoax about it, but a stern and fearful reality."

Alexander Snodgrass frequently used his paper to voice his sarcasm to embellish what little local news he reported. For instance, in 1871, when a fire destroyed most of Scottsboro (which was then laid out along the Memphis & Charleston rail lines along what is now Mary Hunter Avenue and Maple Street), Snodgrass commented that "The report that every man in Scottsboro was drunk on the night of the fire is a willful fabrication, and we denounce the originator as a malicious blatherskite. There were three or four sober men in town that night."

It's difficult to know the extent to which the tale of the giant was accepted among the populace, but the Jackson County giant remains a fascinating example of public credulity and a reminder that "fake news" has a long tradition.

David Bradford

Scottsboro in 1879: A Reflection by H. M. Henderson

The following article was published in the July 28, 1927 Progressive Age and was written by H. M. Henderson, Sr. of Scottsboro, describing the town as he remembered it circa 1879. Comments in brackets are the additions of The Chronicle's editors in an attempt to orient the modern reader to the locales referred to by Mr. Henderson or to give the full names of the residents to whom he refers.

In taking the patient reader back into a twilight world into the dark and almost forgotten past, I do not want to be placed in the category of the butterfly who after his long life of a summer day in a tree passed away serene in the knowledge that he enjoyed seeing all of interest the world held.

I have not seen the entire world by any means, but I have seen Scottsboro intimately for more than four decades.

When I first came to Scottsboro the business part of the town was over at the old freight depot; there was no passenger station. There were four or five buildings on the now Public Square, among those the Judge M.P. Brown brick on the corner now occupied by Jordan and Skidmore, Mr. Tom Starnes store, where the Presley drugstore now stands; the Garland brick now occupied by Jones Dry Goods Company, Mr. Ab Rosson's undertaking establishment near or on the lot now occupied by the picture show; a little frame building where the Gay Hardware Company now stands and Skelton and Sons Store where the First National Bank now stands.

Mr. R.S. Skelton is the only man in business now who was in business then. Colonel R.C. Hunt and honorable J. B. Tally were partners in law and had their office in a little frame building where the Gay Hardware Store [across the street from Payne's Soda Fountain] now stands. Captain Billy Robertson and the Honorable J. E. Brown had their law office upstairs over the Garland brick [on Laurel Street, roughly where the offices of Bill Tally now stand]. Judge Nelson Kyle was probate judge and the late Judge Bridges was his clerk. W. L. Martin was the Register in Chancery, afterward Attorney General of Alabama, and Andy Skelton was sheriff.

Captain Drake ran a hotel in the house now occupied by Mr. G. B. Caldwell and Mrs. Ledbetter conducted a hotel where the old Harris Hotel once stood.

Now listen, there was not a church in the town—but saloons! Oh, my!

My father bought the old brick building back of the present Scottsboro Hardware Co. [at the corner of Caldwell and Laurel] for a church, that is, the downstairs part. I think the upstairs was owned by the Masons. Anyway, he got the downstairs part for the Methodist Church. However, it had been used as a union church by all denominations and a school building during the week.

Prof. Russell was the teacher. Rev. W. W. Dorman afterward sold the church interest in the brick building and built the present Methodist church building [the site of the current post office]. The old parsonage was not completed and my father completed it. My sister, Mrs. James Armstrong, when a girl, taught music lessons and had the parsonage painted.

I remember seeing the late Judge Coulson's father when he started building the Baptist church [at site of today's First Baptist Church on Andrews Street and burned in 1949], which has of late been remodeled into a modern and attractive structure.

An old horse cotton gin stood near where the W. L. Moody residence [at the corner of Laurel and Scott streets] now stands. There were but two buggies in Scottsboro as I remember. One owned by Judge M. P. Brown and one by Mr. Abner Rosson.

Col. John Snodgrass was the depot agent and Roderick Busby the telegraph operator. Mr. King Caldwell was the postmaster and the post office was in Dr. Payne's Drug Store which stood on the corner facing the old freight depot [at the corner of Mary Hunter Avenue and North Houston Street].

Col. Alex Snodgrass was the editor of the *Alabama Herald* and Jas. Armstrong was the editor of the *Scottsboro Citizen*.

The old business part of the town caught on fire one cold windy night a few years later [February 18, 1881] and was literally consumed. Then the building began on the square and continued from time to time.

There was not a bank in town. Of course no telephones, no waterworks, no electric lights, no talking machines, and rubber-tired buggies were unheard of, much less flying machines. No electric lights those days. If you had occasion to go to town at night you would have to take a lantern to keep from stumbling over a cow or hog lying in the path, and you would be lucky if someone did not knock your lantern out with a rock before you reached your destination. No sidewalks paved and all of the streets had trees and heavy shade along them.

Messrs. Rice and Avery Coffey were the first bankers in Scottsboro.

The roads over the county were awful until in latter years Hon. Milo Moody got a bill through the legislature for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars and started the pike building throughout the county. To him all honor is due. (It is generally understood that the bond issue by Mr. Moody was the first county on record to issue bonds to build roads, and since that time, especially during the very recent years, has this method become the main one for the building of highways. According to record, Jackson County, Ala., was the first American county to issue bonds for road building and Mr. Moody the first legislator to introduce a measure to build roads with bonds.)

John Barnett, the town marshal, had a livery stable where the Jacobs Bank now stands [the corner of Market and Laurel streets]. If you wanted to take your girl buggy riding you had to walk or go in a wagon or hack, provided you could not get Judge Brown's or Mr. Rosson's buggies.

The newspapers were printed on the old time Washington hand press, that of the *Citizen* now stands in front of the *Age* Office, and type was set by hand, picking up one letter at a time. No setting by machines. I know for it was in the old *Citizen* office where I learned to pick 'em up and it kept us busy all the week to get out two pages. Now it is common to get out twelve pages on the machine by one man.

Miss Fannie Snodgrass, daughter of Col. Alex Snodgrass, editor of the *Herald*, assisted her father and she was one of the swiftest hand compositors I ever saw. She could go to the case and set column after column without any copy, compose as she went along and not over one or two typographical errors. She afterward married Col. [Frank Ragan] King of New Orleans and was the mother of the late Lt-Commander Frank King [Jr.] of the U. S. Navy for whom the U. S. destroyer King was named in honor of his gallant deeds during the World War.

Some of the businessmen I remember were Scruggs and Fennell, Freeman and Ledbetter, Skelton and Son, W. H. Payne, Dr. Buchanan (store), Judge M. P. Brown (store), Mr. Tom Starnes (store) and others.

The practicing physicians were Dr. McCord, Dr. Buchanan and Dr. Martin, Dr. Scott and Dr. Boyd. Judge Tally is the only lawyer practicing now who was here then. Judge G. D. Campbell was another prominent lawyer of that period.

The wonderful changes that have taken place in our pretty little city have been gradual. We now have factories, mills, wholesale businesses, etc. Scottsboro is a young and growing city and cannot boast of the advantages and historic association of other and older towns in Alabama. She has no idlewilds or sunnysides made classic by the abode of genius, but is the dwelling place of a peaceful people whose hearts are ever responsive to the appeals of charity and to the calls for aid in any worthy cause.

Scottsboro is also noted for her beautiful and picturesque scenery. From some elevated spot with one broad glance one will see the amphitheater of mingled majesty and beauty, around it sweeps a zone of purple mountains seeming like distant clouds. Within are fruitful fields and scattered groves and the winding waters of the blue Tennessee.

Some people would like to go back to what they call "the good old times that are gone," and it may be that it is because they were the days of my youth, or that I am looking back through the mellowing mists of more than forty-eight years ago, that I am sometimes inclined to think that we were happier in those more primitive but less feverish times. Be that as it may, "the moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on, nor will your piety or wit shall take it back to cancel half a line nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

David Bradford and A. M. Henderson

North side of the square about 1920.

Mama's Stalwart Rebel

At this point, feeling my "Southron" identity could use some redemption, I slid down a "rabbit hole" I'd all but ignored. Yes, I set my Unionist focus aside and devoted my curiosity to a long-neglected subject: the purely Confederate past of my mother's great grandfather, Nathan Rendric Hill. He was, after all, as close a Civil War relative as I'd ever had. I soon learned he fully deserved as much interest as my Unionist ancestors. Oh, there was not a desertion scandal to liven things up, but I found Nathan's odyssey through the Western Theater---a story of combat injury and capture---was most worthy of closer study. It made me sorry I'd casually skimmed over it for so long. All the story needed was to be dusted-off, brought to light, and shared. Moreover, to go with Nathan on his journey would illuminate another swath of Civil War history. A swath that proved to be at least as expansive as that of my father's Unionist kin.

Nathan Rendric Hill. Photo posted on Findagrave by Marc Hill.

So, what had I gotten myself into here? I'd be putting my father's Unionist background up against my mother's staunchly Confederate heritage. Further, I'd be seeing if those histories overlapped in time and space, and if so, raised the enticing possibility that my parents' ancestors could have actually fought against each other. No way could I turn away from that alluring prospect. Plus, I expected a dividend, i.e. richer insight about Civil War history within the area of my birth and raising. So let's take a side trip from a different point of view, on a long Civil War march with a Northeast Alabama Good Old Rebel, who was true to the last.

The story begins in March 1862 in Talladega, Alabama. That's where the 31st Alabama Confederate Infantry Regiment was formed. Nathan R. Hill was from Cherokee County, Alabama which provided recruits to Company B of that regiment. The regiment soon turned up in Chattanooga under the command of Col. Daniel R. Hundley. But its ultimate mission was directed toward Kentucky---to bring Kentucky back into the secessionist fold, because the Federals had driven the Confederates out of the state in the early weeks of 1862. It may be recalled that my Skelton relatives were in Confederate service at Bowling Green, Kentucky early in their 1861 enlistment. By the time they'd have reported back from their measles furlough, the Yankees would have evicted their unit from Kentucky. They'd have to rejoin their unit someplace else entirely---probably around Corinth on the way to Shiloh. Corinth, by its major supply and transportation center status, had become the primary focus of Federal advance from Kentucky and across Tennessee. The Confederates fully realized what they had in Corinth, Not wanting the Yankees anywhere close, they famously forged, but failed, a preemptive stand at Shiloh in April 1862. As a side note, there'd be no brewing conflict across my family lines at this juncture. My parental relatives were on the same side---just on separate Confederate missions.

Nathan, by his presence in Col. Hundley's regiment, would be on the way to the Cumberland Gap by way of Knoxville and Tazewell, Tennessee. He probably saw action in the Battle of Tazewell and at Cumberland Gap. The 31st Alabama was by then absorbed into the Army of Tennessee and serving the objectives of Generals Kirby Smith and Braxton Bragg. The eventual goal was to drive the Yankees out of Kentucky into Ohio and recapture the hearts and minds of the Kentucky people. But Bragg unexplainably backed down in spite of multiple Smith victories, and even after he himself achieved victory at Munfordville. Union General Don C. Buell took advantage of Bragg's chronic crawfish-like tendencies right away, and again in the autumn of 1862 when he defeated Bragg at Perryville. Bragg consequently abandoned his Kentucky aspirations and went back to East Tennessee. Nathan, through all

this, had somehow lucked out and avoided serious conflict in Kentucky. Also, when Bragg resettled at Murfreesboro, Nathan's regiment was among those in Stevenson's division diverted by Jefferson Davis and Joseph Johnston to reinforce the Vicksburg area. So the 31st was spared the infamous Murfreesboro carnage at the end of the year. My Skelton kin, however, weren't so lucky. They were in the 50th Confederate Infantry still under Bragg and left to fight at Murfreesboro. But Nathan's turn for glory was still yet in coming. We next find his regiment relocated southward in the Mississippi/Louisiana area on its way to what fate awaited them at Vicksburg.

Events were heating up along the Mississippi River by the winter of 1862-63 due to Grant's serially frustrated, but unrelenting campaign to take Vicksburg. The amount of human suffering it wrought had to be enormous. It amounted to one casualty-inflicted battle after the other in a hostile, disease-ridden river marsh environment. In the course of all this, the 31st Alabama Infantry was called upon to oppose a Sherman-led assault at Chickasaw Bayou five miles north of Vicksburg. They handed General Sherman (and therefore Grant) a decided defeat. Following a total of six other tries, Grant finally settled upon his famous circuitous tactic launched from the Mississippi River south of Vicksburg. Here again, we find the 31st called upon to oppose Grant---this time at Port Gibson. So one has to assume Nathan would have seen serious action at both Chickasaw Bayou and Port Gibson. As another side note, while all this was going on, my Skelton relatives were on the cusp of a major decision. Thoroughly discouraged in the aftermath of Stone's River under the inept leadership of Braxton Bragg, desertion was heavily on their minds.

Back in Mississippi, Grant prevailed to reach Jackson and cut off the Confederate supply line to Vicksburg from the Mississippi capital. General John Pemberton, who commanded the forces at Vicksburg, sent out an expedition to intercept Grant's advance on the road from Jackson to Vicksburg. He tried to make a stand at Champion's Hill near the Baker's Creek Bridge. This is where we can clearly establish Nathan Hill's presence again. He is documented to have sustained injury to his right hand in that battle. He, along with his retreating regiment, subsequently fell back into the fortress at Vicksburg to endure what followed: the ordeal of starvation and artillery bombardment during the Siege of Vicksburg.

On July 4, 1863 Nathan was among the host of Confederates captured and paroled when Pemberton surrendered Vicksburg to Grant. Nathan's regiment was transported to Enterprise, Mississippi and furloughed with orders to return for reassembly at the parolee camp at Demopolis, Alabama. Significantly, Nathan did not use the furlough opportunity to desert as did many of his comrades. Considering all Nathan had been through, one might wish for his career as a soldier to mercifully end at that point. But that was not to be. After return to Demopolis he was exchanged to fight another day under the Stars and Bars.

The circle had been unbroken. Nathan R. Hill was back in Chattanooga after leaving Demopolis by the autumn of 1863. So here's the situation awaiting Nathan on return. The Rock of Chickamauga, General George Thomas, had replaced Rosecrans and wanted to take up where he'd left off against the Rebels after he famously resisted their victory at Chickamauga. At the same time, Joseph Hooker was eager to prove to the world he could do the impossible and drive the Confederates off Lookout Mountain. That was the explosive scenario Nathan came back to find himself in. Yes, he was back into the thick of battle, being thrust into the Chattanooga campaign under the regimental command of Edmond W. Pettus. Nathan by then merited battle-tested veteran status, which was so valued and so rare due to attrition and desertion by that time in the war. His talents would not have been wasted in some noncombatant role.

So that brings up the very real possibility---that my father's Unionist relative and my mother's Confederate relative turned up opposite each other in combat. We, as above, have established that Nathan would be on the Confederate firing lines. We know that by the time in question, the autumn of 1863, two of my Skelton relatives had deserted and were in the Union Army in the 1st Tennessee and Alabama Vidette Cavalry. We also know that the Vidette Cavalry functioned in the area around

Chattanooga at that time. Could we therefore speculate that one or more of my Skelton kin could have engaged in battle against Nathan? The answer to that provocative question is yes.

All that remains to be determined is whether one of my Skelton kin could have served in a combat role in the Chattanooga Campaign. William C. Skelton, my closest Unionist relative would not be a candidate, because he was captured at Hunts Mill before the Chattanooga Campaign occurred. That leaves Samuel G. Skelton. He was assigned to General John W. Geary as his orderly. General Geary was extremely active in the Chattanooga Campaign, even losing his officer-ranked son, who died in his arms at Wauhatchie. There's reason to believe that Samuel would have been right there with General Geary in the thick of battle. That means that Samuel and Nathan could easily have been opposite each other, at least at Lookout Mountain and maybe Missionary Ridge. Also, for that matter, General Geary was very active in the Atlanta Campaign. Was my Unionist relative still assigned as his orderly there? We can't be sure. But Nathan was surely present in that campaign and available for his part in an opponent's role.

Samuel G. Skelton in Union Uniform.
Photo from Connie Stevenson.

No doubt about it, Nathan R. Hill's struggles did not end at Chattanooga or Missionary Ridge. His story from there coincides with the hundred days of the Atlanta Campaign. Yes, in the Army of Tennessee, he even outlasted Braxton Bragg who was finally replaced by Joseph Johnston after the Missionary Ridge defeat. Nathan would have gone on to know Rocky Face Ridge at Dalton, then Resaca, Cassville, and New Hope Church among other famous conflicts southward on the course of the Western and Atlantic Railroad . He'd have been subject to the serial flanking maneuvers, imposed by William Sherman against Joseph Johnston to effect a slow Confederate retreat toward Atlanta. He'd have been around when Leonidas Polk was killed at Pine Mountain, and he'd have joined with his comrades in bemoaning the replacement of Joseph Johnston by John Hood after the Kennesaw Mountain Battle.

Ah yes, Kennesaw Mountain---where Sherman changed tactics from his previous flanking maneuvers and mounted a near-suicidal frontal assault---and "hell broke loose just north of Marietta."

The above quote comes from the vivid representation of the Kennesaw scene from Don Oja-Dunaway's song "The Kennesaw Line." The poignant ballad is based on Sam Watkins' account of his mess mate, Walter Hood, being shot and killed at the famous battle. That song paints a graphic picture of what those men went through in that desperate battle. In listening to the song by any of several artists, expect a rush of chill bumps (my favorite is Bobby Horton's rendition). In a similar vein for me, its lyrics generate a chilling image of Nathan's ordeal as it approached a final climax. What follows is an excerpt from the song that I think represents its feeling and illustrates my point:

Sammy, I think I'm been hurt real bad.
Ain't this a hell of a day
You'd best go and leave me be now.
I think I need time to pray.
Well you know how bad I been wantin' to go home
I couldn't see rightly how.
Colonel Field ain't gonna have a choice this time
I think I'm gonna get my furlough now. (Oja-Dunaway)

It was in this battle-heated setting that Nathan too, once again, fell victim to a Yankee's aim. He was listed as wounded on July 20, 1864 which corresponds to the date of the Battle of Peachtree Creek. This time his wounds were more extensive. Serious wounds were described to his right upper arm and to his right side. There may have been complications, because he was admitted to the Ocmulgee Confederate Hospital at Macon, Georgia as late as September 28, 1864. Yet, unlike Walter Hood, he survived and was soon furloughed to his home of earthly abode on October 1, 1864. That may have effectively amounted to his discharge. By that time he was too disabled to fight.

This disability plagued Nathan the rest of his life. His postwar paper trail is one of application after application for an Alabama relief pension. That which he finally received was a mere pittance: $12.16 a quarter starting in 1889! That brings up an obvious but disturbing fact: You can't get a veteran's pension from an eradicated national government. The privileges a veteran deserves for service to a country can only be realized if that country survives to grant it. What an injustice it is for a soldier to suffer so much, deserving compensation, only to get nothing, because the national government he fought for ends up defunct.

Political awareness of that injustice did exist after the war in the former Confederate States, and as in Nathan's case, eventually resulted in some form of state-provided veteran benefits. As would be expected, the benefits compared poorly with those that the victorious Union provided its veterans, and the state programs were shamefully slow in coming. The Federal pensions actually started during the war, early as 1862. In contrast, except for limb prosthesis grants, Confederate veterans and widows couldn't expect compensation until as late as 1889, as we've seen in Nathan's case.

Yes, Nathan fell victim to a loser's misfortune, and my Confederate Reed relative, William Benton, suffered similar hardship. The most I could find about William was that his widow made application for an Alabama pension based on his dying ten years after he contracted a chronic, fatal disease in the war. My empathy and curiosity about all this led to a frank but disturbing realization: Here was yet another strong argument in favor of the desertion that my Skelton Unionists pursued. They, after all, ultimately qualified for decent Federal pensions and were even granted Vidette Cavalry tombstones.

Okay, so there's an awful lot to think about here. It's only what I should have expected from snooping into the lives of my multi-oriented family members during that complicated war. There's so many ways human life can be contorted by such turmoil that close to home. One can almost feel it when its identified with kin. Anyway, after all is considered, I'm left certain of this: I'm proud to be the great-great grandson of two Good Old Rebels, Nathan Rendric Hill, and William Benton Reed. And with equal assurance, I'm every bit as proud to claim my Skelton kinship---varied loyalty and all. I can only admire those guys, Rebels and Homemade Yankees alike, for what they went through. Moreover, I'm grateful to them for the gift they've willed me ... all they've generously taught me about that horrible war and the awful period in our nation's history they had to endure.

Dr. James Reed

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W. R. McCamy, Columbia SC
Rabon, McCormack, Scottsboro
Hilda, McCoy, Stevenson
Stan, McCoy, Stevenson
* Ted McCoy, Stevenson
Tom McCrary, Hoover
Jeff McCrary, Jasper TN
* Debbie McCrary, Scottsboro
Brenda McCrary, Stevenson
* Charles E. McCutchen, Waverly Hall GA
James and Nancy McDonough, Franklin TN
T. C. McFerrin, Plano TX
Toni and David McGriff, Dutton
Sue McLaughlin, Madison
Larkin McMillan, Fort Worth TX
Britt Meeks, Langston
Hooshang & Louise Moghani, Scottsboro
* Ann Moody, Scottsboro
Joe and Gail Moore, Scottsboro
Garry Morgan, Scottsboro
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NACC Archives Rainsville
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Debra Fossett O'Neal, Scottsboro
* Margaret Ogram, Hayden ID
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Jim Olyniec, Scottsboro
Marie Osmer, Gurley
Charlene M. Pace, Scottsboro
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Steve Patrick, Madison
Amy McCamy Patterson, Scottsboro
Gerald R. Paulk, Scottsboro
Alan Payne, Bridgeport
Hunter Payne, Birmingham
George Hunter Payne, Huntsville
John Clark Pepper, Scottsboro
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Traci Phillips, Scottsboro
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Thomas Raispis, Charlotte NC
Dr. Christopher Raispis, Charleston SC
John Raispis, Charleston SC
Andrew Raispis, Scottsboro
Stanley Raispis, Hustonville KY
Dr. James Reed, Hoover
* Sudie Reed, Jasper
* Marilyn Morris Reed, Scottsboro
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Ellen Richardson, Salem OR
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Andy Skelton, Scottsboro
Robert H. Skelton, Blue Ridge, GA
Bunnie Bradford Smith, High Point NC
Ellie Smith, Scottsboro
Dr. Charles & Carolyn Lewis Smith, Orange Beach AL
Barbara J. Snow, Guntersville
Lynn Snyder, Chattanooga TN
* Gary and Kim Speers, Scottsboro
* Jane Stedman, Scottsboro
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Paul and Connie Stevenson, Scottsboro
Jennine H. Stewart, Madison GA
Patrick Stewart, Scottsboro
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. D. Strain, Huntsville
Carroll C. Strickland, Huntsville
Marilyn B. Sullivan, Greensboro
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Jeanne Williams, Hollywood
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The Jackson County Chronicles

Volume 35, Number 2

In this issue:

Editor: Annette Norris Bradford
Associate Editor: David Bradford

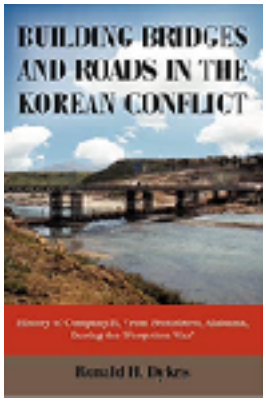
April Meeting: The Jackson County Historical Association will meet **Sunday April 30, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at Fernwood,** the Claude and Veda Spivey home at 517 South Scott Street in Scottsboro. John and Donna Cleveland, the current owners of the home, invited the JCHA to hold a meeting in their historic home. John Cleveland and Anthony Genaro, the Spiveys' great grandson, will talk about the family and the history of the house. *Chronicles* Editor Annette Bradford will talk about Spivey history and the house in its first 50 years. When the formal meeting is over, John will take small groups to tour the home while refreshments prepared by the Fernwood staff are served in the garden. Spend a pleasant spring day learning about this historic home.

Red Sharp Inducted into Alabama Racing Pioneers Hall of Fame: Joseph Oakley "Red" Sharp was honored on January 14, 2023, in Talladega as one of the 2023 inductees into the Alabama Racing Pioneers Hall of Fame. Previous inductees include Bobby Allison, Davey Allison, Donnie Allison, Clifford Allison, Neil Bonnett, and Red Farmer. Jackson County is proud of its multi-talented native son. David Bradford wrote about Red Sharp in January 2018, and Dicky Holder portrayed him on the 2019 Cedar Hill Cemetery Stroll.

Jackson County Sports Hall of Fame Inductees 2022: These citizens were inducted into the JC Sports Hall of Fame in January 2023: Scottsboro and University of Alabama football player Mike Williamson; Scottsboro and UAH track and field star Andrew Hodges; Scottsboro track and field and cheer coach Beth McNutt; Scottsboro basketball player and official Donald Cotten; sports contributor Robbie Copenhaver; Pisgah basketball star Billy Bridges; Section basketball coach Jeff Kirkland; Section basketball standout Didi (Wilson) Barron; Scottsboro basketball star Nita (Craft) Tolliver; Pisgah and University of Alabama basketball star Tommy Turner; and Pisgah baseball coach Dwight Griffith.

Dr. Ron Dykes Presented Second JCHA Founders Medal

A reception honoring Ron and Jane Dykes as they leave Scottsboro and move permanently to Tuscaloosa was held Sunday afternoon, March 26 at the Scottsboro Public Library, sponsored by the library and the Jackson County Historical Association.



Both the library and the JCHA recognize the value of their long association with the Dykeses and the numerous contributions the couple made to Jackson County during their 43 years as residents. Dr. Dykes practiced general medicine in Scottsboro for several years before expanding his practice into pathology. He practiced out of a lab at the Jackson County Hospital and also served Redstone Arsenal with Jane acting as his courier. He retired in 1999 and turned his talents to writing and serving as chairman of the Library Board.

Ron and Jane Dykes lent their enthusiasm and expertise to the fledgling Jackson County Historical Association starting in 1980 when Jane was named to the newly formed Jackson County Museum Commission. In 1982, she served on the first Heritage Center Board when the group was raising funds and coordinating activities that led to the 1985 opening of the Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center. Busy with his practice, Ron retired in 1999 and published his first history book in 1999 about Jane's father, a Birmingham judge, titled *James O. Haley: Lawyer, Judge, Teacher, Advocate*.

In August 1999, Ron began researching his first Jackson County book, *Growing Up Hard: Memories of Jackson County, Alabama in the Early Twentieth Century*. The book focused on the early lives of eight elderly county residents who were reared and spent the majority of their lives in Jackson County. This popular book was featured in the *Alabama Review* and sold out soon after it was written.

In 2000 and 2001, Ron was chairman of the Scottsboro Library Board of Trustees and set up the Robert E. (Bob) Jones Symposiums, where monthly speakers discussed local history topics during the first quarter of both years.

The *Chronicles* records that it was Ron Dykes in 2001 who first suggested that a Scottsboro Boys Historical Marker needed to be created. When Ron, along with John Graham and Archie Stewart, unveiled the marker in January 2004, the event drew national attention.

In 2005, Ron published his second *Jackson County book, Fighting the Just War: Military Experiences of Jackson County, Alabama, Residents in World War II* based on interviews with the county's veterans. He discussed this book in the January 2006 JCHA meeting at the Scottsboro Library, which featured World War II veterans and their families.

In 2006, Ron was part of a volunteer group focused on preserving the Scottsboro Freight Depot and turning it into a museum, which opened with regular hours on July 2012.

In 2010, Ron completed his third Jackson County book, *Building Bridges and Roads in the Korean Conflict: History of Company B. From Scottsboro, Alabama During the "Forgotten War,"* a book that remembered and recorded the men of 151 Combat Engineers Battalion. The veterans of this war were JCHA special guests at Ron's presentation and autograph party at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in July 2010.

In October 2012, Ron published his fourth Jackson County book, "*They Wouldn't Let Us Win:" Jackson County, Alabama Veterans Relive the Vietnam War,"* applying his incisive questioning style to interviews with 15 of the county's Vietnam veterans. He dedicated the book to "every soldier who served in the Vietnam War." The stories of many of the county's veterans would

have gone untold without Ron's compassionate interview skills and publishing expertise.

Dr. Ronald H. Dykes was born in Smuteye in Bullock County, Alabama on October 2, 1938, the older of two children of Allen H. Dykes and Alma Long. He graduated, he tells us, in the top 20% of his high school class—in fact, he was the top 20% of his small graduating class. He attended college at the University of Alabama, graduating in chemistry and working for a time in New Orleans as a chemist.

Ron scored high on a medical school aptitude test, and soon found himself in medical school at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. While in medical school, he met Birmingham native Jane Haley on a blind date at the Upside Down Plaza. They married in 1965.

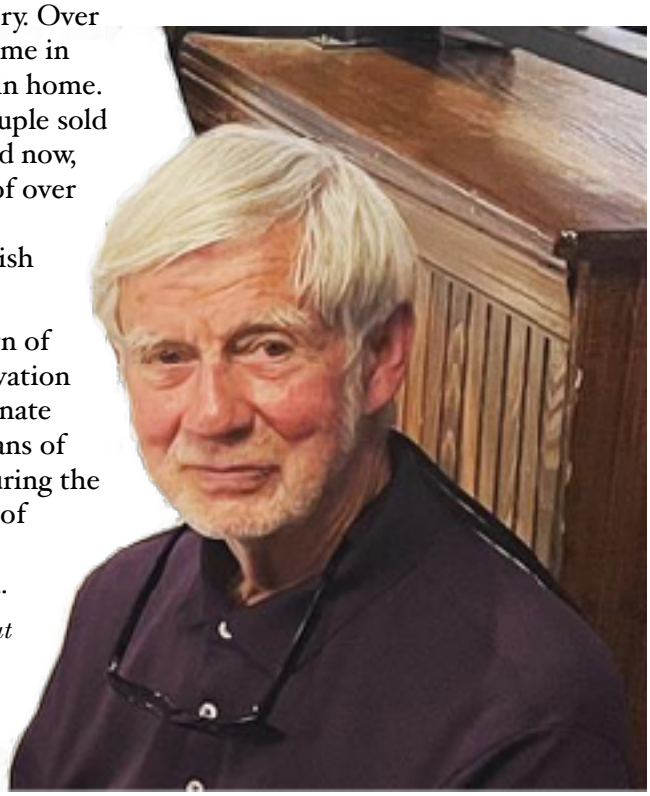
Ron's medical training made him very attractive to the Army, and he entered service as a captain for two years during the Vietnam war, providing medical support for a highly secretive group tracking satellites in New Hampshire. After his time in the service, Ron and Jane moved to Chapel Hill for pathology training and on to the University of Vermont in Burlington. Their son Toby was born there. Toby was only six weeks old when the family left Vermont for a year in Iowa City where Ron was on the faculty.

After Iowa, Ron and Jane moved back to New Hampshire briefly. But they wanted to raise their son in the South, so they moved to Montgomery. They lived there for three years.

When Toby was in the 2nd grade, the family moved to Scottsboro and lived on the Green farm while their home on July Mountain was being built. Ron took an active role in designing and building the July Mountain house, and the family moved there in 1982.

Ron and Jane's son Toby grew up and graduated from Randolph School in Huntsville, followed by four years at Bates College in Maine. He attended Cumberland Law School where Jane's father was on the faculty. Today, Toby serves as University Counsel for the University of Alabama System and is married to Melanie Brown. The couple has three children.

Ron retired in 1999 and began the work for which we in the historical association know him best—writing about Jackson County history. Over the last 20 years, the couple has divided their time between a home in Vestavia Hills near their son and his family and the July Mountain home. Recently, when Toby and his family moved to Tuscaloosa, the couple sold their home in Vestavia and bought a residence in Tuscaloosa. And now, weary of maintaining two residences, they are shaking the dust of over 40 years in Scottsboro and moving full time to their home in Tuscaloosa. While Jackson County is sorry to see them go, we wish them the best and celebrate the time they gave our county.



Ron and Jane Dykes leave Jackson County with a rich legacy born of their time and talent. They were part of every significant preservation effort in the county for the last 43 years. Through his compassionate interview style, Ron captured the words and stories of the veterans of three wars and the hardships of residents who "grew up hard" during the Depression. The time they willingly devoted to the codification of Jackson County history is appreciated by historians and library patrons who benefit from their work. They will be sorely missed.

"Growing Up Hard" and and "Fighting the Just War" are out of print but can be downloaded from the JCHA website: www.jchaweb.org/downloads. "Building Bridges and Roads in the Korean Conflict" can be bought from the Heritage Center. "They Wouldn't Let Us Win" can be bought in hardcopy or paperback from Amazon or Barnes & Noble.

For the Love of a House, Part Two

Last *Chronicles*, we included Tony Curtis' story of how he came to love the Samuel B. Kirby house in Little Rock. We are sad to report that Tony died on January 14, living only six months after his June diagnosis of "butterfly" glioblastoma, an aggressive and fatal form of brain cancer. I can say about Tony what I can say about few people: my dealings with him over the last five years have brought me nothing but joy and I am sad to report that he has died. Here is his obituary by Dwain Hebda from the January 16 *Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette*:

Tony Randall Curtis, Sheridan native and longtime real estate broker, advocated for historic districts

Longtime real estate broker Tony Curtis always believed the soul of a place lies in its history. For decades, the Sheridan native was an outspoken advocate for revitalizing Little Rock's seminal neighborhoods and a valued resource for those he'd led back into the city's core.

Curtis died Jan. 14 after a months-long battle with brain cancer, surrounded by friends who remembered his kindness, his unique personality and his unwavering love for people.

"Tony had the most loving and generous and thoughtful, kind spirit," said Donna Kirkwood of Little Rock, a downtown resident who'd known Curtis for a decade. "Everybody has a Tony story. It's interesting to get together and people would say, 'How do you know Tony? What's your story?'"

Curtis, owner of Tony Curtis Realtors, did more than just deal in historic properties during his career. He'll forever be remembered for his love affair with the Samuel B. Kirby House, his personal residence at 1221 S. Louisiana St. in downtown Little Rock.

Curtis' connection to the property came via his grandmother who lived there from 1958 to 1965 after it was apportioned into apartments. His parents also lived there for a short time right after they were married. When Curtis moved to Little Rock in 1987, he was dismayed to see the condition of the house had deteriorated into a hovel for drug addicts and prostitutes.

According to a 2021 *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* article, Curtis spent five years taking it upon himself to secure and clean up the property, ultimately purchasing it in 1992. He'd sell it in 1995 only to buy it back in 1999 and meticulously restore it to its former 1890s glory.

"Tony came to us years ago and had ideas of what he wanted on the roof of his home," said Mary Bray, a longtime friend and owner of Bray Sheet Metal Company in Little Rock. "He had a vision and he really had a way of getting things across about the way he wanted things done. He turned that house into the most magnificent home in downtown Little Rock, as far as I'm concerned."

The project took 20 years and untold sums of his own money to complete, but as longtime friend Kris Faul Romàn of Kansas City said, the personal connection Curtis had to the property would never let him walk away from it.

"There are pictures of him in that house as a baby with his grandmother," she said. "When he came upon it years later and he saw it, he was just distraught. He knew that it needed to be redone. He'll be remembered as being responsible for restoring downtown Little Rock. He gave everything to that."

Tony Randall Curtis was born May 24, 1965, to Jessie and Linda (Outlaw) Curtis. He graduated from Sheridan High School in 1983 and, after a string of jobs in retail, left for Texas in 1995 for a career in real estate. There, he met Jim Leveritt, who helped him launch his firm, Tony Curtis and Associates, and who was his life partner for 12 years. The couple moved back to Little Rock in the early 2000s.

Curtis' business, from then on known as Tony Curtis Realtors, specialized in historic properties, and his love for history led him to promote various residential districts in the name of revitalization. He was a vocal proponent of expanding the Hanger Hill Historic District, one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, and he helped countless buyers relocate back into the city's core.

His untiring advocacy and a lifetime dedicated to protecting Little Rock's historical neighborhoods led the city of Little Rock last year to proclaim Dec. 21 Tony Curtis Day.

"He had such an interest in history," said Kay Tatum of Little Rock, who knew Curtis for two decades. "To him it wasn't just the nuts and bolts and things that put a house together, it was the history. You never really own a house downtown, you are the current caretakers, because that original family, that history, was such a part of the house."

Curtis frequently opened his beloved home to host various events and parties, the last being the Winter Solstice Celebration in December for neighbors and friends. And in the dawning minutes of Jan. 14, Curtis was yet again at one with the home he loved so much.

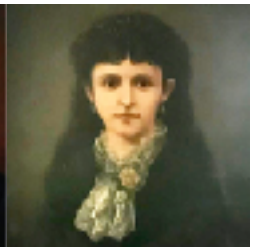
"His house number is 1221 and he passed at 12:21 a.m., I kid you not," said Leveritt. "I mean, when they called the time of death, we were standing all around him going, 'That can't be right. Could it?' It was."

Tony's relationship with the Kirby house started literally before he was born. "My parents were here briefly after they were married so I was more than likely conceived here," says Curtis, who was born in May 1965 and grew up in Sheridan, AR.

In the January 2023 *Chronicles*, Tony told us the story of his grandmother's time in the house and his status as the only child in a house full of loving, indulgent surrogate grandparents. Since Tony died in January, he cannot tell this story himself, but the end of the Kirby House story is the best part and I don't want you to miss it.

From newspaper articles and Tony's "Samuel B. Kirby House" FaceBook page, I constructed the timeline below and pulled photos from his FaceBook page. This is a poor substitute. I cannot capture the time and care he took in this restoration and the way he beamed when he showed the house to friends and family—or his quirky, exuberant personality and the joy he found in reaching out to the descendants of the house's families. "It changed my life coming here," he told a reporter in 2005. "'It really did."

Timeline

1848: Samuel Bowman Kirby born in Marshall County, Alabama

1875: Sam Kirby marries Dovie Skelton of Scottsboro and they move to Little Rock. Their first child, a son Sammie, was born in 1876 and died the next year.

1887-78: Samuel Kirby and his wife Dovie build a grand residence at 1221 South Louisiana Street in Little Rock.


1894: Dovie reads her sister Annie's mail and discovers her sister's affair with a married man. She telegraphs her brothers, and they murder Annie's married lover.

1895: Dovie dies, survived by her two young sons.

1896: Sam marries Fredrika Niemeyer.

1905: Samuel B. Kirby dies. The house gets out of family control.

