

Three Dollars

Fall-Winter

1993

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE
QUARTERLY
Of Local Architecture & Preservation



In Search of Bridges of Madison County

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Founded 1974

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COVER:

Covered Bridge at Butler Mill, contributed by Carlus Page.

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE

QUARTERLY

of Local Architecture and Preservation

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From the HHF Board Chairman
Suzanne O'Connor

Historic Huntsville Foundation members have been busy! Once again the weather cooperated wonderfully so that a successful Trade Day could be enjoyed. A special treat this year was the participation of the national marble champion. Our first membership meeting was held in November and featured a covered-dish supper and an informative talk by Jack Burwell on Southern furniture. The Foundation membership tea, held this year at the home of Eloise and Bill Propst on Adams Street, was enjoyed by about 450 members. Thanks to Billie Jones and Dale Rhoades, chairmen of the event, for all their hard work. It certainly paid off! Thanks also to Norma Oberlies for again coordinating the sale of the limited edition Christmas ornament. The 1993 ornament featured the old Madison County Courthouse.

Next on our agenda of activities will be our February 15 membership meeting. Mark your calendars now for this informative and entertaining event featuring a talk about the history of Monte Sano and the wonderful food of our members. In the spring, our Movable Feast will again be tempting the palates of our members and their friends. This function will feature a wonderful array of foods being offered in some of Huntsville's most significant homes. Chairing this event is Susan Gipson.

The Foundation is joining Alabama's Constitution Village in sponsoring a follies-type musical revue entitled "Way Off Broadway." The event will take place August 26 and 27 at the VBCC Concert Hall. Ginger Fail is acting as our chairman for this event. A professional out-of-state director has been employed for Way Off Broadway. The proceeds will be used to renovate the Humphreys-Rodgers house. The Foundation will have an office in the house.

Efforts are continuing to assist in the stabilization of Huntsville's Freight Depot. This building, which is owned by

the Norfolk Southern Railroad, is the oldest continuously operating freight depot in the country.

Historic Huntsville Foundation will not be able to accomplish any of these activities without the dedicated work of its members. Please give me a call to get involved.

Suzanne O'Connor



From the Editor:

In Search of the Bridges of Madison County

This issue of the *Quarterly* sent me into the hinterland in search of old bridges. I found only traces. A canoe trip on the Flint planned early Spring will yield more. What I did find in my search were wonderfully helpful people. Doyal Bradley of the County Engineers told me to contact Mattie Lou Clay Bishop and her husband Ed who live on the south side of the Paint Rock River facing the Butler Mill Bridge, which was then undergoing its third transformation. Bradley's directions were to go out 72E to the Woodville sign and take a right turn the first chance after that, then go six or eight miles turning right each chance I got. He assured me I would end up at a little old store topped by an old Gulf sign. The Bishop's house was just a few yards beyond that and further I could not go - as the bridge was still under construction.

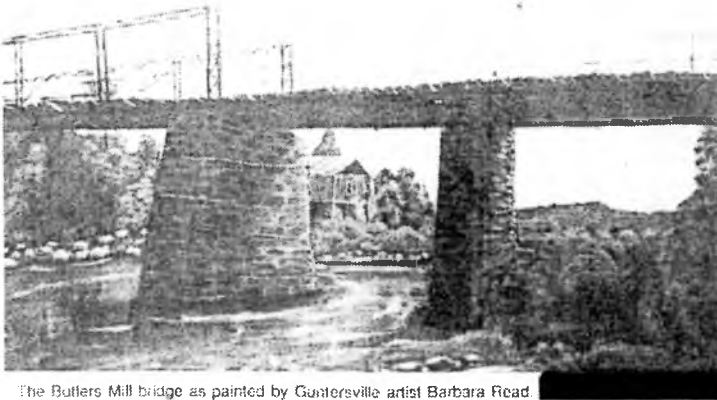
Sure enough, I found my way and the Bishops were at home. In fact, they were doing their daily bridge watching and recording. Ed has video taped the entire construction process. Mattie's family bought the Butler Mill just across the river; so she grew up around this historic spot. Her grandfather, Richard H. Jones, and J. Frank Bevil, his son-in-law, purchased the site in 1916. Then, in 1940, Mattie's father, R. M. Clay, purchased title. In 1974, her brother Sherman inherited it and now she and Ed enjoy title to this unique corner of Madison-Marshall counties, a stone's throw from the Jackson County line.

Mattie Lou and Ed Bishop walk out each day on a scene as rustic, restful and reminiscent of an earlier day as can be found in this area. Her mother, Rose Clay, ran the country store. Since her mom used Gulf gasoline in her car, when the need for a filling station arose, Mrs. Clay put in Gulf. Bridging two counties, the little store with its 29 cent gas, and 5 cent candy bars and colas was a popular way station.

Deeds to the property read like a who's who to the history of the area. Mattie Lou has shared her photographs and records, and HHF member Wenona Jones Switzer has too. Wenona, a Bryant Cobb descendant, and Mattie are cousins. For that matter, as Carlus Page will remind us in his chatty article, everyone was related to someone who was related ...

The theme of this *Quarterly* is bridges of Madison County. Prompted by recent interest in Robert Waller's novel, *The Bridges of Madison County*, your editor went in search of bridges past, especially covered bridges, in our own Madison County. Concrete slabs with no redeeming esthetic value now mark the watery graves of the earlier bridges. The covered bridge at Butler Mill is one bridge that refuses to go gently into the night. Although only a memory now, its spirit hovers.

When the covered bridge was finally pulled down, its logs and planks, from piers and flooring, were strung together to create a ford for mail carriers to cross while another bridge was built at the original site. This second bridge had a split personality, Madison County supplied high steel girders, while Marshall County furnished low railings.



The Butlers Mill bridge as painted by Guntersville artist Barbara Read

The stone piers have proven themselves well-nigh indestructible and proudly bear the new concrete span. The Bishops are pictured standing upon this latest of the Butler Mill bridges. (See photo next page.)

Butler Mill Bridge was properly named. Bill Stubno's thoroughly researched article on Butler Mill established that the Cobb Mill was purchased by James E. and George W. Butler in October, 1882. Madison County Commission minutes establish that on February 11, 1884, a special committee was appointed to "confer" with the probate judge and



county commissioners of Marshall County "about erecting a highway bridge over Paint Rock River at Cobb's ford" (Minutes 1882-1892, 83). On August 11, 1884, Commissioner Joseph A. Brown was authorized to "confer with the Commissioner's Court of Marshall County, Ala. relative to the building of a wooden bridge across Paint Rock River at Cobb's Mill" (99). The county treasurer was ordered to pay "W. R. Rison & Co. benefit of Whited, Atchley & Cooper part payment [for] building bridge over Paint Rock River at Cobb's Mill per order Comm. Brown \$600.-" (104). Lastly, on November 3, 1884, the county treasurer was ordered to pay "A Whited, benefit of A. Whited, J. N. Atchley and A. J. Cooper, for building bridge at Cobbs Old Mill, between Madison and Marshall Counties, payment in full of Madison County's share, per order of Comm. Brown \$834.23" (115).

It would appear that as the new bridge took on the name of the new mill owners, Butler Mill, Butler Mill Bridge, and Butler Mill Road became current and remain to this day. Although the Commission Court minutes do not say it, the Butler Mill Bridge was a covered bridge. In 1885, the commission put covers on the Ashburn Ford Bridge over the Flint and Peevy's Ford Bridge over Hurricane Fork of the Flint (122, 142).

Carlus Page evokes fond memories of when Butler Mill Bridge was quite old and he quite young. The Jackson County Historian/Genealogist presents a case for an even earlier bridge at or near the Butler Mill site. Perhaps so. There was an early covered bridge over the Flint River. The County Commissioner Court minutes, dated April 16, 1855, contain the following: "Ordered that the county Treasurer pay Richard Moore seventy-one dollars for sheading the Bridge over Flynt river" (341).

