Bulloch Roots and Religion

Bulloch County Historical Society

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Readings in Bulloch County History: Book 11

Bulloch Roots and Religion

Bulloch County Historical Society
Bulloch County, Georgia

Part One
INTRODUCTION

This a collection of manuscripts submitted for publication. Hence, the differences in style. We have other manuscripts in hand which we hope to publish later.

You will find several interesting articles submitted by Bulloch County Historical Society LIFE Members Smith C. Banks and Rita Turner Wall.

LIFE Member William Cone submitted the scholarly article on the Salzburgers.

Dr. Charles Bonds, Society Black History Chairman, submitted the biographical sketch of an outstanding Black citizen after having presented the paper at a Society meeting.

Finally, you will find an interesting article on the Shearwood Railroad in Bulloch County written by Mrs. Brenda Steadman.

Kemp Mabry
Executive Vice President
Bulloch County Historical Society

Statesboro, Georgia
September 1992
Ruprecht Kalcher and his wife Margaretha Gunther Kalcher are the little known ancestors of many residents of Georgia and neighboring states. In Bulloch County and nearby areas in Southeast Georgia, the family names of their descendants early on included Groover, Blitch, Cone, Goodman, Kennedy, Lee, Rushing and Sheffield. With the passage of time, the Kalcher descendant families in this area have increased to include such family names as Agee, Berger, Boddiford, Brett, Brinson, Coleman, Hill, Huley, Johnston, Lovett, Maddry, Mathews, Murray, Seyle, Shearouse, Sligh, Smith, Sognier, Tyson, Watson and Wells.

The Kalchers deserve to be known and appreciated by these descendants and others if for no other reason than that they played a significant role in the development and life of the Salzburger community at Ebenezer. The Salzburger struggle to settle and survive at Ebenezer in the Colony of Georgia is now being recognized as one of the best recorded and most revealing segments of life and times in Colonial America. This is due in great part to the relatively recent translation and publication of the "Detailed Reports of the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America," accomplished under the leadership of George Fenwick Jones of the University of Maryland. This article is primarily a review of comments and notes regarding the Kalchers contained in these Detailed Reports and particularly in the diaries submitted by John Martin Boltzius, the Pastor of the Salzburger Congregation, to his superiors in Germany.

EXPULSION AND EMIGRATION

Ruprecht Kalcher was born in the area of Werfen in the Province of Salzburg around 1710. He and several of his siblings were among the many residents driven from their homes by the Catholic authorities in the well known expulsion of Protestants from Salzburg. He probably left his home in late 1731 since the Salzburger expulsion commenced in the village of Werfen and was well underway by the end of 1731. Also, an estate belonging to Ruprecht Kalcher was included in a listing of farms and estates of Salzburger Emigrants for sale in the Werfen area in 1732.

We do not know where Ruprecht went immediately after leaving Werfen, but we do know that he sojourned for a period in Lindau on Lake Constance and was recruited for the Second Salzburger Transport while in that city. We do not know where Margaretha Gunther was born or where she lived until the Second Transport was formed. She was not in the group from Lindau, so she must have lived for awhile in Memmingen, Leutkirch or Leipheim where the remainder of the Second Transport resided prior to being assembled in Augsburg.

It appears that Ruprecht and Margaretha were married just before leaving Werfen on the journey to England and then Georgia. Five couples of the group were married on 21 September, 1734 and the Kalchers' 1739 letter to Samuel Urlsperger, chief pastor of St. Anne's Church in Augsburg, refers to the fact that they were married there by Deacon Hilderbrand. Hilderbrand was one of the pastors at St. Anne's who ministered to the Second Transport as it was being assembled and sent on its way.

The Second Transport, consisting of 54 persons, left Augsburg on 23 September 1734 under the guidance of Jean Vat of Biel, Switzerland. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in London, a principal supporter of the Salzburgers, attempted to secure the services of Vat for the First Transport but Urlsperger had committed that group to the services of the young Nobleman Philip Von Reck, and Vat
was held over for the later expedition.