1958-1992: The Kirby House is divided into five units and known as Clise Apartments.

1958: Clara Cole, Tony's grandmother, rents Apartment 1 in the Clise Apartments and makes a number of close friends.

1965: Tony's parents live for a time in the Clise Apartments, probably conceiving Tony while living there. Tony is born in Sheridan, AR. Clara moves out of Apartment 1.

1965-1973: Tony and his grandmother visit her friends at Clise Apartments, Tony's beloved house full of surrogate grandparents. The last of her friends move out.

1973-1983: Kirby House changes hands among "slum landlords" in the 1980s, and the house becomes overrun with prostitutes and drug dealers.

1984: Kirby House and the adjacent apartment building are auctioned on an "any offer considered regardless of price" basis. The property goes into foreclosure.

1987: Young Tony moves to Little Rock and is an assistant manager at Target. He drives by Clise Apartments and finds the building empty, unlocked, overrun with vagrants, and in foreclosure. He takes his grandmother back to the house and both are sad and appalled.

1987-1992: Tony looks after the house even though he cannot buy it. He puts padlocks on the doors and cleans up the yard. Rescuing the Kirby House becomes the focal point of Tony's career. He learns about Capitol Zoning laws and tax credits. He goes to work for a real estate brokerage company that focuses on saving old houses. He eventually gets his real estate license.

1992: Tony buys the Kirby House.

1995: He sells the house to a couple who want to restore it, but the repairs are more than the couple can manage.

1999: Tony buys the house back. Restoration is costly and time consuming.

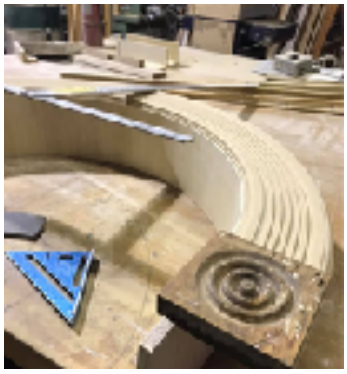
2005: The city waged a sign campaign to embarrass homeowners of abandoned properties into cleaning and fixing up their houses. A news conference was scheduled at his house, but it was postponed after Curtis told city officials he had building permits in place and was in the process of restoring the house.

2005-2019: Tony rehabilitates the house. He ensures that the renovations are true to the way the house looked in 1890s. He discovers original color pallets and hires craftsmen to recreate the pieces he needs to restore the home. For example, he finds one surviving baluster for the grand entryway staircase, and has new ones turned using this model. He has new exterior metal crowns copied, manufactured, and installed.

Tony researches the Kirbys and other former owners. He discovers old photographs of former residents and sends them to China to be painted as portraits. They hang in many rooms and stairwells of the three-story mansion. He has also welcomed descendants of former owners to the house. His first "welcome home" party was in 2019. He held a second "family gathering" in 2021.

Tony dreamed that one day his house would become a museum where people could learn more about genealogical research. We wait until Tony's estate is settled hoping his life's work survives.

"I don't know. You know, I've owned it a bit longer than Sam Kirby did. So I don't know. I really just don't know."



Grand Army of the Republic

Imagine an American Legion chapter in post-war Iraq. "You've gotta be kidding," would be the appropriate response. Okay then, how about a Yankee Veteran organization in Reconstruction Alabama? Just about as improbable, right? Well, it might come as a surprise ... several such chapters did exist in Alabama during the Reconstruction years. The name of the organization was the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) and was initially conceived in 1866 in Decatur, Illinois. As one might expect, it went on to proliferate rapidly in the Northern States. Its popularity there is easy to understand, as it served the Union Veterans in so many ways: e.g. pension acquisition, death benefit promotion, and perhaps, just as importantly, it provided a place for fellowship and camaraderie similar to what American Legion and V.F.W. members enjoy today.

Even though the vast majority of G.A.R. posts were in the North, the "Homemade Yankees" of the South didn't want to be left out of G.A.R. benefits. In Alabama, for example, there were eventually 21 posts. As might be expected by virtue of North Alabama's Unionist history, the Alabama posts tended to concentrate in the Tennessee Valley region of the State. Huntsville had a very active post, as did Florence and Decatur. In fact, G.A.R. posts reached down to include Birmingham, and there is a striking G.A.R. obelisk in the Oak Hill Cemetery memorializing eleven Union veteran graves close to it and fifteen others throughout the cemetery. Not surprisingly, vandals targeted the obelisk in the 1930's, knocking down and smashing the eagle that adorned the top. Another report maintains that the obelisk suffered abuse again in 1991. But the attitude to its presence hadn't always been that bad. Its dedication on April 27, 1891 coincided with a Confederate Veterans' memorial decoration event. The Confederate Veterans decorated not only their fallen comrades' graves, but also the Union graves in the cemetery. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War have restored the obelisk in recent times, and at the time of this writing, it remains intact.

Intriguing as all this might be, I'm most enthralled by the fact that a G.A.R. post existed in Larkinsville, Alabama as chartered on October 15, 1888. In fact, as shown in the accompanying picture, my relative, Samuel G. Skelton, enjoyed acceptance on that day as a charter member, based on his ultimate service in the 1st Tennessee and Alabama Union Vidette Cavalry. That documentation, thanks to direct descendant, Ms. Connie Collins Stevenson, puts a finishing touch on my Skelton family Unionist history. It is also rather telling that Samuel G. Skelton's picture sported a Union uniform and rifle, and the paper that describes his honorable discharge declares his ultimate Union affiliation. I'm betting somewhere there is similar documentation for William C. Skelton, but it hasn't turned up for me yet.

Samuel G. Skelton with Union uniform and rifle (image somehow reversed). Courtesy of Connie Collins Stevenson.

Indeed, the presence of several G.A.R. posts in North Alabama reenforces the concept that significant Unionist sympathy existed broadly over that part of the state. Then did a G.A.R. post garner civic pride in Reconstruction Jackson County, Alabama? No ... I wouldn't propose that for a second. In fact, it may have gotten off to a rough start. It began as Post 75 under the Department of Tennessee and Georgia shortly after the war. But Nathan Bedford Forrest and his Ku Klux Klan did not care for the G.A.R. and banned it in Tennessee, hence no more Department of Tennessee and Georgia. Even Larkinsville with some Unionist sentiment didn't re-establish a G.A.R. post until December 14, 1888 under a provisional Department of Georgia and Alabama (later just Department of Alabama). In the course of all this Post 75 somehow became Post 4. Larkinsville was not among the 7 surviving Alabama posts in 1907.

Samuel G. Skelton's G.A.R. Certificate confirming his honorable discharge from the United States Army. Courtesy of Connie Collins Stevenson.

It's no stretch to suspect G.A.R. attendance carried some risk, but the atmosphere may not have been as hostile as one might expect. The very existence of, and tolerance for, a G.A.R. chapter at Larkinsville supports a significant element of Unionist sympathy there. After all, Larkinsville did muster a company of Union vidette cavalry in 1863, which two of my family members undoubtedly joined---now proved conclusively by, of all things, a very illuminating G.A.R document.

Dr. James Reed

Tree Dedicated in Memory of Ann Barbee Chambless

The Scottsboro Tree Commission dedicated a tree this last Arbor Day on February 21 in honor of Jackson County Historical Association founder Ann Barbee Chambless. Speakers for the event included Jennifer Petty, Heritage Center Director; Donna Greer, Scottsboro Tree Commission; Susan Fisher, former JCHA President; and Judge John Graham, who serves on the JCHA Board. The family was represented by Ann's sister, Martha Barbee Hess.

The JCHA meeting last July celebrated Ann's role as co-founder (with Christine Sumner) of the organization. So much of what we know about our county comes from Ann's years of research and synthesis, and her 41 years of producing the *Jackson County Chronicles*. Thank you, Martha Smith of the *Clarion* newspaper, for letting us all experience this event through your photos.

Susan Fisher, former JCHA president, and Donna Greer of the Scottsboro Tree

L to R, Donna Greer and Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Center Director Jennifer Petty; the group attending the event; Judge John Graham; and the plaque on Ann's tree.

Birth of Telephone Service in Jackson County

The arrival of phone service in Jackson County was anything but a smooth, easy delivery. It was filled with hopes and dreams, fits and starts, and money made and money lost. As early as 1887, the telephone made the *Stevenson Chronicle*'s list of the country's 15 most impressive inventions, though as position 15, well behind the cotton gin, the steam engine, and artificial ice-making. (*SC*, Nov 1, 1887) In 1892, the *Stevenson Chronicle* reported, "the largest telephone switchboard in the world" was located in "Berlin, Germany, where 7000 wires are connected with the main office." Perhaps Europe was so far ahead of the U.S. because they were not hampered by U.S. patent restrictions. (*SC*, Aug 9, 1892). It is little wonder the citizens of Scottsboro felt so abused!

James Armstrong, the editor of the *Scottsboro Citizen*, was bursting at the seams and doing his best to work Jackson County residents into a fit of telephone mania. He reported everyone else getting phone service. Gadsden was connected to Rome, he reported on August 26, 1886, and Anniston to Talladega on September 2. Why, the brand new phone service in Decatur had 54 subscribers by September 1887, and Huntsville had achieved a technological miracle by January 1888—they had strung phone lines from Huntsville to Whitesburg across the Tennessee River. Several Jackson Countians would attempt this feat at the closest point between the two shores, Larkin's Landing, already the site of a ferry. "The telephone gives Guntersville direct communication with the outside world," Armstrong taunted in July 1889. Why was Jackson County not up to the task?

On May 9, 1889, Armstrong reported that "John T. McClendon, of Atlanta, W. M. Gunter, of Bridgeport, and J. E. Brown, of Scottsboro are going to build a telephone line between Scottsboro and Guntersville. King and George Caldwell have been given the contract to do the work. We hope that this piece of enterprise will be the starting point in Scottsboro's future."

Keeping the hope alive, Armstrong reported the weekly progress with the dedication of a play-by-play announcer. "The telephone working squad were half way to Guntersville with the erection of poles on Saturday," he reported on June 6. "The telephone poles are all up and an expert has been employed to put up the wire," was the progress report on June 20. But the progress hit a snag when it was time to cross the river. "The telephone line between this place and Guntersville will probably be completed next week," Armstrong reported optimistically on June 27. "The wire will span the river at Larkins Landing, from a pole on each bank one hundred feet high."

Jerry Gist in his 1968 *History of Scottsboro, Alabama* dates the first telephone exchange in Scottsboro at May, 1889, accomplished by Jessie Edward Brown. "George Caldwell was given a contract to construct a telephone line from Scottsboro to Guntersville, a distance of twenty-eight miles. First service to Guntersville was on July 24, 1889," he wrote.

By 1893, the editor of the *Stevenson Chronicle* regularly complained about lack of phone service in Stevenson. "We second the motion made by the News for a telephone line between Bridgeport, Stevenson, and Scottsboro," the paper wrote on April 11, 1893. A year later, nothing had been done, though the *Stevenson Chronicle* said on February 6, 1894 that Stevenson should be connected by telephone to Huntsville in the next few weeks. But there were still no residential phones.

Bridgeport had phone service just two years later, ahead of Stevenson and northeastern Sand Mountain locations in the county. According to Dennis Lambert, Bridgeport had telephone service in 1891. Frank J. Kilpatrick, the mayor, had the first phone. Nearby South Pittsburg, Tennessee had service in 1888, Dennis recalls.

Early phones were not entirely satisfactory and the poles that went up along the sidewalk on the square were decidedly unattractive. "The first week a man has a telephone in his office he is apt to have the yeller fever badly," the *Boston Bulletin* quipped in August 1893.

With Scottsboro wired to the outside world, the rest of the county was anxious to follow. “Bridgeport, Stevenson, and Scottsboro should be added to the list of towns to be connected by telephone to Huntsville in the next few weeks,” Armstrong reported on February 8, 1893.

In 1894, the *Progressive Age* ran a story stating that the 17 years of exclusivity of the Bell patent for the magnet telephone expired, placing, *Harper's Weekly* wrote, “a very useful piece of mechanism at the free disposal of American householders.” Wikipedia's history of the telephones states that the U.S. could become the world leader in number of telephones “ with the rise of many independent telephone companies after the Bell patents expired in 1893 and 1894.” The *Citizen* story on March 21, 1895 celebrated Mobile's new telephone system, noting that the patent expiration “has had the effect of bringing into existence telephone companies in many southern cities.”

The multiplicity of lines and equipment that followed this patent expiration was both good and bad for the development of a national telephone network. The Alabama legislature could not decide what agency should control telephone proliferations, and proposed in December 1896 that “all telegraph, telephones, and express companies in Alabama” be placed “under the supervision of the Railroad Commission,” a story in the *Scottsboro Citizen* stated. The emphasis in north Alabama was on connecting cities in Alabama with phone lines. Gadsden and Centre were joined (*SC*, December 3, 1896) By January 1897, “Gadsden has been put into telephonic communication with the small towns contiguous to her by the Alabama and Georgia Long Distance Company,” the *Stevenson Chronicle* explained, “and as a result her trade has appreciably grown.”

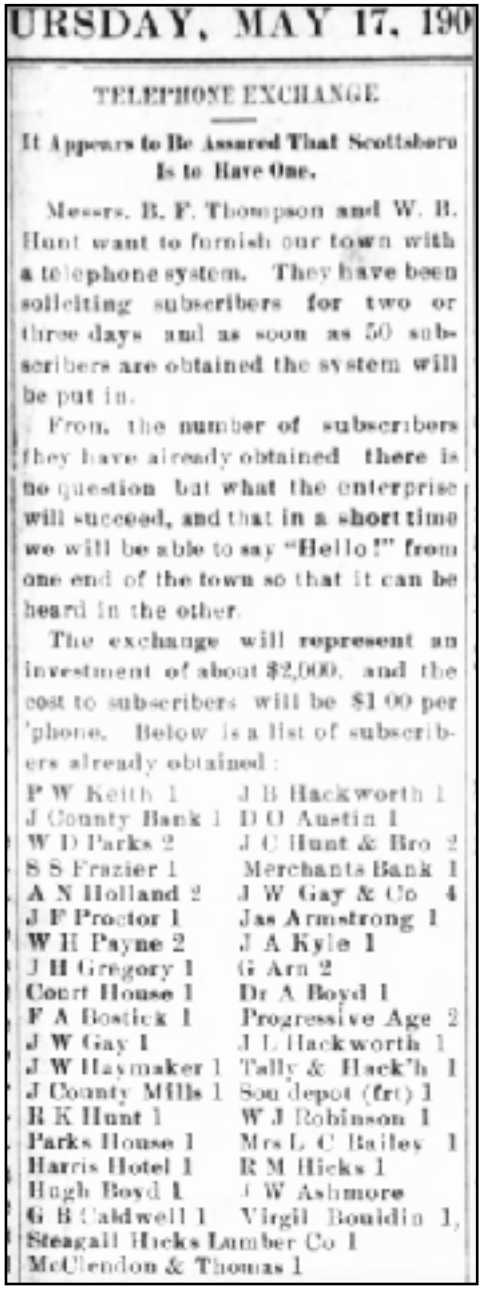
Meanwhile, in the outside world, telephone pioneers were dreaming of transcontinental and transatlantic calls and wireless phones. Bell Telephone continued to insist its patent right were still in force, and that the exclusive rights to the technology extended 17 years from the 1895 patent, not their 1891 patent. The government asked to have the 1895 patent set aside, saying it covered the same ground as the 1891 patent. Bell was clearly enjoying its exclusivity. The decision went to the Supreme Court, and in 1897, the Court found for Bell and extended their patent until 1908.

The world was fascinated with its new toy. “The Japanese yell ‘Oi! Oi! Oi! into the telephone," the *Progressive Age* reported in March 1897. “The Spaniards call ‘Oyez!’ In France, hospitals for infection diseases are furnished with telephones, so that the sick may converse with their friends without danger of communicating disease.” (*PA*, Mar 18, 1897)

Decatur addressed the problem of spanning the Tennessee River in 1898 with a “ ‘swing’ bridge for telephone wires across the river at Decatur which, from tower to tower, is nearly a mile in length, four wires weighing about 1000 pounds each and is said to be the longest single wire swing in the world. The towers are 120 and 140 feet high. The wire is copper and is protected from contact by large rolls of cork at intervals in the span.” (*PA*, Aug 4, 1898). No plastics. Only natural materials were used to create the needed insulation, and the towers had to be tall enough to clear river traffic.

Telephones were not entirely safe, either in implementation or use. People were regularly electrocuted by talking on the phone during a thunderstorm. Men watching a July 4 race climbed to the tops of phone poles for a better view and touched an uninsulated part of the system, and died. Men stringing wires died. “Frank Barker, a colored laborer recently from Birmingham, was knocked off a freight car on Thursday by telephone wires in Huntsville and was run over by the dummy cars and killed,” (*SC*, Sep 18, 1888) In April 1900, a man in Tuscaloosa was killed by lightning because he was using the phone during a thunderstorm (*SC*, April 26, 1900). In 1904, when Stevenson implemented phone service, the *Stevenson Chronicle* announced “Manager Howard, of this place, has instructed us to say to all parties who have telephones here, that the Telephone Company has ordered the equipments to attach to the phone, and also place in the centre office, to protect against lightning.” (*SC*, Jul 27, 1904) But such accidents did not diminish enthusiasm for the telephone.

The list of subscribers to the new telephone service was published in May 1900 in the *Progressive Age*. Phones would cost subscribers $1.00.



URSDAY, MAY 17, 190

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

It Appears to Be Assured That Scottsboro Is to Have One.

Messrs. B. F. Thompson and W. B. Hunt want to furnish our town with a telephone system. They have been soliciting subscribers for two or three days and as soon as 50 subscribers are obtained the system will be put in.

From the number of subscribers they have already obtained there is no question but what the enterprise will succeed, and that in a short time we will be able to say "Hello!" from one end of the town so that it can be heard in the other.

The exchange will represent an investment of about $2,000, and the cost to subscribers will be $1 00 per 'phone. Below is a list of subscribers already obtained:

P W Keith 1	J B Hackworth 1
J County Bank 1	D O Austin 1
W D Parks 2	J C Hunt & Bro 2
S S Frazier 1	Merchants Bank 1
A N Holland 2	J W Gay & Co 4
J F Proctor 1	Jas Armstrong 1
W H Payne 2	J A Kyle 1
J H Gregory 1	G Arn 2
Court House 1	Dr A Boyd 1
F A Bostick 1	Progressive Age 2
J W Gay 1	J L Hackworth 1
J W Haymaker 1	Tally & Hack'h 1
J County Mills 1	Sou depot (frt) 1
R K Hunt 1	W J Robinson 1
Parks House 1	Mrs L C Bailey 1
Harris Hotel 1	R M Hicks 1
Hugh Boyd 1	J W Ashmore
G B Caldwell 1	Virgil Bouidin 1,
Steagall Hicks Lumber Co 1	
McClendon & Thomas 1	

A second exchange was established in Scottsboro in June, 1900, by B.F. Thompson and W.B. Hunt with an investment of $2,000, Mr. Gist explains. The exchange stipulated that as soon as fifty telephones were installed, operations would begin.

B. F. Thompson and W. B Hunt were soliciting subscribers in May 1900, the list shown here. In July, 1900, the required number of telephones had been sold for one dollar each and service was begun with the central office situated over J.W. Gay's store with Miss Lalia Gay, John Will Sr.'s sister, as first operator.

As Scottsboro was welcoming its second exchange, Stevenson was still crying out for the telephone. "The next grand thing for Stevenson will be a telephone connection," the *Stevenson Chronicle* proclaimed on January 3, 1900. "The prospect is good just at this time." The impatience of the February 28 terse article "Stevenson needs a telephone line" leaps off the page.

In August, 1900, H. R. Godfrey of Ft. Payne, Alabama, installed a long distance telephone system which connected Scottsboro directly with Ft. Payne, Collinsville, Albertville, Chattanooga, and New York. The *Progressive Age* was confident this gentleman was capable of delivering the long-promised phone service. "He has a large experience in the business and has built hundreds of miles of telephone with his own means." (*PA*, Aug 9, 1900) "The posts for telephone wires are being placed in position preparatory to being put up over the city" the *Citizen* reported on August 16. "The telephones will be ready to 'Hello Central' shortly," the *Citizen* wrote on August 23. "Pike road and telephones for Scottsboro. Old Jackson is a coming."

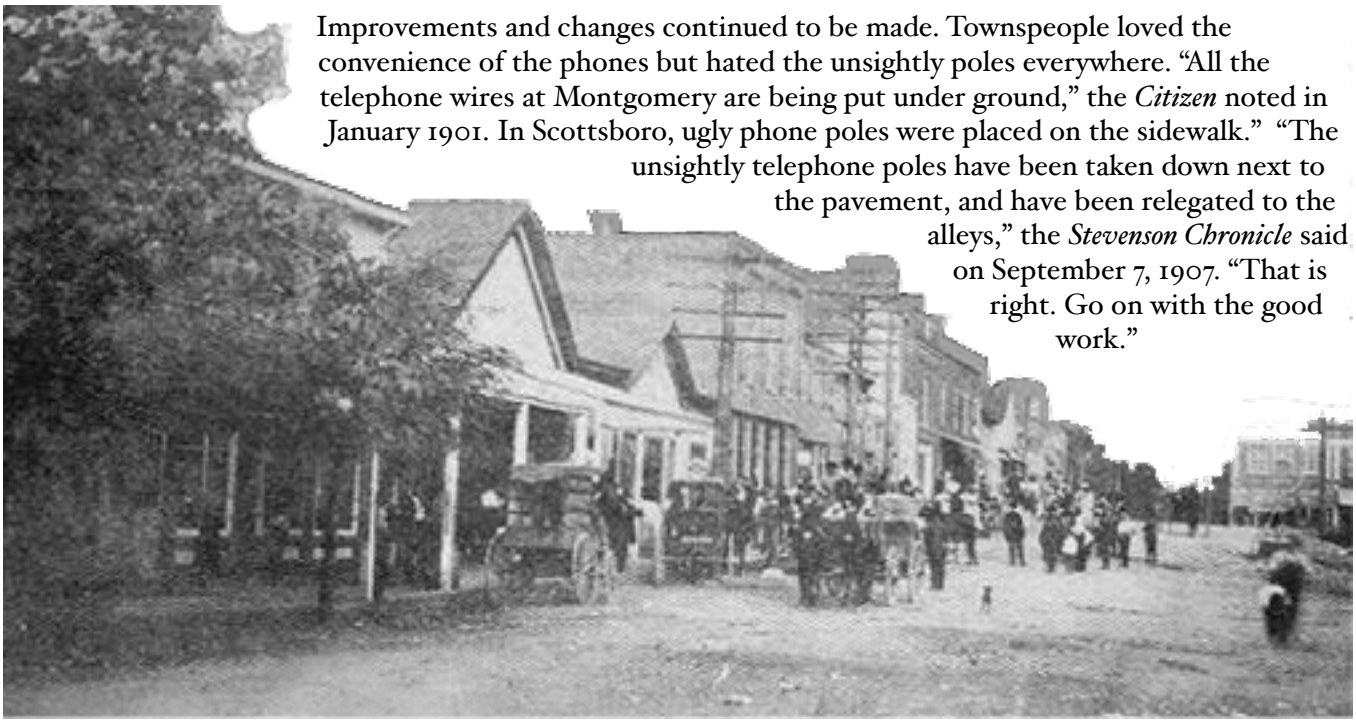
On September 20 of that year, the *Progressive Age* reported that "Mr. Godfrey has the telephone poles up on the south bank of the river at Sublett's ferry, and the posts have been laid down and holes are being dug on this side. A cable 2,400 feet long and weighing 1,400 pounds was laid across the Tennessee River from Sand Mountain to Scottsboro." Godfrey's system and the local system were combined and named the Tri-State Telephone and Telegraph Company. "Seven large boxes belonging to Tri-State Telephone company have arrived at the freight depot in the care of Mr. Godfrey," the *Citizen* reported on September 27.

On October 4, the *Progressive Age* announced that "A local telephone system with 50 subscribers is now being constructed by the Tri-State Telephone Company, of Ft. Payne." The news continued to pour in. "Supt. Godfrey is here this week putting in the Scottsboro Telephone exchange," the *Progressive Age* reported on October 11. "The central office, situated over J. W. Gay's store, has been fitted up nicely, and the wires are now being stretched on the public square and streets of town. In a few days we will have long distance connection."

At the same time that Godfrey was developing inner-city phones in Scottsboro and linking to Ft. Payne, Erwin and Myers of the Cumberland Telephone Company, based in Chattanooga, were installing long distance telephone lines connecting Paint Rock and Chattanooga.

On December 12, 1900, the Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph Company purchased the Tri-State Company and provided many needed improvements. In the latter part of 1900, the telephone rate from Scottsboro to Chattanooga was thirty cents during the day and twenty cents at night.

"The services of John Tally have been secured as night operator, so there will be someone constantly in the central office, both day and night," the *Progressive Age* reported on December 13. "The first long distance message was received here from Chattanooga Tuesday by telephone," the *Citizen* reported on December 13. Mr. Godfrey, who had set up the Scottsboro system, was left in charge of this division.



1908 Photo of the North Side of the Square showing phone poles on the sidewalk.

Improvements and changes continued to be made. Townspeople loved the convenience of the phones but hated the unsightly poles everywhere. "All the telephone wires at Montgomery are being put under ground," the *Citizen* noted in January 1901. In Scottsboro, ugly phone poles were placed on the sidewalk." "The unsightly telephone poles have been taken down next to the pavement, and have been relegated to the alleys," the *Stevenson Chronicle* said on September 7, 1907. "That is right. Go on with the good work."

In 1901, Lalia Gay resigned as day operator and Miss Eudocia Thompson replaced her. (*PA*, Jul 11, 1901) A new switchboard arrived in June and was "put in position in the old Jackson County Bank Building;" the move was promoted as "a great improvement." And the quality of the phone poles improved. "Mr. Godfrey and his gang of workmen are putting up a lot of longer and bigger phone poles. They will put in thirty new phones immediately." (*SC*, Sep 5, 1901)

In February 1901, Annie Padgett replaced John Tally as night operator in the central telephone office. Phone lines were being run between Henegar and Dutton. (*PA* Feb 14, 1901) The switchboard was upgraded in April 1901 to a "new drop switch board." Godfrey and his crew of 15 men remained in town "erecting additional poles and stringing wires, and putting in boxes...The whole number of subscribers in Scottsboro is now about eighty," the *Age* said in September 1901.

While the people in the county seat were reveling in their new phone service, the people elsewhere in the county were not being ignored. "W. V. Green and W. T. Eustace of Hollytree are working toward extending telephone service 40 miles from Paint Rock to Bean's Station in Tennessee," the *Age* reported in December 1901. The same paper noted that"There is probability of having a telephone line along the old stage road from Scottsboro to Bridgeport." On January 16, 1902, the *Citizen* reported that "the telephone line from Bean's Station to Paint Rock is nearly completed."

Soon after its implementation, having a phone was already becoming a requirement for operating a business. Lookout Planing Mills in Chattanooga said in their ads that special attention was given to orders by "mail, telegraph or telephone" in January 1901. "Telephone numbers have an actual money value," the *Progressive Age* said in March 1901, quoting an officer of the American Telephone Company." In May 1901 a telephone box was added to the passenger depot, Agent Hunt informed the *Age*. Calls from phone boxes cost a dime, just as they did 50 years later.

New phone installations happened regularly, three the week of May 3. The phone number for the *Citizen* in January 1901 was described as "Line 3; 4 rings." By October 1901, the number appeared in the masthead as "3-4." Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph promoted the phone in their 1900 ad as a way for ladies to "avoid going downtown in rainy days." They asked, "What is a home without a telephone?"

But the new phones were also put to less wholesome use. One burglar called a local bookseller to inquire if they had copies of several very valuable books. "When the morning came the shop was found to have been broken open, and the very books about which inquiry over the telephone had been made were stolen." (*SC*, Mar 22, 1898)

David Bradford's grandparents in Hollywood had the first and, for a while, the only telephone in Hollywood. They left their front door open so that neighbors who needed the phone could come in and out at all hours without waking the family. *Harper's Bazaar* joked about this phenomena: "Parks—I've just had my telephone taken out. Lane—What for? Parks—My next door neighbor put one in." (*PA*, Dec 20, 1900) The phone company expressly forbade phone sharing with persons outside your family. As late as 1955, the Scottsboro phone directory included this caution: "The use of a subscriber's telephone is limited to the subscriber, his family or employee in his interest. Subscribers have no right to allow its use by other parties. The telephone may be removed if this condition of the contract is disregarded."

Toward the end of 1901, a new player entered the local telephone fray: W. L. "Lit" Moody. The *Age* reported on November 7, "W. L. Moody informs us that he and associates are building a telephone line between Stevenson and Gurley, and that it will be ready for business in ten days. The switchboard will be in Scottsboro. The operating outfit was purchased from a company in New York." On November 14, the *Citizen* reported, "W. L. Moody is having the poles erected for his telephone line," and the *Age* reported that "Laborers are engaged in putting up poles for the new telephone line under the personal direction of W. L. Moody." By early 1902, Moody had strung telephones lines beyond Limrock (*SC*, Jan 16, 1902)

Rising rates created a place for a new provider in the Scottsboro market: "The Cumberland Telephone Company has raised the rate on business phones to $1.50 a month," the *Age* reported. "All the business houses in town refused to pay the raise." One October 24, the *Citizen* reported, "A number of telephones have been given up and taken out, owing to the raise in price."

Decatur had long-distance service to Washington by September 1901. "The N*ew Decatur Advertiser* had a long distance phone message from Washington about the condition of the President on Friday at 1 p.m." the *Age* reported.

In early 1902, another phone company entered the market: American Telephone Company, a group of professionals who promised that "solid copper lines will be strung and the line will be uniform with long distance lines" between Huntsville and Chattanooga. (*PA*, Jan 16, 1902) Also about this time, phone service in Stevenson came several steps closer to reality. The town passed an ordinance granting both E. L. Jordan and W. L. Moody the right to erect and maintain poles and lines in the town of Stevenson. (*SC*, Jan

15, 1902) "The Stevenson Telephone C. is rapidly getting in the phones, and it will soon be 'Hello Central,' " the paper reported in February, noting that Bill Anderson and Jim Graham "can pull a telephone wire to perfection." (*SC*, Feb 15, 1902) On Feb 26, E. L. Jordan and his parter E. K. Mann set a subscription rate for their service of $1.25 per home and $1.50 per business, but in the same paper, W. L. Moody announced that his telephone would connect to South Pittsburg and cost only $6 per year. Stories later that year reported telephoning from moving trains, phone services that used fence wire, and a telephone war in Decatur. By March 12, the *Stevenson Chronicle* reported that "the telephones work like a charm." The Stevenson Telephone Company "moved its central office over Alston and Champion's drug store," the paper reported on August 13, and Will Vaught was hired as night operator (*SC*, Oct 15, 1902)

By early 1903, the *Progressive Age* had grown so blasé about the telephone that the January 1903 paper ran a story titled "More Telephones" and reported that the Jackson County Telephone Co. was about to build a line to Langston and connect with Attalla and Gadsden, and the Cumberland Telephone Company was also considering the advisability of building a line to Langston. So both companies were operating in Scottsboro at the same time. On April 2, the *Citizen* reported that Jackson County Telephone Company was growing under the management of W. L. Moody. By October 22 of that year, the *Citizen* reported that "The Moody telephones are reaching all over the county and giving splendid service," calling Moody "a hustler in the telephone business."

Stevenson Phone Service under E. L. Jordan was flourishing as well. But competition knocked at the door. Cumberland Telephone advertised in the *Stevenson Chronicle*, attempting to lure subscribers with their long distance support. The May 13, 1903 *Chronicle* reported that a line was being constructed to Major I. P. Russell's home. Cumberland Telephone was connecting to Stevenson Telephone Company in June 1903 and constructing a line from Sewanee to Stevenson. (*SC*, June 15, 1903). Jackson County had its own version of the telephone wars!

By 1904, E. L. Jordan had had enough and transferred his Stevenson Telephone Company to Southern Bell. The *Stevenson Chronicle* celebrated the "splendid telephone service" that Jordan had built but acknowledged that the sale would "doubtless prove of great benefit to the people of Stevenson."

When Bell Telephone entered the local phone service provider market, it took over. As early as 1888, the *Stevenson Chronicle* noted that Bell Telephone stock was selling $390 a share, paying dividends of 15 percent. (*SC*, Feb 21, 1888). As Bell established its foothold, it began to improve on the ragtag phone poles and fly-by-night services of the local exchanges. "It is very probable that within the next few weeks a new telephone exchange will be established in Huntsville, to connect with the Bell Telephone company," the *Stevenson Chronicle* wrote on February 23, 1897. On November 13, 1901, the *Stevenson Chronicle* reported, "the Bell Telephone Co. is to begin work...to extend its line from Chattanooga to Huntsville. Stevenson is very anxious for this to be done at once."

The wild west period of multiple small exchanges had to come to an end. "In 1904 several of the small independent telephone systems in Scottsboro merged to form the Jackson County Telephone Company," Jerry Gist explained, "which was to serve Scottsboro for approximately the next twenty-five years. In January, 1929, the company was sold to the Alabama Telephone Company which eventually purchased practically all independent telephone systems in the state."

After he sold his interest in the phone company, W. L. "Lit" Moody, the brother of Probate Judge A. H. Moody, found that both his nephew John and his son Clifford suffered from tuberculosis. He moved his family to Columbus, New Mexico around 1910 and started a dry goods business. He was a respected merchant and model citizen, a member of the school board and local men's clubs. He lived on a ranch outside Columbus until 1915 when Pancho Villa and about 60 Mexican raiders "came across the line and rode to the Moody ranch, ... and took provisions, saddles, guns, and some small articles of furniture and then set fire to the buildings." After this loss, Moody moved to San Simon, Arizona. His son Clifford flourished for a time in the dry climate and was in the cattle business, but died from his tuberculosis in

1916, only 22 years old. His body was returned to Scottsboro, and he is buried in Cedar Hill. Lit stayed out west and had just sold his family property on the corner of Laurel and Scott to the Methodist church so that they could build a new church when he died in 1939.

The telephone exchange in Scottsboro moved around in the early days. The first exchange was on the second floor of Gay Hardware, the corner of Laurel and Broad, the location that would later be the first home of Alabama Bedspread. The exchange then moved upstairs in the Bank Building. The Scottsboro exchange was in the Snodgrass Building. When the Farmer Building was built in 1936, the Jackson County Telephone exchange moved upstairs in this building where it remained until the county adopted dial phones and operators were no longer necessary. The photos here show the Scottsboro switchboard and a group of "telephone girls," known today simply as operators. Instructions for placing an operator assisted calls in 1919, 1951, and 1955 are found below.

Photos of Scottsboro telephone operators in the 1950s, from Brenda Fossett.

Jackson County Telephone Crew, 1930s. From the Scottsboro Power Board Building. L to R, Vassar Lamb, Ernie Kirk, – Day, and Bert Vann, Manager.

Jerry Gist summarized the next step in Jackson County phone evolution. "In September, 1961, the General Telephone and Electronics Corporation contracted to purchase the Scottsboro system. The purchase price offered by General Telephone and Electronics was the highest of six received under competitive bidding. Effective date of the acquisition was set for December 1, 1961. The new company began making many improvements including the dial system which was first initiated in Scottsboro on June 17, 1962. The exchange is now [1968] in the hands of the General Telephone Company, a subsidiary of General Telephone and Electronics, and has approximately 5,500 phones in the Scottsboro area."

This is, of course, not the end of the story. In 1998, General Telephone sold to CenturyLink, a division of Lumina Technology. The company built the switching facility on the corner of South and West Appletree Streets and maintains the line superstructure. Today, a landline telephone user has many options regarding how a house phone is connected to the poles on the street. Approved in January 1998, the Scottsboro Electric Power Board began construction of a modern telecommunications system to supply cable television, high-speed Internet, and telephony. Construction began in June and the first CATV customer connected in December.

Irene Grigg, head operator in Scottsboro when operator -assisted telephoning ended. *Sentinel-Age*, June 21, 1962.

The world has continued to grow more complex, and phone service today more closely resembles the wild west days when phone service was new. There are many providers and many options. Landline phones are usually bundled with cable service and internet; phones that originally used coaxial cable now use fiber optics and voice over IP (voIP) technology. Many users, especially the young, have elected to "cut the cord" and do without landline phones altogether, depending exclusively on their cellular phones using one of the multiple cellular service providers. We have to say a silent thank you to the people who established standards so that this plethora of devices from different providers can communicate with each other and the network.

The Telephone and Privacy Issues

From the earliest days of telephone implementation, users worried about the impact that the telephone had on privacy. Until the early 1960s, an intermediary—the operator—was a part of every call we made. And people passing secrets, whether business or personal, were never comfortable with that human listener.

In 1895, New York State passed a law requiring that "the staff of telephone companies to be secretive regarding the nature of their business as are the operatives who handle telegraphic messages."

In a 1909 article in the *Stevenson Chronicle* titled "The Disturbing Telephone," the potential of the phone to disrupt....um...important activity. "The telephone has destroyed all the privacy of society," said the society girl. "It breaks in on everything. Nothing is sacred to it. You may be saying your prayers. The telephone. Or in the midst of your bath. The telephone. Or doing up your back hair, or, worst of all, a delightful man may be making love to you when k-ling, k-ling, k-ling! The telephone breaks the thread of his theme and he fails to resume it." And the speaker never even sat with a teenager whose new girlfriend calls six times during dinner! Or tried to share a nice meal out with a friend when an Apple watch pings every five seconds. Our forefathers had no idea how disruptive a phone could be.

The newspapers carried an incredible number of jokes about the new telephone service, the butt of which was usually the telephone operator, the 1900s equivalent of "dumb blond" jokes. I suspect that these women were not held in the esteem which they deserved for a simple reason--people were afraid of them. They were afraid that operators were listening in to their calls, ready to broadcast their secrets. The poem below that appears in the 1901 *Stevenson Chronicle* sums up these fears:

The Telephone Girl, 1909

The telephone girl sits still in her chair and listens to voices from everywhere.

She hears all the gossip, she hears all the news; she know who is happy and who has the blues.

She knows all our sorrows, she knows all our joys; she knows every girl who is chasing the boys.