The memoirs of Reverend James M. Mason found in the *Huntsville Historical Review*, October, 1972, and recently available as a reprint entitled "A Schoolboy Goes to War" found in *Old Huntsville*, issue No. 37 witness to a covered bridge over Flint river. A member of Capt. Frank Gurley's Confederate forces assigned to operate in North Alabama, Mason wrote of the skirmishes with Federals garrisoned along the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. He singled out the Yankee occupiers at the Flint River bridge east of Huntsville, commenting:

"...One of the stations occupied by a garrison was the Flint River bridge, twelve miles east of Huntsville. This covered, wooden bridge was converted into a blockhouse, and furnished with bulletproof gates at each end.

When Captain Hambrick united with us, Bragg's army had already turned the enemy's flank, and were upon the march to Kentucky. Part of our duty now was to obstruct the retreat of the force in North Alabama, and a plan was matured for capturing and burning this bridge. Our scouts learned that the doors were kept open during the daytime and that many of the garrison amused themselves bathing in the river. We hoped to be able to get near enough to capture this bridge by a sudden dash. We dismounted in the woods and approached as near as we could under cover. Many of the Federal soldiers were bathing in the river, others were amusing themselves in various ways. We felt that the prize was almost in our grasp. Just then, the sentinel on duty discovered us and fired; those of the garrison nearest the bridge rushed to their arms; the bathers in the river grabbed their clothing and ran into the bridge and the heavy doors closed with a bang ... our plan had failed, and we drew off" (HHR, 8).

James Monroe Mason, the schoolboy soldier, also sheds light on the other subject of this *Quarterly*, Frank Gurley, his family's legacy. Sarah Dudley Edwards has written a loving tribute to her family and dedicates it to her mother, Sara Dudley Hall. The Halls have bridged the generations and the county with the town. Theirs is a legacy of quiet joy and generosity, strength and continuity. The wonderful moon bridge Sara Hall built in her rock garden is a suitable symbol. Malcolm C. McMillan calls Frank B. Gurley "one of the most interesting of all Madison County war heroes." Gurley's role is summarized:

"He was a local cavalry leader who often rode with Nathan B. Forrest. In August, 1862, ... he was charged by the Federals with the killing of General Robert L. McCook, one of the seventeen "fighting McCooks of Ohio," in a guerrilla-type action near New Market, Alabama. McCook, who had not completely recovered from a wound received some months before, was riding in his ambulance without sufficient escort. When Gurley fell into Union hands in 1863, his execution was prevented only by Confederate threats to hang an excess of Federals in retaliation. Elected sheriff in Madison County at war's end, Gurley was again arrested in November, 1865, by the Radicals and held for a time on the old charge of the murder of General McCook" (Confederate Reader, 155).

James Monroe Mason joined Capt. Gurley's forces, explaining that "General Bragg who was then maturing his plans for the march into Kentucky, gave to Frank B. Gurley of Forrest's Regiment a commission as a Captain of Cavalry, and ordered him to organize these men into a cavalry company, and operate in rear of the enemy" (HHR, 5). The veteran's account relieves Gurley of any culpability for the death of General McCook. The whole encounter was an accident of war. He describes the "panic-stricken" scene,

"We overtook a buggy containing two Federal officers. Firing on them as we came up with them, one was wounded and the other surrendered and hastily stating that the wounded officer was Gen. McCook, appealed to us for help. Capt. Gurley who was with the head of the column stopped and caused the General to be carried into a house nearby, where he expired in a short time, the fatal shot

had passed through his body from the rear, ... By whose hand the fatal shot was fired is not known, as three or four were firing at the same instant (10) ... Among the trophies of this fight was the sword which was presented to Gen. McCook by the Congress of the United States, which bore upon its blade an inscription commendatory of his gallantry" (12).

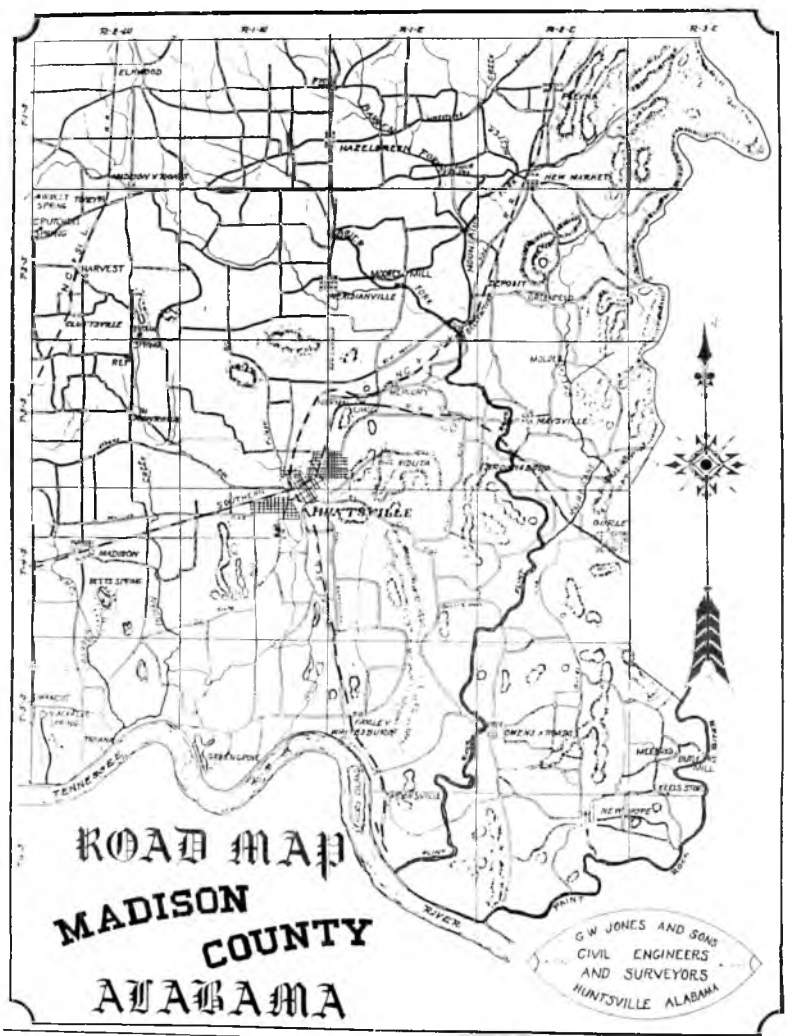
Captain Gurley returned the sword to the McCook family after the war.

Forrest acknowledged the extraordinary bravery and tenacity of his North Alabama warrior by presenting him a fine pair of pistols on one occasion and a very fine horse on another. Upon the withdrawal of Federal occupiers on August 31, 1862, Mrs. W. D. Chadick wrote in her diary:

"Frank Gurley [local guerrilla cavalry leader] has been in and arrested James Hickman [Negro trader and hotel proprietor who had traded with Federals during the occupation] and John King, [clerk who must have also traded with the enemy.] and gone again. Returned at 5 o'clock with a company of cavalry. A perfect crowd of ladies and gentlemen rushed to the square to greet them, and Capt. Gurley was literally crowned with wreaths of ivy and flowers" (McMillan, 172).

Kudos to Harvie Jones who accompanied me to Gurley one Saturday and took photographs of the Hall House, Killarney and the Frye Portrait of Frank Gurley and to Malcolm Tarkington for his assistance. Lastly, information and photographs are still sought in the search for the bridges of Madison County.

Elise Stephens



1921

COVERED BRIDGE AT BUTLER MILL

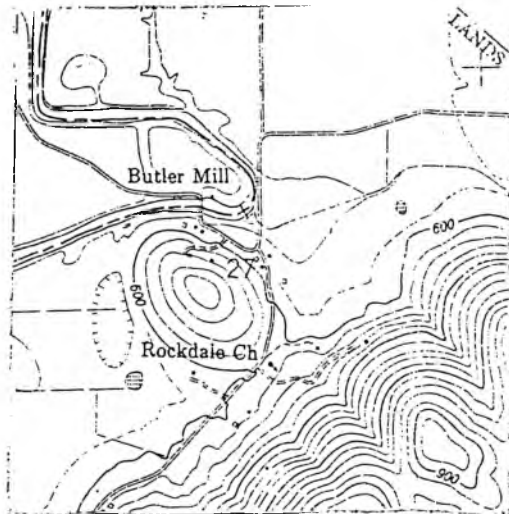
Carlus Page

There was once a covered bridge at Butler Mill. Now there is nothing left except some memories and a few newspaper articles about it. I had a profound feeling that there should be something in the annals of history to assure that something would be left for posterity. The covered bridge has been gone for many years. The site location still affords a modern-day bridge to get traffic across beautiful Paint Rock River at a point where, not so many years ago, there stood an old mill and dam known as Butler Mill.

To set the stage of where the bridge did actually exist, I'm going to carry you through Jackson County, which Anne Chambless has christened the "Switzerland of Alabama," to reach it. This gives me a little out for claiming a partial right to its location for my native Jackson County. If the bridge had existed in 1819, its left end, or south terminus, would have been in Jackson County. If it had existed between December 7, 1821 and December 28, 1825, it would have been in the short-lived Decatur County. It would then have reverted to Jackson County, and have remained so until the creation of Marshall County in 1837, where it in part remains today. Had the bridge existed prior to 1819, it would have been in The Cherokee Indian Nation.

If you travel U.S. Highway 72, east out of Huntsville, or west out of Scottsboro, you need to exit at Jackson County Road Number 63. Marked even more noticeably, as D.A.R. Kate Duncan Smith School Road. This exit gives you a true South azimuth, in case you brought your compass. Travel this road for about 3,000 feet. You will have crossed Little Paint Rock Creek, a tributary of Paint Rock River. Promptly after crossing said creek, you begin approaching the toe of a 15-20° grade or ridge. This is known locally as "Rocky Ridge", and I think I know from the topography, why. About three miles

south of this point, watch for a secondary road crossing the D.A.R. road at a right angle. Exit onto this “pike-type” road. You now have a West azimuth. This carries you by a landmark in Marshall County known between 1885-1950 as “Jim Tom Hodges’ Shop and Grist Mill.” It is non-existent today. Meander southwesterly up and down hill after hill. In 5 to 10 minutes, maybe less, you’ll be passing the old homesite of Henry and “Jimmy” Butler, deceased, grandparents of Julian Butler, Attorney of Huntsville. There are no remaining marks of this early homesite. Julian gets to be my cousin through a maternal Perkins line. Read your compass again. You pretty near have an exact West azimuth. Run this reading for one mile. You will come to Paint Rock River. Look downstream. You will observe the old south abutment of the new bridge over the river, opened in November, 1993. You may back-track to U.S. 72, or take George Folsom, Sr’s Fish-Trap Road to Grant. Go via Rockdale Church as spotted on the topo sketch below.



The house adjacent to the south abutment is the home of the Bishops, Edward and Mattie Lou Clay. Mattie Lou is the daughter of Robert Clay, one-time owner of the old Butler Mill. She is a most knowledgeable person of the history of the covered bridge and the old mill.

I got you lost but good, I know, so I'll rephrase. When you reach Paint Rock River on U.S. 72, just put your skiff in and scull it downstream some 5 miles. You can't get lost. It gets pretty jungle-like about the middle of your "short cut," but you can't miss the way because Little Paint Rock Creek's confluence is not all that navigable. You'll observe one of our unmolested streams that is beautiful. Happy rowing or sculling!

To get the full historic significance of this old covered bridge that stood in its original style until around the late 1940's, I think one must know a little about this old mill with its old wooden "Niagara Falls type" plank dam for water power.

John R. Kennamer in *The Story of Woodville* (1950, pp. 46-47), states in Chapter 5: "The largest [mill] was built on Paint Rock River more than a century ago by a man named Burns... After a few years, Bryant Cobb acquired it and built a bigger and better mill, to grind both corn and wheat. His son, 'Old' Joe Cobb tended the mill for years and years and it became well known both far and near."

"In the eighteen eighties a company of Madison County citizens, Jim Ed, George and Taylor Butler, John H. Atchley, John Russell, Frank Ivey and "Big" A. Whiterd rebuilt this mill adding new equipment. This work was supervised by E. G. Morris of South Alabama. Mr. Morris had built Lilly's Mill at Paint Rock and Walker's Mill in Paint Rock Valley ... The following noted millers ran it: M. M. (Dock) Downey ... William B. Gross, Robert Whitaker, George W. Anderson, J. Dave Jones, and Richard (Dick) Jones.

It was sold to Richard H. Jones and J. Frank Bevel, but they were not able to repair and keep it in first class condition. It was finally sold to Robert Clay.

On April 11, 1939, a tornado swooped down in swift destruction, destroying this famous old mill ... and so Butler Mill's usefulness has gone and its former glory is now history."

I went to the 1860 U.S. Census for Madison County, Alabama, to get a little genealogy on this Bryant Cobb. The following enumeration for November 16, 1860 was found:

315	Cobb, Bryant Farmer \$2,000	54	N.C.
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This leads me to a fact of some kind of circa date for the building of the covered bridge. In various other annals of history of this area, we can read about "Cobb's Ford" existing prior to and after the building of the mill. Thus, we know the covered bridge, which is our prime center piece, did not exist in the early days of the mill. A "ford" was used. But then, we know the bridge was extant as late as 1930, for I took pictures of it that were stamped on the reverse with a rubber stamp, that says "Lollar's Birmingham Sep. 8 1930.



We know for certain that the area that the mill served grew and it became a foremost industrial entity with the developing of the region which it served. This we know by what we've experienced and by "word-of-mouth." It was only this morning when, at a certain restaurant where men gather early to swap anecdotes, that I was "showing-off" my old pictures of the old bridge and mill, that a member of this prestigious "strong-coffee" fraternity remarked, "Why, I know where that is. Many has been the time that my Dad put me on a horse with a sack of corn straddling my horse and sent me off to that mill to get a "turn ground." Now "Mac" isn't one to make up a tale, but he said he always was afraid to ride through that old dark covered bridge. he said further, "My horse always pranced and "jigged" all the way through the 300-foot "dungeon-like" old bridge and I was thinking every minute he was going to jump through one of the gaping holes in the plank sidings."

You see, not only was this structure covered over the top, roofed, so to speak, but the walls on the sides were weatherproofed just like a house or a barn..Once you entered it on the brightest sunlit day, you could hardly see your hand before you until you reached the other end. And there was no turning back once you started across except by "footbackers" or "horsebackers". Wagons, buggies, autos, and the like just had to make sure the bridge was clear before they entered. Once in it, it was no time for aborting.

Another preponderance of evidence that the bridge had an early advent was the fact that the mill was inaccessible to those farmers on the east side of the river because the river at this point was just not fordable, especially with wagon loads of grain. This was a vast area of rich fertile open land near the mill site, and extending all the way north and east through Kennamer Cove and into section after section of open rich land at and near "Old Woodville". The river was generally "unfordable" at the Butler Mill site, so, isn't it reasonable to say the governments on either side of Paint Rock River proceeded to bridge the river at this point? Cobb's Ford is not mentioned further, so far as my research reveals.

We do have some evidence that a bridge did exist during the Civil War.