She know all our troubles, she knows all our strife.; she knows every man who talks mean to his wife.

She knows every time we are out with "the boys;" she knows the excuses each fellow employs.

She knows every woman who has a dark past; she knows every man who's inclined to be "fast."

In fact, there is a secret 'neath each saucy curl of that quiet, demure-looking telephone girl.

If the telephone girl told all that she knows, it would turn half our friends into bitterest foes.

She could sow a small wind that would soon be a gale, engulf us in trouble and land us in jail.

She could let go a story which, gaining force, would cause half our wives to sue for divorce.

She could get all our churches mixed up in a fight and turn all our days into sorrowing nights.

In fact, she could keep the whole town in a stew if she'll tell a tenth part of the things that she knew.

Oh brother, now doesn't it make your head whirl when you think what you owe to the telephone girl.

Between the early 60s and the advent of cell phones, we learned to trust the privacy of the device. Perhaps too much. As Britain's King Charles can tell you, a clever hacker can pull a cell phone conversation out of the air and invoke just the kind of chaos we attributed to the telephone girl.

One final closing thought. Whenever any technology is new, people need to be taught how to use it. Early automobile documentation included such revelations as "when you turn the steering wheel to the left, the car goes to the left as well." In that spirit, here are three sets of telephone instructions: a 1917 guide to operator-assisted calls, a 1951 guide to using a phone with no dial or buttons, and a 1955 guide to how to use a dial phone.

Telephone Rules Plainly Told: Using the Phone in 1917

From the 1917 Jackson County Telephone Company Directory

"The use of these lines for eavesdropping or conveying the sounds of music of any nature, phonograph, piano, mouth organs, crying children, etc. is strictly prohibited. Eavesdropping is very unmanly and unlady like and should not be indulged in. If you must do it, please hold your hand over the transmitter so your presence will not be so plainly felt. Parents should not allow their children to interfere with the telephone in any way. You may think we do not know who you are, but sooner or later it comes out who is the guilty one and rest assured we never feel good about you any more. You annoy your neighbor, make a fool out of yourself, and injure the Company by acting in these unbecoming ways. Central is required to listen at times and has instructions to disconnect any one who makes improper use of these lines. If you are persistent in making a nuisance of yourself then the penalty is removal of your telephone without further notice.

"Don't use the telephone during a thunderstorm. Obey this rule and your phone will remain in good shape and you may remain in good shape and not get hurt.

"To answer: Don't say hello. That means nothing. Simply lift your earpiece to your ear and say Johnnie Brown at 14, if that happens to be your name and number. Always ring one short ring when through talking: this notifies the operator that the line is open and can be used by some one else. Too many of our subscribers are slow in answering their rings. Please answer promptly and avoid delay.

"If the operator is slow to answer, don't get mad and say hard things to her; this only complicates matters. Unless things are just right with the next one that calls the operator may not be pleasant and your harsh words will be carried along from one to another all day long. The operator has over 300 subscribers to look after and you hardly appreciate the amount of work she has to do.

"One minute is long enough to talk, over three minutes will be charged for extra. We will, however, use some judgment in enforcing this rule. The purpose is to cut out useless gab and childish talk. Business always has preference.

"All the rates over the company's lines are for a conversation of three minutes and for each additional minutes you talk you are charged in proportion to the distance. Remember this and don't kick when your toll bill is presented.

"Report all phone and line troubles to the managers. He is always ready to give you a hearing. If the line is broken and you can make a temporary connection with a piece of wire, we will appreciate it. Don't try to

fix our phone....The phones are rented to you, not sold and any damages they receive while in your possession we will expect you to pay for.

"Operators do not have time to carry on conversations. Please do not expect it of them. Don't make complaints to them; they are busy and cannot give you any satisfaction. Call the manager or general manager.

"Using vulgar or profane language is a punishable offense under the law and certainly unbecoming to men. A gentleman will not do it.

"Always hang up your receiver earpiece down when thru talking; otherwise your batteries will be exhausted and your bells cut out. Ring off by giving the crank one turn.

"In dry weather it sometimes happens that the earth around the ground line get very dry. By digging a small hole around them and pouring on two buckets of water twice a week, you will greatly improve the service over your telephone.

"All subscribers are required to call the attention of Central to any message originating at their place that should be charged for. Any failure to comply with this rule looks like an attempt to defraud, whether intentional or not.

"It is a misdemeanor to shoot off insulators or to in any way damage, molest or interfere with lines of this company. A reward of $5.00 will be paid for the arrest with proof to convict any guilty party.

Making a Call with Operator Assistance

from the 1951 Scottsboro Phone book

Station-to-Station Calls (From One Telephone to Another): A station-to-station call is when you ask to be connected with a certain phone in another town. If you ask for a particular person, or for an extension telephone reached through a private branch exchange, as in a department store or hotel room, the call becomes a person-to-person call.

To Place a Station-to-Station Call—1st. Give operator name of place you are calling. 2nd. Give telephone number you are calling (if known) or name if address (if known) of the party whose telephone you are calling. For example: A. J. Smith, 500 Third Street. 3rd. Give your telephone number when the operator asks for it.

Advantages of Station-to-Station Call: A station-to-station call is completed more quickly and the rate is less than for a person-to-person call. The rate is reduced between the hours of 6 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. and all day Sunday if the initial day rate exceeds 35 cents. The time at the starting place when the conversation begins determines whether the day or night rate applies.

Telephone Directories: Call the number and help us improve the service. In a community this size the operators—especially a new one—cannot possibly remember the names of all subscribers; and when you call by name, you delay your service and hamper its efficiency. You can improve the service by looking up the number in the directory before calling, and then give the the operator the NUMBER AND NOT THE NAME. We ask your cooperation. Numbers not in the current directory can be secured by calling "Information." No binder, holder, or other cover, except those furnished by the Telephone Company, shall be used in connection with any telephone directory.

Using the Dial Telephone (1955)

from the 1955 Scottsboro Phone book

On all calls remove the receiver carefully from the hook and listen for the dial tone before starting to dial a number. The dial tone, a steady humming sound heard in the telephone receiver, indicates that the line is ready to use.

How to Dial a Number— When you hear the dial tone, keep the receiver off the hook and dial each figure of the telephone as listed on this page, consecutively in order given. For example, if you are calling 2011, proceed as follows: 1. Place your finger in the opening over the figure 2. 2. Turn the dial around until your finger stops. 3. Remove your finger and without touching the dial allow it to return to its normal position. 4. Proceed in the same way to dial other figures. If your finger slips, or you make a mistake dialing hang up the receiver at once, wait a few seconds, and dial again. Before starting to dial a second call, always hsng up your receiver for a few seconds in order to clear the previous connection.

Ringing and Busy Signals—Within a few seconds after you have completed dialing you should hear either the ringing signal, an intermittent brr-rr-ing sound, indicating that the bell on the called line is ringing, or the busy signal, a rapid buzz-buzz-buzz, indicating that the call line is busy. If you do not hear either of these signals within half minute hang up the receiver, wait a few seconds and make another attempt. When for any reason you do not get the number called (for example, the called line is busy or does not answer) you will get quicker service if you hang up the receiver and call later at intervals instead of immediately dialing the "Operator" for assistance.

Obtaining Assistance from 'Operator" in Emergencies—If the lights are out, or you need assistance from the Operator in emergencies, you may secure an Operator by simply placing your finger in the dial through which "O" is seen, and turning the dial around to the finger stop and releasing it.

Annette Bradford

You can see the entire 1917 Jackson County Telephone phone directory (thank you, Dee Meek) on the JCHA web site Downloads page (www.jchaweb.org/downloads). On that page you can also find the Bridgeport and Stevenson directories from 1952, 1955, 1956, and 1957, and the Scottsboro phone books from 1951, 1955, 1955, 1958, 1966, 1970, and 1979.

L to R, Western Electric ad inviting users to set up their own telephone network, *Stevenson Chronicle*, March 25, 1909; Operators in 1860s dress as part of the Scottsboro Civil War centennial celebration in 1961, from the *Progressive Age;* Cover of the 1966 General Telephone Book for Scottsboro.

New Account of the 1865 Skirmish at the Freight Depot

Nat Cisco gets a gold star on his history report card for turning up a new account of the January 14, 1865 attack on the Scottsboro Freight Depot. He found this gem of Civil War history in the *Nashville Union* newspaper, dated January 21, 1865. It does not differ substantially from the Official Report (OR) records but bears no resemblance to J. R. Kennamer's account of the skirmish. There is no strictly Confederate account in the Southern version of the ORs. Here are all three:

Recruiting poster, from the Smithsonian.

From the *Nashville Union* by William P. Lyons

A fight with Lyon at Scottsboro—Bravery of the Colored Troops. Huntsville, Ala. Jan. 14, 1865.

A fight took place at Scottsboro, twenty miles west of Stevenson, on the evening of the 8th inst, between the forces of the Rebel Gen. Lyon and the garrison at that place, consisting of detachments of Co. E, 101st U.S.C.T., the former commanded by Lieut. John H. Hull, and the latter by Lieut. David Smart, the whole under command of Lieut. Hull. This affair deserves more publicity than it will get through the ordinary medium of an official report, as it helps settle the oft repeated question, "will the Negro fight?"

Lieut. Hull's command numbered fifty-three muskets in all, but eleven of his men were on outpost duty at the water tanks over one mile west of the depot, in which the balance of the command, forty-two strong, were stationed. Here the little garrison was attacked by the whole rebel force of the rebel General, reinforced by several independent guerrilla companies who infest that region, and numbering from 800 to 1000 men, with two twelve pounder howitzers.

The sergeant delivered this message, and a wild shout of joy went out from the beleaguered garrison—a shout which assured their gallant commander that there would be no faltering on the part of his men in the deadly conflict which was rapidly thickening around them.

Another incident. A colored sergeant named Anderson had his leg torn off by the explosion of one of the shells—and afterward loaded and fired his musket three times. The brave soldier has since died of his wound.

It is worthy to mention that these soldiers were mostly new recruits and had never before been in action, and a majority of them have not even been mustered.

The whole affair lasted some three hours, and, to give an idea of the desperate character of the fighting, I will mention that in one, at least, of the assaults, the rebels came so close to the building that they seized the guns of our men as they were projected through the loop holes in the brick walls of the depot, and attempted to wrench them from the grasp of those inside.

Lieut. Hull, a resident of Ripley county, Indiana, was formerly an enlisted man in the 83d Indiana, and is a brother, I am informed, of the gallant Col. Hull, of the 37th Indiana, whose name is so familiar in the Army of the Cumberland.

I am not acquainted with the history of Lieutenant Smart, but it is just to add that Lieut. Hull speaks in terms the highest praise of his courage and efficiency in the contest.

Respectfully yours, Wm. P. Lyons, Col, 13th Wis V.V.I., Comd'g

From the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies in the War of the Rebellion*

Photo by Wendell Page.

Report of Lieut. John. H. Hall, One Hundred and first U. S. Colored Infantry, Hdqrs. Company E 101st Regt. U. S. Colored Infty., Scottsborough, Ala. January 8, 1865

Lieutenant: I have the honor to report that in compliance with orders received, I proceeded to Larkinsville and reported to Captain Givens, commanding post with fifth-four men, consisting of a detachment of Company E, One hundred and first (twenty-nine men) and Company E, One hundred and tenth, of U. S. Colored Infantry (twenty-five men), commanded by Second Lieut. David Smart. On the evening of the 7th instant I was ordered by Captain Givens to proceed with my command to Scottsborough immediately, to guard water-tanks and Government property. On the 8th instant, at 4 p.m., Colonel Harrison passed through Scottsborough, informing me that the rebel General Lyon was moving on the railroad with a force of from 1,000 to 1,500 men, ordering me to patrol the road for two miles and half, both east and west, which order I promptly obeyed. At 5 p.m. one of my scouts returned, reporting the enemy advancing in force. I immediately forwarded a request to Colonel Harrison, at Bellefonte Station, for re-enforcements, which did not arrived until 10 o'clock, after the fighting was over. At 5:30 o'clock the enemy attacked my pickets, wounding and disabling one of them. After shooting him they stabbed him three times, twice in the neck and once in the back. I immediately sent Lieutenant Smart with a squad, who drove the enemy off, bringing in the wounded man, the enemy taking with them his musket and accouterments.

At 6 o'clock the enemy attacked in force, from all information I could obtain, 1,500 strong, with two 12-pounder howitzers. They massed their force on the north side of the depot, making an assault, which I repulsed after ten minutes of almost hand-to-hand encounter. Again they assaulted on the south side, coming up and laying hold of the muzzles of my men's guns, attempting to wrest them through the loopholes of the depot building, in which we were stationed. The assault lasted about fifteen minutes. Again they were repulsed, when all was quiet for about twenty-five minutes, when they made their third and last assault on the south side and west, and which was the most severe and closely contested of all, lasting some thirty minutes before they were driven back. Then they fell back beyond the range of my muskets and opened on me with artillery, compelling me to abandon the depot. I fell back to the mountain, some 450 yards, where I halted my men (the enemy pursuing me half that distance), intending to renew the fighting; but hearing that there were three sections of cars loaded with our troops lying at the water-tanks one mile and a quarter west of Scottsboro, I marched my command down to them, making my report to the commanding officer, Colonel ——, who ordered me to Larkinsville to report to Brigadier-General Cruft, who ordered me to bring my command to Larkinsville. On my arrival there I made application to General Cruft for medical aid for my wounded men. He ordered two surgeons from Colonel Salm's command to attend my wounded men. They came and looked at them, but left without doing anything for them; consequently, my wounded did not get their wounds dressed until the afternoon of the 12th instant.

I am under lasting obligations to Colonel Morgan, of the Fourteenth U. S. Colored Infantry, and his surgeon for their attention to my wounded, doing all they could for them, to whom I applied for assistance when I found that General Cruft's surgeons would do nothing for me.

One my arrival at Larkinsville I reported to you and asked for orders, which were for me to send my wounded men on the first train either to Huntsville or Stevenson, as medical aid could not be sent to me; but owing to the bridge over Paint Rock being out of repair I did not have the opportunity until the morning of the 12th instant. I take pleasure in saying that I find my men, though but little accustomed to the use of the musket, and yet mustered into service to be cool and determined and willing to obey my order; and at no time did I lose confidence in their willingness to fight to the last, though surrounded by a much larger force and aided by artillery.

For Lieutenant Smart, command detachment of One hundred and tenth U. S. Colored Infantry, I must say that he was all that could be expected, cheering the men on and inspiring them with the belief that all would be well and we were strong enough to drive them off.

My loss was six wounded: Amos Bird, left leg; Sergeant Williams, in leg, Jones slight; private from Lientenant Smart's company, whose leg was shot off. We inflicted a loss on the enemy of 1 colonel and 17 men [killed] and 40 wounded.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant, John H. Hull, First Lientenant, Commanding Company.

From J. R. Kennamer, *The History of Jackson County*

General W. H. Lyon, on his retreat from the invasion in Kentucky and Tennessee to the south side of the Tennessee River, at the head of 500 cavalry, came upon Paint Rock Valley, thence across Cumberland Mountain down through Maynard's Cove to Scottsboro. With the small cannon, he attacked the garrison at the depot, January 9, 1865. One shot struck the plaster on the wall above the Negro soldiers, and, as it fell, they scattered to the mountains like a flushed cove of birds. The loss was small on both sides.

Scottsboro Depot Museum Photo by Nat Cisco.

Vesta Lou McLemore Skelton

Vesta Skelton does not hesitate to speak her mind, and since at 103 years old she is disarmingly lucid, whatever she has in mind is worth attending to.

After 48 years as a nurse, attending to combat casualties in WWII and then attending to Jackson County's most marginalized and isolated inhabitants, she's seen more misfortune and suffering than most can imagine. She's had police escorts subdue patients who refused to take mandatory vaccinations. She's whisked newborns whom attending physicians deemed unviable into her car and driven them to metropolitan hospitals to see them survive. She's held the hands of numerous frightened county children as they were wheeled into surgery and was still their side when they woke from anesthesia. Through it all, she remains infectiously optimistic, gregarious, and unfailingly self-confident.

Vesta Lou McLemore was born on December 19, 1919, in Eastwood, Georgia to Sheppard McLemore, a railroad employee, and Florence Smith McLemore, a teacher and native of Aspel, AL. When Vesta was five, her mother died of Spanish Flu at age 27, and her aunt Desie (Dea) McLemore, brought her to Scottsboro to the home Dea shared with the John Gross family. In Scottsboro, she had extended family, notably the Stocktons, a prominent family of four unmarried women who were active in local education for decades.

Vesta Lou Skelton's senior picture from the JCHS yearbook (last name misspelled)

During her school years she moved between her aunt Dea in Scottsboro and an uncle in Birmingham, receiving most of her education in Birmingham schools. She returned to Scottsboro, however, for her senior year. In her yearbook entry, she's referred to by her nickname, "Toots." The high school yearbook credits her with being captain of the girls' basketball team.

She returned to Birmingham to study nursing and earned an RN certification at the South Highlands Infirmary, a training facility associated with St. Vincent's Hospital. After certification, she worked for county health departments in Colbert and Cullman Counties. She traveled to schools and isolated homes where she treated impoverished residents for a variety of conditions made worse by the lack of availability of health care: problems arising from malnutrition, parasites, and chronic childhood diseases such as rheumatic fever that had gone undiagnosed and untreated for years.

After two years in Cullman and Colbert, Vesta's life took a radical turn. "I saw a sign that said the US Navy needs nurses. I said, 'well why not go?' I didn't have any reason not to. The boys were doing their part. So I left my office and signed up. I was 21. That roadside sign was the reason I went into service."

So in 1941, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Vesta was commissioned as an ensign in the Navy and deployed to Norfolk, VA. There, she and her fellow nurses treated casualties from the European theater. The patients were mostly burn victims who arrived by ship. Most were stabilized by the time they entered the Norfolk treatment center, but she faced many life-or-death struggles every day. And as in her days with North Alabama health departments, she tended to young men who were suffering from chronic undiagnosed childhood illnesses.

After Norfolk, she did a brief stint in West Palm Beach, FL before being stationed in the Panama Canal Zone during the height of the hostilities. The staff there was overwhelmed by the wounded who arrived by ship from both the Atlantic and the Pacific theaters.

Her personal life was severely limited in those war years: “[Officers] were very strict about the nurses going out,” Vesta said of her social life in the Navy. “The date had to be checked out by the housemother. The dates could not have been married or divorced and had to be between the ages of 18 and 26.”

In 1945, at the end of the war, Vesta left the Navy, having been promoted to the rank of lieutenant. She had her choice of where she wanted to go to resume her civilian career, and she chose Jackson County. She was one of two nurses assigned to the Jackson County Health Department. "The other nurse was from Paint Rock and wanted that end of the county. I took the other. The two of us were responsible for administering vaccinations and diagnosing illnesses among the school children. We had to visit every school in Jackson County. We visited homes where a family’s first children were to be born to educate the new mothers on care." Her responsibilities eventually grew to include rotations in her old territory: Colbert and Cullman counties.

Vesta Lou McLemore in Panama.

There were unique challenges to working in such a rural setting: “We had outbreak where everyone was required to take a vaccination. It was the law. I had one man who wouldn't take the shot, and I had to call the police to hold him. Those mandatory vaccines were one of the times it was really hard to work in health care. People just didn't want to take it.”

After her stint with the county health departments, she began work in private practice, serving with Doctors Ingrum Bankston, Joe Cromeans, and the newly arrived Samuel Parks Hall. In one instance, Vesta was the sole contact in a local clinic for nearly six months while a doctor recovered from a persistent medical condition. During that six-month stint, she also tended the doctor in his home.

In 1947, she attended a dance at the old recreation center at the corner of Parks and Houston in Scottsboro. Her date was with a sanitation officer from the health department, but her eye was drawn elsewhere.

On the floor was Mark Scott Skelton. He was the best dancer she’d ever seen. “Back then, the men chose the women. They had sign-up ‘slots,’ they called them. I said to my date, that’s the best dancer I’ve ever seen. I said take me over there, I want to meet him. And so he carried me over there, and I said, ‘My name is Vesta McLemore, and I sure would like to dance with you. Do you have any extra slots?’ and he said ‘Yeah, one more’. In three months, we were engaged, and in six months we were married.”

After marriage, Vesta continued her medical career, becoming the second nurse to be hired at the newly opened Jackson County Hospital on Woods Cove Road. “There were two nurses and two janitors,” she recalls of the early days at the facility. “We didn’t have a pharmacy. Walt Hammer helped me pick out the drugs to stock the pharmacy.”

After five years as director of nursing services at the Jackson County Hospital, she began a five-year stint at the nursing home facility associated with the hospital, thinking that in the absence of incessant off-duty calls, the nursing home would give her more freedom to be with her family, which now included two sons, Mark Scott Skelton Jr. born in 1950 and Andrew Douglas Skelton born in 1953.

In the late sixties, she left the nursing home to serve as chief health officer at Revere Copper and Brass. “The job wasn’t demanding, and I thought I was wasting my time, given that we had a such a good safety program, so I decided at age 50 I wanted to get my degree.” Vesta’s RN certification had been earned in a

vocational degree program, not an academic one, and she believed the lack of academic credentials limited her options.

“I went back to school at UAH and specialized in mental health. I wanted to do clinical work, and you had to have your degree. I served as a psychiatric nurse for fifteen years. At first, we were downtown [on the square in Scottsboro] and didn't have many patients because people didn't want people to know they were seeking treatment. When we located behind the hospital, we got a lot of traffic. We did a lot of good in Jackson County.”

Of all her health care jobs, she was fondest of the stint with the Marshall-Jackson Mental Health Center. There, she worked with alcoholism, drug abuse, and marital relationships. She retired from mental health in 1989 after 15 years, at age 65.

Of her 68-year marriage to Mark, she says of their relationship: “He and I always did things differently. For him, everything had to be just so. I could do things any old way. It got to where when we had a party, I wouldn't even tell him we were having one so I could do things my way.” Mark Scott Skelton, Sr. died in 2015 at the age of 95.

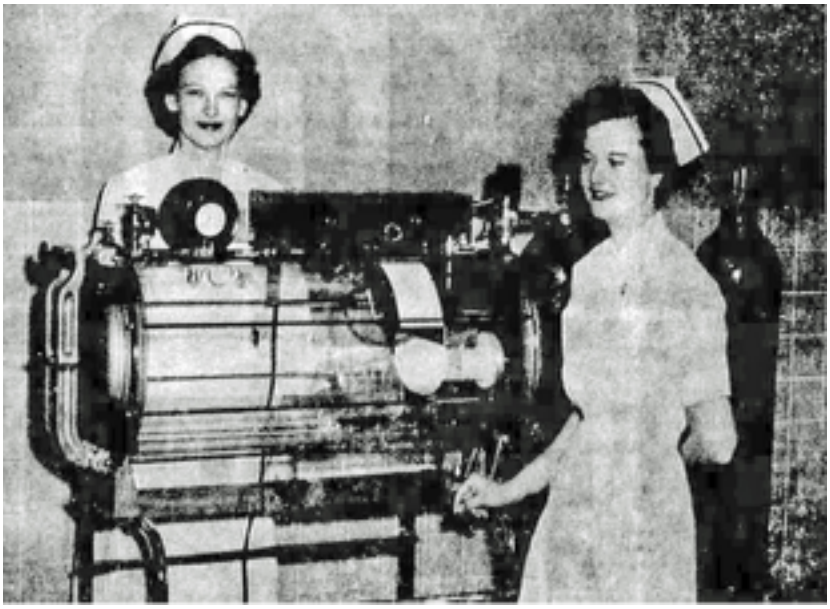
An avid watcher of television news, Vesta expresses optimism about the world her grandchildren will live in, but is alarmed at the increased incidence of gun violence, the effects of which she'd treated numerous times over the years as a combat and trauma nurse.

She’s weathered Covid and an auto accident a few years back without lingering trauma, but a recent bout with shingles has proved the most challenging of recent obstacles.

What is the secret of her longevity? “I don't think at your age you'd ever think you would live to 103. The secret to living that long is to just keep on living. I still exercise. My whole family believes in exercising.” After the Covid quarantine, which was a difficult for someone as gregarious as Vesta, she has resumed her traditional Wednesday outings with friends at Payne’s and attends the occasional church and civic event.

The county’s oldest WWII veteran, Vesta is a source of optimism, determination, and warmth. At age 103, she has the satisfaction of knowing she has fulfilled her goal of making a difference.

David Bradford



Vesta Lou Skelton, Day Shift Nurse Supervisor, and Betty Reeves, Evening Nurse Supervisor, at the Jackson County Hospital, *Progressive Age,* September 25, 1958

Robert T. Scott's Ill-Fated Appointment as County Salt Agent


Robert T. Scott daguerreotype, from Andy Skelton.

Everyone who has ever stood in the Scott cemetery and read the account of how Scottsboro founder Robert T. Scott died has to wonder what piece of information Scott had that was so valuable to the Union commander that he tortured a 63-year-old man to death, forcing him to pull a wagon in the heat of June until he dropped dead. Popular theory says that the Union chose to abuse Scott so because they wanted his horses and he had hidden them. But Ann Chambless always contended that Scott's last job as Salt Agent played a key role. I regretted finding the microfilmed records on which this article is based in the Alabama Archives after Ann's death when she could not appreciate them. Did his last government appointment as Jackson County Salt Agent in November 1862 contribute to his torture and death in June 1863? You decide.

The founder of Scottsboro had served Jackson County in many roles for most of his life. Born in 1798 or 1800 in North Carolina, he was educated in Raleigh, NC and Chapel Hill before accompanying his parents to Madison County in 1817. He studied law in Franklin, Tennessee and worked on his family farm, making his entry into politics in 1826 as Madison County's representative in the Alabama Legislature. In 1830 he bought a tavern in Bellefonte in Jackson County and soon found himself publishing the county's first newspaper. In 1832, he was elected to the Legislature for Jackson County, and re-elected in 1836.

In 1838, Scott was elected Clerk of the Circuit Court. The county tried to re-elect him to the Legislature four times in 1839 but each time, he was denied the seat because he held another county office. When his term as clerk ended, he returned to the Legislature in 1842, and was chairman of the influential Ways and Means Committee, shaping revenue bills for the state.

His skill as a legislator led Governor Benjamin Fitzpatrick to appoint him in 1845 as agent to settle financial irregularities following the failure of the State Bank, and Governor Collier appointed him as a commissioner to adjust the dispute with Georgia over the shared state boundary for the county. The December 24, 1845 *Independent Monitor* in Tuscaloosa reported on Creek indemnity: "We learn from the report of the State Treasurer that Robert T. Scott, Esq. agent, has succeeded in obtaining $24,759.62 to the credit of the Treasurer of Alabama, at the U. S. Treasury Department, on account of money expended by the State in the late Creek hostilities. Mr. Scott has been active and faithful in his agency, for which he has been allowed the sum of $1,285.57."

Scott spoke with members of Congress and representatives of various agencies on behalf of not just of Scottsboro citizens but all residents of the state of Alabama. The October 13, 1847, *Huntsville Democrat* advertised one such trip: "Robert T. Scott. Agent of the State of Alabama, will attend the next session of Congress for the completion of business confided to his care and management—and while in Washington, will attend to the collection of private claims, and all demands that claimants have against the Government, either before Congress or the Accounting Officers. Charges will be reasonable—He refers to Gov. Chapman, Hon. W. L Yancey Hon. F. W. Bowdon and Hon. George Houston. Letters, post paid, directed to "R. T. Scott, Bellefonte, Jackson Co., Ala.," will receive immediate attention until the 25th of November next. After which time letters must be directed to Montgomery, until the adjournment of the Legislature."

Scott formalized this process by advertising his Washington connections in newspapers across the state. A commercial card, for example, appeared in the May 30, 1855 *Weekly Advertiser* in Montgomery before one of his trips offering his services "to all who are entitled to Land-bounty, as an Agent for the procurement of Land Warrants" and invites Alabamians to write to him in Washington to engage his services. "He will also practice in the new Court of Claims, which will soon be organized," the card goes on to explain.

Scott was also a commissioner to the federal government and presented inWashington the state's claims for repayment of moneys expended in the Indian and Mexican Wars. Governor Chapman called out Robert Scott's accomplishments in his 1849 address to the Alabama Legislature. The November 22, 1849, *The Tuskegee Republican* carried Governor Chapman's Message to the Alabama Legislature in which he praised Scott for his efforts in Washington: "Since the last session seventy four thousand three hundred and sixty three dollars and forty-nine cents have been received by the Treasurer from the United States, thro' the agency of Robert T. Scott, on account of expenses incurred in the Creek War, all of which has been paid over to F. S. Lyon, Commissioner. There has also been received from the United States, by the State Treasurer, a treasury draft for seven hundred and seventy-five dollars and eighty six cents, on account in part of expenses incurred in the Mexican war, which remained on hand in the 1st instant."

Scott was well known and respected across the state. He was encouraged to run for a seat in the House of Representatives in 1857, but the April 12, 1857 *Huntsville Democrat* noted that "Col. Robert T. Scott declines the canvass for Congress in the Huntsville District." But he remained politically active. In 1860, Scott was a delegate to the Baltimore convention that nominated John Breckinridge and Joseph Lane as President and Vice President candidates for one wing of the Democratic party.

When the Civil War broke out, Scott was too old for active service, but penned a history of the war titled "Bushwhackers" that was lost in its manuscript form to a federal raiding party.

Scott's history of government service led to the final appointment, the one that took his life: as Salt Agent for Jackson County. His years of government service had taught Scott to keep good records. A detailed history of the last eight months of his life is recorded on slips of paper that he submitted to the state government. Through all the chaos of the Civil War, these records survived to be microfilmed by the Alabama Archives and provide answer an to the question, why was Robert Scott tortured to death?

Salt was an essential commodity. Union General William Tecumseh Sherman once memorably said that "Salt is eminently contraband, as an army that has salt can adequately feed its men." Salt was used to preserve food before the days of refrigeration, and to cure leather as well. Farmers with no access to salt had to percolate the dirt from the floors of their smokehouses to extract the brine, and evaporate the water to preserve their meats.

The Alabama Salt Commission was created December 9, 1862 under Act 38 of the Alabama General Assembly. This act authorized the creation of a commission to guarantee the "people of Alabama access to supplies of salt at a reasonable price." Alabama citizens depended on salt for preserving meat, as an additive to animal feed, and for cooking. Alabama suffered a shortage of this vital commodity because of Union blockades of southern ports and from the loss of northeastern salt suppliers. The small supply of salt available in 1861 was sold at inflated prices, well beyond the means of most Alabama farmers who depended on it.

Alabama Act 38 gave the governor authority to appoint a Salt Commissioner whose primary responsibility was to purchase, manufacture, and transport salt, rationing it at 25 pounds per family per year. The Salt Commissioner provided each county with salt, but it was the county's responsibility to set up an infrastructure for the equitable distribution of this precious commodity to its citizens. Distribution took place in the county seat. The "need of each household" was determined by a written notice of quantity needed, which was submitted by each household to the probate judge or justice of the peace. The governor appointed a county Salt Agent to appropriate storage areas for salt, and to oversee equal distribution of salt.

So who would the governor appoint as Jackson County's Salt Agent but the man who had served the county faithfully in so many capacities already.

Where did the state get its salt supply? There was a source inside the state in Clarke County and lesser salt mines in Washington and Mobile Counties. The Clarke County Salt Works were located on the Tombigbee River. The three salt manufacturing areas on Clark County employed 5,000 men between

1862 and 1865. Much of the labor force was made up of Negro slaves impressed into service by their owners. But the labor force also included white men who were unable to serve in the Confederate army due to medical problems. Salt mining was hard work, and the mines were located in swampy areas. Workers suffered from malaria, and the in-state salt manufacturing capacity could not keep pace with the needs of the citizens.

The state contracted with firms in Saltville, VA and New Iberia, LA to meet this shortfall. The salt from Saltville, VA was meant to go to the northern part of the state so that local mines in the southern part could serve needs in the southern part of the state. This route from Virginia proved less satisfactory as the war dragged on because supply routes were attacked by Union forces.

The Alabama Archives has eight microfilmed folders of documents about the county salt agents, which included their monthly reports, abstracts, and vouchers between 1862 and 1864. As an attorney and a seasoned public servant, Robert Scott kept excellent records. In fact, the state knows about the operation of this Civil War agency because of records kept by Robert Scott and the salt agent from Barbour County.

Jackson County was particularly lucky when it came to accessing the salt supply in Saltville, VA. Robert Scott would have been acquainted with James White, the Salt King of Abingdon, VA. White was 30 years older than young Robert Scott. Born in Pennsylvania, he was a frontier industrialist who operated a "chain" of retail stores and in doing so, acquired large tracts of land in Jackson, Madison, Morgan, and Limestone Counties. He began producing salt in the town of Saltville around 1802. His operation was close to the Holston River and gave him access to one of the main commercial routes in early Alabama—the Tennessee River. As his descendant Gilbert White (who always portrays his ancestor in the Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll) expressed it, "Not only did White master the transportation, distribution and retail sale of salt, he also controlled salt production, thereby giving him a total monopoly on salt across a large geographic area. In 1812 White opened one of his first of many mercantile retail stores in Huntsville adjacent to today's Madison County Courthouse." White had a second home in Huntsville; his success in North Alabama made him one of the wealthiest men in frontier America. Whitesburg took his name from James White. His son Addison managed his huge plantation in Hollywood near Black Ankle, and Addison White and Robert Scott were both heavily invested in Memphis and Charleston Railroad stock.

When Scott began setting up the salt supply for Jackson County, he went to his old friends, the White family. Before the Salt Act was passed in November 1862, Scott was already amassing the money and resources to guarantee a salt supply for Jackson County. With his wealth tied up in land and railroad stock and Confederate currency, he needed to know he could turn to wealthy Jackson County residents for their help, so on October 27, 1862, he wrote Thomas Snodgrass, James T. Skelton, and James M. Parks, asking them to stand as sureties of his bond for the salt and distribution of salt for Jackson County. Those letters are housed in the Alabama Archives in the records of the State Auditor John A. Graham.

With his surety bonds in place, Scott would have needed a location where the salt resources of the county could be safely stored, probably a barn or several geographically dispersed barns, but definitely not at the freight depot since the Union Army had occupied Huntsville in April 1862 and essentially remained there throughout the rest of the war. Union General O. M. Mitchel's men destroyed the Memphis and Charleston tracks into and out of Huntsville but passage was clear in the first half of 1863 between Scottsboro and Huntsville. We know this because Scott travelled to Huntsville on several occasions negotiating salt delivery for Jackson County. On April 23, 1863 J. D. Ledbetter, whose home in Larkinsville served breakfast to train travelers, gave Scott a receipt for him to file with the state auditor documenting three breakfasts he had served to Scott traveling on the 6 am train since January 1, 1863. Scott went to Huntsville on November 18, 1862 on salt business, where he paid W. H. Clay $2.75 for his tavern (room and board) bill. He was back in Huntsville January 20, 1863 and amassed $1.74 in room and board charges. He was in Huntsville again on March 3, 1863 and spent $4.00, and again on April 23, These slips of paper are the equivalent of a modern expense report. Scott needed this documentation to be reimbursed by the state for his travel expenses.

Once he had set up his salt shipments from Saltville, Scott needed a way to inform Jackson County citizens about the availability of the salt, so he had circulars printed on December 2, 1862 by W. G. Figuroa, 100 circulars printed for $5.00 These would be posted all over the county, in stores, train depots, post offices, and public meeting places and would include the dates and places where salt could be purchased.

He had ordered salt from Saltville but residents needed salt immediately, and Scott was forced to pay high prices to John V. Gross for salt to sell while he waited on his Saltville shipment. He spent $1100 on three sacks of salt from John V. Gross and agreed to pay for the salt when he had the money from salt purchases. Gross wrote back on January 23 and wanted his money for the derelict salt purchases immediately. (This is possibly John Vernon Gross, 1831-1880.)

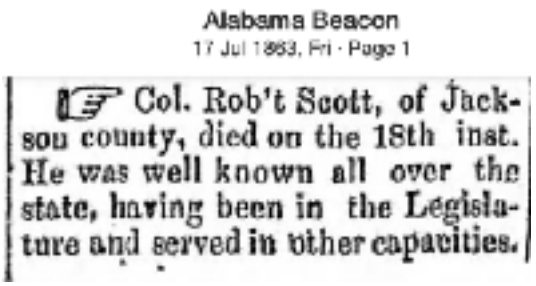
By January 24, Scott's salt from Saltville, VA began to arrive by wagon. The drivers would have travelled 295 miles if the trip had been made on Interstate 81.It is logical that the drivers would not have used even the best-existing, most efficient road available, as they needed to avoid the Union army. Scott paid five wagon drivers from Saltville $24 per sack of salt to deliver bags of salt: W. B. Grayson, John H. Evans, William Perkins, Richard C. Hodges, and John T. Hodges. He got receipts from these men to file back with the state auditor.

He also paid freight charges to the agent J. H. Williams for the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. A receipt on January 31, 1863 establishes that Scott paid $507.24 in freight charges on 3,118 sacks of salt delivered by train. He states that the January 24 drivers are from Saltville, but there is a possibility these drivers picked up salt from the railroad depot and transported it in local wagons.

Scott was back in Huntsville April 23 for a longer stay, since his tavern cost was $7. And back again for a longer visit on May 7. On the May 7 trip, he also visited the Huntsville Democrat newspaper office and had more salt circulars printed. Importantly, this is the first time Scott needed the permission of the Union army occupying Huntsville to perform his tasks. Among his receipts was a travel pass granted to him by Union Provost Marshal John Lane.

The last receipt is of particular interest since it was issued after Scott's death, showing that the auditors in Montgomery were not aware of Scott's death a month after it occurred. It is also interesting because it confirms why the Union commander was so interested in interrogating Robert Scott. He had received four wagonloads of salt from Virginia and a shipment by rail through his association with Addison White in Huntsville and he was about to begin distribution of this vital commodity to the citizens of Jackson County. Jackson County desperately needed this salt. Scott had ordered 350 salt circulars from the state to roll out over the summer (July 19, July 31, and August 22) blanketing the county with the news that the Salt Agent had salt available for them. Scott would have hand-written on these circulars the times and locations for salt distribution. So the fact that Robert Scott had this valuable commodity was no secret.