John B. Kennamer had a company of Union Scouts. While they were on guard duty at Paint Rock River Bridge just west of Woodville, the men were anxious to see their wives and families so they rode back into Kennamer Cove, which is in close proximity to our subject. Kennamer's Scouts were in the house eating supper. Their pickets, Jacob L. and Tom Kennamer heard persons approaching the house where the company was. Picket Jacob L. Kennamer called to them, "Halt!" and fired on them — Lieutenant Millard with a squad of about twenty Confederate Scouts, being a part of M. E. Johnston's company — better known as "Bushwhacker" Johnston — who had organized at New Hope, Alabama, leading his men and firing on the house. It was dark. The Union Scouts scattered and returned the fire. Silas P. Woodall had hid himself behind a large gate post. He fired and Lt. Millard fell mortally wounded. The Confederates turned back and the skirmish was over. Damerias (Aunt "Love" Kennamer), "as brave a woman as ever lived" gave the dying Lt. Millard a cup of water.

The horses feet carrying the Confederate Scouts back to Madison County could be heard as they passed over a rocky ridge toward the Roaring Spring. Butler Mill Bridge site was only a couple of miles away. This was in December. The Paint Rock River at this physical point and at this season was always at flood stage. They had to get to the bridge. Forging the river was impossible. Don't you know the hoofs of twenty horses running at top speed, gave the sound of an onrushing devastating "Twister"? Thus, we can establish a premise that a bridge was there in December of 1864.

In the 1920's many families from the Woodville area who spent at least a week at Butler Mill/Covered Bridge regularly each summer after "crops were laid by," just camping and fishing. The main fish they caught was the "pan-fish" type. These were the regular perch and the Goggle-Eye species. The Paint Rock River at this point was one of the best fishing

sites in the entire valley. Guntersville Dam had not been built at this time.

It took a lot of planning and preparation for a week of camping. The mill served as billeting for the campers, with the bridge serving as a kind of a "sparking quarters" for those of us who thought we'd reached that age. Cooking was done on outside grills or homemade rock furnaces. Wood for cooking and a potable water supply had to be set up. This was from a spring under the old bridge near a sycamore. Drift wood was plentiful. Each wife was assigned to some special meal for each day, but usually the "fare" was fish, gravy, Pool Room Slaw (or something near what we call it today), fish-gravy, corn bread, fresh tomatoes right from the fields, strong coffee, cereal in the morning (Post Toasties), and previously baked cakes for the occasion that were kept cool an a six hundred pound block of ice insulated with pretty good quilts and a lot of saw dust.

Each kid caught his turn at gathering in the drift wood for cooking. Many has been the time that I had my "tail" paddled for failing to gather up enough wood for the breakfast. Everyone was very well regimented. Lighting was by kerosene lanterns, and a light called an Alladin lamp. It had a mantle that was kind of a mesh. Its fuel was "white" gas and air or oxygen. In the evenings the grown-ups would play cards (Rook) and Set-Back. We wild younguns' would go frog gigging in some pond nearby.

Our main entree was fish, but sometimes the fish didn't bite. But that was no problem. I've seen as many as four country hams prepared and carried to take up the slack if the larder ran low. Again, the 600-pound block of ice was the chief refrigerator. Temporary pit privies were sanitized with plenty of lime. They were made private by boards. If a rain came up while we were having a meal under the sycamore, you'd just grab your plate of food and run for the covered bridge. Smoking was not permitted in the mill. For those who smoked, the bridge acted as a "smoker". We kids were constantly hiding in the covered bridge to smoke our "Rabbit

Tobacco." Ours was not a group to run out of food. If we did run short, Bob Clay ran a very good commissary-type victualing store near the premises. He sold coal oil too.

All of these people have been gone a long time now. They had much fun and relaxation from the chores and responsibilities of raising families and keeping the family budget out of a deficit state. I'm glad I could share the pictures with you. I note on the back of the developing logo, "Fox Photo Service, San Antonio, Texas." That company was a real big mail order developing service in this era. I am grateful to my cousins, Grover Hodges of Scottsboro and his sister, Elsie (Hodges) Kennamer (Mrs. A. H.) of Abilene, Texas, and to my dear deceased Aunt Allie (Woodall) Page, who never threw anything away, but in having such a trait, left me some goodies when she died testate April 21, 1962, as well as other legacies, some of which still grace Elberta's and my modest home and which are a real part of me and a daily reminder of how her love from her dwelling place "up there" blesses me every day of my life!

This seems to be a good note to stop on. For a better and fuller story of camping and fishing at this Old Bridge and Mill, I refer you to a story I did on Thursday, July 12, 1973, in the *North Jackson Progress*, edited by Mr. Glass of Stevenson or, maybe *The Jackson County Advertiser*, a non-existing weekly that was owned and run by my very good friend, Dr. Ralph Sheppard, Scottsboro, Alabama.

Scottsboro, Alabama
October 29, 1993



The four men in the picture above were a fun-loving, congenial group whose main object was to see who could bring in the most fish on any given day. From left to right: Milton Page, my farmer father; Homer Hodges, The Woodville barber; Robert L. (Bob) Jones, R.F.D. mail carrier; Wade Page, Woodville to Grant mail carrier. In front of them was each man's wife: Maude (Woodall) Page, my mom; Millard (Page) Hodge; Biddie (Peters) Jones; and Allie (Woodall) Page, my dear Aunt. Do I have to date this picture for you? Does not the mode of transportation, the apparel, and the cane fishing poles date it for you?

**Excerpts from *North Jackson Progress*,
Stevenson, July 12, 1973**

Butler's Mill, as I remember it, was strictly one of the outstanding vacation spots in the neighborhood of Woodville for those who loved to camp and fish. I know that earlier it served a great need domestically as a processing plant for grinding corn and wheat into meal and flour.



Note the height of this structure. This was so that all the shafts, conveyors, chutes, etc. could be installed. This grinding process was powered by a water wheel type turbine that was driven by the clear blue waters of the Paint Rock River. A wooden structure dam was built from bank to bank of the river. It may look rather crude to our modern day engineers, but it was a great accomplishment when it was built maybe around the turn of the century or even before. This dam diverted the water over to the right bank (looking downstream) into the water race where the turbine wheel was located. This race had gates for the influent and also for the effluent of the water. (Incidentally, there were no thermal pollution problems from heating up the water as it passed through the race, thence through the turbine). There was,

however, one health hazard that did exist, but I never heard of Health, Education and Welfare getting involved in it. This was from the water moccasin snakes that took refuge from fishermen in the old dam and around the sloping rocks that protruded into the water. I can't say just how poisonous this snake was, but I do know that as a youngster who has walked this old dam many a time rather than walk an extra 1000 feet across the old covered bridge, I have had the "day lights" scared out of me by them as they would slither into the water just before I made a step onto the next partially submerged plank in the dam.