The newspapers were uncharacteristically quiet about Scott's death on June 18, 1863. Only this short obituary in the Greensboro *Alabama Beacon* can be found. Of course, in June 1863 with the Civil War raging and Huntsville under Union control, there is little doubt that the spectacular story of a county official being driven to his death by a Union commander would not have sat well with the people in power. The story of Scott's death comes down through family oral history and cannot be substantiated in public records. It is hard to imagine the Official Reports of the Civil War, written by Union officers, would have recorded such a heinous act.


Alabama Beacon
17 Jul 1863, Fri · Page 1

☞ Col. Rob't Scott, of Jackson county, died on the 18th inst. He was well known all over the state, having been in the Legislature and served in other capacities.

Notes: This article is based on information, receipts, and reports contained on state records microfilmed in the Alabama Archives, specifically records ALAV88-A567 and ALAV90-A234, and on earlier accounts of Scott's life in the Chronicles. See also Gilbert White's account of "The Salt King of Abingdon" found at huntsvillehistorycollection.org.

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The Jackson County Chronicles

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In this issue:

Editor: Annette Norris Bradford
Associate Editor: David Bradford

July Meeting: The July 2023 meeting of the Jackson County Historical Association will be at the Freight Depot on **Sunday July 23 at 2:00 p.m.** As we close in on the 20th anniversary of saving the depot, **Dr. David Campbell,** who was closely involved with researching and advocating for the depot, will be our speaker. He will talk about the time in 1995 when the historic freight depot was nearly torn down, and his work to restore the depot.

David hardly needs an introduction. Langston resident, former JCHA president, President of Northeast Alabama Community College for 22 years, father of Emmy-award winning broadcast journalist Jeremy Campbell, and husband to Carole Hodges Campbell, David is one of our most distinguished and recognizable native sons.We are pleased he can work our quarterly meeting into his schedule.

Welcome first-time authors: Thank you Charlene Cobb who shared her history of the Scottsboro Church of Christ and Roger Allen who shared the recipe for the Cumberland Mountain Farms Secret Stew.

Congratulations to our Board Members: Two of our board members have enjoyed recognition for their work in the public press recently.

First, Susan B. Barnes at *Southern Living* picked up a Facebook post that Nat Cisco made about Decoration Day at Free Home Cemetery in Grant, quoting his mother and our president Lennie Cisco about the tradition. That essay was published on May 26, 2023 and is here: https://www.southernliving.com/what-is-decoration-day-7504845

Second, Kyle Whitmire, the author of the regular *Alabamafication* column on AL.com, recognized our vice president Blake Wilhelm for conversation and insights related to the entry Blake wrote about the Election Riots of 1874 for the *Encyclopedia of Alabama* (https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/election-riots-of-1874) The column is here: https://link.al.com/view/5ecff426801e482925781 4f9ipsrr.5nz/600abe82.

Historic Scottsboro Freight Depot Faces Destruction

In 1995 when Dr. David Campbell was Chairman of the Arts and Humanities at Northeast State Community College, he led the charge to save the depot from destruction. He wrote this essay published in the March 26, 1995 Daily Sentinel, explaining the history of the Scottsboro Freight Depot and the status of the effort to save it.

A city building older than Scottsboro faces demolition unless a last-ditch plan for preservation is devised. The building, the Freight Depot at the corner of Houston and Maple streets, was constructed in 1860, eight years before the town of Scottsboro was incorporated. The owner of the building, the Norfolk Southern Corporation, no longer needs the facility and plans to conduct its Scottsboro operations from a mobile unit adjacent to the rail line near the Depot.

Norfolk Southern has offered to sell the building to the city of Scottsboro for one dollar and to lease the land on which the depot sits. Norfolk Southern officials, however, have strongly indicated that they want the building moved off the railroad right-of-way. To emphasize their point, railroad officials say that they cannot provide the city with parking at the present site.

City officials feel that the cost of moving the building is prohibitive and question whether or not the building is in good enough condition even to be moved. If the building were moved, additional costs would be incurred in restoring it.

Norfolk Southern officials say that they do not want to assume liability for the building at its present location and that now the company's only choice is to demolish the Freight Depot, which they say could happen at any time.

Depot Opened in 1861: The building obviously has seen better days since the Memphis and Charleston Railroad opened its passenger and freight depot in 1861 in what was then referred to as the community of "Scottsborough," which had been settled in the early 1850s. Scottsboro's founder, Robert T. Scott, had the vision to see the economic benefits that would result from his community being a designated stop along the Memphis & Charleston Line. This, along with the relocation of the county courthouse from Bellefonte to Scottsboro, led to the growth of the community. Construction of the Depot began in 1860 and the building was completed at a cost of two thousand dollars.

The Depot itself has had a storied history, perhaps no more so than during the Civil War. According to the official war records, a brief but intense skirmish between Union and Confederate troops occurred at the Depot on Jan. 8, 1865.

The Union troops consisted of 29 soldiers of the "One hundred and first U. S. Colored Infantry" and 25 soldiers of the "One hundred and tenth U. S. Colored Infantry." The soldiers were under the command of First Lieutenant John Hull.

The Union soldiers had been ordered to proceed to "Scottsborough" to guard water tanks and the Depot. It had been reported that Confederate Brigadier-General H. B. Lyon and a force of about 1,000 to 1,500 soldiers were in the area. (Later, Lyon's army was determined to be about 350.)

Lyon was a feared Confederate leader under the command of Nathan Bedford Forrest. Lyon, a Kentucky native who had been West Point trained, led raids into Union occupied territory, in Northern Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee and destroyed a number of courthouses and railroad depots that had fallen under Union control.

The 101st and 110th Union troops had only recently formed and had little combat experience. They had not been in the Scottsboro area during the early years of the war. These soldiers had been assigned

primarily to guard the Memphis & Charleston railroad line, but on Jan. 8, 1865, they found themselves in full battle with Lyon's unit and the Depot in "Scottsborough," Ala.

Fighting Was Ferocious: According to Hull's official report, fighting at the Depot was ferocious. Lyon's men attacked first at 5:30 p.m. One Union solider was shot, then stabbed in the attack, but the Union troops held the Depot.

At 6 p.m., accord to Hull, Lyon's men attacked again. Hull said that the Confederates "massed their force on the north side of the depot, making an assault, which I repulsed after ten minutes (of) almost hand-to-hand encounter." The Confederate soldiers grabbed the muzzles of the Union troops' guns, attempting to "wrest them through the loopholes in the depot building, in which we were stationed," Hull said. The Union soldiers again fought off the attack.

A third even more intense attack occurred and once again the Confederates were driven back. Finally, the Confederates fell back and opened artillery fire on the soldiers at the Depot. The Union soldiers then "fell back to the mountain."

Hull later praised his soldiers for their bravery, saying "...at no time did I lose confidence in their willingness to fight to the last, though surrounded by a much larger force and aided by artillery." A few days after the battle, Union Brigadier-General Thomas J. Wood officially commended Hull and the Union troops for their "gallant conduct." Wood noted that some of the troops had not officially been mustered into the Union army and he stated that: "Justice to these brave men requires that it (enrolling them as troops) should be done without delay."

Skirmish Considered Minor: Hull reported that 18 Confederates were killed in the skirmish and that 40 were wounded. Included in the Confederate deaths was a "Colonel Oneal" according to later reports. Hull stated that six of his soldiers were wounded and described the Union casualties as follows: "Sergt. Amos Bird, left leg; Sergeant Annis, left leg shot off; Corporal Lacy, slightly; Privates Robert Williams, in leg, Jones slight; private from Lieutenant Smart's company, whose leg was shot off."

Most local histories of the skirmish have considered the fight to be have been minor. For example, J. R. Kennamer in his *History of Jackson County* stated that "the loss was small on both sides." Kennamer, writing some 70 years after the incident, does not cite the source for his conclusion.

Available Confederate records do not refute or prove Hull's account, which at this point must be assumed to be true and accurate. A key question, however, in the account is what happened to the bodies of the 18 Confederate soldiers who were killed? Were they taken by Lyon's forces? Or were they buried by Union soldiers in the Scottsboro area?

Lyon's forces did not stay in "Scottsborough" for long. Union Colonel A. G. Mallory reported that soon after the skirmish he was stopped by Hull's garrison near "Scottsborough." He then advanced and moved into the town, which he said had been evacuated. Before leaving, the Confederates had set fire to the Depot. Mallory's men extinguished the fire and saved the building, he said.

Lyon marched on toward Guntersville, his unit steadily disbanding. Lyon himself was captured near Red Hill, but escaped by seizing a pistol while under guard and killing the Union sergeant who guarded him.

Depot Repaired and Remodeled: According to local historian Ann Chambless, that the Depot survived the war is evident in the minutes of the Memphis & Charleston Railroad, which on July 1, 1866, show that the Depot at Scottsboro had been "more or less repaired." In 1885, according to Mrs. Chambless, the Depot was remodeled. No details were given in the minutes, however, about the extent of the remodeling.

In 1892, a separate passenger depot was built at Scottsboro. Until that time, the original Depot had served as both the freight and passenger depot. After passenger service stopped in Scottsboro, the Depot was purchased by a private owner and relocated.

Catalyst for Growth: In looking back, it is clear that throughout the late 1800s and into the mid-1900s, the railroad line served as the catalyst for Scottsboro's growth, and the Freight Depot area was the hub of the city's business activity.

Indeed, there was a time when the Depot was essentially Scottsboro. When the Depot was built, the unincorporated community consisted of no more that two or three hundred people. At this time, there was a lumber mill, a tanyard, and several small businesses in the community. A post office had been designated for "Scott's Mill" in 1854.

Robert T. Scott operated the tanyard, which he used during the early part of the war to make boots for Confederate troops. Scott's home, "White Cottage," was burned by Union troops in the early years of the war. Scott himself died in June of 1863 after being forced to pull a Union soldier's wagon.

As stated, the days of the Freight Depot may be numbered unless some solution to the disposal and use for the building can be made. No doubt, members of DesignAlabama, the evaluation group scheduled to be in Scottsboro in April, will look at the Freight Depot in studying ways to bring tourists downtown.

Perhaps some modern-day Robert Scott will see a restored Freight Depot as having potential for revitalizing the railroad district. Or perhaps the Freight Depot will be deemed more a liability than an asset, when all other city obligations are considered. If so, then after the building is gone, at least some historical marker or monument that acknowledges the role of the Depot in the city's history would be in order.

Step Back into the Past: Meanwhile, for those who are interested in the history and heritage of Scottsboro, it is suggested that late some afternoon, go down to the Depot. Stay awhile and imagine the area 135 years ago. Robert Scott himself must have at one time looked on the building with pride, seeing it was the first step in the fulfillment of his dream for "Scottsborough."

Think, too, about that January day 130 years ago when true believers from opposing sides fought with their lives for gallant causes and struggled to control the depot in a small community on the Memphis & Charleston line. Their story is a part of understanding who we are as a people and how we've come to what we are.

The author would like to think Mrs. Drenda King for her assistance and contributions to this article. Mrs. King is spearheading an effort to stimulate discussion on all possible options for the Depot before the building is demolished.

In discussion with Mrs. King, Mayor Louis Price and former Mayor Walter Hammer offered perspectives on the Depot from city government's point of view. Mr. John Baker, Vice President with Norfolk Southern Railroad, provided information on the current status of the Depot during a telephone interview with the author. Mr. Clyde Broadway provided valuable information on the historical significance of the Depot Building. Mrs. Ann Chambless has compiled information on the Depot, specifically identifying important dates and occurrences in the building's history. Mr. Wendell Page of the Scottsboro-Jackson County Heritage Center discussed the Depot with Mrs. King and the author.

Jerry Gist's book, *The Story of Scottsboro*, contains very useful historical background on the city. Information on the Civil War skirmish at the Depot is from reports contained in *The War of the Rebellion: A compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.* This material is available in the Heritage Room of the Madison-Huntsville Public Library.

Dr. David Campbell

Scottsboro Freight Depot before renovation.

Jackson County's Romance with the Airplane

Although Jackson County by no means had a front seat for aviation history, its citizens followed new developments through local newspapers and even had a brush with aviation greatness with Charles Lindbergh doing a flyover in 1927.

The desire to fly through the air was anything but new or unique. It is my most persistent dream. Icarus in Greek myth flew out of the labyrinth with wings his father fashioned out of wax and feathers. Leonardo DaVinci designed flying machines in the late 1400s. The Montgolfier brothers made the first untethered hot air balloon flight in 1783, and balloons were used to spy on enemies during the Civil War. Matthew Brady took a photo of the Union army filling a hydrogen balloon in 1863, watching the balloon as it filled from hydrogen generators off to the left. "The generators used sulfuric acid and iron filings to produce the hydrogen (along with a lot of heat)," Bill Tally explained. "Unfortunately, a lot of hydrogen sulfide was also released, which attacked the balloon material when it recombined with water vapor to re-form sulfuric acid."

Matthew Brady, 1863. Chattanooga Public Library.

Aviation moved a little slower in Alabama, though in 1903 our citizens marveled at Wilbur and Orville Wright's first powered, sustained, and controlled flight at Kitty Hawk. We were not even sure what to call our flying machines. The March 28, 1912 *Stevenson Chronicle* reported that a military appropriations bill in Congress had come down on the side of calling the new inventions "airplanes,' not "aeroplanes," the original name. "It appears that a sensitive representative from Texas objects to the word 'aeroplane,' and will not be satisfied with anything less than 'airplane'....In the interests of the simple life, by all means call the things airplanes."

Once someone had accomplished powered flight, it took an amazingly short time for airplanes to make it to Alabama and Jackson County. In New Market, William Lafayette Quick constructed a flying machine in 1900, a harness-type mechanism worn by the "pilot" that he tested in 1908 that reportedly rose 10-12 feet in the air and flew 60-75 feet. He was issued a patent in 1913 for his "Improved Flying Machine." The Encyclopedia of Alabama notes that "the first documented, controlled and sustained flight of a powered heavier-than-air machine" in Alabama occurred March 26, 1910 when Orville Wright ascended from the cotton fields around Montgomery.

Johnny "Bird Man" Green with his plane "Betty". From earlyaviators.com.

Men with their flying machines began making the rounds at county fairs as early as 1911 when John Schwister of Wausau, Minnesota built his own plane nicknamed the "Minnesota Badger." Scottsboro's first organized county fair took place in 1914, and the daily special attraction that fall was Johnny Green, the Bird Man, who brought his airplane, "Betty," and flew daily to the delight of fairgoers. Just 11 years after the first flight, this was a very early aviation demonstration, and Jackson County people deserved to be awed by this early barnstormer. It was dangerous business so early.

In 1916, Chattanooga aviator Clifton Cook "sustained a broken hip and several minor injuries at the Sequatchie Valley fair grounds in South Pittsburg, when his biplane, after landing, crashed through the fence around the race track." He was saved by the weakness of the fence. (*Progressive Age* September 8, 1916)

It took war for development of the airplane to really take off, so to speak. World War I was the first war to be fought in the air. Remember that even though America entered the war in 1917, World War I started in 1914. The first wartime use of airplanes was for reconnaissance. The airplanes would fly above the battlefield and determine the enemy's movements and position. "As the war progressed, both sides began to use aircraft to drop bombs on strategic enemy locations. The first planes used for bombings could only carry small bombs and were very vulnerable to attack from the ground."

"By the end of the war, faster long-range bombers were built that could carry a much larger weight of bombs. With more planes taking to the skies, enemy pilots began to fight each other in the air. At first, they tried throwing grenades at each other or shooting with rifles and pistols. This didn't work very well. Pilots soon found that the best way to shoot down an enemy plane was with a mounted machine gun. However, if the machine gun was mounted at the front of the plane, the propeller would get in the way of the bullets. An invention called an 'interrupter' was invented by the Germans that allowed the machine gun to be synchronized with the propeller. Soon all fighter planes used this invention.... These fights in the air were called dogfights. The best of the pilots became famous and were nicknamed 'aces'. " (See https://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_i/aviation_and_aircraft_of_ww1.php)

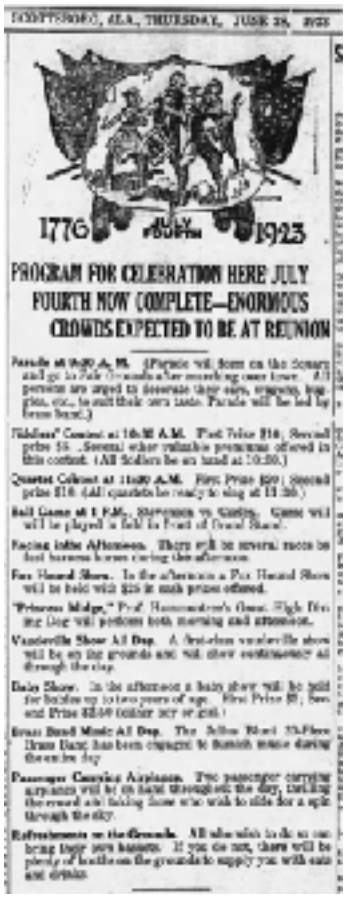
The August 17, 1917 *Progressive Age* included the drawing at the left of student airplane observers making topographic sketches of an improvised battlefield over which they were supposed to be flying. In November the *Age* carried this quip about the warning about treating Spanish flu with alcohol: "Drinking liquor for the 'Flu' is like riding in an 'airplane,' you're in a helluvalot of danger but the 'pleasant sensation' makes you unconscious of the fact."

The development funds poured into war-time biplanes and triplanes opened up aviation to those who did not choose to build their own aircraft. After World War I ended in 1918, the world was ready to exploit the airplane, and the *Scottsboro Citizen* enthusiastically reported on January 14, 1919 that "airplane manufacturers are losing no time in developing long-distance machines for transatlantic flights for which tempting prizes have been offered by various newspapers and aviation clubs."

In September 1922, James H. Doolittle, an Army aviator, flew across the continent in 21 hours and 18 minutes, with one stop in San Antonio, TX. "The most astonishing feature of the flight...was the fine condition in which Lieutenant Doolittle arrived." Spectators expected to see him covered with spattered oil and also find him "dead tired," as the *Progressive Age* put it. "Instead, when Doolittle landed, having 'taxied' up to the deadline with superb precision, he pulled off his leather cap, smiled from a face clean of travel stains and laughed." Clearly the newspaper thought of 'taxied" as a new, specialized term that needed quotation marks.

We had no common terminology at that time for talking about air travel. I remember the first time my mother saw an airplane when she visited Montgomery, where her cousin was training for service in World War II. Her diary referred to seeing the airplanes "take off and light," her understanding of flight based on watching house flies. But the same terminology was in evidence in a September 28, 1922 *Progressive Age* story with the headline "Plane Damaged While Alighting Here." In this story, a plane flying from

Birmingham to Nashville landed roughly here when it stopped to "take on gas." The plane "struck its nose in the ground and turned over," but the occupants were not injured. Bennett McCracken an airplane mechanic formerly from Scottsboro, "got the plane fixed up and it went sailing away to Birmingham."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PROGRAM FOR CELEBRATION HERE JULY FOURTH NOW COMPLETE—ENORMOUS CROWDS EXPECTED TO BE AT REUNION

In 1922-1923, the local papers reported a steady stream of airplane firsts. February 1922 is the first instance of the Coast Guard using aircraft in their work. In New York, a fleet of seaplanes was being used for sightseeing flights, the *Age* reported on August 21, 1922. In March 1923, with the boll weevil devastating local cotton crops, the U.S. Department of Agriculture developed a "special spraying apparatus" that could be "attached to planes, which will scatter poison over the fields," and crop-dusting was born. In June 1923, the age reported the birth of aerial photography. "Thomas B. Eaton, of Houston, Tex., has arrived in Gadsden and will take plane pictures of Gadsden and the district" for use in a Chamber of Commerce advertising campaign. A plane flew over Scottsboro in September 1923 "dropping advertising matter for the Madison County Fair."

By 1925, the Navy had built its first aircraft carrier, the Saratoga. The U.S.S. Langley had been converted in 1922 to accommodate aircraft. "A new naval giant will take her first dip in Camden, N.J. April 7," The *Progressive Age* reported on March 26, 1925 "when the first airplane carrier Saratoga slides off the ways....she will be the biggest and fastest craft of the kind in the world and will carry a fleet of 72 combat, observation, and bombing planes."

This same year, Atlanta made plans to build its first airport. Mayor Sims planned to lease a 300-acre tract of land to create the city's first airfield. I'm sure that a traffic jam formed immediately.

Scottsboro was not left behind in this flurry of airplane firsts. At the 1923 county fair, "two passenger carrying airplanes" were on hand, "thrilling the crowd and taking those who wish for a spin through the sky." The week after the fair, the *Progressive Age* reported that the paper might be jumbled because their typesetter had been one of those who took an airplane ride.

In August of that year, two former military aviators with the Tennessee National Guard who flew at county fairs, Charles J. Roscoe, of Nashville, and P. O. Cook, crashed and died in Birmingham. "They had cleared the field only about 100 feet and were approximately 300 feet up when the machine began to drop. Just what caused the accident could not be determined until a board of officers conduct an investigation." They had stopped in Huntsville earlier that day to negotiate a contract to fly at the Madison County Fair that fall. None of the aviation regulatory agencies were established until the 1950s.

By 1927, opportunities for airplane rides became more available to Jackson County residents. In June 1927, "a plane landed at Fair Grounds and the flyer made the proposition that he would take any and all of us Lindberghs for the small sum of $2.50 each [a Model A Ford could be had for $385], and from the very beginning until Sunday afternoon late he was busy shoving the local population through the atmosphere far above the soothing assurance of 'terror firmah.' Most of the population kept their eye on the plane, expecting it to fall every trip but it didn't fall and there was more or less disappointments." Rudolph Jones took a ride and managed to overcome his Florida tan; he "didn't look brown when he came down." Gus Sentell hung around all day but did not ride, though his wife urged him to go ahead. "Gus thought there was a trick in it somewhere. He said some fool woman had already told his wife she looked fetching in black." Exum Sumner already courted danger in his work but hanging around watching flights was the extent of his involvement with the airplane. "Ex has a peculiar idea of danger. He has been biting

dynamite caps on to fuses and dynamiting gravel pits for twenty years and as a side line he 'breaks' young mules between crop time and road-making."

The real measure of how enamored everyone was with flying lies in the fascination that Jackson County—indeed, the world— had with Charles Lindbergh. In May 1927, Lindbergh made the first solo non-stop flight from New York to Paris in his "Spirit of St. Louis." He was awarded the Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Flying Cross by President Calvin Coolidge and promoted in July 1927 to the rank of Colonel. On the Paris end, he received the French Order of Merit and the Legion of Honor. "His achievement spurred significant interest in both commercial aviation and air mail" in a phenomena referred to as the "Lindbergh boom." (Wikipedia) "No one can fully estimate the value of this feat and what it will mean to transportation in the future," the *Progressive Age* said in May 1927. Lindbergh was welcomed with parades and celebrations wherever he travelled. He was awarded an honorary master of science in aeronautics from St. Joseph's College (*PA*, Nov 24, 1927) He received the Woodrow Wilson medal in March 1928. After Lindbergh's flight to Paris, even the Palace Meat Market was capitalizing on the Lindbergh mystique.

YOU CAN FLY, TOO.

Lindbergh flew from New York to Paris in 33½ hours by himself. We would not think about flying across with a dozen fellows for company, much less by ourselves. But we are flying here in town, selling the best meats and lard that can be bought. We take pride in keeping our market nice and clean. Visit it and see for yourself. There is no bad odor here. Phone us your wants and get instant service.

THE PALACE MEAT MARKET

POLK McCLENDON, Manager.

Brown Building, Northeast Corner Square.

Lindbergh actually visited Alabama in 1927. The rumors began to appear in July when the *Progressive Age* reported that the Birmingham city commissioners "had been officially notified of Col. Charles Lindbergh's coming to Birmingham." Real notification was published on September 22, stating that Lindbergh would come to Alabama on Wednesday, October 5, which was declared Lindbergh Day. "The governor of the state will officially welcome the distinguished guest" when he landed at Roberts Field in Birmingham at 2:00 pm in the Spirit of St. Louis airplane that had completed the Paris trip. Lindbergh would then "address an open air meeting to which every one is invited and lead a parade through town. At night at the municipal auditorium he will be tendered a banquet." Dr. J. A. Gentry from Scottsboro took his family to Birmingham for the event.

Scottsboro was to be part of this Lindbergh celebration. The *Progressive Age* reported that Lindbergh flew the "Sprit of St. Louis" to Alabama, but he did not. "Congressman Almon arranged with Col. Lindbergh to give us North Alabama towns notice and the famous flyer certainly did let us get 'an eye full.' The schools dismissed for the occasion and the 'Lindy' gave them a special dip at the campus." Not a stop, just a flyover. But then, Jackson County had nothing resembling an airport in 1928, though clearly pilots landed at the fairgrounds on West Willow.

The Depression put the brakes on much of our airplane enthusiasm, though in February 1930 "passenger and express airline service" was "inaugurated between Atlanta, Ga., and Birmingham, by Davis Airlines Company."

In the early 1930s, Jackson County people were struggling with putting food on the table. When Roosevelt's New Deal program, the Works Progress Administration, offered to match local funds and build an airport in Jackson County in October 1935, the offer of $42,000 was rejected because there was "no agitation for an airport around here at the present time."

But the county got an airstrip out of the Roosevelt programs because the TVA needed to land its dam experts and political connections nearby to see work on the Guntersville Dam. The TVA airstrip was

located on North Sauty Creek and served as the de facto Scottsboro Airport until our airport was built in 1955. This 1947 USGS map shows the location of the airstrip near Temperance Hill School on Goosepond Island.

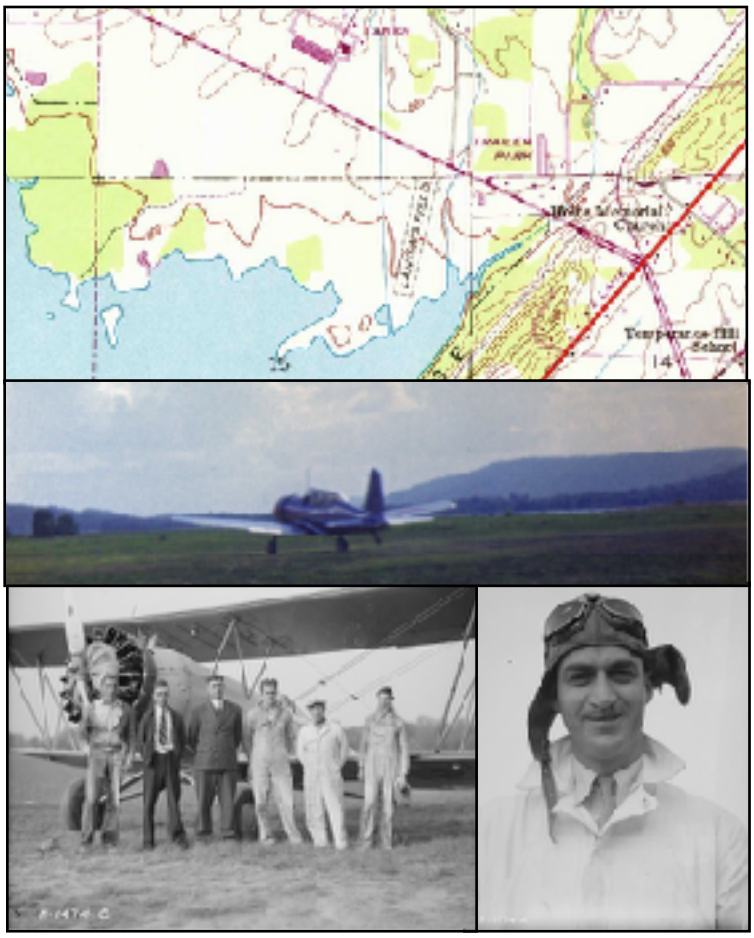
We have confirmed that this was the location of the airstrip, and Sam Hall has a 16 mm film that he has restored, shot entirely at this site. The plane on the right is a capture from this film, which you can see here: http://vimeo.com/835093922.

In the 1940s, stunt pilots toured the country promoting first one business and then another. In the May 6, 1940 *Progressive Age*, "The TOM CAT OVERALL Stunt Pilot" was in town, paid for by the Red Hot Store. He dropped "small parachutes, some with lucky number which get you FREE pairs of TOM CAT overalls" at the Red Hot Stores.

Free Air Show and Free Overalls!

The TOM CAT OVERALL Stunt Pilot will fly over Scottsboro at 12 noon MONDAY and put on a real air show. He will drop small parachutes, some of them with tickets with lucky numbers which get FREE pairs of TOM CAT overalls absolutely free at either of the RED HOT STORES.

These free overalls and air show are given the public by the TOM CAT OVERALL COMPANY and THE RED HOT STORES. Don't miss it! Watch for the parachutes—you may get a lucky ticket



Top: 1947 USGS Map showing the TVA airstrip. Middle; 1948 plane on the TVA airstrip. Bottom: 1937 TVA ground crew in Knoxville and TVA pilot Paul Flannery, National Archives.

World War II brought our flying fascination down to earth again as so many of our young people prepared to serve in the military. At least four of the young men the county lost during the war were pilots, and two of the pilots who died were brothers-George and Walt Austin of Stevenson. Twenty-seven-year-old George, a Navy pilot, died in Australia in 1942, and his brother, thirty-year-old Walt, died teaching in flight school in Jacksonville, FL. Pilot Herbert Ballad from Dutton flew missions for three and a half years before dying in 1944 over Spain. Pilot Robert Keown flew his P-38 on a mission over Papua, New Guinea in 1944; all four planes in his squadron failed to return and were presumed shot down. Pilot Cecil M. Floyd served 11 years and survived missions over Normandy, France, and Italy only to die in 1948 in the crash of his F-80 jet. The McCamy brothers—Raymond and James—died in 1943 and 1944. Both spent the war in B-17 bombers, Raymond as a navigator who was lost in a sea battle over the Bismarck Sea in the Pacific war and James as the bombardier who died in a mission over Germany.

At least two more Jackson County men were pilots during World War II—Richard Patrick, who was shot down over Germany in March 1945 and held in a POW camp in Wetzler, Germany, and Frank Claytor, whose B-17 was shot down over Belgium. He evaded capture while his wife Mary was told by the Air Force that he had died, and went on to serve in Korea and Vietnam. His brother-in-law Robert Haas served with the 69th Bomb Squadron, 42nd Bomb Group, as a bombardier/navigator in the Luzon,

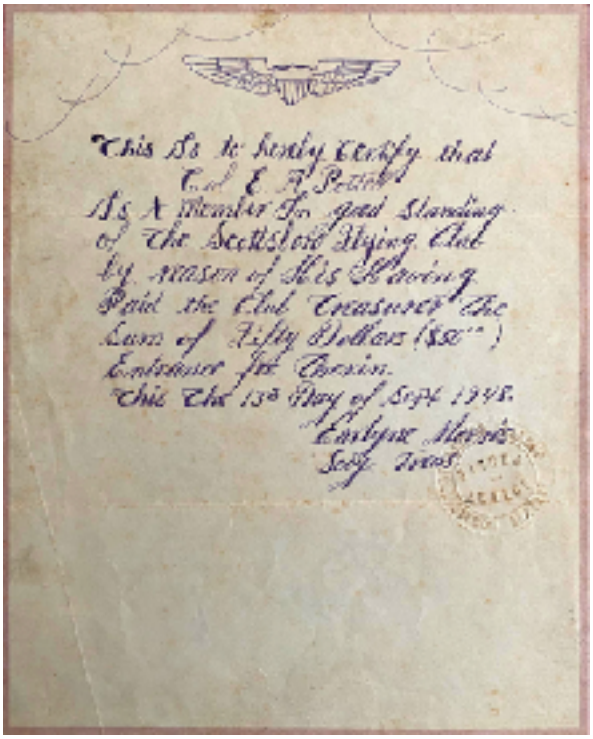
Borneo, New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago and the Southern Philippines campaigns. Jack Knox was only 24 and left his post as principal of Long Island School to be the navigator on a B-17 that was shot down over Hanover, Germany. Corporal Roderick Harris was serving with the U. S. Air Force in Germany when he lost his life. Richard Patrick was featured on the most recent cemetery stroll, played by his great nephew, Steve. All of these men represent incredible stories—but stories outside the scope of this article.

In 1943, a military aviation trainee named Edward Putter from Bethlehem, PA crashed into a field owned by Leonard Barbee, near Randall's Chapel, after he ran out of fuel searching for a landing site. Mr. Barbee carried the injured pilot to Hodges Hospital, but he died four hours later from his injuries.

During World War II, several shows were staged to promote the sale of war bonds. The Tuskegee Airmen were in town February 15, 1944 to cap off a bond drive in the Black community. "The Negroes of Jackson County will end their Bond Drive by a celebration in Scottsboro next Tuesday the 15th....this will be topped off with an air show by negro pilots from the Tuskegee Air Field. These pilots will come over the city at approximately 12:50 and put on the show. They cannot land for there is no suitable field, so the show will be in the air only," the *Progressive Age* reported.

The air shows that followed the end of WWII gave citizens a chance to see some of their war heros in action. The air shows were held in Sebring field, a wide, flat area on Ridgedale Road just off Tupelo Pike. The first airshow was held at Sebring Field on June 27, 1948 and featured a group of stuntmen from the Birmingham Air Service. Admission was $1 per car.

The second airshow was a local production. The August 26, 1948 *Progressive Age* provided details about the Free Air Show: "Three of Scottsboro's top-notch fighter pilots of the last war gave our folks a nice air show last Sunday afternoon. They were Ben Kirby, Sam Barnes, Jr. and Richard Patrick Jr., and all are in the Air Force reserve. They have to go to Birmingham at intervals and do flying, so last Sunday they came up and gave the homefolks a show. They were piloting three fast planes and they certainly knew their stuff. If all towns in the country have reserve pilots like these boys, we need not worry about our air defense."


This Is to Hereby Certify that
Col E A Potter
As A Member In good Standing
of the Scottsboro Flying Club
by reason of His Having
Paid the Club Treasurer the
Sum of Fifty Dollars ($50.00)
Entitles him to Certain
This the 13th Day of Sept 1948.
Earlene Morris
Sec'y Treas.

Membership certificate from the Scottsboro Flying Club,, issued to Col. E. A. Potter on September 13, 1948. From Katrina Potter Patty.

The popularity of this show in August led to a third air show, put on this time by a group called the Scottsboro Flyers Club on October 10. The newly formed Flyers Club consisted of Dr. Sam Hall, president; J. W. "Hoodaddy" Floyd, first vice president; Lawrence Sebring (who owned the field on which the event took place), second vice-president; and Earylene Morris, secretary-treasurer. Other members included Ottis Potter, E. A. Potter, Charles Cook, Red Roden, R. H. Latham, Boots Potter, Johnny Allen, Fate Melton, Charles Hodges, Richard Patrick and Homer Hancock, with honorary members Mayor W. W. Gross and stuntman Dan Turner. This was the event that put Scottsboro flying on the map.

On October 7, the *Progressive Age* wrote: 'Plans are rapidly forming for the big air show at the Scottsboro Air Field next Sunday, sponsored by the Scottsboro Flyers Club, a live and wide-awake group of local flyers and flying enthusiasts. There will be a day full of stunts and exciting air thrills," featuring the same three local flyers. "Also J. W. Floyd, of Scottsboro, pilot, stunter and parachutist, will put on a special act with a jump during the program." It is not known if this was the show where Jesse Walter "Hoodaddy"

Floyd pulled his famous parachute stunt, that is, throwing a dummy out of the plane that plummeted to the ground, causing his spectator mother to faint.

The October air show was expected to draw a few hundred people but instead, *The Huntsville Times* reported, "Scottsboro's first big air show was a thigh-slapping success yesterday with 3,000 neck-craners watching for four hours at the municipal airport as planes of different builds and sizes buzzed overhead—and it wasn't very high sometimes. Hoodaddy Floyd was the star of the show, doubling in brass as emcee, funnyman, and parachute jumper. He latched into the main stand mike and entertained the crowd between acts with humorous talk, assisted by a hill-billy band."

In case you think I exaggerate about this airshow, you don't have to take my word for it. You can see a 16mm film of this event that flying club president Dr. Sam Hall shot, which has been lovingly restored and put onto vimeo by his grandson Sam Hall. https://vimeo.com/802435636

Composite photo of a capture from the Sam Hall 1948 airshow movie superimposed over a modern photo of Sebring Field. Photos by Sam Hall Sr. and Sam Hall Jr.

Recently, Sam Hall visited Sebring Field and looked for assurance that the location was correct. Here is a 1948 frame of the air show superimposed over the modern photo of the pasture where the airshow was held.

At least one more airshow, sponsored by the Scottsboro Flyers Club, was held July 10, 1949 and featured formation flying, crop dusting demonstrations, aerial acrobatics, and a parachute jump by Hoodaddy Floyd. This was billed as the "Fifth Annual Air Show." Passenger rides were available all day.

Air Show full-page Progressive Age posters from (L to R) June 24, 1948, October 2, 1948, and July 7, 1949.

The flying club seems to have disbanded shortly thereafter, but aviation enthusiasm was alive and well. In 1952, pilot James Thompson heard a plane circling and circling overhead as the night grew darker. He called his friend, pilot Frank Henshaw, and together they organized a caravan to the airstrip off Tupelo

Pike to light a path for Robert Kieran, a young pilot lost in a storm and overtaken by darkness. Kieran was anxious that his parents not learn of the incident, but they were sitting in a bar in Manhattan when the news of his miraculous landing came on Lowell Thomas's nationally syndicated radio show.

The 1948 *Huntsville Times* article about the air shows referred to Sebring Field as the "Scottsboro municipal airport," but it was not an airport. The airstrip was abandoned by 1953, and the TVA strip was used without the agency's authorization for two or three years thereafter. Sam Hall has made his grandfather's Scottsboro Flying Club film show at the TVA airstrip available on Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/833102700 The TVA maintained the airstrip into the 1950s to house planes used for the aerial inspection of power lines and shore frontage. But the TVA put a stop to local planes using their airstrip, and it was up to young Jake Word to spearhead the building of the Scottsboro Municipal Airport.

When Jake graduated from Auburn University in 1953, he flew the plane home to Jackson County that he had bought and learned to fly at Auburn. Jake arranged with his first cousin, Bob Word, to recruit another friend to aid his nighttime landing. The plan was for Bob and his friend to park at each end of a TVA airstrip. They were to burn their car headlights at each end of the airstrip to guide Jake in for a landing. Their method of communicating Jake's arrival time was primitive: Bob, who was attending a gathering at a Mink Creek dance hall, was to listen for the sounds of Jake's engine overhead and then drive to the airfield. When fellow party goers learned of Bob's mission, they joined the caravan to the airstrip, pretty much clearing out the dance hall. David and Jake told the story of building the Scottsboro Municipal Airport in April 2019 *Chronicles*. It is a good read.

The runway of the new airport was on the short side. Over time, a cluster of trees at the point where pilots began to make their descent grew until the trees became a serious safety hazard in the early 1960s. Repeated requests that the landowner cut the trees down fell on deaf ears. A pair of local pilots with a chain saw took the trees down under cover of darkness in 1961, only to have the land owner attach guide wires and reseat the dead trees on their stumps.

A new flying club was organized, the Scottsboro Hi-Jax Flying Club in July 1963 with 16 members: Charles Hodges as president; Frank Henshaw Jr. as vice-president; Allenne Joyner Vann as secretary-treasurer; and Dr. Carl Collins and Dr. John T. Sanders as members of the board. Other members included Mack Allen, Fred Casteel, Porter Dawson, Spec Dawson, John Lee Gainey, Guy Hollis, O. A. Hicks, and Welton Norwood. The club purchased a Cessna 172 to use for flying lessons, and Rev. W. C. Nolan, who held an instructor's license from the federal government, was the chief pilot-instructor for the club.

One other flying story with Jackson County connections should be mentioned. In 1990, World War II veteran pilot Col. Carl Rudder was flying one of the eight planes (a P-38) that crash landed on a Greenland icecap on July 15, 1942—two B-17s and six twin-engine, P-38 Lightning fighters. "They ran out of fuel after being decoyed by false radio transmissions from German submarines while en route to Europe, " the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* wrote in their June 7, 1990 paper. The pilots camped for nine days until they were rescued by a sled dog team.

In the early 1970s, Rudder mentioned what became known as the Lost Squadron to Roy Dean, a commercial pilot who brought the idea of locating the aircraft to the Greenland Expedition Society. "In 1988, the society found the aircraft using low-frequency subsurface radar." *Smithsonian Magazine* included an account of the excavation and recovery of two planes (both P-38s) in the August 28, 2018 issue. Rudder, the son of Horton and Biddie Rudder, died in 2000 and is buried in the Wimberley Cemetery.

The Scottsboro Municipal Airport has a good safety record. Local pilots can recall only four accidents there, none of which resulted in serious injury. The airport today does a brisk business in safety inspections and servicing of aircraft. It continues as a place where local aviation enthusiasts and the occasional corporate jet can land safely.

Annette Bradford

Of Sinkholes and Disappearing Lakes

A sinkhole is a depression or hole in the ground caused by some form of collapse of the surface layer. Most sinkholes are caused by karst processes, the chemical dissolution of carbonate rocks that cause a collapse of the ground beneath. Sinkholes are usually circular and vary in size from tens to hundreds of meters, both in diameter and depth, and vary in form from soil-lined bowls to bedrock-edged chasms. Sinkholes may form gradually or suddenly, and are found worldwide.

Jackson County, with its thousands of known caves, is a network of eroded limestone, and it is little wonder that lakes come and go. Dale Crawford dropped by the depot recently and told me this story, reported in the September 5, 1938 *Jackson County Sentinel*. When I repeated this story, I learned that lakes swallowed up by the earth are not such a unique phenomena in the county. It happened a few years back to a lake where I had fished in the 1970s. If I have the location right, the lake seems to be back.

Lakes Disappears Into Earth on J. O. Lipscomb Farm. One of the most peculiar phenomena in the county's history occurred at Larkinsville, five miles west of Scottsboro, on Monday afternoon, when the large lake on the Dr. J. O. Lipscomb farm suddenly disappeared into the ground leaving hundreds of fish in low puddles in the lake basin.

The lake was known as one of the finest game fishing spots in the area, as it had been stocked with game fish and well protected for years. The lake was about 300 yards in diameter and the water ranged in depth from a few inches to twelve feet, with some holes of unknown depth. It was better known locally as the "lily pond" because of the immense lilies that covered a part of the surface and made ideal fish breeding waters.

Shortly after noon on Monday, people noticed the water receding from the banks and saw a sort of whirlpool near the center of the body of water. As the water got lower, hundreds of fish could be seen as they were swept by the current into some underground route the water was taking. When daylight came Tuesday morning, the big blue lake had disappeared, with the exception of a shallow section of water that had been held back by a rise in the bottom and kept from falling down the hole. In this body of water there leaped frantically hundreds of game fish. Men and boys waded into the place and took several dozen bass ranging in size from two to six pounds, and the fish catching was still in progress at noon Tuesday. The editor of this paper got a fine four-pounder that a lively youngster managed to catch during the frolic, catching the fish with his bare hands.

A hole about twenty feet across where the water disappeared was not explored, but several times this morning the water has risen in this spot and then dropped back again, which leads some to believe the lake may come back through the same hole at a later time.

This is the first time in the memory of any Larkinsville citizens that this lake has been dry or very low. The origin of the lake was handed down from older settlers that it was made overnight. It is said that a dug well was once located near a house. The residents of the house were awakened one morning to find their cabin being flooded. They ran out and saw a great volume of water overflowing from their well and they ran for their lives. The water continued to rise until the big lake was formed. Since that time soundings have been made which disclosed the location of the old well. Today for the first time in a hundred or more years, the exact spot of the well can be seen, and this well is where the water drained out.

Hundreds of people have been visiting this spot since the phenomena and it will likely remain a live curiosity for sometime to come. Anyway, there can be no argument about one thing—there certainly were some fine fish in the lake, even if they did fail to bite at times.

New Scottsboro Church of Christ History Available

Charlene Cobb, widow of long-time Broad Street minister Charles Cobb, has written a new history of the Church of Christ in Jackson County. The timeline from her history is reproduced below. The full history can be downloaded from the Broad Street Church of Christ website: https://www.broadstreetchurchofchrist.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Memorial_Booklet_2023.pdf

Church of Christ on Peachtree Street.

1815 First church of Christ in Alabama: Antioch, near Bridgeport, now Rocky Springs.

1819 Alabama Legislature created Jackson County.

1884 On January 26, James Alexander Harding of Winchester, Kentucky began a gospel meeting in Scottsboro, Alabama. (He was born April 16, 1848.) The meetings were held in the Missionary Baptist Church house.

1884 On February 20, the Gospel Advocate printed an article written by James A. Harding which summarized the meeting in Scottsboro.

1884 Later, this year, J.W. Shepherd of Kentucky conducted another gospel meeting in the same place. As a result of these meetings, a small congregation of the church of Christ was organized in Scottsboro.

1885 B.C. Goodwin preached in Scottsboro.

1885 On August 31, for seventy-two dollars, trustees James Daniel, J.H. Gregory, and W.J. Rorex signed the deed for the purchase of 1/8 of an acre. (For several years, newspaper articles referred to this congregation as the Christian Church. According to reports, when J.M. Gainer preached here, he influenced the editors of the newspaper to use the name Church of Christ.)

1886 The congregation erected their first church building on Peachtree Street. At some point, the building burned and church members attended services out of town, perhaps at Aspel/Zion's Rest. A second church building was erected on Peachtree Street about the same spot as the first building. This building was used until a new building was erected on the corner of Charlotte and Broad Streets. (In a 2004 anniversary paper, Wendell Page, who had begun attending services there in January 1941, remembered there was no regular preacher for the congregation on Peachtree Street for every Sunday.)

1901 On November 11, the Alabama State Constitution was ratified. On July 28, World War I began; it ended on November 11, 1918.

1911, 1919 Other congregations of the Church of Christ began in Guntersville, Woodville, Mt. Shade, Grant, and Simpson Point.

1950 On July 1, trustees C.S. Kennamer, Quitmon Howard, R.B. Derrick and Albert Parks signed a mortgage to borrow ten thousand and no/100 ($10,000.00) from Lawton Kennamer to purchase the lot at the intersection of Broad Street and Charlotte Avenue in Scottsboro, Alabama. (W.J. Derrick had owned that lot.) On September 3, 1950, the first service was held in the new building. Jack Wilhelm was the minister. (Jack was born August 12, 1930; Therefore, he was just 20 years of age. At the same time, he was a student at David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee.)

1955 A minister's house was built on an adjoining lot just north of the church building. The first resident minister was Lindsay Allen who became the minister in July. Succeeding preachers who lived in that house at that location were Paul Kidwell, W.A. Black, Robert Buchanan and Charles E. Cobb.

1967 In April, the preacher's house was moved from Broad Street to 406 Charlotte Avenue to make room for an annex to the church building.

1968 In September, the annex was completed. The design of this annex created an L-shaped auditorium with the addition facing South. There was a nursery with a rest room at the rear of the annex auditorium.

1978 On July 23, a ground-breaking ceremony was held for an extensive renovation of the church building.

1979 On Easter Sunday, April 15th, the first service was held in the new auditorium which is also the one presently in use.

1984 On May 27, the congregation celebrated the 100th anniversary of the church of Christ in Scottsboro.

1994 The parking lot was expanded and improved with accommodations for handicapped access.

1998 In September, the building formerly occupied by the Jackson County Health Department was purchased. It was renovated to provide offices and classrooms.

2000 In August, Nathan Bridges became the Director of the Learning Center. Extensive renovations were made of the annex area formerly occupied by the Health Center.

2001 In February, the Learning Center opened. Later this year, Nathan was called to active duty in the Air Force Reserve. His wife, Melissa (Cunningham) Bridges assumed the role of Director. Later, she was followed by Brenda Devers, Sue Bilke and Debra Wilhelm.

2002 The preacher's house was sold. (After Charles E. Cobb vacated the house in November, 1987, the house became the residence of Charles and Dot Curtis, then Johnny Mack and Kayren Young, and then for a short time, Terry and Kathy Broome.)

2003 Broad Street began participating in the Lads to Leaders program in December.

2004 On October 31, the congregation celebrated the 120th anniversary of the church of Christ in Scottsboro.

2017 Extensive renovations were made of the building formerly occupied by the Woods Cove church of Christ. It became the new Youth Center sometime in 2018.

2022 The former youth center in the former Gist Studio was sold early in this year. In March, the Learning Center closed after 22 years. Deborah Wilhelm had served as its Director for its last eighteen years. On May 22, Terry Broome announced his partial retirement pending the employment of a new minister. Terry and Kathy began their work at Broad Street in May 2002.

Rocky Springs Church of Christ, 1910. From the South Pittsburg Museum.

Charlene Cobb

Rolling Stores

Taking the product to the customer is anything but new. "From antiquity, peddlers filled the gaps in the formal market economy by providing consumers with the convenience of door-to-door service," Wikipedia begins its 'peddler' entry, noting that peddlers congregated at fairs and markets in town, much as food trucks gather at First Monday. Peddling was even a term found in the Bible. Frontier women depended on peddlers who carried their goods on their backs, walking to places too remote for wagons to reach. But there was a limit to how much merchandise one person, or a person with a pack animal, could carry.

Catalog companies like Sears and Roebuck and Montgomery Ward appeared just before the turn of the century, giving residents an alternative to face-to-face purchases for durable goods. Until the advent of home-delivery of warm meals like pizza, food items were typically not delivered to your door. It took Covid to make Door Dash and home delivery of groceries an alternative that many embraced.

The rolling store seems to be the last hurrah of the peddler tradition. In fact, old folks called the rolling store driver "the peddler." The rolling store passed out of existence in Jackson County when R. W. Gibson took his rolling stores off the road in the early 1980s, but not before WHNT television sent a reporter to cover the man who had operated his rolling store for 42 years. His grandson Paul put this profile out on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=oevEVV85qll

The rolling store as a new business entity was operating very successfully in New York City in 1919, The *Chattanooga News* reported, and it was seen as a chance to lower the cost of doing business. "A rolling store is a large truck drawn by two giant horses, and filled with huge stacks of dry groceries which rolls into a neighborhood at the hours of 8 in the morning and thereafter does a rapid business until 6 o'clock at night," the paper explained. The appeal of this new form of commerce to New York City residents was that it sold merchandise at 25-30% lower than the same item in a traditional store.

When this story was written by Frederic J. Haskin in November 1919, there were 96 rolling stores operating in New York City and Brooklyn. But we folks in the South were not far behind, and most of our rolling stores used motorized vehicles, not horse-drawn wagons.

The earliest rolling store we can document in Jackson County came here from Chattanooga. The November 24, 1921 *Progressive Age* announced that a new form of commerce was coming to Jackson County—The Roly Redy, a complete grocery store on wheels operated out of Chattanooga. The same paper noted that A. H. Gay's trial rolling store had met with success. Alex Gay was a merchant who frequently advertised buying eggs and chickens in the early 1920s. His uncle Sam Gay was also a merchant, owner of a dry goods store. This was part of the Red Store rolling store fleet which had started up in 1919. The July 26, 1919 *Chattanooga News* announced that the 7th Roly Redy was about to begin rolling. The truck going to St. Elmo advertised two sizes of milking pails, fat for boiling, smoke meat, army bacon and Brown Beauty beans.

The "fleet of traveling Red Stores" had first appeared in Chattanooga at the 1919 fair, but the 1920 fair featured 12 of these stores, which were paraded around the race track between events. The "moving stores now cover the streets of Chattanooga proper, St. Elmo, Highland Park, North Chattanooga, and Rossville," the October 4, 1920 *Chattanooga News* stated.

"The trucks are a familiar sight on the streets. They are fitted with counters, shelving, cash registers, scales. All trucks are electric lighted. The stores pass through the residence section stopping when signaled or in the middle of the block. The garage and warehouse is located on East Main street. Each truck manager is required to wear a red shirt and white tie, characteristic of the Red store."

The Rolling Red Store was robbed in October 1920. "Thief holds gun on the manager while his pal takes $180.00 in money, two sacks of Red Store Flour, three pounds of Gem Nut Oleo Margarine and 1 pound Chickmauga Brand Coffee," the *Chattanooga News* reported. But the robbery did nothing to deter the growing number of rolling stores.

Rolling stores operated in Jackson County between at least 1920 and 1979, perhaps longer. Many operated on the barter system, an egg for five DumDum suckers or a chicken that was no longer laying for the sugar needed to make jelly. Jackson County folks report using butter, eggs, baby chicks, blackberries, homegrown vegetables, or milk for bartering. The rolling stores catered to children, who, I am sure, dragged their parents and grandparents with them when they spent their precious pennies and dimes for treats. *Alabama Folkways* magazine (June 1996) noted that "Often rolling stores would have cages built up under the truck bodies with a trap door above to drop in live chickens," though no one in Jackson County has shared this memory. Many times, such items made it no further than the next stop.

In 1935, the state of Alabama wanted to stop—or at least profit from—rolling store owners who operated multiple vehicles. The *Progressive Age* reported on June 6 that "A bill has been introduced to impose an annual license of $350 on each rolling store and if the same man owned more than one, $400 to be imposed on each additional rolling store." I could not determine if this proposition passed, but it would have been unpopular since many owners operated multiple rolling stores.

Rolling stores were very popular. *Alabama Folkways* reported that in Pike County alone, 25 rolling stores were operating during World War II. A number of drivers and stores were mentioned in the JCHA Facebook discussions, but no count can be made since only five are mentioned in the period newspapers.

Perry Green, who posted Kaye Cyler Mathes' photo of her family's rolling store, started this rolling store discussion on his Facebook page "Old Alabama Family Photos:"

For the under educated amongst you who do not know what a rolling store is, it is just as its name implies, a store that rolls. What one would do is buy an old school bus that had been retired, remove all the seats, install shelves and such and maybe even a small refrigeration unit. Then you would stock it with milk, bread, bananas, etc. and hit the road. Back in those days folks only went to town about once or twice a month or so and would occasionally run out of stuff. The rolling store owner hoped to provide whatever you might need thus saving a special trip to town or one of the local stores. For a small fee of course! He didn't seem to have a regular schedule, would just occasionally show up and Grannie would feel obligated to go inside look around and buy something just to be nice. Guess most sales were of that category.

Photo belonging to Kaye Cyler Mathes of her family's rolling store. Used with permission.

The man who operated our local rolling store [in Coosa County] was a Mr. Walton Monk. I believe he worked at the local grocery in the small town about twelve miles away, learned the business, saved up his money, bought the bus, and

started out on his own. He actually made enough money to open up his open grocery in the town in direct competition with his former employer. I have been told he died a rich man.

One of the things that Mr. Monk stocked was candy and drinks. Now this was a treat beyond our imagination back then. Here was this bus loaded with all manner of confections that would just show up at our doorstep. We obviously felt obliged to make his trip worthwhile!

Running the rolling store had to be a hard job. No air conditioning in the bus and in the winter the old heater just couldn't keep up. Plus the bus had like a gazillion miles on it when Mr. Monk bought it so I am sure it was prone to breakdowns. Tires, oil, upkeep, etc. also had to be considered. Plus, he had to keep inventory, buy stock and replenish it everyday that he went out. Don't know where or how he got the stock for the store. He just did. Never knew when he started out the day if he would sell enough to pay for gas and such. Even though gas was only about twenty-five cents a gallon back then, the houses he went to were few and far between.

Almost no one has speculated about what a hot, hard work it was to run a rolling store. And the condition of the roads must have limited the locations that a rolling store could access.

Unlike Mr. Monk's store in Coosa County, most rolling stores in Jackson County were owned by merchants who already had a retail location in one of the towns. C. A. Wilson's Rolling Store grew out of his business in Fackler, and Walter Johnson's out of his business on the north side of the square. The Gentle family in Lim Rock, who operated the familiar general store we still enjoy seeing by the the tracks, also operated a rolling store, as did Floyd Price whose iconic store is still standing in Estillfork. As Perry Green noted, most farm families came to town only a couple of times a month. Having two weeks of necessary groceries on hand is a foreign concept to someone like me, who often has to cut off the stove and run to the store to cook a single meal.

Being on a rolling store route was a perk, and people renting and selling houses touted this convenience in their ads. In 1953, for example, you could inquire at Temp's Bicycle Shop to rent a "4 room house, wired, on school mail, and rolling store route."

Walter Pearson was lucky enough to be on two rolling store routes. "We lived in the Bass community north of Stevenson," he wrote on the JCHA Facebook page. "My mother bought from C. A. Wilson (came by on Friday) and Gibson's (came by on Tuesday) for many years."

Cathy Thomason in Woods Cove did not live on a rolling store route in the mid-1950s but she and her sister "stayed with Mrs. Petty who lived there while our parents worked in the daytime. It was always exciting to see the store come and the merchandise across the doorway counter while Mrs. Petty shopped from outside. It was a unique experience for us since the rolling store did not come by our house."

Folks in Grey's Chapel were troubled when their rolling store driver was drafted to fight in Korea in 1953. "The housewives of this area are troubled because of the loss of their nice peddler boy, Avel Posey. Avel is a fine fellow and greets everyone with a smile and helpfulness. He has been driving the Prince rolling store for a year or more, coming to all our homes twice a week with most anything a housewife needs for her table."

Pages from Ben Matthews' rolling store ledger, from Richard Matthews.

Jackson County residents have many fond memories of the rolling stores that came to their parents' and grandparents' homes. When I asked the JCHA facebook page to share their rolling store memories, I got a wonderful flood of responses. The information below is compiled from those responses and from Ben Matthews' 1941 ledger from his time driving Tate's Rolling Store in Hollywood.

Tate's Rolling Store: Ben Matthews drove Tate's Rolling

Store in Hollywood in the 1940s. Thanks to his son Richard, I was able to study his 1941 records. His small commercial ledger chronicles the purchases of the 60 customers on his route. When a page filled up, he started a new page and carried the balance due forward and referenced the new page. No balance due in the ledger ever reached $40.

The ledger tells interesting stories. The rolling store stocked seasonal merchandise. For Christmas cooking, for example, the store offered "raisins, extract, and coconut" and "apples, oranges and nuts" purchased on December 23. On December 18, Gordon Brooks purchased a vase, and I am guessing that his wife Birtie received this for Christmas that year. Almost everyone bought exotic ingredients for Christmas cooking—nuts, sliced pineapple, coconut, marshmallows, fruit for stockings.

People bought everything; the variety of what was available in a small space is really beyond belief. People bought all kinds of clothing items—handkerchiefs, sweaters, shirts, overalls, unionalls, gloves, socks, shoes, and panties. They bought thread and piece goods by the yard. Customers bought knives and forks, snuggies and a vest, laying mash and shotgun shells. Snuff and Prince Albert. Ladies' slips and buttermilk. Baking powder and motor oil. Mule shoes and Oxydol. Ax handles and pie pans.

The store also carried over-the-counter medicines. E. D. Edward treated his aches with "head power" (Goody or Stanback?). He also bought Christmas gifts on December 22 for his family—4 new shirts, hankies, overalls, nuts and candy. Sometimes the rolling store was also the lunch wagon: "two vienna mixups and 2 drinks" cost Mr. Edwards 50 cents. Lots of dopes and cheese.

Frank Ellison's son borrowed a quarter from the rolling store. The entry read "Credit for cash by boy: .25." I remember Ann Chambless saying once she had no lunch money, and charged a quarter at the drug store to spend on lunch at school.

When he was a child, Richard remembered that often when his father drove the rolling store home at night, he would "go inside and play with the few toys and games that he had on board." I am surprised this packed, small space had room for toys at all.

Richard remembers that his father was once stopped on a remote part of his route by two young armed highwaymen intent on a robbery. They chickened out and ran away before completing the heist, though.

C. A. Wilson's Rolling Store: Operating in the 1950s out of Fackler, the C. A. Wilson Rolling Store "came by our house on highway 72," Naydene Cook recalls. "Us kids always looked forward to the time. We always wanted Cracker Jacks or Sugar Daddy candy bars until we found out that Sugar Daddys lasted longer than Cracker Jacks. Mama would count those eggs, chickens, butter, and milk down to the last cent. She would tell us exactly how much we could spend. And that had a lot to do with what kind of treat we got. And I can tell you there was no begging for more, because we knew there was no more. When we were doing our chores, mine was gathering eggs, I always made sure I got all of them hoping we have enough to trade. Milking, making butter, baby chicks, back then the Rolling Store had more leeway. They would go on down the way and sell them to someone else." C. A. Wilson also had a grocery store in Fackler which his son Charles operated until his recent death. Jason Cornelison recalls that his father drove the rolling store for C. A. Wilson. Frances Reid remembers Wilson coming to her house. Jennifer Shrader Swoboda remembers "C. A. Wilson's rolling store coming to my Mamaw's house in Wannville when I was little. That would have been the mid to late 70's so it was near the end of the era. I wish we had them now!"

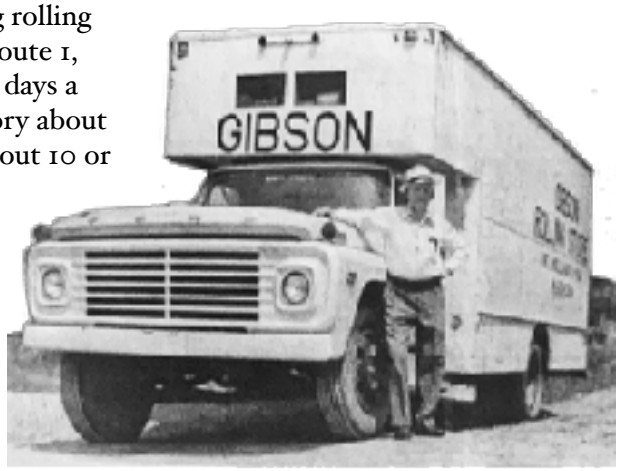
Judy Gibson remembers that Mr Wilson's store came by her house in Mud Creek/Martintown on Tuesdays. She remembers that a Mr Atkins drove Wilson's rolling store before he drove the school bus. Her mother traded molded butter and eggs.

Reed's Rolling Store: Details about this rolling store come from Brenda Lusk, who wrote the "Rolling Store" article for *The Heritage of Jackson County, Alabama*. She wrote, "The Reed's Rolling Store was owned by our Uncle Jim Reed, and driven by his brother, Jack Reed. Daddy's nephew, Junior Light, drove the

Machen's, at the same time. Uncle Jack says that it was the most enjoyable job he ever had, but in the late winter or spring of 1948, everybody seemed to run out of money at the same time. They all showed up at their stops asking for credit and buying large orders. He said half of them were never seen again." She told the story of her uncle stumbling into a big moonshine operation while trying to collect on these debts. As a historian and findagrave volunteer who has stumbled into marijuana fields and meth-making operations, I can sympathize with how it felt to see the porch "covered in clean washed quart jars" and thinking about canning until the wind changed.

Johnson's Rolling Store: Walter Johnson, who was later mayor of Hollywood, operated a grocery store on the square in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Bill Bradford worked in his rolling store while in high school. He remembered having to clear out of the truck so that ladies could try on lingerie inside the rolling store.

Gibson's Rolling Store: The last and probably the longest-lasting rolling store was the Gibson Rolling Store, operated by R. W. Gibson of Route 1, Hollywood. It started operating in 1937 and was still operating four days a week in 1979 when the *Jackson County Advertiser* ran a front page story about it on July 4. Mr. Gibson had six routes that he ran. He left home about 10 or 11 a. m. and returned home "an hour before sunset."



When he retired, Mr. Gibson was tired. "I'm not pushing the rolling store any more," he told Denise Jackson from the *Advertiser*. "I'm just taking care of my regular customers," which numbered 125. Many of his customers had no way of getting to the grocery store, and depended on Mr. Gibson for their needs. "I have gone on my route many days when I didn't feel like it just because I knew that people were depending on me."

Gibson carried a full line of products on his truck including vegetables, canned goods, all kinds of medicine, soft drinks, tobacco, snuff, cigarettes, caps, belts, hardware, and cooking utensils. He even had a deep freeze on board for meats and ice cream. He carried a good cross section of everything found in a grocery store. If he did not have what you needed, he would bring it the next week. At one point, he sold bolt cloth and ready made dresses.

Gas prices were spiking in 1979 just as they are today. The story ends with the statement, "If gas prices keep going up and gas lines keep getting longer, people may have to give up their habit of getting in their cars and going out to get anything they want when they want it. A lot of people may be standing by the side of the road to meet R. W. Gibson and his rolling store."

Louise Lawson and David Bradford both remember the Gibson rolling store operating out of a building at Mud Creek. Sharon Rose Medley recalls that her grandparents depended on Gibson's for their weekly groceries. Sherry Steele Holcomb remembers Mr. Gibson coming to her aunt and uncle's house on Little Coon. "My cousin was diabetic so my Uncle Big Boy always got a six pack of Tab cola." Debbie Stephens and Louise Lawson remember Gibson's coming to Boxes Cove in the 1960s and into the 1970s.

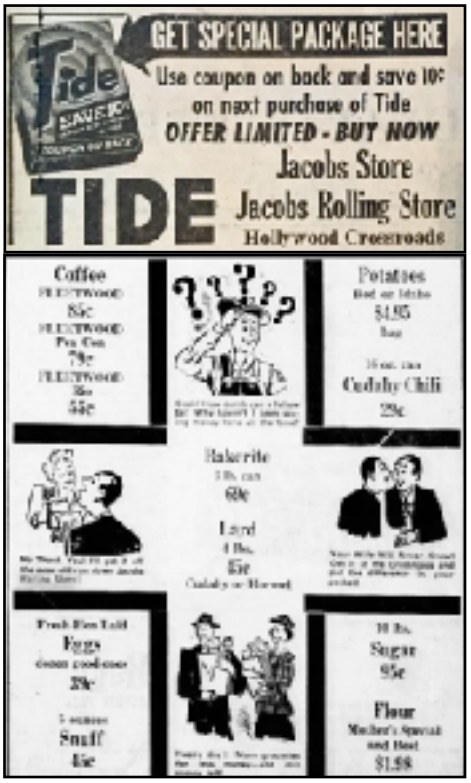
A number of subscribers to the JCHA Facebook page remember Mr. Gibson fondly. Bill Woosley recalls that around 1958, "I used to walk down a lane with my grandmother to meet Gibson's rolling store to purchase items such as bananas, apples, flour, and meal."

Rosalie Scharf shared fond memories of Gibson's rolling store in Boxes Cove, where the truck visited every Thursday from the 50s through the 70s. "I remember my brother and me waiting under a shade tree till we heard him coming blowing his truck horn to alert us he was coming down the road. Momma always had eggs to trade him for groceries. He had most everything anyone would need back in those days. I remember him selling momma some Comet cleanser. We liked the candy, and drinks of course."

Patricia Ott Uchman watched the truck go by with longing. "We never had money for it, but I remember Gibson's rolling store coming down the road past our house. Us kids would run out to watch him roll by, wishing we had a few pennies to buy something sweet." Kathy Reiss who lived near Mt. Carmel remembers that the "Gibson Rolling Store would come by our house in the Mt. Carmel area. We never purchased anything but he usually stopped at my Grandmother's house which was very close to us. I remember being fascinated when he opened up the back doors. I remember my grandmother buying Watkins vanilla flavoring."

Linda McDonald also remembers the drivers for Gibson's Rolling Store bartering and trading. "Gibson's Rolling Store used to come thru Cedar Switch every week when I was growing up. My Granny ran McAllister's Grocery and always met him to trade eggs for different items to go in the grocery store to sell and if she made extra money from selling pigs she would usually buy something especially for me. I remember she got my first dictionary from Gibson's and a piece of material to make me a Sunday dress. She also bought me a watch when I passed from 5th to 6th grade. I kept that little watch until 10 years ago when someone broke into my house and stole that along with a few other pieces of jewelry. It was priceless to me because I knew how hard Granny worked for the money to buy it for me. I loved waiting by the road for the rolling store."

Judy Gibson remembers Mr. Gibson being a kind man good with children. "I remember him being so patient and kind with us kids. He let us take as much time as we needed to pick out whatever we wanted to buy. Never seemed to be in a hurry." Janice Phillips remembered how neat and professional Mr. Gibson was. "In the 50's I remembered he always had on a dress shirt and dress pants as if he was going to church. I remember him always being professional and polite. He was such a huge part of our history, for those of us growing up in the Mud Creek, Martin Town area. He came by our house on Friday."



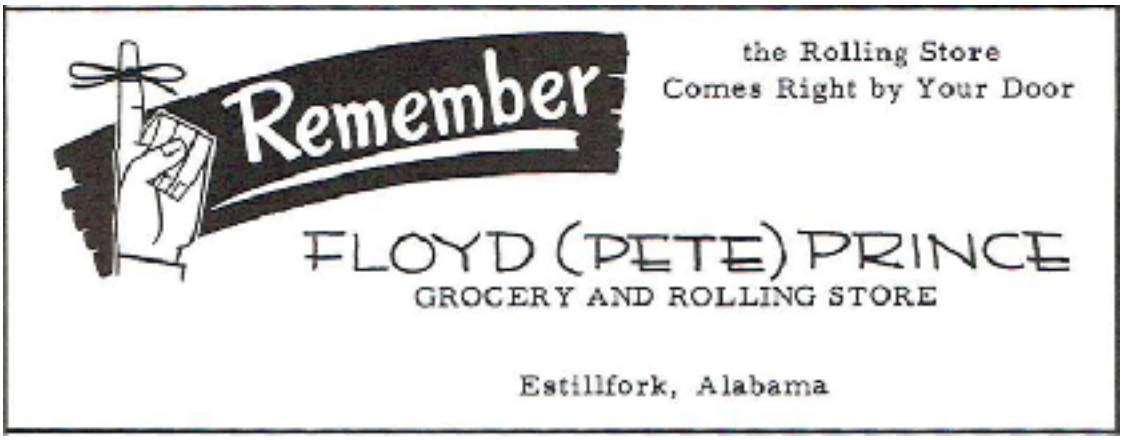
Ads for Jacobs Rolling Store, from the *Progressive Age*.

Jacobs Rolling Store operated at Hollywood Crossroads in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Their ads in the newspaper were sometimes half a page and their slogan was "If they make it, we got it (or got it ordered)."

Pete Prince Rolling Store: Several people shared fond memories of the Pete Prince Rolling Store. The 1951 *Progressive Age* regretted that Russell Wilson was leaving for the military. "He is a popular young man and well known throughout Paint Rock Valley and for many miles surrounding, as he was for a year or more the efficient operator of the Floyd Prince Rolling Store and also assistant postmaster." (May 10, 1951) He and his family were home in 1954 and "were guests of their many friends in Estillfork on Saturday, April 17th."

"Mr. Wilson operated the Prince Rolling Store in the Valley and has many friends when he comes." Bobbie Lee Gifford was laid up with pneumonia in February 1955, and his brother Herschel covered his route for him on the Prince Rolling Store. Cody Putman on the JCHA Facebook page recalls, "My grandfather, James Putman, drove for Pete Prince for years." Jim Austell grew up at Estillfork in Paint Rock Valley and remembers' Pete Prince's rolling store. " James Putman drove it. He had the basic essentials like canned goods, eggs, ice, milk. He would barter with people who had eggs, home-grown vegetables, milk, etc. He had a route up the valley. He came by our home on Larkin Creek on Saturday." Michael Mercier with the *Huntsville Times* wrote this story in 1990 and shot this picture of Mr. Prince on the porch of his store.

Michael Mercier wrote: The store is a classic country grocery and post office in a very remote area. Dominoes and billiards are played in the back near the old pot-belly stove. Pete's great-grandson hangs around there like a puppy. They went out on the porch, Pete chewing his ever-present tobacco and Jake chewing gum. It did not take much imagination to see the future. Used with Michael Mercier's permission.



Williams' Rolling Store: Randall Harper remembers that Williams Store in Rainsville operated a rolling store that came to Macedonia in the 1960s. Nancy Guess remembers, "Williams was around for several years. As kids we got to trade extra eggs and butter for candy." Nancy Guess recalls, "He took coupons from us in exchange for candy." Anita Hilley Johnson recalls that a Mr. Lassetter from Fyffe drove this rolling store for a time.

Scrogins Rolling Store: Scrogins Rolling Store was operated by W. C. Scrogin in Dutton. It was operating in 1951 but an ad appeared in the *Progressive Age* in October 1954 where W. C. was selling his 1949 Dodge truck with a "Rolling Store type body."

Tidy Wann and later Billy Machen's Store in Hollywood. Photo by Bill Bradford.

Gentle's Rolling Store: Bob Hodges spoke at the Lim Rock-Aspel Heritage Day in October 1993 and shared his memories of Clyde Gentle's rolling store where his father "had his first job as a boy clerking and keeping up with the eggs and chickens on the rolling store." Bob remembers the train pulling away from Gentle's store and wanting "to come back and hold on to" his memories "until I understood the peace and simple virtues of this place." (quoted in Marlin Tucker's *Legends, Laughters, and a Little Bit of Lineage in Lim Rock, Alabama*)

Machen's Rolling Store: Phil Dutton recalls that Aubrey

Machen Sr. and Luke Machen who operated the Machen stores in Hollywood also owned a rolling store in the mid 1950s. The last driver he remembers was Junior Light, who clerked at the main store for several years in the late 1950s.

Langston: Vicki Brown Porter recalls the "sweet memory" of a rolling store "pulling right up in front of my grandmother's house in Langston. In my mind I can still see her standing at the truck purchasing whatever goods she needed...and me some candy,." Karen Woodward remembers the Langston rolling store as well and thinks it was operated by Mr. Gibson. "I remember the rolling store that came to Langston around 1965. It always smelled like apples. My grandmother always bought something from them."

Jeffries Cove: Jane Rorex Holland has fond memories of the rolling store that came to Jeffries Cove on Saturday between 1952 and 1954. "I would spend the night with my Mamaw and Papaw and shop for candy on Saturday morning," she recalls.

Stevenson Area: Sheilla Boland recalls that a rolling store came to their house on Crow Mountain in the 1960s. "We would pick up empty glass coke bottles on the side of the road and trade them for candy. We always got chocolate footballs and Bike's banana candy." Linda Gail Cambron Andrews remembers the rolling stores passing her house on Highway 117 in Stevenson.

Ann Sample remembers "A rolling store came to McMahan Cove. I was maybe three. My mother would get me marshmallows. Because of this, I called them wagons. I wanted wagons when the rolling store came."

Jerry Marlow grew up in Big Coon and remembers meeting the rolling store and trading eggs for kerosene and candy in mid and early 1950s.

As noted earlier, Walter Pearson in Bass north of Stevenson was visited by two rolling stores: C. A. Wilson, which came by on Friday, and Gibson's, which came by on Tuesday.

Geraldine and Fyffe: Betty McCoy remembers the rolling store back in the late 1930s. She "lived in Tenbroeck between Geraldine and Fyffe. I always bought a large caramel sugar sucker that I licked for hours. Most candy was a penny or a nickel. The store was one of my favorite things." Marie Garrett's father Clarence Potter drove a rolling store along this route.

Fackler: Janice Reed Davis wrote about the rolling store that served this community. "My mom lived in Jackson county in the Fackler community and talked about the rolling store a lot. I have three small child size iron skillets that her dad bought from the rolling store for her sixth birthday in 1936. Whenever her mom made cobblers or cornbread she gave my mom enough to make her miniature one. Her picture appeared in *Guidepost* magazine holding those little skillets. She also said she met the rolling store with an egg and he would give her four dumdum suckers, one for each of the kids in her family. When he saw her mom not getting one, he began giving her five each time for her egg so she'd have one too. My mom died in 2013 at the age of 82 and still talked about her fond memories of the rolling store."

Larkinsville: Bettye Watson Naler remember a rolling store that came down the old Larkinsville Highway. " I certainly remember looking forward to it coming so I could get one of those all-day suckers!"

Sauty Bottom: Sandra Cornelison remembered, "We lived down what is Highway 79 in the fifties and sixties, it was called Sauty Bottom then. We always met the rolling store and a nickel bought a bunch of candy then. Mom traded butter, eggs and frying size chickens, blackberries, and wild plums for tea, lemons, and sugar to make jelly and jam. I know she got other stuff but I don't remember exactly what. We loved it when it came thru."