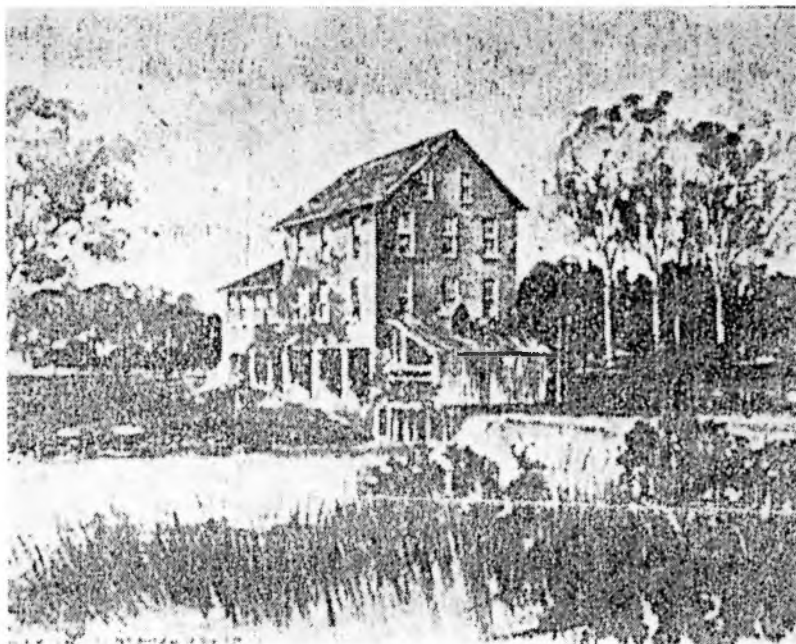
Just below the 10" by 10" vertical structures that you can see just on the water side of the first tall handhewn rock pillar that you see, was the favorite fishing spot of the late beloved "Mr. Bob" Jones. (He was a brother to W. G. Jones of Woodville who recently served on the Jackson County Hospital Board). After "Mr. Bob" would have his breakfast under the sycamore and have all the fishermen and fisherwomen off to their favorite fishing spots up and down the river, he would "keep camp" and stay around for security purposes. He always smoked cigars — Virginia Cheroots — and would fish in the cool of this natural spot until time to call the anglers in to prepare lunch. As a youngster, along with some of the other children of the campers, we were always glad when "Mr. Bob" would forget to lock his Cheroots and we could "slip" one or two and hide ourselves in the covered bridge and smoke them.

I guess the thing I remember most pleasantly besides the cigar "slipping" was sleeping in the grain bins. There were two distinct sections to the mill building and a dividing wall between the areas. The men and boys slept in one section and the women and girls slept in another. Of course, the men folks and boys always slept in the first room from the entrance. This was for protective purposes. However, about the only things that one had to be protected from was a stray dog wandering into the mill or some of the youngsters up to some kind of mischievousness like slipping a live rat into the women's boudoir. There were large grain bins in the area we

slept in. I guess they were maybe 12' by 12' and about 4' deep. What fun to roll into a homemade quilt, maybe with your overalls serving also as your pajamas and sleep in two or three feet of wheat or corn that was waiting to be ground into flour or meal or be shipped away to Huntsville for the big city markets.

I remember one of the persons that was a most integral part of the old mill. "Uncle Dick Jones," as everyone knew him, was I guess what General Goods or Mother's Best Corporations would call the Chief Executive. It was "Uncle Dick" who would reserve the mill's camping facilities for our "crowd" you see. "Mr. Bob" was the mail carrier for Woodville RFD #1 and his route carried him by the old mill daily except Sunday, so there was what one today would call a priority. I am sure "Mr. Bob" repaid "Uncle Dick" for his favors many, many times by bringing him medicines, messages, and maybe occasionally a pair of overalls from the village store in Woodville. You know, it is interesting that no one ever got investigated in those days for doing a good deed even though he might be a government employee or official.





Crayon drawing by Albert Lane for R. M. Clay on his birthday.

BUTLER MILL

Bill Stubno

One of the most noted grist mills in Madison County was Butler Mill, situated in the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of section 27, township 5, range 3-east, along the Paint Rock River. Originally part of a tract of land ceded by the Cherokee Indians to the Federal Government on February 27, 1819, the area was incorporated into Jackson County by an act of the newly formed Alabama Legislature in December of that year. Two years later it became part of Decatur County, with Woodville as the county seat.¹

1. John R. Kenamer, *History of Jackson County*, (Woodville, Alabama: by the Author, 1935), pp. 17-19, 21.

Housing in Woodville, and throughout Decatur County, consisted mostly of log homes, usually constructed in close proximity to a spring or similar water source. The necessities of life such as candles, soap, bread, and all of the clothing were made at home. Shoes were made from leather tanned on the homestead, and the soles were connected to the uppers with wooden pegs.² Although this frontier existence was difficult at times, the settlers still managed to relax by telling stories, playing cards, or just visiting neighbors in the immediate vicinity.³

The educational system of Decatur County, like the living standards, was quite simple. To be a teacher, one had to know only the basics of reading, writing, figuring, and using the switch well. Classes were conducted either in a home or church. Tablets were nothing more than slates, spit upon by the students in order to erase.⁴ Such an educational system, though, satisfied the needs of the citizens of Decatur County.

In 1823, many of the people who lived in Decatur and Jackson County resided on public land. This land, in most cases, was greatly improved by its inhabitants, thus increasing the value of the various tracts. At about that time, the Federal Government surveyed the public lands with the intentions of selling to the settlers. Yet, many of them were taken advantage of by shrewd speculators and businessmen who coerced them from these improved Government lands, thereby forcing the pioneers to settle on other unimproved, unsold Federal land. Although these individuals again made improvements to these newer areas, they were not able to purchase them, for the price of cotton had fallen as well as the existence of a depreciated paper currency. Therefore, the Federal Government postponed the sale of the public lands but created a provision by law with the stipulation that those who made improvements on public domain were given the

2. Dr. Herbert L. Hughes, "Old Decatur County," *Huntsville Historical Review* 3 (January 1973):21-22.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

4. *Ibid.*

right of preemption, or first choice, to one 160-acre quarter section or an 80-acre half quarter section of public land.⁵ William Burns and William W. Pruitt were probably given preemption privileges at this time to the area where the mill later stood. In order to secure these rights, they perhaps formed a partnership and built a grist mill about 1824.⁶

On December 28, 1825, Decatur County, which included the mill, was abolished by the Alabama Legislature because it did not contain enough acreage which the Constitution required. Subsequently, the Legislature divided the County, part of which went to Jackson County and another area, roughly between the Old Cherokee Boundary Line and the Paint Rock River, was designated New Madison. The Burns and Pruitt Mill was nestled in this latter area in section 27 on the Paint Rock River. A Government survey described this region as hilly, stony and swampy with a variety of trees including oak, ash, cedar, hickory, persimmon, and maple.⁷

On January 24, 1829, Burns and Pruitt were authorized by the Alabama Legislature to continue their mill operation on the Paint Rock River, in spite of an act declaring the river a public highway.⁸ Shortly thereafter, Burns and Pruitt turned their operation over to David Cobb and his two sons,

5. Ashbury Dickens and James C. Allen, eds., *American State Papers*, 1st Sess. of 18th Congress to 2nd Sess. of 19th Congress, 1823-1827 (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1859), 4:2.

6. Alabama, *Acts of the General Assembly*, "An Act Authorizing William Burns and William W. Pruitt to continue their mill on Paint Rock River" (1828), p. 63. J. R. Kennamer and L. G. Kennamer, *The Story of Woodville and Community Album* (Woodville, Alabama: By the author, 1950), pp. 46-47.

7. Field Notes of the original W. S. Government Survey of Land in Marshall County, State of Alabama, p. 10, Probate Office. Marshall County Courthouse. Guntersville, Alabama.

8. Alabama, *Acts* (1828), p. 63.

Williamson R. W., and Bryant Cobb.⁹ In May of 1830, a preemption law was enacted which gave an individual who had occupied or improved a tract of public land in 1829, the right of filing a preemption claim on that property which eventually resulted in a patent. A short time later, these lands went up for sale on two separate occasions, July and October 1830.¹⁰ Judge Thomas J. Taylor recounted concerning the latter sale:

The second sale commenced on the first Monday in October, and at that time Huntsville was thronged with an eager crowd of purchasers, some of them speculators but the large body of them small farmers with the means to purchase a home, or here endeavoring to raise money for that purpose.¹¹

On October 5, 1830, David Cobb and his two sons, were issued a patent, certificate number 103, on the northeast and southeast quarter of the northwest quarter section 27, township 5, range 3-east, a half quarter section.¹² On July 7, 1836, David Cobb and W. R. W. Cobb conveyed their \$450.00 interest in the property to Bryant Cobb.¹³ In October, he was given permission to built a larger mill that would grind both wheat and corn.¹⁴ The court decree stated:

An inquest upon the petition of Bryant Cobb, for a writ of *Adquod Damnum* having been made and it appearing to the satisfaction of the Court, that mansion house of no proprietors, nor the offices,

9. Government Tract Book, Vol. 1, p. 87. Probate Office. Marshall County Courthouse. Guntersville, Alabama.

10. Thomas J. Taylor, "A Later History of Madison County," *Valley Leaves* Special Edition (December 1969): p. 76-77.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Tract Book, p. 87.