Shakerag and Randall's Chapel: Barbara Rogers remember that Gibson's rolling store ran in the early 60's at Shakerag community. Nancy Lynn Cunningham remembers Gibson's coming through Randall's Chapel. "My grandfather and I would walk to meet him. I think he came by every two weeks. Wonderful

memories."

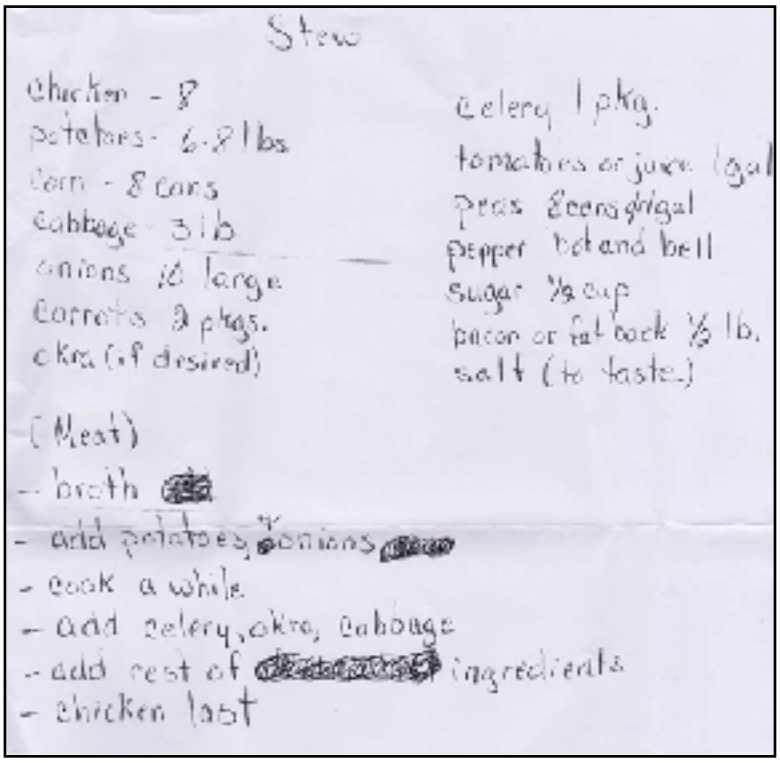
Wonderful memories indeed.

Editor's Note: *I am endebted to people mentioned in this story for sharing their memories for all of us to enjoy. I particularly owe Richard Matthews for lending me his father's rolling store ledger.*

Annette Bradford

There is an out-of-print children's book about rolling stores, written in 1997 by Angela Johnson and Peter Catalanotte (who also illustrated the book). The JCHA ordered a copy and donated it to the Scottsboro Public Library. In this book, a little girl's grandfather tells her stories about rolling stores and she and her friend load up her wagon and start their own rolling store. If this articles scares up some fond memories, you might want to check out this book. Here are some illustrations.

Cooking the Cumberland Mountain Farms Secret Stew



Stew

Chicken - 8
potatoes - 6-8 lbs
corn - 8 cans
cabbage - 3 lb
onions 10 large
Carrots 3 pkgs.
okra (if desired)

celery 1 pkg.
tomatoes or juice 1 gal
peas 2 cans frigal
pepper hot and bell
sugar ½ cup
bacon or fat back ½ lb.
salt (to taste)

(Meat)
- broth
- add potatoes, onions
- cook a while
- add celery, okra, cabbage
- add rest of ingredients
- chicken last

In keeping with our efforts to document beloved recipes with historical significance in the *Chronicles* (we did red slaw dogs and chili pies not long ago...), here is Roger Allen's Facebook information about cooking Skyline Secret Stew. Roger tells us:

This was Skyline (Cumberland Mountain Farms) Secret Stew, way back when we had the all-day singings in the old gym at school once a year. Seems like the whole mountain would be there. The older men cooked this stew with the eight chickens for each of the old three-legged black pots that were used to cook out hog lard!

They cooked it out front under the big old trees that covered where the parking lot is today. We ate the stew out of small cardboard trays with wooden spoons, and me and my friends would sit on the steps at the old Teacherage building! We never had this recipe until last few years, it was a SECRET!!!!!!

This was also a big part of our play ground! We had no swings or anything to play with but bat and ball, and whatever game we came up with in our heads: "Boom boom boom, here we come, what is your trade!"

The photo on the left shows the school ground in 1938 when the tree-covered area that is the parking lot today can still be seen. The photo on the right is the old teacherage.

Title IX and Women's Sports 50 Years Later

When we mailed the *Chronicles* recently, I noticed that the post office was selling stamps commemorating Title IX, the 1972 law which, stated simply, says "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

This ground-breaking change to high school and college athletics came along after I graduated from high school, and I was less aware of its impact than I should have been. But I became most acutely aware of it recently, because I was scanning county yearbooks to be hosted on the JCHA web site. All of a sudden, the athletics sections of all the yearbooks ballooned. Athletics was not just an all-male section of the yearbook. Women could participate too—and they participated in big numbers in basketball, softball, volleyball, golf, tennis, and shooting—even wrestling.

When the law passed, there was a lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth about Title IX being the end of men's sports. When the bill was being debated in the U. S. Senate in 1972, Alabamians watched as John Sparkman and Jim Allen both voted to delete Title IX from the Senate Bill 3010, which became the Education Amendment of 1972, when the women's sports provision struggled to get out of committee. When the bill finally passed, an AP story titled "One-Sex Schools Pressured" appeared in the *Selma Time-Journal* May 11, 1973, and it seemed at first that the only institutions affected by the new law were all-male and all-female colleges. But it stated unequivocally, "Institutions that violate one guideline, covered by Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, risk the loss of federal aid." Ouch. A kick right in the old athletic pocket book.

By July 1973, a case had already come up in the Indiana Supreme Court ruling on a class-action suit brought by a female high school student who wanted to play on the boys' golf team. The court found that the school rule against "mixed" participation in non-contact sports violated the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment.

But that was far from the end of it. Any school receiving federal funds was subject to Title IX—which is to say, any school. The fear was that by giving so much money to women's athletics, colleges would have to eviscerate their men's athletic programs. The *Alabama Journal* ran an entire series of fear-mongering articles in late 1974. "What is abundantly clear in Title IX is that universities must provide teams, coaches, facility, and some scholarship aid to women who wish to participate in competitive sports. Whether the women have the same athletic skills as men is irrelevant." No sexism there.

"The government has no business getting into the athletic business," Big Sky Athletic Commissioner John Roning claimed. Title IX "will be a serious threat to intercollegiate athletics through division of funds to women's programs." The *Alabama Journal* ran an insulting cartoon (shown on the next page) on November 15, 1974 of "bimbo girls" in football gear smiling as the beleaguered athletic director showered them with money.

University Athletic Departments Are Reluctant To Buy Equipment For Female Teams

Yet here, 50 years later, there are still football programs at Auburn and Alabama, in spite of the rise of women's athletics. And society has reaped the benefits of giving women athletes more support and opportunity.

"Our male-dominated society prefers females to be physically and psychologically dependent," said collegiate football player and coach David Auxter in 1973. "Denying them athletic opportunities has been a good way of molding girls into the kind of human we want them to be. Better athletic programs will develop more aggressive females, women with confidence who value personal achievement and have a strong sense of identity. I think that would be a good thing for all of us." ("Programmed to be Losers," *Sports Illustrated*, June 11, 1973)

And this statement was prophetic. Giving women's athletics the kind of attention that had traditionally been given only to men's athletics before 1972 was good for all of us.

According to the NCAA, in the 1966-67 college year, a few years before the passage of Title IX, there were 151,918 men and 15,182 women in college sports, roughly 10 times more men than women. In 2010-2011, after the passage of Title IX, there were 252,946 men and 191,131 women in 2010-2011.

A National Coalition for Women and Girls report commemorating Title IX's 40th anniversary in 2012 indicated that hurdles still existed for female athletes, especially women and girls of color, and the law must be enforced better. We still have work to do, but a 25 percent difference in the number of male versus female college athletes is a major improvement over the 90 percent difference four decades prior.

The importance of Title IX is not simply how many girls are playing sports; it is what these female athletes are making of these new opportunities. Studies highlighted by the the *New York Times* in February 2010 reveal that "girls' participation in sports leads to increases in women's education and employment rates and decreases in women's obesity rates. Girls who play sports are less likely to experience teen pregnancy and depression and more likely to experience academic success, high self-esteem, and positive body image." Women now have roles in high school and college that involve neither evening gowns nor short pleated skirts. They are athletes who are able to realize the same benefits from sports participation that their male counterparts have long enjoyed. (see https://www.ywcaoahu.org/ywca-oahu-blog/2021/11/12/title-ix-where-are-women-after-40-years)

If we combine the anniversary of Title IX with the JCHA's collection of more than 200 county yearbooks, we can get a clearer understanding of the impact that this new rule had in the county.

Let's begin with Scottsboro High School. We'll take 1970 as a baseline and look at how women were depicted in 1970. When you move beyond the class photos and organizations, you mostly saw women in evening dresses and cheerleader outfits, sitting on the trunks of convertibles holding flowers and throwing candy. The student council was disproportionately male (23 males to 15 females), though women dominated in the National Honor Society and the Science Club and the Medical Careers Club. But all the participants in sports were men. There were football teams at various levels, a wrestling team, basketball teams, and a golf team—all male. In 1973, there was also a male baseball team. In 1974, there was also a rifle team and a track team, both all male. In 1975, we see the first hint of women in sports. There was a women's tennis team with 13 members and surprise, two women on the rifle team.

In 1976, after the law had been implemented and all the gnashing of teeth was over, there were still lots of women in traditional roles. But there was also a women's basketball team with an eight-game schedule, playing other teams at Bridgeport, Douglas, Randolph, Hazel Green, and Grissom. There was only one

woman on the rifle team, but she was part of the A Team. There was a girls' tennis team which had started in 1975. There were three 9th grade female wrestlers—Joy Hambrick, Julie Little, and Pam Noble. And surprise, there was a girls' track team, coached by Beth McNutt, with 22 women participating. And they were not just runners. They were high jumpers, hurdlers, shot put and discus competitors, sprinters, and distance runners. Colleen Cannon and Shannon Wade participated in the state meet.

It is significant that strong, beautiful Colleen Cannon was only a junior in 1976. In the 1977-78 school year, her senior year, she was all over her yearbook, in Who's Who as Best All Around, on the girls' track team in the 440 dash and sprinting, on the student council, and the most surprising yet, she was homecoming queen. When I graduated from high school in 1970 at Auburn High School, we had girls participating in sports, but they were certainly not "girly girls" and no one classified them as beauties. But here in 1978, in a small town in rural Alabama, there was a girl who was both a track star and homecoming queen. Wow, if you needed to understand the impact of Title IX, that says it all.

Year	Bridgeport	North Sand Mountain	Paint Rock Valley	Section	Skyline	Woodville
1973	Football Basketball	Football Basketball	Basketball	Football Basketball **Girls' Track (Varsity&JV)**	No data	Basketball
1974	Football Basketball	Football Basketball	Basketball	Football Basketball	No data	Basketball
1975	Football Basketball	Football Basketball **Girls' Track**	Basketball	Football Basketball	Basketball	Basketball Baseball
1976	Football Basketball Baseball **Girls' Basketball**	Football Basketball	Basketball Baseball	Football Basketball	Basketball	Basketball Baseball **Girls' Volleyball (Varsity&JV)**
1977	Football Basketball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	Football Basketball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	Basketball Baseball **Girls' Basketball** **Baseball** **Girl's Baseball (Varsity&JV)**	Football Basketball incomplete data	Basketball Baseball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	Basketball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**
1978	Football Basketball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	Football Basketball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	No data	Football Basketball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	Basketball Baseball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	Basketball Baseball **Girls' Basketball** **Girls' Softball**
1979	Football Basketball Baseball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)** **Girls' Softball**	No data	Basketball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	No data	Basketball Baseball **Girls' Basketball (Varsity&JV)**	Basketball Baseball **Girls' Basketball** **Girls' Softball**

I used Scottsboro as an example. The table above examines sports around the county and how quickly girls were allowed to participate.

In 1978, for example, Bridgeport girls' basketball won second place in the county, first place in the district, first place in the regionals, and made it to the state quarter finals. According to Greg Bell, there are currently nine women in the Jackson County Sports Hall of Fame. In 2015, this elite group inducted its first woman—Colleen Cannon. In 2016, the Hall of Fame added Pamela Hicks Campbell, Robin Gant Shirey, Gretchen Prince Wilbanks, and Melissa Thomas, all basketball players. In 2018, the organization added Keesha Sanders King. In 2022, Beth McNutt, Didi Wilson Barron, and Nita Craft Tolliver joined their ranks.

Graduating in the late 1970s, Colleen Cannon was the pioneer. Beth McNutt was Colleen's coach, first coach of the Scottsboro High School basketball program Basketball stars Robin Grant Shirey and Pamela Hicks Campbell graduated from Pisgah and track and basketball star Melissa Thomas from Scottsboro in the 1980s. Track star Keesha Sanders King graduated from Pisgah and basketball standout Gretchen Prince Wilbanks from Paint Rock in the late 1990s. Didi Barron dominated the court at Section High School in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Nita Tolliver set records in high school basketball at Scottsboro High School 1988-1991.

Who are these women and why were they added? Their plaques and complete stories can be found at the Rec-Com.

Didi Wilson Barron: Was a dominant force on the court of the Section High School girls' basketball program in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During Barron's four-year Section career, the Lady Lions won 77 games, taking one Sand Mountain Tournament title and two Jackson County Tournament titles. Scored over 1,500 points during her high school career and pulled down over 900 rebounds. She averaged 24 points and 14 rebounds during her senior season. Was recognized with all-county honors all four varsity seasons, all-Sand Mountain three years, All-Area three years. Selected first-team all-state in 1989 and second-team all-state in 1990 by the Alabama Sports Writers Association. Participated in the USA games in China in 1990 and later served as a member of the Section City Council.

Pamela Hicks Campbell: Played basketball at Pisgah from 1978-1982. Graduated in 1982 and played for Lipscomb University in 1986. Was a standout player for the Lady Eagles Basketball team, averaging a double-double her junior and senior seasons. Was a starter for the Lady Eagles as they went undefeated in the regular season and tournament play during the 1981 and 1982 seasons, winning two state championships. Was named All-State her senior season. After high school, played for Snead State and for Lipscomb. She earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education and taught at Woodville Elementary School for almost 29 years. For many of those years, she coached varsity basketball and softball for the Lady Panthers.

Colleen Cannon: Easily regarded as the "greatest" female athlete from Scottsboro High School, was a multiple star for the Wildcats. Was a member of Scottsboro's first ladies basketball team and played for three years including the 1977-78 team which played in the very first girls state basketball tournament in Huntsville. After graduation from Scottsboro High, attended Auburn University and was a member of the Tiger swim team for one year and track team two years. After a highly successful career as a professional triathlete, founded "Women's Quest" in 1992, an adventure program for women. Was World Champion in 1984 and National Champion in 1988 and 1990. Was also a multiple U. S. National team member.,

Keesha Sanders King: A 1996 graduate of Paint Rock Valley School and a 2000 graduate of Troy University. Finished her high school career as the most decorated individual athlete in Jackson County sports history. Participated in both basketball and track for the Lady Pirates. In basketball, she was selected All-County four times and All-Area four times. Received a track scholarship to Troy University and was a three-time First-team All-conference selection (1997,1998,1999) She was a member of the 1999 Trans-America Athletic Conference Champions.

Beth McNutt: Pioneer coach of the school's girls' basketball program in 1975 at Scottsboro High School. The Lady Wildcats won three games during that initial season. The following season, McNutt's Lady Wildcats finished 9-5. As more schools established girls' basketball programs, the Lady Wildcats played more games. In 1977-78, McNutt's final year as coach, the team played 26 games and made history by participating in the first ever girls State tournament at Huntsville High School.

Robin Gant Shirey: A 1982 graduate of Pisgah High School and a 1985 graduate of Jacksonville State University. Played basketball at Pisgah from 1978-1982. Her varsity teams went 84-5 during her playing career, winning the Class 2A state championship for the 1980-81 season, finishing with a perfect 31-0 record. The 1981-82 team finished 23-4 and she received All-County and All-Area honors. From 1978-82 her Pisgah teams won 48 consecutive games. Graduated from JSU with special honors in Elementary Education. In the fall of 2009, helped establish and coach the first volleyball team at Pisgah High School.

Melissa Thomas: Played basketball at Scottsboro High School 1984-1988. All-State in 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988. Owns Scottsboro's career scoring record in basketball with 1,601 points. Also lettered in track and set records in Summer Swim Team competitions. Region 8 Class 6A Bryant-Jordan Scholar Athlete Award Winner and Salutatorian of Scottsboro High School. Received an academic scholarship to Mississippi State. Walked on the basketball team and received a full athletic scholarship, playing in over 95 games as a Lady Bulldog. Was Academic all-SEC 1990, 1991, and 1992. Was a four-year letter winner, two-year starter, and co-captain of the 1991-92 team. Participated in Mountain Biking and has won or placed in numerous competitions throughout the United States. Was a 2003 National Endurance Mountain Bike Champion and 2006 Marathon National Champion.

Nita Craft Tolliver: Put together a record-setting high school basketball career for Scottsboro High School. Played for head coach Robin Kirkland for the 1989, 1990 and 1991 seasons. Holds Lady Wildcat records for most points in a half with 26, most points in a game with 44, most points in a single season with 613 and is second on the career scoring list. Is also the Lady Wildcat record holder for most free throw attempts in a game and most free throws made in a game. Following graduation from Northeast Alabama Community College, began a teaching and coaching career in the Scottsboro City School system that continues today. Ran a successful campaign for Scottsboro City Council in 2020 and became the first African-American female to serve on the council.

Gretchen Prince Wilbanks: Started as Point Guard in 8th-12th grades at Paint Rock Valley High School where she led the Lady Pirates in scoring, totaling 3,809 points during her high school career. She was named All-County, All-Area, 1st Team All-State (2 years) and Alabama 1-A Player of the Year. Was chosen to play in the World Scholar Athletic Games at the University of Rhode Island along with 2200 youth from the United States and 109 other countries. After high school, was recruited by more than 150 colleges. Signed with Northwest Shoals Community College where she led in scoring and assists and was named Gulf Southern Conference Player of the Year in 1996-97. After college, was invited to tryouts for the WNBA in Kansas City where she was offered a contract with a San Diego team, which she declined.

Women at the Olympic trials still point out the disparities between the men's facility and the women's facilities. The successful women's national soccer club still protests that they are not paid as well as the unsuccessful men's team. But these are adjustments to make. Little girls are now able to grow up involved in sports because of Title IX. And that fact is well worth remembering 50 years after Title IX became law.

Annette Bradford

Footnotes

See https://www.ywcaoahu.org/ywca-oahu-blog/2021/11/12/title-ix-where-are-women-after-40-years?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIrduiwMaP9wIVhxXUAR0z0AagEAAYAyAAEgJIJvD_BwE. Other citations inline. Thank you, Greg Bell, for the biographies of the Scottsboro Sports Hall of Fame athletes.

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The Jackson County Chronicles

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In this issue:

October Meeting Features Neal Wooten: The October 2023 meeting of the Jackson County Historical Association will be at the Freight Depot on Sunday, October 29 at 2:00 pm. The speaker will be author **Neal Wooten**. Neal grew up on Sand Mountain, Alabama, where, as Amazon says, "everyone was white and everyone was poor. Prohibition was still embraced. If you wanted alcohol, you had to drive to Georgia or ask the bootlegger sitting next to you in church ." Neal graduated from Auburn University with a B.S. in applied mathematics. He became a math teacher and director of a math school in Milwaukee, winning numerous math awards. He is now the Managing Editor for Mirror Publishing, a contributor to the *Huffington Post*, columnist for *The Mountain Valley News*, curator of the Fort Payne Depot Museum, creator of the popular Facebook comic strip "Brad's Pit," and a standup comedian. Members and non-members are invited, and Neal will autograph copies of his books after the meeting.

New Inductees to the County Sports Hall of Fame: The Board of Directors of the Jackson County Sports Hall of Fame announced the Class of 2023 inductees. They are Kim Beason Bergman, Ryan Griffith, Randy Hamilton, Mark Marshall, Wayne McNutt, Terrance Meade, Cindy Patterson Palmer, Bruce Pickett, Jamie Pruett and Roger Pruett. The contributor inductee will be Dewayne Patterson. The Class of 2023 inductee banquet will be held on Saturday, January 13, 2024. Congratulations to an outstanding group.

Greg Bell Named "Broadcaster of the Year": Greg Bell, the JCHA go-to guy in the cemetery strolls to portray county athletes, was recognized by his colleagues in the Alabama Broadcasters Association as "Broadcaster of the Year." Greg is the owner-operator of WWIC-AM in Scottsboro. For county people involved with high school sports, Greg needs no introduction. "He simply lives to broadcast and serve his community. It's his life." said Ron Ricker, a former WWIC employee who nominated Greg for this honor. For more information about this honor, see https://al-ba.com/wp2/greg-bell/.

Old Friends Lost

The JCHA has lost two old friends in the last few months, long-time collectors of county lore whose deaths leave ragged holes in the fabric of our history: Joyce Money Kennamer on March 29 and Ralph Mackey on June 18.

Joyce Money Kennamer was born on Kyle Street and lived every one of her 92 years in Scottsboro. She was wife to Alfred for 68 years and mother to Steve, Ernie, and Julie, yet found time and energy to give in abundance to Jackson County, as a teacher, officer in the DAR, library and Heritage Center board member, and historian.

She was born at the family home at the intersection of Kyle Street and Money Lane on February 22, 1931, to Judge James Morgan Money and his wife, Martha E. Robinson Money. She was the youngest of the nine Money children.

Being the youngest of nine high-achieving Money children, Joyce lived a Scottsboro life well documented in the social columns of the newspaper. At age 2, she was part of the Cinderella Revue at JCHS, along with Jeanne Jacobs, Cornelia and Caroline Gay, Wynn Ambrester, Mildred Ann Word, Mary Texas Hurt, Elizabeth Ann Eyster, and Willie B. Shook, among others, "each one just as cute as cute can be," the August 10,1933 *Progressive Age* said.

In January 1939 when she was eight, she gave a reading at the Twentieth Century Book Club, which was meeting at the home of Mrs. W. J. Austell. She was one of the fairies later that year when Jackson County school children presented *Meilolotte*, a fairy operetta, in the city school auditorium, with John Will Gay as the male lead. As a dance pupil of Miss Blanche Thomas, Joyce participated in the December 1939 Christmas Revue. She studied piano with Mrs. Sid Telford and in April 1941 played a set of Thompson trios with Cornelia Gay and Margaret Jordan and "Les Sylphes" by Bachman solo in 1944.

But Joyce herself would tell you, the defining event of her childhood was the creation of the Cumberland Farms, later called Skyline. When interviewed for a 2018 *Chronicles* story about her father, she recalled that "the colony" was always part of their dinner table conversation; she grew up with Skyline almost as a sibling. She was only two when her father, who was probate judge, applied for and received a grant from the Hoover administration to build the Cumberland Road that tied the Cumberland Valley to the Tennessee Valley and provided employment for 5000 men so desperate that they worked barefoot until Mr. Money took them in groups and bought them shoes. In 1978 when Joyce was completing her Master's in Education, she wrote a paper about the Skyline Colony, which was scanned with her permission and can be downloaded from the JCHA website.

When Joyce was eleven in 1942, she was a member of Miss Will Maples' second Girl Scout Troop, along with Martha Powell {Foster], Augusta Snodgrass [Ford], Jeanne Jacobs [Moody], Dorothy Ann Gold [Moore], Martha Hunt [Robertson Huie], Carolyn Gay [Ponsford], Jan Boyd [Roberts], Janice Smith [Olsen], Sue Smith [Law], Nancy Benham [Steenhuis], Sara Wood [Mullins], Elizabeth Payne [Word], and Mildred Ann Word. This intrepid group of girls climbed both Tater Knob Mountain and the Sand Mountain road cut.

When Joyce was 10 in 1943, many young people were leaving Jackson County to work in the munitions plant in Childersburg. The remote rural area where the plant was built offered no room or board to these outsiders. James and Mattie Money left their three daughters still living at home (Edith who was teaching, 13-year-old Evelyn, and 12-year-old Joyce) and built a two-story, eighteen-rooms-per-floor rooming house. The time when the family was separated is reflected in the *Progressive Age* which wrote in October 1942 that "Miss Joyce Money is spending the week in Childersburg with her mother, Mrs. J. M. Money."

When the plant closed after D-Day in August 1945, the Moneys dismantled their Childersburg rooming house and used the lumber and materials to construct five houses behind their home on Money Lane. In the years after the war when everyone needed housing and there was little to be had, many couples lived for a time in one of the Money Lane houses, including Joyce and Alfred Kennamer. Son Steve was born when his parents lived there.

Joyce was a life-long Methodist and was active in the First United Methodist Church from an early age. In 1948, she attended the Methodist Youth Fellowship conference in Talladega. In November of 1948 when she was a junior in high school she offered a reward for the "Pair of pink rimmed glasses in a blue case" that she lost in town. In 1949, her senior year, she played Mabel Warren in the class play at JCHS, "Almost Eighteen." She won first prize in the county oratorical contest and went on to represent the county at District competition that spring. The 1949 JCHS Yearbook notes that she was in the band (playing cornet) and on the staffs of the school newspaper, *The Wildcat*, and the yearbook, *The Reminder*. "If you've ever wondered what kind of noise a seal makes, just listen to Joyce laugh some times and you will know," her yearbook description said. "She is full of fun, a good friend, and 'a good ole girl.'"

Joyce was mentioned frequently on the social pages of the *Progressive Age* as her friends began to marry. But she wanted to be a teacher like her sisters, so she enrolled in Florence Teacher's College in the fall of 1949. There she met the love of her life, Alfred Julian Kennamer. They married on December 17, 1950, shortly before Alfred had to report for duty in the Korean War. She would joke that they spent their honeymoon in Florence (Alabama) taking semester exams. Alfred served in Korea for 16 months.


Joyce and Alfred as newlyweds, 1950.

When Joyce and Alfred started teaching in 1951, they taught a year at Scottsboro. The couple moved to Dean's Chapel and Macedonia School for a year each, then on to Hollywood Elementary before staying several years at Temperance Hill. Joyce and Alfred both taught at this small school, with Bettye Webb teaching first and second grade, Joyce teaching third and fourth and Alfred teaching fifth and sixth. Both Kennamers were later principals at this school. When Alfred was principal, he arrived early and started four fires to heat the classrooms. He was paid 25 cents a fire in addition to his salary. The school lunchroom made everything from scratch, food supplied by the community and kept in large freezers. The only running water in the school was in the kitchen and students drank from a well bucket with a shared dipper. Alfred left teaching in 1964 to work for Brown Engineering in Huntsville. Joyce stayed at Temperance Hill and became principal until the school closed.


Joyce and Alfred in 2014, from *Zest*.

The couple narrowly escaped a move to Tennessee. Brown Engineering became Teledyne Brown, and the company was moving to Lewisburg, TN. No one wanted this move, especially their older son Steve who was entering high school. The family was packed, had rented their Scottsboro home, and had found a home in Tennessee when Alfred's job was eliminated in a work force reduction. Skyline needed a teacher, and Alfred returned to teaching.

Joyce taught social studies at Skyline for 21 years. During the years that she taught, she was awarded the Jackson County Teacher of the Year Award twice and was nominated for State Teacher of the Year. Her former students number in the thousands, and they speak of her with reverence. A tree dedicated to her memory grows behind the Heritage Center.

After their retirement, Alfred took care of their home and stayed active with First Methodist Church until arthritis limited his mobility. He also made time to visit old friends every day at Hardees on Broad Street, in a group that Jim Pitt labeled

ROMEO—Retired Old Men Eating Out. When Alfred's care took more physicality than Joyce's limited mobility supported, he moved into Southern Estates, where he was visited daily by his wife. They enjoyed 68 years of marriage. Alfred died in 2018.

Joyce was involved in many activities and organizations during her life time. She was a founding member of the Scottsboro Woman's League and active member of Scottsboro's First United Methodist Church where she served on the Church Council and as a Trustee, a member of the choir and a Record Secretary for the Church's Charge Conference. She was very active in the United Methodist Women's Organization and Church's small group and pantry ministry. She was also a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) serving as a regent and in other capacities, and AAUW. She was and remained an unapologetic New Deal Democrat. (She often joked that she was busier after she retired than she had been while working.) She was a longtime member and Chairman of the Scottsboro Library Board and a longtime member and Chairman of the Scottsboro/Jackson County Heritage Center.

And Joyce, as we all remember, was no wallflower, no token member of the organizations in which she participated. She was outspoken and active and made a difference."I don't do anything I don't enjoy," she told a reviewer for *Zest* magazine in 2014.

The Kennamer children Ernie, Julie, and Steve with grandchildren

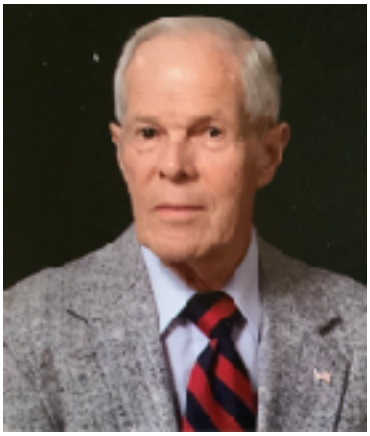
"Knowing Joyce's love of history," DAR member Carolyn Jury Davis wrote, "it's not surprising that she would be interested in joining the Daughters of the American Revolution and proving that her ancestors helped our country achieve its independence from England. She was a loyal and active member of the Tidence Lane chapter here in Scottsboro for well over twenty years. She enjoyed the fellowship of like-minded women, frequently attending not only local meetings but those at the District and State level. She held various offices within the chapter such as Historian, Regent, and for the last several years, Chaplain. She was a true asset to the organization and will be missed by her many DAR friends."

Joyce was devoted to her family, both close and extended. She was proud of her children, Stephen, Ernie (whom Joyce always insisted on calling Brian), and Julie, her grandchildren, Georgia, Molly, Jamie, Morgan, Skyler, Ben, Chris, and Billy, as well as her great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, and cousins, of which there are too many to name.

She lived a wonderful Scottsboro life, and spent much of her time serving her community. We miss her terribly.

Annette Bradford

Joyce Money Kennamer, L to R, age 1 on her mother's lap, age 3, her high school senior picture, teacher photos from Skyline yearbooks, and a recent photo.



Ralph Sacris Mackey was born in Laurium, Michigan on June 18, 1927. He passed away June 7, 2023 at Highlands Health and Rehab, due to complications from Parkinson's. He was 95.

If Joyce is one of our homegrown treasures, Ralph is one of our best imports. He came here from Michigan when he and his wife Jan retired in 1983 to be near his wife's father in Scottsboro. The incredible hours that he spent documenting Jackson County history, veterans, historic buildings, and cemeteries is hard to grasp. And he did some difficult, not terribly "showy" things. He searched out, cleaned up, and documented old cemeteries. He prepared county documents for microfilming, researched records and organized them in a logical fashion. And all this for a community where he is an "adopted son."

Ralph was born in Laurium, in Northern Michigan's Copper Country, the second son of Urho Victor Mackey and Signe Adele [Lampi] Mackey. He attended schools in the area, graduating from Calumet High School in 1944 and then enrolling in Michigan College of Mining and Technology (now MTU) in 1945.

He had enlisted in the Navy's Radar Technician training program in 1945 and served briefly until he was released in 1946 due to postwar manpower reductions. Resuming his college studies in the fall, he received his BS degree in Mechanical Engineering in June 1949. He was hired by Ford in December and worked in their experimental engine development program for three years.

Military requirements during the Korean War resulted in Ralph being drafted in the Army, and assigned to Redstone Arsenal where he served as an ordnance engineer in the 1330 TSU in their solid rocket propellant program. When the Korean War was ending in the early summer of 1954, the Army began releasing personnel who had served a specific amount of active duty time. Taking into account his Navy service in World War II, Ralph was eligible and was put in inactive duty in June 1954.

While serving at the Arsenal, he met Merle Janette Porter from Scottsboro. The couple dated for a few months and married in Scottsboro at the new First Baptist Church in April 1954. After their marriage, Jan left her job with TVA at the Widow's Creek Steam Plant in Stevenson for one in the Army commissary office at Redstone Arsenal.

After only two months of marriage, the Mackeys left the Arsenal and Alabama and returned to Detroit, where Ralph was reinstated at Ford Motor and assigned to Car Engineering. He worked for Ford for more than 33 years, primarily on passenger car engineering across several product lines.

The Mackeys bought a home in Novi, Michigan on the G. I. Bill, and son Charles Porter joined the family in 1957. In 1959, they family moved to Rochester, a larger home and a location that reduced commuting time. Daughter Nancy Elizabeth was born in Rochester in 1960. Six years later, they moved into a larger home in Avon Township so that Ralph could alternate between the Michigan Proving Ground in Romeo and work in Dearborn. When the children completed their schooling, the Mackeys sold this house and bought a condo in Bloomfield Hills until Ralph retired from Ford in 1983, and the couple returned to Alabama.

They purchased a home in Scottsboro in 1983, living near Jan's father, who had lost his wife in 1979. The couple began their post-retirement life by taking on a number of challenging volunteer tasks. Jan worked with the Hospital Volunteers, and Jan and Ralph coordinated the Lifeline emergency phone-in system for 13 years, driving over 150,000 miles around the county helping people enrolled in the program, until the cost of the system exceeded the price that volunteers could pay to subsidize it. They then joined the Jackson County Historical Association and were tireless volunteers for the organization. Jan also documented her family, which included four of the county's Revolutionary War veterans, and Ralph worked on county records. Both Jan and Ralph helped Wendell Page catalog and index county documents

and prepare them for microfilming. He was recognized for his ability to keep volunteers "on track and motivated."

One of Ralph's most valuable and interesting discoveries was the pre-Civil War document signed by President Abraham Lincoln, a voucher for $5000 to Robert William Cobb of Jackson County, appointing him "Provisional Governor of Alabama." It was dated 1863 and was never redeemed because Cobb refused the appointment.

The shelves of the Heritage Center are packed with the documents he produced. *Old Bones* is a registry of local cemeteries with locations, finding and photographing more than 500 cemeteries. He walked through old newspapers and reference books about locations in the county to compile *Jackson County Historical Sites, Businesses, Professionals, Tradesmen, Etc.,* which you can download from the JCHA website, www.jchaweb.org/downloads. He compiled a list of all the county's post offices and claimed to have discovered over 120 such facilities.

Perhaps because Ralph was a veteran of both the US Navy during World War II and the US Army during the Korean War, he devoted much of his time to documenting the veterans in our county. He has placed documents listing Jackson County soldiers from the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War in the Heritage Center.

Ralph didn't just begin these large data compilation projects after he retired. He authored a book titled *Centennial Heights: 1900-2000* about the neighborhood where he grew up in Michigan, which he had lived in from birth until 1949. His grandfather Victor Mackey started a grocery business in this community after migrating to the U.S. from Finland. Ralph's father Urho and his uncle Wilho operated the business when Ralph was growing up. Ralph collected special interest stories and numerous photographs and newspaper articles to provide a keen insight into the village and its residents.

Though born a Lutheran, Ralph was a faithful member of the Scottsboro First Baptist Church. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Merle Janette (Jan) Porter; son, Charles (Gabrielle) of Redford, MI; daughter, Nancy Rose of Scottsboro; grandson, Andrew Rose of Norcross, GA; granddaughter, Julie Rose of Scottsboro; nephew, Allan Mackey of Washington state; special brother-in-law, Jim Porter of Danville, KY,; and many cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, Urho and Signe Lampi Mackey, brother Paul and nephew, Henri Mackey; brother-in-law Ralph Porter and sister-in-law Dorothy Ann Porter Richards.

Ralph's ashes were buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery in a private family service. Memorial donations may be sent to the First Baptist Church of Scottsboro, 215 South Andrews Street, Scottsboro, AL, 35768 or The Heritage Center, P.O. Box 53 of Scottsboro, AL, 35768.

When Ralph was nominated for Volunteer of the Year, Ken Bonner wrote an article about him in the *Daily Sentinel.* Ralph, with his typical humility said, "I'm flattered but it's unnecessary." This sums up this quiet man, this observant Ford engineer who dedicated so much his retirement time to collecting and organizing information about his adopted home. And we are all grateful.

Annette Bradford

Photos from Jan Mackey, Jim Porter, and the Heritage Center FaceBook page.

Remembering the Reverend

When we wrote about Hodges Hospital in the October 2017 *Chronicles*, we learned about Reverend George Rumph, the *de facto* doctor in the African-American community for many years. So the JCHA was pleased when lawyer Parker Edmiston approached us about recognizing the Reverend, not just for his healing abilities but also for his famous barbeque. Parker purchased the old Airheart Feed and Seed property on the corner of Maple Avenue and Tupelo Pike, and put hours of love and labor into making it an event venue, renaming it "The Silos." In doing so, he gave Scottsboro an attractive location for music festivals and outdoor parties. The sign he created and placed on the fence around the property gives the community a way to remember the vibrant African-Amerian community that flourished across the road from The Silos. It was dedicated on June 13. Well done, Parker.

Reverend Rumph, Pitmaster and Healer

George Rumph, who was known as "Reverend Rumph" by the town's white population and "Mr. Preacher" by the town's African-American population, was the "right hand man" of prominent Scottsboro doctor Rayford Hodges, founder of Hodges' Hospital. Although officially designated as the hospital's custodian, Reverend Rumph accompanied Dr. Rayford on house calls and often tended to minor health issues in his community without supervision.

George Rumph was born June 19, 1909 in Eufaula, AL. In May 1941, George ran afoul of the law and was sentenced to thirty years in prison. He was to serve his time at the convict camp in Scottsboro. At the camp, Rumph served informally as a medic, treating injuries and disease in the prison population. Rumph had served four years of his thirty-year sentence when he was released into Dr. Rayford's custody.

In addition to his medical duties, Rumph was also a minister to congregations at Kirbytown, Langston, and Attalla. He is remembered as an animated, passionate speaker. He was also known in Scottsboro for his skills as a barbecue pit master, selling pork and poultry from a small smokehouse behind his house at 326 East Maple Avenue. His customers often jokingly imitated his way of drawling "You want it hot or you want it mild?" Everyone remembers that the mild was hot and the hot was blistering.