13. Deed Records. Deed Book Q, pp. 103-104. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.

14. Kenamer, *Woodville*, p. 47.

curtiledges, nor gardens thereto immediately belonging nor orchards will be overflowed and that the health of the neighbors will not be materially annoyed by the stagnation of water, loan is granted said petitioner to build a water grist mill and saw mill and it is ordered that the proceedings herein be recorded.¹⁵

Thus began the Cobb Mill.

Bryant Cobb's father, originally from Virginia or North Carolina, migrated to Rhea County, Tennessee, around 1800.¹⁶ In 1809, he came to Madison County with his children and settled on a plantation near Bellefonte.¹⁷ Judge Taylor stated that the Cobb brothers became prominent in the community, though Bryant Cobb "met disasters that seriously affected his business enterprises ..."¹⁸

Bryant Cobb's largest business interest was the Cobb Mill at Paint Rock River. Keel boats, flat-boats, and skiffs floated down this river from Cobb's Mill, as well as other business concerns, to the Tennessee River, where products were loaded on to larger craft to make the trip to New Orleans.¹⁹ In 1840, just 3 years after New Madison was incorporated into Madison County, Bryant Cobb became indebted to Joseph Talegman and Eleazar Andrews, merchants and partners in the firm known as Andrews and Brothers of New Orleans, Louisiana. The debt amounted to \$11,238.41 plus legal

15. Orphans Court Minutes. Book 6, p. 532. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.

16. Kathleen Paul Jones, "Census of 1850, Madison County, Alabama," Huntsville, Alabama, 1955, p. 160 (typewritten); "1850 Census, Jackson County, Alabama," n.d., p. 157 (typewritten).

17. Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography Vol. III*. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1921), p. 357.

18. Taylor, *History*, p. 82.

19. Kennamer, *History*, p. 23.

interest of the State of Alabama of which \$500 had already been deducted — the price of a young male slave. Cobb, moreover, had to sell some of his other chattels namely Caesar, Nance, Amanda, Mill, Mela, Larat, Adeline, Elizabeth, Mealinda, Betsy Jane, Pete, Meary, and Deci. Under these adverse circumstances, Cobb decided to deed the mill and other real estate to Daniel B. Turner in trust until he could settle his accounts.²⁰ Notwithstanding, the debt could not be paid, and so Turner sold the mill to the highest bidder on August 9, 1843. Fortunately, Bryant Cobb's son, Alexander, was the buyer. Thereafter, the Cobbs tried desperately to keep the mill enterprise in the family by conveying it to various family members to include Joseph Cobb in 1849 and Christopher C. Cobb of Limestone County in 1853.²¹ Finally, on July 11, 1858, C. C. Cobb deeded the mill back to Bryant Cobb, although Joseph Cobb continued to tend the mill many years thereafter.²²

Bryant Cobb's brother, W. R. W. was less fortunate in his chosen career — that of a politician. Beginning as a clock peddler and merchant in Jackson County, he was elected to the United States Congress in 1847 and served in that capacity until 1861, when Alabama seceded from the Union. That same year, Cobb was elected to the Confederate Congress in Montgomery but did not take his seat. Rumors circulated that President Abraham Lincoln had appointed him military governor of Alabama, but this accusation was never substantiated. He died tragically in 1864, from the accidental discharge of his own pistol.²³

20. Deed Records. Deed Book S, pp. 89-93. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.

21. Deed Records. Deed Book U, pp. 43-44. Deed Book X, p. 496. Deed Book Z, p. 258. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.

22. Deed Records. Deed Book GGG, p. 189. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama; Kennamer, *History*, p. 47.

23. David Ritchey, "Williamson R. W. Cobb: Rattler of Tinware and Crockery for Peace," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 26 (Spring 1974): p. 113; Owen, *History*, p. 357.

After the Civil War, Bryant Cobb somehow managed to maintain the solvency of Cobb's Mill in spite of the ravages of Reconstruction. On August 21, 1881, Cobb passed away and left the following children: Alexander, Ira, Joseph, Mary, Naomi, Bernice, Francis, and Annie. In his will, he appointed Joseph and Alexander Cobb and John W. Grayson the administrators of his estate.²⁴ On October 2, 1882, they sold Cobb's Mill to James E. and George W. Butler.²⁵

The Butlers, with the assistance of John H. Atchly, John Russell, Frank Ivey, and "Big" A. Whiterd, rebuilt Cobb's Mill under the supervision of E. G. Morris of South Alabama, by adding more space and equipment. Business activity thereafter was prodigious, and after about 15 years, the mill was improved by adding rollers, a grinding stone imported from France, and other miscellaneous equipment.²⁶

In 1898, George W. Butler died and left his share of what was now known as the Butler Grist Mill Company to his wife and children. James E. Butler, though, continued to operate the mill concern until his death in 1913. At that time, Butler Mill was divided among all of the Butler heirs.²⁷ Some of the noted millers who ran the mill for the Butlers roughly between the years 1898 and 1915 were M. M. Downey, William B. Gross, Robert Whitaker, George W. Anderson, David Jones, and Richard H. Jones.²⁸

24. Will Book 2, p. 101 and Probate Case number 3610. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.

25. Minute Book 20, p. 42. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.

26. Interview with Mr. W. W. Crum, former owner of Fall's Mill in Huntland, Tennessee, Harvest, Alabama, 12 September, 1979; Kennamer, *Woodville*, p. 47.

27. Minute Book 25, p. 276. Probate Book 41, p. 567. Will Book 4, p. 146. Probate Book 46, p. 38. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.

28. Kennamer, *Woodville*, p. 47.

In 1916, the Butler heirs sold the mill to Frank Bevil and Richard H. Jones.²⁹ In 1922, they owed a sum of money, amounting to \$250 to Joseph W. Woody. Therefore, the mill was mortgaged on the condition that if the debt were not paid before it was due, Woody would take possession of the property. Bevil and Jones were not able to satisfy the mortgage, thereby Woody held title to the mill until his death in 1939, when the executors of his estate conveyed title back to Bevil and 42 other individuals who held legal interest in the mill.³⁰



On April 11, 1939, a tornado touched down and destroyed Butler Mill, except for the stone foundation. Also destroyed was the nearby covered bridge, stretching across Paint Rock River, that joined Madison and Marshall Counties. During this storm, a group of six people, fishing along the river bank, took shelter in the mill. When it collapsed, Charles Robert Merritt of Fort Payne was killed, and a small boy was slightly injured.³¹ Shortly after this disaster, Frank Bevil et al., sold the Butler Mill tract to Robert Clay.³² Clay built a new mill on the original antebellum stone foundation in 1940, satisfied the mortgage in 1942, and operated a profitable business

29. Deed Records. Deed Book 114, pp. 212-219. Probate Office, Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.
30. Mortgage Book 181, p. 351. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.
31. "Tornado Hits Butler's Mill, *Huntsville Times*, 11 April 1939, p. 1; Interview with Mrs. E. Bishop, daughter of Robert Clay, Butler Mill, Marshall County, Alabama, 8 December 1978; Kennamer, *Woodville*, p. 47.
32. Deed Records. Deed Book 156, pp. 98-99. Probate Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.

throughout World War II and the early postwar era.³³ By 1952, though, modern food processing methods diminished the importance of a grist mill, which forced Clay to close his establishment.³⁴



In 1969, W. W. Crum, a retired Army officer, bought the grinding stone, imported from France, from Robert Clay, in order to utilize it at Falls Mill in Franklin County, Tennessee. Clay also sold Crum a steel-encased small upright, manufactured in North Carolina about 1920. This second item was also from Butler Mill.³⁵

In 1974, Butler Mill became the property of Sherman Clay, who lived in Grant, Alabama.³⁶ Occasionally, one could observe a person fishing from the mill or a group of teenagers congregating under the building, but otherwise, Butler Mill remained inactive.