He was fond of a dog, Brownie, with which he was frequently photographed. When he sold barbecue, he would have the dog chained in the front yard. The dog was friendly to arriving customers, but Reverend Rumph warned them to steer clear of the dog on the way out. The dog was hooked on the scent of the barbecue and became aggressive when customers tried to carry it away.

Reverend George Rumph died September 29, 1991, aged 82, at the Jackson County Hospital, likely from complications of diabetes. He is buried at Cedar Hill Cemetery, along with his wife and daughter. Today, decades after his death, he is still held in highest regard for his community leadership, his selfless care of the ailing, and his all-night vigils with expectant mothers.

Katie Irene Allen Rice Denham and Her Restaurants

When we lived in Scottsboro in the mid 1970s, my father-in-law was always hustling us out of church, curtailing post-sermon conversations, and getting us all into the car so we could get to lunch before the other churches let out. "Got to keep the Baptists from getting all the good biscuits," he used to say, a testament to the sheer number of Baptists, I believe, as opposed to Cumberland Presbyterians, rather than the voraciousness of the Baptist biscuit consumption. More likely than not, our lunch destination was Katie's Liberty Restaurant.

Technically speaking, it was no longer Katie's when I first set foot in Scottsboro in 1974, but some folks even older than I am still call it by that name. My husband's family had begun their after-church ritual of eating lunch with Katie long before she moved her business out of the Scottsboro Hotel.

Katie Irene Allen was born in Hollywood in September 12,1914, the daughter of Edgar Walter Allen and Mary Alice Dawson, the second of the nine children, two girls and seven boys, in the Allen family. They moved from Hollywood to the Langston Ferry Pike near Goose Pond in 1921 where Walter worked as a tenant farmer. Alice died of tuberculosis in 1937, and her father married Julia Law Coulson, a divorced woman with four children, the next year. A TVA interviewer met with the family in July 1937 because they were being moved to accommodate the building of the lake. The lake filled in 1939. Katie married Paul Wilson Rice in June 1936 who worked for the TVA helping clear the land that would be part of Lake Guntersville. She and Paul lived on Old Goose Pond road in 1940. The couple had no children, and the marriage did not last. She was known as Katie Rice when she opened her restaurants. In October 1964, she married Henry Newt Denham. He lived on six years after their marriage. Katie lived to be 97 and died in 2012.

But none of these factual details capture the Katie who operated a beloved restaurant in Scottsboro for nearly 20 years, first in the Hotel Scottsboro and later in a restaurant that bore her name, Katie's Liberty Restaurant.

Barry Nichols said on the JCHA Facebook page that Katie opened the restaurant in 1963 and that the location at 907 East Willow was constructed in the same timeframe as the like-named motel across the street. The Liberty Motel, built by Cecil Curry and Bill Thrower of Huntsville and managed by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Neeley, was advertising in the *Progressive Age* in February 1959, touting its completely modern large and comfortable rooms with electric heat, Beauty Rest Mattresses, and full-size baths. The Liberty Motel started with rooms numbered 1 - 18, but there was no room #13. The owners thought no one would want to stay in that room. Later the Liberty Motel added another 10 rooms. A room cost was $5.12 single , $6.24 double when it opened. When Pat Trammell passed away, Bear Bryant and several of the other alumni stayed at the motel for his funeral. Bob Brandy and his wife Ingrid stayed at the Liberty Motel several times.

Location of Katie's in the Hotel Scottsboro

Katie's Coffee Shop opened in the space near the front of the Hotel Scottsboro between the beauty shop on the corner and the hotel lobby, a space that would later house the Moonlight Cafe. This photo of the space the Moonlight shared with Katie's was contributed by Amber Gilbert. The doorway faced Broad Street.

The late, wonderful Joyce Kennamer whose father James Money built and operated the Hotel Scottsboro, remembered Katie fondly. "I just remember at Hotel Scottsboro Katie used cloth table cloths and napkins, good glassware and

stainless knives, forks, spoons, and a salad fork with these salads served on plates, tables cleared before dessert was served. It seemed really nice at the hotel...I was most impressed. The food was just as good as at Liberty, but it was less formal than at the hotel."

David Bradford remembers the unusually incongruous photos that decorated the walls of the coffee shop. "The walls of Katie's Restaurant were filled with black and white 8 x 10s of a peculiar local ritual called 'coon on a log contest.' It was held yearly at Sportsman's Park. It was a blood sport that consisted of putting a raccoon on a log in the river and having a dog drag it in. As I remember, the mortality rate was pretty high on both sides."

There are a few references to Katie's in the newspapers that help construct this story, but subscribers to the JCHA Facebook page have filled in with fond memories. The coffee shop was a popular meeting venue even before the larger restaurant on Willow Street opened. In January 1960, the Scottsboro Business and Professional Women's Club met there. Mrs. Julian Hodges and Mrs. Bobby Roy co-hosted a luncheon there for bride-elect Sarah Kaye Kennamer in May 1962. The county scoutmasters met there in August of that year to discuss recruiting and the Boy Scout Rocket Round-Up Program. The Lion's Club held their regular meetings there beginning in September. The Community Development Foundation under Eddie Ray Hembree presented awards and money to winning club presidents in November. Katie contributed to Christmas promotions that year as part of the merchant's association. In February 1963, Katie's Coffee Shop was one of the businesses donating their proceeds from the sale of coffee on a given day to the March of Dimes.

Cecil Curry and Bill Thrower from Huntsville built the Liberty Motel and Restaurant in 1962. Ed Neely moved his family from Chicago to manage the motel until 1974, when it sold. Liberty Restaurant was built in 1962 in the same timeframe as the Liberty Motel across the road was completed. Curry and Throw asked Katie to run the new establishment and leased it to her. She moved out of her coffee shop location in the Scottsboro Hotel in February, 1963. For as long as I can remember, it was known as "Katie's Liberty Restaurant" even after Katie sold it in 1969.

The *Sentinel-Age* covered the opening of the "New Restaurant Opened by Katie. Katie's Restaurant opened for business today (February 10) at Five Points in Scottsboro. Open House was held Saturday afternoon (February 9) for the general public. The restaurant, owned and operated by Katie Allen Rice, can easily accommodate 150 customers at one time. It is equipped with the latest, most modern equipment. In addition to the main serving room, the establishment has two private dining rooms—one small and one large. The large private room can easily accommodate a crowd of 100 persons at one sitting and the small private room can seat 25. The building is equipped with both winter and summer air conditioning. Latest type of equipment is installed in the kitchen, as well as other serving areas in the establishment." The post card view below shows this Liberty when it opened.

Scottsboro was clearly pleased to have a larger space for dinners and meetings. “My first cousin, Jean Dawson Stockburger Smith, had her rehearsal dinner there the month following the grand opening,”Lallie Paula Dawson Leighton remembered. “It would have been held Friday, March 22, 1963.” In April 1963 the University of Alabama Alumni Club held a dinner meeting at Katie’s Restaurant. In June 1963, the *Sentinel-Age* noted that the rehearsal dinner for the Bettye Lou Lyda and John Pittman’s wedding party was held at the new Liberty Restaurant. In December 1963, the paper noted that the Stevenson Book Club held at luncheon a the Liberty Restaurant. Dianne Kennamer Dooley remembers that her rehearsal dinner was held there in 1973, and the Liberty was the site of Nita Wright’s bridesmaids’ luncheon. Brett Haas recalls, “We use to eat breakfast there before going duck hunting as a young kid in the late 60s early 70s. Always loved it when Grady Bennett would be there playing.”

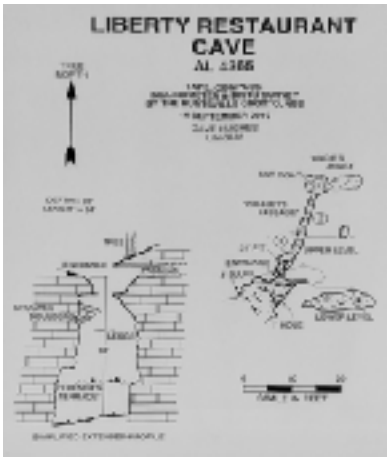
Claire Roberts also remembers Grady Bennett playing the organ or piano. And Claire brought up the most notable feature of ordering at Katie’s: “the little paper menus and short pencils you used to circle the dishes you were ordering. I think I used those menus and pencils to draw on when I was there as a young child.” Claire also recalls the “great pies” and “the fried okra as being especially outstanding.”

“I remember Katie,” Karen White wrote in the Facebook JCHA discussion of this closing. “She was a good lady who had a big heart.” Clyde Broadway wrote, “Katie was an institution. I think she had worked at Oak Ridge, early on.”

Katie sold the Liberty Restaurant business to Bill and Louise Petty, the June 12, 1969 *Sentinel* reported. Asking support the new owners, Katie wrote on ending her business: “I wish to thank each of you for your wonderful support, kindness and friendship through the past years. It is people like you who have made the Liberty Restaurant the success it is.” She stated that “circumstances beyond our control make it necessary to sell the business.”

Bill and Louise Petty owned the restaurant starting in 1969, though Louise’s son Kenneth Nichols was responsible for most of the day-to-day operations. The Pettys sold it to Barry’s father Dwan Nichols in 1975. Dwan’s wife Louise was a teacher in Section and helped with the restaurant during the summers. In 1995, Dwan sold the restaurant to Edna and Pleasey Talley, who operated it until February 2011 when Barry Nichols, the current owner, bought it. He has introduced innovations like Seafood Thursdays and Karaoke Fridays, and has survived a kitchen fire that closed the restaurant for eight months in 2009 and a careless driver in 2022 who took the left front off the restaurant, though Barry managed to keep some part of the restaurant operating through the repairs.

Barry retired from his day job in 2011 in the technical industrial coating industry. He bought the Liberty, the restaurant his parents had owned. “I have had food from everywhere,” Barry says, “But I am a country boy. I like pinto beans, cornbread, and fried potatoes. The menu here is all about good country cooking.” He gets to know his customers by walking around and talking and bussing tables himself. The restaurant is open early and is a popular meeting place for cavers. Barry keeps a log book where cavers sign in and offer comments and reviews to other cavers. The walls of the restaurant feature photos of county caves. The cavers wanted to immortalize their fondness for the restaurant, so they found a previously unnamed pit cave above Blowing Cave and designated it the Liberty Restaurant Cave.



The atmosphere at the Liberty is tied to its history and to its success as Scottsboro’s favorite “meat and three” meeting place. As the 2015 article about the Liberty that Tina Thurmund-Jones wrote for the *Sentinel*, she said, “The Liberty is a place where friends connect and talk as casually as they might at home.” Barry is into his 12th year of operating the Scottsboro institution. The fried okra is still wonderful and the fried pies are a treat. Barry’s role in perpetuating this beloved Scottsboro establishment to its 65th year is recognized and appreciated.

Fundamental Legal Rights Codified in Jackson County Cases

I have often wondered if any other towns of 15,640 people have had such a major role in clarifying statutes that are so basic to defining the relationship between citizens and the law. Jackson County has had at least six cases that were reviewed by the U. S. Supreme Court. In the oldest case, tried and appealed in 1888, the State statute governing physical requirements for working as a railroad conductor were tested and upheld at all judicial levels. Two of these landmark decisions came out of the Scottsboro Boys trials in the 1930s. One came from the Johnny Beecher trial in 1967 and decided whether a confession obtained from a drugged defendant was admissible as evidence. A fifth case about the nature of evidence involved Hugh Otis Bynum Jr. in 1976 and challenges to the information introduced as evidence. The case was heard by the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals and refused by the US Supreme Court. A sixth came in 1994 and decided whether it was legal to stack a jury based on gender.


MIRANDA WARNING

WAIVER

The two fundamental human rights—
the right to an attorney and protection against self incrimination —were challenged during the Scottsboro Boys trials and clarified in the Johnny Beecher trial. They were codified in 1965 as part of the Miranda Warning. Every citizen who is arrested hears the Miranda warning. And Jackson County rulings had a major role in developing the wording of Miranda.

Defining Acceptable Physical Limitations and Legal Jurisdiction: Nashville, C. & ST. L. RY. Co. v. State of Alabama, 1888

On August 2, 1887, James Moore was employed by the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad as a locomotive engineer. Many railroad lines operated in Alabama by this time, and that same year, the State Legislature had passed a law which required "locomotive engineers and other persons employed by a railroad company in a capacity which calls for the ability to distinguish and discriminate between color signals, to be examined in this respect from time to time by a tribunal established for the purpose, and which exacts a fee from the company for the service of examination." The new Alabama statute, which took effect June 1, 1887, disqualified certain persons with impaired and or color blind vision from operating trains and required certification of vision.

Since the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad was based in Tennessee and only passed through Alabama, the company did not comply with new Alabama law. When the train entered Stevenson without the conductor having obtained his vision certificate, the train was stopped, and the company was indicted in the circuit court of Jackson County in October 1888. The company pleaded not guilty because they required a general physical exam of their employees, though not explicitly a color-blindness test. The company was convicted and fined $50. Since this conviction meant that the company had to comply with the laws of all the state legislatures in which their trains operated, the implications reached far beyond the $50 fine and guilty verdict in Alabama, so the verdict was appealed to the district court.

The basis for this appeal was the provision in Article III of the Constitution of the United States which provides that the trial of all crimes "shall be held in the State where the said crimes shall have been committed." The railroad also argued "that the statute of Alabama was repugnant to the power vested in Congress to regulate commerce among the States, and that it violated the clause of the Fifth Amendment which declares that no person shall be deprived of his property without due process of law." (casetext.com)


Oscar Richard Hundley. Wikipedia.

The Alabama Supreme Court reviewed the case and upheld the conviction from the Jackson County Circuit Court. Unhappy with the verdict, the N. C. and St. L. Railroad appealed the case to the U. S. Supreme Court, with Oscar R. Hundley representing the railroad and Thomas N. McClellan, then Attorney General of the State of Alabama, representing the State.

Hundley was born in Limestone County in 1955. He practiced law in Huntsville 1887-1907 and represented the district in both the Alabama House and Senate during his career. He was division counsel to the N. C., and St. L Railroad between 1884 and 1907 and served intermittently as a judge in the Northern District of Alabama US District Court.


Thomas Nicholas McClellan from judicial,.alabama.gov.

McClellan was also born in Limestone County. He practiced law beginning in 1872 in Athens and had represented both Limestone and Lauderdale counties in the State Senate. He was first elected state attorney general in 1884. He was appointed to the State Supreme Court in 1889 and became chief justice in 1898. He died from a heart attack on a train in 1906, only 53 years old. (https://judicial.alabama.gov

The conviction was upheld by the Alabama Supreme Court. The judgment was reaffirmed by the U. S. Supreme Court.

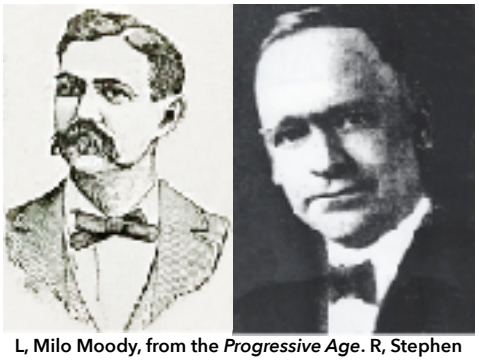
The implications of this case reach beyond the borders of Jackson County. The case upholds the idea that a corporate entity must comply with the laws of all the states with which it conducts business, not just the location of its corporate headquarters.

Sources: judicial.alabama.gov for McClellan portrait and biography; newspapers.com for McClellan obituary; casetext.com for case summary; wikipedia for the Hunley biography; caselaw.findlaw.com for the full case

The Right to Legal Counsel: Powell v. Alabama, 1932

The infamous Scottsboro Boys incident took place on March 25, 1931. Nine African-American teenagers were accused of raping two white women aboard a Southern Railroad freight train in northern Alabama: Haywood Patterson, Olen Montgomery, Clarence Norris, Willie Roberson, Andy Wright, Ozie Powell, Eugene Williams, Charley Weems, and Roy Wright. Three trials took place on one day, and eight of the nine had been sentenced to death the following day. The first verdicts handed down required deliberation of only 15 minutes.

As the due process clause of the 14th amendment to the constitution and Alabama law regarding capitsl cases required, counsel was appointed. Milo Moody (1868-1941), an older lawyer and legislator at the end of his career, was the only man on the Jackson County Bar who would accept the case. The NAACP sent Stephen Roddy (1890-1934) from Chattanooga to assist him, but Roddy arrived on the day of the trial with little time to prepare. Because of threats against their lives and an attempted breach of the Jackson County jail, the boys were held 60 miles away and delivered to Scottsboro on April 6 for their trials, and introduced to their lawyers.


L, Milo Moody, from the *Progressive Age*. R, Stephen Roddy, from findagrave.

The first two convictions — of Charlie Weems and Clarence Norris— came on April 7, the second day of trial. Two days later, eight of the nine had been convicted and sentenced to death, with their executions scheduled for July 10. Jurors had deadlocked on the fate of the ninth defendant, 14-year-old Roy Wright, with seven holding out for the death penalty, although prosecutors, because of his age, had requested only a life sentence.

The trials took place so quickly after the court-appointed attorney and Roddy who joined the defense team on the day of the trial, the attorneys did not have sufficient time to consult with their clients and build a case. The rush to justice perhaps kept the Scottsboro Boys from being lynched.

A stay of execution on June 22, 1931 enabled Attorney Roddy to appeal the verdict. The Alabama Supreme court heard the case and on March 24, 1932, upheld the lower court ruling. The US Supreme Court heard the case on October 10, 1932. The court ruled on November 7, 1932, that the defendants were denied the right to counsel, which violated their right to due process under the Fourteenth Amendment. The cases were remanded to the lower court. New trials were scheduled.

Sources: https://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/287us45 for case summary; *JC Chronicles* April 2021

The Right to a Jury of Your Peers: Norris v. Alabama, 1935

After the Supreme Court overturned the April 1931 verdicts from the Jackson County Circuit Court, a motion for change of venue was granted and the cases were transferred to Morgan County. Clarence Norris was brought to trial in Morgan County in November, 1933. At the beginning of the trial, Norris' lawyer introduced a motion to deny the indictment on the grounds that Negroes* were systematically excluded from juries in Jackson County where the indictment was found. A motion was also made deny the change of venue to Morgan County, because Negroes were also excluded from juries in that county.

The lawyers representing Norris argued that there existed in both counties a long-continued, systematic, and arbitrary exclusion of qualified Negro citizens from service on juries, solely because of their race and color, in violation of the Constitution of the United States.

The attorneys for the State took issue on this charge and after hearing the evidence, the trial judge denied both motions. The trial then proceeded in Morgan County and resulted in the conviction of Norris who was sentenced to death again. On appeal, the Alabama Supreme Court considered the issue of exclusion of qualified Negroes from the jury and decided in favor of the State and affirmed the verdict of the Morgan County Court.

The lawyers defending Norris did not agree, and filed a *writ of certiorari*, a request that the Supreme Court to review an opinion issued by a lower court. The case was argued before the Supreme Court in February 1935, and decided on April 1 of that year and found in favor of Norris.

The lawyers for Norris argued that qualified Negro jurors could be found in Jackson County. In 1930, the total population of Jackson County, where the indictment was returned, was 36,881, of whom 2,688 were Negroes. The male population over twenty-one years of age numbered 8,801, and of these 666 were Negroes. Alabama law stated that jurors had to be literate and of sound mind and good character. A lengthy argument before the Supreme Court found that contrary to the State's argument, at least six Negroes qualified under both federal and state law for membership on county juries.

Jury box in the historic Monroeville County Courthouse. Photo by Annette Bradford.

At the foundation of this charge was the issue that that the grand jury selected in Jackson County was not a jury of Norris' peers and that the all-white grand jury violated the Equal Protection clause at the end of the 14th Amendment. The 14th Amendment reads thus: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

After the Supreme Court ruling, so that the trials in Morgan County could proceed, Jackson County in April 1935 convened a second grand jury to

indict the nine boys again. This jury included a qualified Negro juror, Creed Conyers, seen in the back left corner of the November 1935 wire service photo below of the grand jury. Conyers owned a farm in Paint Rock. The *Huntsville Times* on November 13, 1935 stated that Conyers was one of 18 members drawn from a pool of 35 for service on the grand jury organized in Scottsboro to re-investigate the Scottsboro case.

The wire service photo caption stated: "Scottsboro, Ala., Nov. 14 —Jury with Negro on It re-Indicts Scottsboro Case Defendants. A county grand jury with one Negro, Creed Conyer (upper left) on it, returned 18 new indictments here charging the nine Negro defendants in the Scottsboro case with attacking two white women. A supreme court decision upholding a defense contention that Negroes had been excluded from juries connected with the case necessitates the new inquiry. J. Wiley Whitaker (third from left in front row) was foreman of the grand jury which is shown after it met. (EKB 51130)" The *Progressive Age* on February 28, 1935, stated that taking this case to the Supreme Court had left the county near bankruptcy.

Wire Service Photo of the 1935 Scottsboro Boys jury. From John Graham.

This second indictment returned by a qualified jury with a Negro juror enabled the new Scottsboro Boys cases tried in Morgan County to proceed. This jury also found the boys guilty and upheld the original death sentence. The cases of the individual defendants were an on-going American tragedy. The last living "Scottsboro boy," Clarence Norris, was pardoned by Governor George Wallace in 1976.

Sources: https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/294/587/ for case summary; *JC Chronicles* April 2021

Confessions Obtained from a Drugged Defendant: Beecher v. Alabama 1967

On the morning of June 15, 1964, thirty-two-year-old Johnny Daniel Beecher, a Negro convict already serving a ten-year sentence for rape in the state prison system, escaped from a road gang in Camp Scottsboro, Alabama. On June 16, a woman's tortured, lifeless body was found not more than a mile from the prison camp. The next day, Beecher was captured in Tennessee and returned to Jackson County, Alabama, where he was indicted, tried, and convicted on a charge of first degree murder. The jury set his punishment at death.

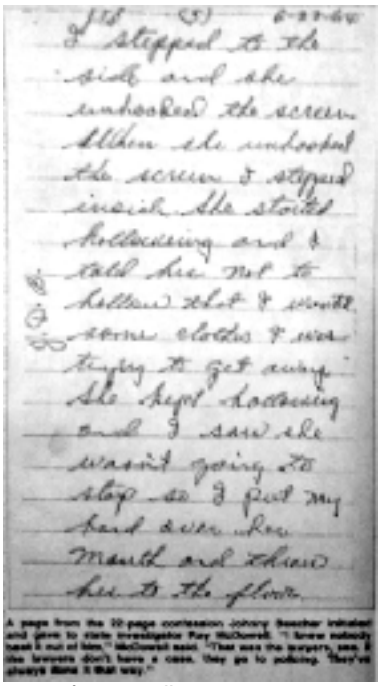
After the Alabama Supreme Court affirmed this conviction, David E. Kendall and U. W. Clemon, Beecher's appeals lawyers, filed a *writ of certiorari*, requesting that the case be heard by the U. S. Supreme Court because the coerced confession taken down an hour after Beecher was given strong pain killer, had been used as evidence at Beecher's trial, and thus violated the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment.

From the *Huntsville Times*, June 18, 1995

These are the facts of record. Tennessee police officers saw Beecher as he fled into an open field and fired a bullet into his right leg. He fell, and the local chief of police pressed a loaded gun to his face while another officer pointed a rifle against the side of his head. The police chief asked him whether he had raped and killed a white woman. When he said that he had not, the chief called him a liar and said, "If you don't tell the truth I am going to kill you." The other officer then fired his rifle next to the Beecher's ear, and Beecher immediately confessed.

Later the same day Beecher received an injection to ease the pain in his leg. He signed something that the chief of police described as "extradition papers" after the officers told him that "it would be best ... to sign the papers before the gang of people came there and killed" him. He was then taken by ambulance from Tennessee to Kilby Prison in

Montgomery, Alabama. By June 22, the petitioner's gangrenous right leg, which was later amputated, had become so swollen and his wound so painful that he required an injection of morphine every four hours. Less than an hour after one of these injections, two Alabama investigators visited him in the prison hospital. The medical assistant in charge told Beecher to "cooperate" and asked the investigators to inform him if Beecher did not "tell them what they wanted to know." The medical assistant then left Beecher alone with the state investigators. In the course of a 90-minute "conversation," the investigators prepared two detailed statements similar to the confession the petitioner had given five days earlier at gunpoint in Tennessee. Still in a "kind of slumber" the *Huntsville Times* said, from his last morphine injection, feverish, and in intense pain, Beecher signed the written confessions prepared for him. A page from this handwritten prepared statement is shown here, reprinted from the June 18, 1995 *Huntsville Times*.



From the *Huntsville Times*, June 18, 1995

These confessions were admitted in evidence during the Beecher trial over the objections of Beecher and his lawyer. Although there is some dispute as to precisely what occurred in the petitioner's room at the prison hospital, the facts of the case supported the conclusion that Beecher's confessions were not voluntary.

Beecher was ordered at gunpoint to speak his guilt or be killed. When he signed his "confession," he was still in pain, under the influence of drugs, and at the complete mercy of the prison hospital authorities. Regardless of whether he was guilty, he was not treated humanely or fairly under the law.

The lawyers for the State of Alabama said that the facts in this case differed in some respects from those in previous cases where confessions we held to be involuntary. Regardless of these differences, the Supreme Court concluded that Beecher's confessions were the product of gross coercion. Under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, no conviction tainted by a confession so obtained can stand. The judgment was reversed. The case helped end the use of chain gangs in Alabama.

Only three months after this Supreme Court decision, Beecher was reindicted and retried for the same crime. Again, a confession was introduced into evidence, but the confession used at the second trial was different from the one used against Beecher at his first trial: it was an oral confession that he made in a Tennessee hospital only one hour after his arrest. Beecher was convicted and sentenced to death again.

Three of the convictions against Beecher were reversed, including the two death sentences. Beecher pled guilty later to murder and received a life sentence, thus avoiding the electric chair. He was incarcerated first at the Lawrence County, Alabama Jail, where he cooked for the prisoners, and later at the Bullock Correctional Center. He was eligible for parole for the eighth time in 2008 and was consistently denied. He died in prison of natural causes on September 11, 2009 at age 65. He claimed that he was innocent of the crime of which he was accused.

Sources: https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/294/587/ for case summary; https://cite.case.law/us/389/35/ for case details; *Huntsville Times*, June 13, 1995 "The Pain of Loss Returns with the Road Gangs."

What Can Be Introduced into Evidence: Hugh Otis Bynum Jr. v. The State 1976

Hugh Otis Bynum, a White citizen of Scottsboro, had a history of violence. In 1970, Bynum shot two black youths, Claxton Green Jr and Willie Lee McCamy, in the back because they trespassed on his property, and, he claimed, shot at his cattle. Both youths were hospitalized and listed in "fair" condition after being hit by 12-gauge blasts while walking near a pasture owned by Bynum. The next day, three buildings on North Houston Street owned by Hugh Otis Bynum were set ablaze.

Photo of Bynum (center) with his attorneys. From the *Jackson County Advertiser*, March 27, 1975

In his trial for the shootings in 1971, Bynum was acquitted of assault with intent to murder, but found guilty of the lesser charge of assault and fined $500.

Bynum felt that he was wronged by Sheriff Robert Collins, whom he thought had failed to pursue the shooters and the burners of his barn with adequate vigor, and with then-Attorney Loy Campbell who defended Green and McCamy. According to court records, Bynum hired Charles Hale to rig a car bomb. Hale stopped first at the Collins residence but left because of a barking dog. He found a quieter place to work at Loy Campbell's house on Hamlin Street and rigged a bomb made with between five and eight sticks of dynamite to the ignition of the lawyer's car. Campbell's legs were shredded in the explosion and subsequently amputated.

Governor George Wallace offered a $5000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrator, and Hugh Otis Bynum was arrested. The indictment charged Hugh Otis Bynum, Jr., and Charles X. Hale with the unlawful assault with intent to murder Loy Campbell. The jury found Bynum "guilty of assault with intent to murder," and the trial court then entered judgment, setting sentence at 20 years imprisonment as punishment.

Attorneys for Bynum immediately appealed the conduct of the case and asked for a new trial. The Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals heard the case and on June 29, 1976 dismissed the various challenges raised by Bynum's attorneys and denied the request for a new trial. The Bynum attorneys challenged seven major points of law in connection with the trial: that the trial court erroneously admitted evidence of another offense involving Bynum, namely the barn burning incident and ensuing trials, which formed the motive for the current case; that Bynum had been convicted on the uncorroborated testimony of an accomplice, here Billy Ray McCrary, but the State cited some 24 instances of corroborating testimony; that Charles X. Hale's statements to Linda Darlene Sullivan were inadmissible as hearsay but the court found that Mrs. Sullivan's testimony was properly admitted at trial.; that Bynum's lawyer were prevented from executing a full and searching cross-examination of Agent Barrett which was simply untrue; and that the trial court failed to properly select and later charge the jury, but the State proved these charges were untrue.

After such a thorough challenge was summarily rebuffed, it is not surprising that on January 16, 1978, the U. S. Supreme Court refused to hear this case. Sheriff Collins said on January 17 that Bynum had but one judicial venue left to hear his case, but that Bynum had to be arrested and placed in jail before an appeal to the U. S. District Court could be filed. Having exhausted his appeals, Bynum reported to the county jail and was transferred to prison. Just before his death, he was transferred to the Veterans Hospital in Birmingham where he died May 10, 1980.

Sources: https://casetext.com/case/bynum-v-state-57 for case summary; contemporary accounts in the *Daily Sentinel, Huntsville Times*, and *Jackson County Advertiser*

Defining a "Jury of Your Peers": J.E.B. v. Alabama 1994

Alabama has lagged behind other states in establishing the rights of women. The state failed to ratify the 19th amendment supporting suffrage for women until 1957, though women could vote in the state because the 19th amendment became law in 1920. Women could not serve on juries in Alabama until 1967, though women had this right in Utah in 1898. It is ironic, then, that a Jackson County case was decided in the Supreme Court because the jury was composed entirely of women.

In 1994, the State of Alabama, acting on behalf of a child, J.T., filed a complaint for paternity and child support against the alleged father, J.E.B. The State used its peremptory challenges to strike 9 of 10 potential male jurors from the jury. J.E.B., the defendant, used one challenge to strike the remaining male juror. As a result, all the selected jurors were female. J.E.B. claimed that the state's use of the peremptory challenge to exclude nearly all male jurors violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The court rejected his claim. The jury found the defendant to be the father of the child, and the court entered an order directing him to pay child support.

The Alabama Court of Civil Appeals affirmed the lower court verdict, and the Supreme Court of Alabama refused to hear the case. The U. S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the case because of the constitutional ramifications of the question: had J. E. B. been denied equal protection under the law because the jury deciding his paternity case was made up entirely of women?

U.S. Supreme Court art for CNN by Peggy Gage. Used by permission of John Porter.

The case was heard in the Supreme Court on November 2, 1993. Scottsboro Attorney John Porter argued the case for the defendant, and the Supreme Court handed down its ruling April 19, 1994. The sketch shown here, made by CNN artist Peggy Gage, shows Porter and his family in the foreground and the nine justices who sat on the bench in 1993.

The Court ruled that the Equal Protection Clause prohibits discrimination in jury selection on the basis of gender, or on the assumption that an individual will be biased in a particular case solely because that person happens to be a woman or a man. The Court reasoned that implicit in the decision to strike virtually all male jurors was the supposition that female jurors would be more sympathetic and receptive to the arguments of paternity and child support than male jurors would be. The Court found that this argument was virtually unsupported and based on the very gender stereotypes that the law condemns.

The conclusion that the State could not strike potential jurors solely on the basis of gender does not imply the elimination of all peremptory challenges. So long as gender does not serve as a proxy for bias, unacceptable jurors may still be removed, including those who are members of a group or class that is normally subject to "rational basis" review and those who exhibit characteristics that are disproportionately associated with one gender.

Historically, a jury trial to decide paternity had proven to be unreliable. Before 1994, defendants in criminal paternity proceedings were entitled to jury trials. Evidence might consist of testimony regarding the parents' relationship, the mother's relationships with other potential fathers, and the physical resemblance of the child to the defendant. Often, without an admission by the alleged father, it was difficult to establish paternity under the law.

The notion that a jury could decide paternity was mostly set aside with the use of DNA testing.

Sources: https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/511/127/ for case summary; interview with John Porter

Annette Bradford

*The modern descriptor for African people of color is “African-American.” However, since direct quotes in this article use the term “Negro,” we used this term throughout for consistency.

Louise Willson Jacobs: Beloved and Dynamic Community Leader

Louise Willson Jacobs lived in Scottsboro for all of her adult life – from 1913, when she came to Jackson County as the 20-year-old bride of Henry Grady Jacobs of the J.C. Jacobs Banking Company, until her death in 1988. In these 75 years of residence, she endeared herself to fellow church members of the First Baptist Church, taught a Sunday School class there for 74 years, founded several patriotic citizens' groups, organized Parent-Teacher organizations, and exerted a lasting influence on the Kate Duncan Smith DAR School in Grant, AL.

She was born Sara Louise Willson on February 21, 1893, in Sweetwater, TN, the oldest of three daughters of Robert and Lillian Boyd Willson. After both parents died in 1907, the fourteen-year-old Louise moved with her two younger sisters to live with an aunt, uncle, grandmother, and four cousins in Niota, TN.

She attended the Girls Preparatory School in Chattanooga, TN during the first year of its existence, and after graduation attended Middle Tennessee State Normal School in Murfreesboro, TN, as a music major. Her middle sister, Mary, had married, and her younger sister Ellie accompanied Louise to college, living with her in the women's dormitory. During her college years, Louise went home with a friend, Alma Thompson, for a weekend visit to Beech Grove, TN, where they were met at the train station by Alma's cousin, Henry Grady Jacobs.

The rest is history. They were married in Niota on September 17, 1913, and traveled on the train to Scottsboro, his home town, to make their home.

A week after their marriage, the young couple attended the First Baptist Church in Scottsboro, where Grady and his family were members. Louise was asked that day to teach a Sunday School class of three teenage girls. She continued to teach that class for the next 75 years. At its peak, her class had 127 members, divided into sub-groups. She continued to study her Bible lessons and teach the class until shortly before her death in 1988.

Service to others was a foundation of her Christian beliefs, and the Louise W. Jacobs Class, as it came to be known, was very active in practical service. During the World War II years, the class often met at the Jacobs home to make candy and sandwiches to serve soldiers who passed through Scottsboro on military trains. Her home was a headquarters for the Red Cross work. Her class collected clothes and placed them in a church closet so needy persons could select what they needed; the First Baptist clothing room was an outgrowth of this class project. The class often helped struggling young ministers by making clothes for their families in all-day sewing sessions at the Jacobs home.

She was highly respected by the First Baptist Church for her long and devoted service as member and Sunday School teacher, and the classroom where she taught was named for her. In 1985, the church held a special service in her honor.

In 1914, after one year's residence in Scottsboro, Louise was invited to join the Twentieth Century Book Club. She remained a member of that group for the next 74 years.

Louise and Grady Jacobs had two children, Nancy Elizabeth (Beth), born in 1915, and John Clinton (Jake) Jacobs II, born in 1918. During her pregnancy in 1918, the family moved to 407 College Avenue, their newly-built home, where Louise lived for the rest of her life.

Her children, Elizabeth and Jake, attended local elementary schools, and Louise became active in the school system. She organized Scottsboro's first Parent-Teacher Association, and served as its first President. She was instrumental in putting together the city's first school lunch program. She offered her home library to the students of Scottsboro High School for some time, until the school began its own library.

Mrs. Jacobs was an honorary life member of the Jackson County Department of Human Resources board, having been a member of the board since it was first organized in 1928. During President Franklin D. Roosevelt's tenure in office, she was appointed to the Board which selected recipients of land to be homesteaded on Skyline Mountain.

She was a member of the Pink Ladies' organization at the Jackson County Hospital, where she devoted many Saturday evenings over several decades, helping in the Hospital Snack Bar to serve families of the patients.

Patriotic organizations, both local and national, were an important interest of hers for many, many years. She was instrumental in organizing the Alabama Society Daughters of the American Colonists, and was a member of the Judge David Campbell Chapter of that organization. She was a member of the Colonial Dames of America in both Alabama and Tennessee. She was a member of the Charter Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the War of 1812 and of the Daughters of Colonial Wars, of which she was a past State Regent and a past National Registrar. She made friends throughout the country and kept in touch with them for decades.

She was Organizing Regent of the Tidence Lane Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The chapter was named for her Revolutionary ancestor, Capt. Tidence Lane. She was a past State of Alabama DAR Regent and Vice-Regent, and she served on the national level as National Vice-President General. She attended many national DAR Continental Congress gatherings (conventions) in Washington, DC, and developed lifelong friendships with DAR members across the United States.

On a more local level, one of her passionate interests over many years was connected to her membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution. That group undertook in the 1920's to establish a public school in a mountainous and poverty-stricken area of Grant, Alabama. Mrs. June Troup, in her 1991 book *A Vision Come True: Gem of Gunter Mountain* wrote about the DAR School and Mrs. Jacobs' involvement over many decades.

Mrs. Jacobs was a member of the DAR Patriotic Education Committee when the school was founded in 1938. She was a member of the Board of Trustees of the DAR School, as it came to be known, from its opening, and served as Vice Chairman of the Board from 1938 to 1950. At that time she became Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and served in that capacity for 26 years (1950-1976).

For two periods of time (July 1, 1966 to June 30, 1967, and November 27, 1974 to January 24, 1975), while she was chair of the Board of Trustees, she filled in as Administrator, making daily automobile trips to the school to sign checks, answer mail, and carry on the business of the school.

She hosted DAR members from across the country in her home for decades, when they came to Grant to attend the school's annual ceremonies on "Dedication Day." Fundraising for the DAR School for years included the sale of a red pepper relish, made from her own recipe.

The Trustees of the DAR School honored her in 1978, when they named the former main building of the school the Louise Willson Jacobs Classroom Building. Friends and relatives gathered in the building for the dedication ceremony. Her portrait hangs in the building. Citizens of Grant, many of whom are graduates of the DAR School, still remember her with fondness and great respect.