33. Interview with Mrs. Bishop, 8 December 1978; Mortgage Book 181, p. 351.

34. Interview with Mrs. Bishop, 8 December 1978.

35. "Huntland Creek Turns Mill Wheel," *The Funlander*, September 1979, p. 15; Interview with Mr. Crum, 12 September 1979.

36. Plat Book-East 1968 to present. Tax Office. Madison County Courthouse. Huntsville, Alabama.



GURLEY: A Family Legacy

Sarah Dudley Hall Edwards

PROLOGUE

The family name "Gurley" is a derivation of the original French name "de Gourle". A genealogical history of the de Gourle family has been traced to the Thirteenth Century; however, for the sake of brevity we will begin in the Eighteenth Century. Two Gurley brothers, who were Episcopal Clergymen, emigrated from Scotland to America in the 1700's and settled in North Carolina. A descendent of the brothers, Jeremiah Gurley, was born in Johnston County, North Carolina on December 29, 1759. He served in the Revolutionary War in 1781 (battles of Guilford and Camden). Jeremiah purchased a large tract of land in eastern Madison County in the late 1700's or early 1800's. A portion of this land was inherited by his son, John Gurley. The Memphis and Charleston Railroad (now Southern Railway) first laid its tracks in the area to be known as Gurley in 1857 across the farmland of John Gurley. A water tank was erected there, and the settlement which sprang up around the abundant water supply became known as "Gurley's Tank". The small community prospered. The major industry was timber which was plentiful in poplar, cedar, and oak.

During the Civil War, Gurley lay helplessly in the path of invading Northern armies. On their march through the South, the town and its colonial homes were wrecked and reduced to ashes. When Captain Frank Ballew Gurley, son of John Gurley, returned from the war, he led the populace in rebuilding the area and donated one square mile of land for the town site.



Captain Frank Ballew Gurley loomed larger than life in the eyes of those of us who grew up nourished by stories of his heroism and in awe of his handsome Civil War portrait by William Frye. The first time I saw the likeness of Captain Frank was in the parlor of the Hall House — a gracious Victorian hotel with picket fence and magnolia trees, circa late 1800's. The site of the Hall House and the nucleus of the structure as it stands today, originated as the modest three room home of Captain Gurley. Generous and charismatic, Gurley was apparently a forceful man in dealings with his family. Although he never married, he raised the young orphaned children of his brother James Harvey Gurley and Elizabeth Acklin, who died in 1868 and 1866, respectively. There were several children, but his major attention was directed to my grandmother, Molly. Then to Molly and her six children. He was directly responsible for intervening in the romance of grandmother and her friend, Jack Daniel. It was said that The Captain thought Jack would not amount to much. Captain Gurley was said to have intercepted and destroyed the last letter that Jack Daniel wrote to Molly. The letter arrived on the day she married Thomas Ripley Hall. On her wedding day, December 23, 1874, Captain Frank gave Molly and Tom Hall his home.



Between 1874 and the end of the century, the home grew from three rooms into the large structure it is today. It even served as the town's hotel. The register from the early 1890's bears witness to the town's heavy traffic. It also served as home for a growing family.



My father was the youngest of the Hall's seven children and only surviving male; Molly and Tom lost their second child, a son, to pneumonia. Their children were Ernestine Hampton; Theo Rita; Annie Louise; Allie Adams; Tommie Gurley; and Frank Ballew Gurley Hall, all born prior to the end of the nineteenth century.

When Daddy was seven years old, he moved to the country with Captain Gurley whom he called Grandpa. Grandmother thought that Captain Gurley would be a good influence and allowed this. This was an education that lasted for two years. I am sure they were long years! My father's personality (the sensitivities of a poet) must have clashed with the regimented, outspoken, crusty old soldier. This stay ended when Daddy drove the Captain, Grandmother, and his sisters to Deposit, Alabama to board the train to St. Louis for the 1904 World's Fair. The horse-drawn vehicle (young Tom Hall drove) carried eight to ten people. Designed and built by the Captain, it was to accommodate his guests at war reunions held annually at his "plantation". (This home was destroyed by fire in the mid 1900's.) On his way back from Deposit, my father made a conscious decision to return home to his family and the Hall Hotel. He was nine years old.



I knew the Hall House simply as Papa Hall's. The first five years of my life I lived on Jackson Street, two houses down and across the street from Papa Hall and Aunt Tommie and Uncle John Barte. There was a steady stream of traffic between the two homes.

My favorite memories of the Hall House were in the library where Aunt Tommie read and reread to me the books of Louisa May Alcott and the Miss Minerva series. Like these beloved novels, the Hall House with its special ambiance endures.

My parents, Frank Ballew Gurley Hall and Sara Dudley, were married in 1920 and lived for a short time with Papa and Mama Hall in the Hall House. They became parents to Frank Ballew Gurley Hall, Jr. and Tommie Louise Hall. Eleven years later I arrived, followed closely by Paul William. I have been told that residents of the town would drive by our home to see if they could get a glimpse of Mother “because she was so pretty,” with her bright auburn hair and blue eyes.

Killarney

It was a warm day in June, 1940. A five year old girl was about to transition from the confines of a small Southern town to the wonderful expanse of rural Madison County — Killarney.



To a small child, the large stone structure of a house and barn to its side were, at the same instant, formidable and inviting. A strong sense of curiosity and the potential for grand adventures for myself and younger brother, Paul William, was irresistible and far outweighed any sadness at leaving our home “downtown”.

Since 1940, Killarney has been the home of Frank Ballew Gurley Hall and Sara Dudley Hall. Killarney, a dignified, stone "English cottage" sits at the center and foot of Gurley Mountain just north of the town of Gurley. The house and barn were completed in 1919 by the original owners, John and Ernestine Bogenshott. Daddy's sister Ernestine was heir to a portion of Captain Gurley's estate on which the house was built. Building Killarney was a special project of John Bogenshott. A man of many interests, Bogenshott was a building contractor; co-owner of the Stanley-Bogenshott Hotel for Men in Chattanooga; a farmer; a raiser and racer of thoroughbred horses; and a well-traveled individual.

The carpenter, H. P. Wright, a local artisan, used stone cut from virgin limestone indigenous to Gurley Mountain to construct the house. The stones on the four front columns are set in an identical pattern. The imported red, tile roof was installed by Oscar Dregger (Father of Alvin Dregger). Mr. Dregger commuted daily from Huntsville by train. The house was state-of-the-art technology for urban America, but most unusual for a Southern rural area in the early 1900's. It was wired for electricity, but was not accessed until the 1940's. At that time, Killarney was supplied by three sources of water: a 90 foot bored well with pump which pumped water to a tank on the mountain above the house in order to have the convenience of running water in the house and barn lot. During the wet seasons, a natural mountain spring also filled the tank. A 40 foot long and 6 foot deep cistern under the west patio collected rain water for special purposes. Heat was provided by a coal burning, forced air furnace in the basement with auxiliary heat provided by a fireplace on the main floor (living room) which burned four foot logs. Memories of logs burning and winter evenings bring other reflections of Daddy smoking his pipe and reading while Mother, Paul, and I would cuddle on the love seat for bedtime stories.

The farm animals and approximately 40 acres of land were tended and farmed by Walter Robinson and his wife Mary Alice Robinson. I was taught to call him "Uncle Walter." He was a kind, dignified black man in his late fifties

when I met him. The produce that came from his labor was cotton, corn, and hogs. Uncle Walter cultivated the land with mules. The first summer at Killarney, Mother asked me to take Uncle Walter's lunch to the screened-in porch. I thought this strange. I questioned why Uncle Walter would not eat at the kitchen table. Mother's response was "... that is just the way it is." This was not the first time my Mother had used this answer on me. We call it "a cop out" today. My solution to negotiating or coming to terms with the answer for this occasion was to take my plate to the porch and lunch with Uncle Walter. I have always been indebted to my Mother for her silent consent. I like to think that it encouraged a sense of fairness.

Uncle Walter and I became good friends. He allowed Paul and me to ride to town on the tail of the wagon and bought us R.C. Colas and moon pies. He taught me to milk a cow, but never told anyone that I could! I learned to ride on his mules which were farm animals but also served as his transportation. We graduated from riding mules to ponies and finally to the Tennessee Walker which Mother laughingly called her "baby sitter." She put me on Snow White when I was nine years old and I got off when I was thirteen! The mare was bred to Midnight Sun, Tennessee Championship Walker, and produced a colt — Queen May. Both horses are buried in the front area within the circular drive.



The barn that housed the horses also housed Mother's cattle. Daddy gave her the first calf, Bawley. From this Jersey calf she developed a herd of about forty cows which has expanded and shrunk and expanded over the years. To this day she still has a descendent

of the original calf, Cocoa. The barn built in 1919, retains its original and unique loft oak flooring and sash windows. The barn was renovated in the early 1950's. This included a new roof and concrete foundation, and replacement of the areas used to store farm machinery.

Further improvements include land management. Mother was privileged to have grown up on a plantation in South Alabama. her father was a master farmer and a gentleman engineer. This background was instrumental in her planning skills. She recognized the need for soil conservation and developing terracing and contouring. She cleared an additional ten acres.

Mother's interest in the Huntsville chapter of the Ikebana Club, International (based in Tokyo, Japan), culminated in the construction of a mountain rock garden enhanced by a 25 foot oriental moon bridge and two natural limestone fishponds.

EPILOGUE

My family has always considered Huntsville a part of home. Mother and Daddy have been members of The Church of the Nativity for an average person's lifetime. The children were christened at Nativity. I especially remember when Mother and Dad dressed (in vogue) to attend the Reveler's Club at the Russel Erskine. We were all attracted to a variety of social activities. I attended The Irene Jones Studio of Dance. Mother belonged to the Music Study Club, and Ikebana. When Paul and I reached high school age, we attended Huntsville High School. Of course, we all enjoyed the Post Office and Central cafes and what would be a Saturday without the Lyric Theater!

Sarah H. Edwards, DPA is employed by the U.S. Army Missile Command. She has a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences from the University of Oklahoma, a Masters and Doctorate in Public Administration from Nova University in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. She is a member of the Church of the Nativity and the Huntsville Music Study Club.



*Frank Ballew Gurley Hall and Sara Dudley Hall,
THEN
and
NOW.*



Portraits of John and Ernestine Bogeshott in the background.

Fighting Fire with Fire

Charles Rice

It is hard for us to believe that little more than a century and a quarter ago our own Madison County was the scene of a brutal little sideshow of the great American Civil War. Yet Madison County, like most of North Alabama, saw quite a bit of bloodletting and considerably more than its share of senseless destruction. The bridges of Madison County were a natural target for the invading Union Army, since the Memphis and Charleston Railroad was a vital supply line of the struggling young Confederacy. However, private dwellings, farm buildings, and even entire towns were also put to the torch by the northern forces in their attempt to strong-arm Southern civilians into returning their allegiance to the Washington government. The callous campaign of terror quite naturally backfired more often than not and served mainly to drive lukewarm secessionists into the ranks of the Southern Army. The well-timbered mountains and valleys of eastern Madison and neighboring Jackson and Marshall Counties provided perfect hiding places for the guerrilla companies formed under the Confederate partisan ranger act. Leader of these isolated Confederates was a Paint Rock native named Lemuel Green Mead. If the name sounds familiar, it is because his uncle, Lemuel Mead of Huntsville, was one of the signers of the Alabama State Constitution.

Regrettably, Colonel Lemuel G. Mead did not live long enough to write his memoirs, being shot down at age 47 in a land dispute in Gurley in 1878. However, his second in command, Rev. Milus Eddings Johnston, did tell much of the story in the *Guntersville Democrat* in the summer of 1902. Forgotten for nearly ninety years, Johnston's tale, titled by him *The Sword of "Bushwhacker" Johnston*, finally appeared in book form late last year.

Milus Johnston was a humble Methodist minister who admitted he had no desire to take part in the war. However, he was hounded by the invading forces until he finally crossed

the Tennessee River and cast his lot in with the Confederacy. "The writer recollects distinctly to this day," Johnston related, "that upon reaching the south bank of the river he called a halt and about faced, and straightening himself up, he looked northward and said: 'Boys, I have come to the conclusion that God never yet made a man to be slobbered on always by dogs; hence I am going to give those fellows in turn — the best turn I can get into the hopper!'" And the Union Army would have ample opportunity to regret that it had ever made an enemy of the dashing "Bushwhacker" Johnston.

First commanding a company of Mead's Battalion, Johnston soon became acting major, leading a squadron of several companies. By early 1865, he had become Lieutenant Colonel of his own 25th Alabama Cavalry Battalion, which he finally surrendered more than a month after Appomattox, his men stacking their arms on the site of today's Huntsville Hospital. Between January 1864 and May 1865, however Milus Johnston had joined colonel Mead in repaying the Union occupiers of Madison County in their own coin. The bold Confederates captured wagon trains, gobbled up forage parties, ambushed cavalry patrols, and generally bluffed their enemy into thinking they were much stronger than they actually were. One of Mead's crowning accomplishments was the capture of the entire Company G of the 13th Wisconsin Veteran Volunteers at Paint Rock Bridge on the last day of 1864. Mead and Johnston managed this feat with less than 40 men, burning the bridge, rolling a captured cannon into the river, and then marching away to safety with their prisoners.

The Sword of "Bushwhacker" Johnston is a very readable account of the War Between the States in the Huntsville area. Fully annotated by Charles Rice, who also wrote the introduction, Johnston's book comes with a complete muster roll of Mead's North Alabama and Tennessee Cavalry Battalion, as well as a full name index. If you like your history and you love your romance, buy, beg, or borrow a copy of Johnston's memoirs. Milus Johnston's relaxed style makes learning history seem both easy and enjoyable. *The Sword of "Bushwhacker" Johnston* can be purchased for \$19.95 plus \$2.00 shipping from Flint River Press, P. O. Box 49, New Hope, AL 35760. It can also be found at Shaver's Bookstore on Whitesburg Drive in Huntsville.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$25 to \$99 |
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To become a member, please check desired category.
All contributions are tax deductible.

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Yes I am interested in volunteering for a Historic
Huntsville Project. Please call me.

The HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION was established in 1974 to encourage the preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures throughout Huntsville and Madison County and to increase public awareness of their value to the community. The FOUNDATION is the only organization in Huntsville concerned exclusively with architectural preservation and history. Other similar organizations within Huntsville are concerned either with general history or only with those buildings located within preservation districts.

Summarized, HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION has two main objectives: preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures throughout Huntsville and Madison County; and, educating the public on and increasing their awareness of this historical heritage.

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