After her husband, Grady Jacobs, passed away in the 1950s, Mrs. Jacobs continued her active lifestyle, as he had wanted her to do. She was a loving mother to their two children, an exemplary grandmother to her five grandchildren, and a devoted great-grandmother to fourteen.

Her 90th birthday, in 1983, was celebrated by a reception in her home, hosted by her daughter, Elizabeth Jacobs Samsa, and other relatives. Mrs. Jacobs insisted that the reception be "just for the family." However, she drew a very large circle as to just who composed "the family," and when the invitation list was finally completed, ninety people were invited. She greeted the group while seated in her carved living room chair, and loved seeing everyone who came.

At her death, on October 10, 1988, at the age of 95, the DAR School immediately lowered all flags to half mast for the entire week. The school dismissed classes for half a day on the day of her funeral, October 17, 1988, so that faculty and staff could attend the service at the First Baptist Church, Scottsboro.

Much more could be written about her abilities, unusual for a woman at any time in history, and about her kindness to others and her fun-loving spirit. She was an exceptional woman, indeed. To paraphrase the Book of Proverbs, her "price was far above rubies."

Photos from Grady Jacobs

Jeffrey Mathis, Scottsboro Violin Maker

Photo from the Van Massey Auctions website.

My husband David remembers a time when he was a boy that people at First Monday played in pick-up bands around the Square, many on homemade instruments. So I was more than interested when Steven Baty reported on the JCHA Facebook page that Van Massey Auctions had just sold the beautiful violin pictured here with a paper sticker inside that said, "Made by Jeff O.B. Matthews, town of Scottsboro."

A kinsman, Richard Matthews, recognized the violin maker and said, "That was made from scratch by one of my distant relatives, Jeffery Mathis. Copied from a Stradivarius. He lived in Scottsboro and was a genius in many ways but very eccentric in many ways. To make his violins, he selected, cut, shaped and polished his wood, which came from local swamps. He lived a very simple life in two old rundown school busses on East Willow Street. He made several such violins in the mid to late 60s, which was maybe 60 years ago. Jeff was also an expert in repairing old tube-type radios. He also made the case and the bow."

Standard violins have a spruce top, as this one does, but the finger board is varnished walnut. Varnishing the finger board, luthier Gerald Jones tells me, is not usually done since grip and finger placement are important. It sold for $70, and I offered twice that to buy it from the man who purchased it, but he would not give it up.

The Guerrilla Effect

It will consume your thoughts if you let it. It might even sneak into one's dreams. I refer to the nightmare existence that Northeast Alabamians endured throughout the Civil War. The disturbing story is as powerful as that. One could spend hours ruminating about how human existence, previously thought peacefully secure, could be so quickly and radically upended. What were the forces and failures that came together to promote such strife and suffering? Whatever the relevant factors, they generated a "perfect storm" if ever there was one.

I don't think anyone would expect much else in a confined area where Confederate and Union regular armies were vying for the same space. Not to mention that the resident civilian population---both Loyalist and Secessionist---were so divided in their views. But the more I grappled for a dominant cause, one influential factor kept coming up. guerrilla warfare---yes, it's arguable that it ranked as the most influential factor through its unique catalytic role.

Guerrilla warfare lacked the respect of the formal military from either side at the time. Regarded as defiant against the rules of war and chivalry, its status on land was comparable to that of piracy on the high seas. Representative of its disdain, a guerrilla would likely be hanged, instead of getting to live (at least for the moment) by going to a prison camp or even being paroled if he were a regular soldier.

So why should this onerous guerrilla practice become so prevalent in this area of my birth? Largely because it fit the independent mind-set of its Scots-Irish settlers. Also because the conditions and terrain in Northeast Alabama were conducive to the tactics guerrilla warriors used. Since the guerrillas were in home-territory, they knew it intimately well. They operated quite effectively from the thick cover (bushes) in the undeveloped area, earning them the sobriquet from either side of "bushwhackers" ("partisans" to the more euphemistic).

This unconventional tactic was radically different from standard line regimentation of the day. The conventional tactic was only achievable through long hours of close-order drill, as was the de rigueur discipline of regular army troops. Never mind that in live combat, close order drill with its frontal assaults produced the suicidal charges that generated enormous death tolls on both sides in that war. Truth be told, guerrilla warfare was much more adaptive to the advanced firearm capability achieved by that time. Countless lives would have been saved had it been used more. But West Point had indoctrinated the leadership of both sides in Napoleonic tactics. Guerrilla warfare simply wasn't playing fair. The attitude was that a soldier was being cowardly if not willing to present his chest defiantly toward the muzzles of enemy guns.

Lemuel Green Mead, the organizer of Jackson County's Paint Rock Rifles, would eventually play a role in North Alabama guerrilla warfare. Disillusioned with the regular army after Shiloh, he gave up his commission in the Confederate army in order to operate independently. He organized and commanded several Confederate "partisan" units back home in North Alabama. One might consider his decision to leave the the service of General Braxton Bragg as prudent (Nathan Bedford Forrest and notable high-ranking Confederate officers did the same), but in resigning his commission, he turned his back on my Skelton ancestors and others of his Paint Rock Valley neighbors whom he had enticed into regular service to the Confederacy and then left to fend for themselves after his departure.

North Alabama had little in the way of organized, named battles, but had more than its share of lethal conflict throughout the War. That was largely a function of the prevalent guerrilla warfare. In fact, one can go so far as to say guerrilla warfare characterized Civil War conflict in the area of my birth. By 1862, guerrilla units functioned on both Union and Confederate sides, with the Confederate units being by far the most numerous. The Confederate Partisan Ranger Act of 1862 was an effort to legitimize its Rebel guerrillas. And yes, there did exist Yankee guerrillas (called "Jayhawkers" like in Kansas). Unionist

guerrilla bands also existed called "Destroying Angels." One report went so far as to characterize our 1st Alabama and Tennessee Union Vidette Cavalry as a guerrilla regiment formed from Confederate deserters. It accused that unit of terrorizing secessionists in Coffee, Warren, Grundy, and Franklin County, Tennessee. We know from records, however, that Company A, in which my Skelton relatives served, did not function in that area or in that way. One might deduce that the aforementioned guerrilla description fits one of the companies formed at Tracey City, Tennessee, I.e., Company D, E, or F. Tracey City is in the area of the counties described.

So on what basis can we give guerrilla warfare primary responsibility for wartime misery in Northeast Alabama? Here's where the dynamic gets subtle and complex, as is so often the case when human nature and its provocation get into the act. Let's take the case of Col. John Beatty to further explore the concept. He's the Union officer that gave the direct order to burn Paint Rock to the ground in May, 1862. Reaction to guerrilla warfare influenced this and other of his severely vengeful policies. The following quote from his book graphically illustrates the point:

> *Moved to Bellefonte. Took the cars for Huntsville. At Paint Rock the train was fired upon, and six or eight men wounded. As soon as it could be done, I had the train stopped, and , taking a file of soldiers, returned to the village. The telegraph line had been cut, and the wire was lying in the street. Calling the citizens together, I said to them that this bushwhacking must cease. The Federal troops had tolerated it already too long. Hereafter every time the telegraph wire was cut we would burn a house; every time a train was fired upon we would hang a man; and we would continue to do this until every house was burned and every man hanged between Decatur and Bridgeport. If they wanted to fight they should enter the army, meet us like honorable men, and not, assassin-like, fire at us from the woods and run. We proposed to hold the citizens responsible for these cowardly assaults, and if they did not drive these bushwhackers from amongst them, we should make them more uncomfortable than they would be in hell. I then set fire to the town, took three citizens with me, returned to the train, and proceeded to Huntsville. (Beatty, John 1879)*

But there's an even more far-reaching example to support the guerrilla influence concept. Union General Ormsby Mitchel, for admittedly good reason, also didn't much care for the Confederate guerrillas. His commander, General Don Carlos Buell, had previously kept a lid on any kind of burnt-earth policy in North Alabama. Buell favored a conciliatory civilian approach, as the Federals progressively gained territory in the Tennessee Valley. But this policy became increasingly hard to maintain against the opposite sentiment of his subordinate, Ormsby Mitchel. Here's where guerrilla warfare comes into the picture again. The constant harassment from Confederate guerrillas intensified Mitchel's disdain for the resident Tennessee Valley population. Furthermore, he didn't discriminate. Interestingly, he detested the population as a whole with no distinction made between Unionist and Confederate. He heartily endorsed Beatty's burning of Paint Rock in May of 1892.

Plus, as noted earlier, Mitchel turned John Basil Turchin loose in Athens, Alabama that same month to exert depredation all across Northeast Alabama. Buell, to his credit, was incensed by all this, and objected to the point of demanding a Turchin court-martial. Significantly, Turchin was exonerated, which amounts to a harbinger as to the future direction of Union policy toward Southern civilians.

Thus a hard-war policy became "standard operating procedure" in my ancestral region. So guerrilla warfare undoubtedly played an important causative part. In turn, the hard-war policy just fueled further guerrilla warfare incentive---the all too familiar "vicious cycle". A perfect example comes from the life of the Reverend Milus Eddings Johnson.

Rev. Johnson was a traveling Methodist minister in a circuit from Fayetteville, Tennessee, through Madison and Jackson Counties in Alabama. From this he received an initially unperceived blessing: i.e., valuable tactical familiarity about Tennessee Valley terrain. After Ormsby Mitchel's directives declared martial law in Fayetteville, they made the mistake of underestimating this mild-mannered preacher and arrested him as a "suspect citizen". Soon released, Rev. Johnson settled near what is now New Hope,

Alabama (formerly Vienna, my mother's hometown). He planned to quietly sit out the war working on his father-in-law's farm. But the Union soldiers wouldn't leave him alone. They added injury to insult, when Mitchel's men burned his father-in-law's house and viciously returned to burn the only outbuilding he had left for shelter, and for that matter, the rest of the town. They even came back a third time to capture Rev. Johnson, but he escaped, and they only got his boots. By then they had finally made the mistake of pushing this mild-manner preacher too far. Something of a Jekyll-Hyde conversion came over the good reverend. He promptly sought to do what damage he could by becoming a guerrilla-fighter.

He wound up in Col. Mead's 25th Alabama Partisan Ranger Battalion and eventually assumed a very effective leadership role as a Lt. Colonel. He was in several important guerrilla engagements fighting beside Lemuel Mead (including Paint Rock River Bridge skirmishes). All this earned him the nickname "Bushwhacker Johnson." I'm sure the Yankees had learned to leave the "reverend" part off by that time. Surviving the War, he spent the following 30 years dedicated to his former calling of trying to convert sinners. I doubt he preached many sermons on turning the other cheek.

Col. Lemuel Green Mead, buried in the Old Paint Rock Cemetery

As might be expected, Bushwhacker Johnson was only one of many Secessionist guerrilla leaders in the Northeast Alabama region. There was John Tyler Morgan. Not to be confused with the famous John Hunt Morgan who, although being from Huntsville, operated mainly along the Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana areas. John Tyler Morgan led the 51st Alabama Partisans formed in Calhoun County. Another was William Gunter who headed much Rebel guerrilla activity in the Sand Mountain area. But perhaps the most interesting was Obediah C. Crossland, who specifically targeted Unionists in our area, murdering, kidnapping , and hanging Unionists in the Alabama/Tennessee border region. His notoriety eventually led to his capture and hanging. Abraham Lincoln himself signed his execution warrant.

So that's an overview of perhaps the most destabilizing role guerrilla warfare played. But that's only one way it fanned the flames of miserable existence in the Northeast Alabama area. Another incendiary element is the often-ill-defined nature of a guerrilla unit. Many of the so-called guerrilla units were the impromptu handiwork of reprobates, taking advantage of the social disintegration of the time. These bands came together with one sole purpose: to take advantage of the weak and unprotected. Many households had lost the fathers or older sons that would normally provide some protection against such marauders. Those vulnerable families, of course, were not to be spared.

The marauding bands were as adaptable as chameleons. They could change identity from Union to Confederate literally at the drop of a hat. This they did, according to what best suited their exploitative purpose at the time. And they had further advantage. Many, more creditable, guerrilla units did exist in the area. So uncertainty existed as to whether a guerrilla unit was friend, foe ... or indiscriminately predatory. This conveniently gave the marauding bands the ability to misrepresent themselves by pretending to be a more legitimate partisan unit. Thus, they could, as it were, get their foot in the door. Some things never change---to get an inkling of this concept, consider the scams we have to endure every day.

A net result of all this depredation was what always happens in war. The War drove people from their homes, and they became refugees. A Union-run refugee camp resulted. Yes, they actually tried to help the ravaged citizenry. So should we count this offering as benevolent or hypocritical? It's a relevant question considering the Union policy that generated its need. I don't know, but they didn't have to do it, and it undoubtedly tempered the suffering that prompted its need. This camp was near Ft. Harker at Stevenson, Alabama. There was a hospital facility also nearby. The mere fact of a needed refugee camp underscores how severely the war disrupted the lives of Northeast Alabamians. And, as above noted, guerrilla tactics carried much of the blame. Eye witness insight about all this comes from Frank Wilkeson

in his Recollections of a Private Soldier regarding his tenure as a Union soldier (4th United States Artillery) at Stevenson. The following textual quote comes from his disturbing observations. I include it knowing I could never portray it so vividly or succinctly as he:

> *At Stevenson there was a large refugee camp, where many women and children and a few crippled or age-enfeebled men had sought refuge from murderous bands of guerrillas. The camp had probably been abandoned when Hood swept north with his army, and the refugees had sought shelter and food as best they could. Hood's army went to pieces after being defeated at Nashville, and the refugees again gathered at Stevenson. Guerrillas infested the southern highlands. These pretended soldiers, it mattered not which uniform they disgraced by wearing, were, almost without exception, robbers and murderers, who sought to enrich themselves by plundering their defenceless [sic] neighbors. They rode through the southern highlands, killing men, burning houses, stealing cattle and horses. Today a band of guerrillas, alleged Unionists, ravaged a mountain district. They killed their personal enemies, whom they said were Confederate sympathizers, and destroyed their property. To-morrow other guerrillas burned Union men's houses, and shot so-called Union men to death. This relentless, mountain warfare was exceedingly hard on women and children. Agriculture was suspended in the highlands. No man dared to till his lean fields for fear that some hidden enemy might kill him. No stack of unthrashed grain or garner of corn was safe from the torch. The defenceless [sic] women and children were starved out of their homes, and they sought safety and food within the Union lines. Our government established extensive camps for these war-stricken Southerners. (Wilkeson, Frank 1897)*

"Thought consuming if one allows it" ... no doubt about it. I believe we can now say for sure that guerrilla warfare wreaked havoc in the area of my home region. Also, when I think back on the beauty and pleasant times I've experienced in Northeast Alabama, it's very difficult to fit that scenario into this portrayed perspective of the suffering and persecution that my ancestors endured. Yet I know that the very fact I got to enjoy my home region came from their tenacious persistence and their Spartan toughness. In that, they have blessed me twofold: One, with a beautiful, peaceful region I enjoyed growing up in. And the other ... well, maybe I got a tiny bit of their indomitable toughness that allowed me to survive and have the joy of its memory.

Dr. James Reed

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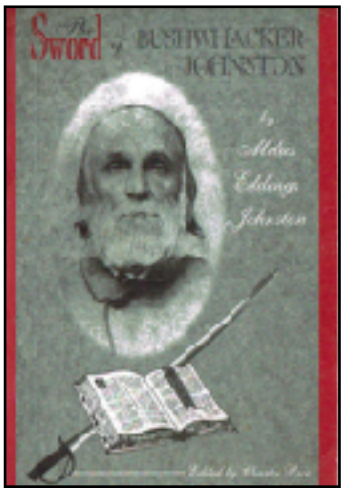
Born in Scottsboro at Hodges Hospital, Dr. James Reed started life as an infant in Woodville. His early years were then spent in Huntsville, returning to Scottsboro for his high school years until his family, much to his chagrin, moved back to Huntsville in the middle of his senior year. He received his pharmacy degree at Samford University and his Ph.D. in pharmacology at the UAB School of Medicine, where he also received his M.D. He completed his residency in internal medicine and went on to further specialize in nephrology, which he practiced in Birmingham for some 45 years. His publications have focused on his professional field and the sport of fly fishing.



Note: The Sword of Bushwacker Johnson by Miles Eddings Johnson is out of print but available for download as a PDF on the JCHA website: http://www.jchaweb.org/downloads/BushwackerJohnson_low.pdf

The Great Langston Gold Rush of 1895

It all started out quietly. A rumor, really. Some of the best-educated and most influential men in town were buying the mineral rights to land almost on the line between Marshall and Jackson counties near the end point of the Sauta Creek ferry. Before you grab up your shaker pans, folding chairs, and ice chest to go prospecting, read on about how this hoax was perpetrated.

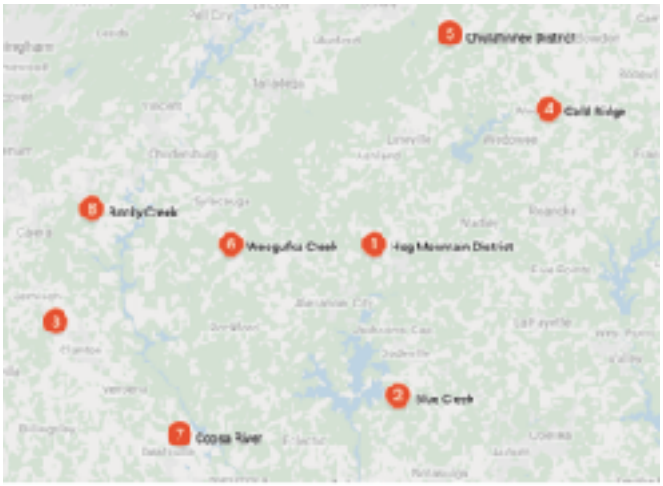
Placer mining illustration from the Library of Congress.

The Guntersville paper got wind of it first, perhaps because Dr. G. B. May, the man behind the hoax, went to the *Guntersville Democrat* first with his bait story. As part of the news from Hillian's Store on February 7, 1895, the *Guntersville Democrat* noted this:

> *As an item of news I write to let you know that a rich gold mine is being developed on Sauta Creek, in Marshall County, near the Jackson County line. Dr. G. B. May and others have employed a Georgia miner to develop their mine. So far it seems to be exceedingly rich. The miner has sunk pits to the gravel, which proves by actual pan to test to yield from $3.50 to $15 per cubic yard. On Tuesday in one of the pits the miner panned out a nugget of about one pennyweight. The mine is a placer mine. Dr. May has known of this for years and lately sent to Georgia for a miner to open it. A few years back Dr. May himself washed out several pans and got good coarse gold."*

For those of you unfamiliar with mining techniques, placer mining is the mining of stream bed (alluvial) deposits for minerals. This may be done by open-pit (also called open-cast mining) or by various surface excavating equipment or tunneling equipment. As the illustration above from the Library of Congress shows, it usually involves sifting through alluvial deposits with metal pan. In panning, some mined ore is placed in a large metal or plastic pan, combined with a generous amount of water, and agitated so that the gold particles, being of higher density than the other material, settle to the bottom of the pan. The lighter material, such as sand, mud and gravel, are then washed over the side of the pan, leaving the gold behind. (1) In theory, at least. What often began as a placer mine turned into a pit mine as development progressed.

It is not beyond belief that gold might be found in the area around Langston, though the major period of prospecting in Alabama took place between 1828 and 1836. Substantial deposits of gold had been found in North Carolina as early as 1820. In fact, the U. S. Mint reports in 1825 that it received $17,000 in gold from mines around Albemarle, NC. Between 1825 and 1830, North Carolina had 56 mines. By 1828, many placer mines were reported on the Cherokee lands in the northeastern corner of Georgia around Yahoola Creek and Dahlonega. The hundreds of squatters infected with prospecting fever angered the Cherokees, who preferred to exploit their own lands. In fact, "after gold was discovered in Georgia in late 1829, the ensuing Georgia Gold Rush increased white residents' determination to see the Cherokee removed," leading to the Treaty of New Echota in 1835 and the subsequent Trail of Tears. (2)



Map of gold mining sites in Alabama from https://raregoldnuggets.com/

In Alabama, the first gold was discovered in Chilton

County. Gold mining in Alabama reached its height in 1836 when new mining towns like Arbacohee had a population of 600 and Goldville over 3000. The gold rush ended in 1849, when miners left the state to join the California Gold Rush. There was another revival of mining activity between 1880 and 1903, and the gold frenzy that hit Langston in 1895 was part of this secondary gold rush. (3)

Having whetted the appetites of local get-rich-quick enthusiasts, Dr. May continued to feed the rumor he had set in motion. On March 7, 1895, the *Democrat* reported a story titled "That Gold Discovery" that was picked up by other papers in the state:

> *The Democrat had a call the other day from Dr. G. B. May, a leading citizen of Hillian's Store, on whose land was discovered the placer gold deposit a short while ago. Dr. May brought samples of free gold in a small vial which were taken from the gravel right next to the slate. His land runs to the Sauta Creek Ferry, on the South side of the Tennessee where Jackson and Marshall counties join. A practical miner, with pick and pan, is engaged in uncovering more of the earth and sand and getting down next to the precious particles which glisten in the slate bottom.*
>
> *Dr. May is enthusiastic on the subject of the new discovery. The find is what is known in mining parlance as "placer," a deposition of free gold, age ago disintegrated from its vein of quartz, which may have existed in prehistoric mountains now leveled. Be that as it may, the fact of gold mining being successfully conducted in Cleburne County, sixty miles southeast, and in Dahlonega, Georgia, one hundred or so miles east, and that both are mining the placer deposit, makes it quite reasonable to suppose that mining at Hillian's Store, on the plan, hydraulic mining, would be profitable.*
>
> *We hope that Dr. May will get sufficient capital enlisted to erect a hydraulic plant on a large scale which will not only develop the Sauta Creek portion of East Marshall but which will give employment to many poor men who are in need of it. The doctor's post office is Hillian's Store, Marshall County.*

By May 16, the *Guntersville Democrat* did a background story on the mine: "All About the Gold Field" that provided more detail:

> *The Democrat has published several articles on the Sauta Creek gold discoveries. Events which transpired last week render it desirable to begin with the first and give a clear and concise statement of facts obtained from reliable authority.*
>
> *Two years ago Dr. G. B. May of Hillian's Store, sixteen miles up the Tennessee River from Guntersville, made a discovery of shining particles in the sand while crossing the creek. He thought then that a deposit of gold must be there, but it was not until last November that he arranged to have a practical miner test the matter. Miner Derr was prevented by high water and bad weather from such speedy developments as were expected by Dr. May but he found positive evidence of the yellow metal about two months ago.*
>
> *Shortly after the first discovery, on land belonging to Jack Doss, colored, Dr. May associated with himself and the miner, B. F. Shook and Dr. J. B. Haralson of Langston, Milo Moody, Esq. of Scottsboro, A. G. Collins or Martin, Jack Mickler of Chattanooga,and others.*
>
> *These gentlemen as a body bought options on the mineral right to forty acres of land from Jack Doss, colored, and on forty acres owned by D. H. Evans, upon the terms that ten percent royalty on all yields should go to the land owners.*

By May, the *Scottsboro Citizen* had joined the gold mining frenzy, exciting Jackson County residents with this May 16, 1895 short: "The excitement over the Langston gold fields is increasing. Maj. Hugh Carlile, of Guntersville, told a newspaper reporter the other day that the gold mine near Langston was the largest in the State, if not in the United States. The major estimates the value of the gold mines on Sauta creek as being worth, if properly mined, the enormous sum of fourteen million dollars." On May 30, 1895, the *Citizen* reported: "P. W. Keith dug a cistern in his yard at his farm on the river last year. It is now discovered that the dirt thrown out is full of gold, specimens of which he has brought up to demonstrate to the doubtful."

On May 30 1895, the *Scottsboro Citizen* reported: "The Sauta Creek Mining Company has been incorporated by the following gentlemen: D. J. Jones, C. E. Jones, George C. Hunt, Virgil Bouldin, F. V. Bodfish, J. R,. Harris, and W. Martin. The capital stock is one hundred thousand dollars. The object is to mine gold, to buy and sell mining and other lands, to do a general mining business, and to exercise all powers conferred on mining corporations. Langston is to be the headquarters of the company." Heady times. Langston, the corporate headquarters of a gold mining operation.

Those who doubted the story were many, and the entire affair became the subject of much derision in the skeptical local press. The editor of the *Progressive Age* joked that Langston might be able to relieve the distress in the national treasury. "If the owners of this property do not go to work at once, the Langston gold mine people will get ahead of them, and supply that much needed gold for the treasury." (*PA*, October 24, 1895) The *Scottsboro Citizen* reported, "Editor Vaught, of the *Stevenson Chronicle*, visited the Langston gold fields last Tuesday. Did he buy a mine?" (*SC*, May 30, 1895)

To counter the doubting Thomases in the area, a western expert was called in. The *Bridgeport News* reported that:

> *Maj. J.C. Wall just arrived from inspecting the new gold fields in the northeastern part of Marshall County. He says he met F. V. Bodfish, an expert mining engineer, well known in California, Arizona, and New Mexico. The two experts inspected the site, and Major Wall reported: "I went over the property with him and found it all showed fair in gold. All the panning I saw showed good in gold. When Mr. Bodfish makes his report, which will be soon, upon this field I am satisfied it will be full and correct. I yet say the gold fields of the South will soon be the best paying gold mines in the United States."*

Maybe a little bit of hyperbole here and some unfounded optimism.

That was all the reassurance that enthusiastic local investors needed. A company was formed and the stock sold out quickly. The Chattanooga newspaper reported on May 25:

> *The Sauta Creek Mining Company was organized today at Scottsboro, Ala. with a capital stock of $100,000 to mine for gold in Sand Mountain, fourteen miles from Scottsboro The mineral rights in 240 acres of land along Sauta Creek have been purchased and options obtained on all farms and mountain land in the neighborhood of the gold fields. Officers were elected as follows: D. K. Jones, President; O. F. Jones, Secretary and Treasurer; and F. V. Bodfish, Manager. All are of Chattanooga. During the meeting reports reached Scottsboro that gold had also been discovered on the north side of the Tennessee River, opposite the mouth of Sauta Creek, and the town became greatly excited. Land owners now refuse to entertain propositions of sale. The mineral is found in the form of pebbles in a bed of gravel and sand, and only admits of being worked by the Placer process. Stock in the new company is held by Chattanooga, Scottsboro, and Montgomery, Ala. parties. Of the 1,000 shares of stock of $100 each, only a limited portion remain untaken. The gold fields cover an extensive territory and it is believed the metal there is paying quantities.*

In the fire-ready-aim hysteria that accompanies such intentional deceptions, only after forming a company and attracting investors was a real expert on site to assess the situation—Assistant State Geologist Henry McCalley. The May 23 *Birmingham Herald* reported that Dr. McCalley was going to evaluate the "gold fields on Sauta Creek." He also provided the best technical description on the mining operation. Sauta Creek Mining Company vice president George C. Hunt claimed in late June that no one associated with the mine asked McCalley for his evaluation.

Dr. Henry McCalley of Huntsville, Asst. State Geologist. Findagrave.

> **The Sauta Creek Gold Deposit***: Report of Assistant State Geologist Henry McCalley.*
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> *I visited last week the much talked of gold deposit on Sauta Creek. I have to say that it would be one of the wonders of the 19th century for this gold find to ever prove of any great importance or value to the Sate. It is a layer of gravels or*

> *pebbles along the high water level (of 35 to 40 feet above low water in the Tennessee River). This gravelly or pebbly layer is some three feet thick and from 75 to 150 yards broad. It has been traced for some three miles, though it is doubless much more extensive. It rests directly on unbroken bedded sub-carboniferous and Silurian strata and is covered, usually four to five feet, in placed by a yellowish or mulatto sandy loam and in other places by a mottled or light colored plastic clay. The pebbles are mostly of quarter, though some of them are of chert, sandstone, etc. The quartz pebbled with the few of crystalline and possibly gold bearing rocks are well rounded or water worn, while some of the others from non-crystalline rock or non-gold bearing rocks are more or less angular, thus showing that they have not been transported as far, some of them being almost in place. These pebbles rare in size from large cannon balls to small shot. Their matrix of light and orange colored sands and of a plastic clay carries a great deal of black magnetic sand. The gold is seemingly of very good quality, though some of it has reddish or rusty points from the oxidation of pyrites that once accompanied it. It, so far as I have seen, is mostly a coarse, angular gold in flat shots and scales from half the size of a wheat grain down*
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> *Some of it, however, is said to be rounded and to be of a much larger size and much or most of it is said to be very fine flour gold. It panned from the bottom of the pits dug down on it from about $1 to $5 per cubic yard, at the northern and southern ends of the deposit. The physical free characteristics of most of the gold and especially the flat, angular coarse gold show most plainly that it has been rolled very far in loose, free places as it now is. It must therefore have been brought here, unless man had something to do with its transportation, encased in other rocks from which it was liberated, or set free only after these rocks have been deposited here where the gold is now found, for there are no gold bearing veins to bedded strata hereabouts, notwithstanding many reports to the contrary. It must therefore have come, if nature brought it here, from extreme East Tennessee or the western part of North Carolina, a distance by water 200 miles or more. Such being the case, it would be something new to the scientific world for this gold deposit to prove a valuable and workable one, though there is not the slightest doubt of the presence here of some true placer gold. It is merely a equation of quantity. Henry McCalley*

McCalley "seems to think they have no gold," the *Fort Payne Journal* said succinctly in a June 26 article. McCalley told the newspaper, "My object in visiting the Santa Creek gold deposit, only after I had seen the many newspaper accounts of it and had been urged to go, was solely for the good of the State at large....I still hope, against my judgment, that I may be deceived in my opinion of this deposit and that it may still prove a rich and paying one."

The company's response, in the same paper, was essentially, who asked you anyway? "When we want Prof. McCalley to examine our property," George C. Hunt wrote, "we will invite him to do so, but he has shown himself to be such an ass in what he has already published that I don't think we will ever need his services." The *Birmingham News* reported on June 27, "President Hunt is out in a letter to the Scottsboro *Age* saying that he had no need of boosting by geological experts or others."

The organizers forged ahead with their mining plans. The June 7, 1895 the *Montgomery Advertiser* said:

> *The Sauta Creek Mining Company was organized last week at Scottsboro and has been incorporated with the following members: D. J. Jones, C. E. James, George C. Hunt, Virgil Bouldin, F. V. Bodfish, J.R.Harris, and W. L. Martin. They commenced work yesterday on a deep shaft near the Sauta Creek ferry. Having found a large piece of honeycombed quartz weighing a hundred pounds which showed by its rough cut surface that it had been broken from a ledge of quartz near by, their object is to find the vein of which this is a part. The people of Hillian's Store and vicinity believe that the gold boom has now struck them. Bicycles are on their streets. In this remote region, this is the first time that many have seen a bicycle.*

There were other attacks on McCalley's conclusions. The June 13, 1895: *Guntersville Democrat* denied the truth of McCalley's information. "The gold excitement still exists here regardless of McCalley's report. All the miners make fun of the report and say they think he was prevented by something that is as precious as gold from making a correct report." On July 10, the *Montgomery Advertiser* reported nothing but optimism and confidence, on the word of none other than the seeder of mines and perpetrator for the hoax. "Dr.

G.B. May of Hillian's Store reports that increased confidence is being shown in the gold fields. $4,000 cash having been paid in the past week on the options taken by Dr. May and associates. The Sauta Creek Gold Mining Company have capitalized at $100,000. Ten per cent of which is already paid in and spent for options and machinery. The patent rockers and amalgamating pans are already on the ground. Some heavy machinery is expected today. Foreman Derr is collecting a force of men to commence mining."

But a heavy dose of reality in mid August, almost exactly six months after Dr. May planted his first story in the *Guntersville Democrat*. On August 14, the Fort Payne Journal ran a short story on page 2: "The Langston Gold Bubble":

> *It was a matter of universal surprise when it was announced that gold in large quantities had been discovered on Sauta Creek near Langston. But there it was and no mistake. Experts were employed, pits were sunk, gold was panned out in the presence of any one who deserved to see the process and the whole country went wild. Property changed hands rapidly at fancy prices and some holders were so enthused that they refused to sell at any price.*
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> *Gloom has fallen upon the town of Langston. Some of the promoters of the gold scheme have been arrested and charged are made that the mine was salted and the whole scheme a swindle.*

The *Fort Payne Journal* did the best job of summarizing the entire six-month affair and reported that those arrested were Dr. G. B. May and Charles T. Durr. The article indicated that other men were arrested as well: "The other gentlemen are well known citizens of Marshall and Jackson counties, and some of them own considerable property, and so far as we know, men of reputable character." The article indicates that a number of men had purchased multiple shares of Sauta Mining Company stock, at $100 per share. This group of investors included: D. J. Jones (133 shares); F. V. Bodfish (167 shares); O. F. James (167 shares); J. R. Harris (97 shares); George C. Hunt (96 shares); Virgil Bouldin (97 shares); and W. L. Martin (42 shares). Note that of this group of investors, Virgil Bouldin was an attorney in Scottsboro who would later be an Alabama Supreme Court Judge, and W. L. Martin was also an attorney who would later be Attorney General of Alabama. He is the man for whom Martin Street in Scottsboro is named. As dissatisfaction spread among the investors, it was Virgil Bouldin who "made affidavit charging Dr. G. B. May and Charles T. Durr with having obtained money from him under false pretenses. They were arrested and brought to Scottsboro and there waived examination and gave bond to answer such indictment as the grand jury might find against them." (*FPJ*, September 11, 1895)

But the grand jury failed to return an indictment in the case.

> *D. J. Jones,O. F. James, and F. V. Bodfish of Chattanooga, have instituted a damage suit in the United States Court at Huntsville for $20,000 damages, on account of an alleged fraud practiced on them by J. B. Haralson of Jackson County and by Dr G. B. May, and Babe Collins of Marshall County, in selling them a 'salted' gold mine near Langston," the Progressive Age reported. "The attorneys bringing the suit are Ben P. and George Hunt. The gold mine referred is the Sauta Creek mine. We had quite a sensation over these mines some time ago, which developed a suit in the circuit court here against Dr.May and Miner Derr, in which they two were bound over to answer an indictment. The grand jury failed to find an indictment. So the matter 'petered out' and this state court business ended. Now it has broken out in a new place, but this new outbreak is destined to the same end. If for no other reason, because Jones, after he alleged he knew the fact about 'salting' the mines, and after he told it to scores of people, he went to Langston and settled with Dr. May by compromise and gave his receipt. This puts his grievance at rest, if he had any.*

But that was not the end of it. The *Guntersville Democrat* reported that Dr. May and his son David stopped by the newspapers office in April 1897 on their way to Huntsville "where a suit was pending in the federal court wherein D. J. Jones et al sued Dr. G. B. May, A. G. Collins, and Dr. J. B. Haralson for twenty thousand dollars damages. It grows out of the Sauta Creek gold mine transactions of 1895. Among the witnesses who left on the 14th for Huntsville were John W. Hodge, Charles Myers, J. F. Kirby, and David May. The defendants gained the suit, a jury verdict has been brought in on the 27th."

It appears that the president of the Sauta Creek Mining Company did not escape unscathed. The *Scottsboro Citizen* reported on May 27,1897: "Chancellor McConnell, in the chancery court at Nashville, decided the case of W. M. Bearden vs. D.J. Jones, president of the Sauta Creek Gold Mining company of Marshall county, giving Bearden a judgment for $4,000 against Jones, on the ground that Bearden's investment of that amount in the stock of the mining company was procured by fraud and because of the complete failure of the consideration. Other suits will follow."

Dr. George Burkhart May was an honorable man. Born in Tennessee in 1828, he was a doctor during the Civil War and rose to the rank of captain in Company B of the 4th Georgia Cavalry. He married Elizabeth Gamble in what was later known as Dalton, Georgia before moving to Kirby in Marshall County, Alabama in 1868-69. The couple had seven children, six sons and a daughter, most of whom moved out of the area. In 1888, the *Guntersville Democrat* reported that he was ""building a nice dwelling on his place," which the paper reported in its Hillians Store column. In 1889, the *Democrat* reported that Dr. May "is not only one of the oldest and best physicians in Marshall county but a fine farmer." In 1893, he took the interests of his community forward to the county seat. In September 1895, when the whole scam first made its way to the courts, the *Fort Payne Journal* was incredulous. "Dr. G. B. May has for more than twenty-five years been practicing physician of Marshall county and a man of good character and reputation. He is a man of some property, owning several hundred acres of land. He is about seventy years of age and says this is the first law suit he ever had in his life, either civil or criminal." In 1897 when the trials began, he took to his bed and let it be known that he was very ill and not expected to survive. But he lived another 12 years, and is buried in the Raney Cemetery in Marshall County. The community loved him. "Dr. G. B. May is able to ride, after suffering with grippe several days. He has been attending to several patients, making about two trips to see each patient a day. It never gets too cold or rains too much to prevent him from attending the sick." He had the respect and trust of his community, even after perpetrating this hoax. It is worth mentioning that the hoax did not affect "the common man" but instead affected mostly lawyers and another physician. It is amazing that he could admit he had seeded a mine and made fools of a number of other honorable men who were influenced by his reputation—and yet escaped without retribution.

The hoax became an object lesson in gullibility and the empty promise of easy money. "John M. Black, J. O. Titshaw, and Owen Hall of Oleander beat, have struck it rich in Cotaco valley," the *Progressive Age* reported in October 1897. "They claim to have found new El Dorado rich in gold, silver and lead ore, and they are inviting expert miners. [No you don't, young fellows! How far are you from Sauta Creek?]"

Annette Bradford

Footnotes:

(1) I am indebted to the Wikipedia "Placer Mining" article and the Library of Congress for this background information on placer mining and the accompanying photo.

(2) This history of mining in the south comes from Otis E. Young, Jr., "The Southern Gold Rush, 1828-1836," in The Journal of Southern History (Vol. XVIII, No. 3), August 1982, pp.373-392.

(3) I am indebted to the "Gold Mining" article in the Encyclopedia of Alabama and to https://raregoldnuggets.com/ for the map of Alabama gold mining sites.

Some Progressive Age newspapers are missing from our collection but were reprinted in the Guntersville Democrat. I accessed them from the online book, People and Things from Marshall County, Alabama,Guntersville Democrat by Robin Sterling