The Second Transport traveled the same route as had the First, to Rotterdam by way of Wertheim, Frankfort and Cologne; and then sailed from Rotterdam to Gravesend. One of the stated and publicized reasons for founding the Colony of Georgia was to create an asylum for religiously persecuted people, and the Salzburgers were among the few colonists to meet this description. Accordingly, they were given considerable attention in England and in a sense were celebrities for a brief period. The group was taken to London and entertained there by their sponsors and other illustrious personages. A measure of the attention they received is that the dignitaries in attendance included the Lord Mayor, the City Marshall, the Trustees of the Georgia Colony, the Court Minister, the Court Chaplain and the members of the SPCK. The Salzburgers apparently made a very favorable impression. Henry Newman, the SPCK Secretary in a letter to the younger Von Reck reported that they "come up to London and by their Behavior have gained the Esteem of all who could have the happiness of seeing them." 1-6

While in London, the Second Transport met General Oglethorpe and Tomochichi, the Mica or Chief of the Yamacraw Tribe. The Indian Chief and his family had been taken to visit the English Court by Oglethorpe and were returning to Georgia on the Prince of Wales. The Salzburgers joined them for the voyage. 7 Sailing from Gravesend on 12 November 1734, the Prince of Wales under Captain George Dunbar arrived in Savannah on 27 December. The Salzburgers participated in a welcoming ceremony and then went by land to Abercorn and finally to Ebenezer, completing their long journey from Augsburg on 13 January 1735.

The ocean voyage was relatively uneventful although the navigation left something to be desired if passenger Henry Bishop (later Bischoff) is to be believed. He reported by letter to his parents in England that the ship had sailed past Georgia to Saint Augustine but that the Spaniards had not seen them and they sailed back up the coast to Savannah.8 In any event, the voyage was much easier than the journey experienced by the First Transport which had suffered considerably due to the elements as well as the conduct of the Master and crew.

THE EARLY YEARS AT EBENEZER

Somewhere along the way Ruprecht Kalcher was assigned or agreed to serve as a paid servant to Commissioner Vat.9 His performance apparently satisfied Vat completely. Boltzius makes reference in his diary to Kalcher being Vat's favorite, and that this caused some jealousy among his fellow Salzburgers. It resulted in one of the few known criticisms of the Kalchers in their long life at Ebenezer.10

Commissioner Vat did a masterful job in managing the movement of the Second Transport to Ebenezer. He also contributed immediately to one of the most important events in the lives of the Salzburgers - the move from the original settlement to the Red Bluff, i.e. New Ebenezer. Vat's strong opposition to settling the Second Transport at Old Ebenezer and his advocacy of the proposed move in correspondence with the SPCK and others in England significantly influenced the ultimate decision.

Personally, Vat seems to have been something of a tyrant. Boltzius reports several instances of his threatening and intimidating the settlers. He was parsimonious in his distribution of food and supplies, and dictatorial in his efforts to control the community, e.g. in requiring the performance of guard duty and in attempting to require the Salzburgers to obtain his permission before traveling, getting married, etc. In any event, the Kalchers' relationship with Vat was a short one. Conflict was inevitable between Boltzius and Vat as to their respective authority, and the difficulty was exacerbated by the arrival of Von Reck and the Third Transport. There were then two commissioners (Vat and Von Reck) competing against each other, and both were in competition with Boltzius. The latter played off one commissioner against the other and succeeded in prevailing over both. Vat left Ebenezer in July 1736 and remained in Savannah until October when he returned to England. Von Reck also left Georgia in late 1736, never to return. Boltzius became and remained for many years the secular as well as spiritual leader of the Salzburgers.

The Kalchers quickly made a favorable impression on Boltzius because of their extreme piety, concern for others and willingness to assume responsibility and work under his direction and guidance. Ruprecht was quickly utilized by Boltzius to assist with some of the community problems. Thus, the Zettler boy was put in Ruprecht's care because of apparent mistreatment by his brother-in-law,11 and shortly thereafter the couple assumed the care and control of the disobedient son of one of the Salzburger widows.12

THE ORPHANAGE

Perhaps the Kalchers' principal place in history is that they managed the orphanage at Ebenezer. It was the first orphanage in Georgia and one of the first in the country. The community leaders had recognized the need for an orphanage soon after their arrival. The extraordinary incidence of illness and death created a need for care, and it was natural for Boltzius and Gronau to relate this need to an orphanage because of their recent association with the famous Orphan House in Halle, Germany.13 Boltzius initially utilized Johannes Moshammer and his wife Maria Kroher Moshammer (later Mrs. Peter Gruber and later still Mrs. Carl Flent) in the care of the orphans. After the death of Moshammer in September 1735, he turned to Thomas and Maria Bacher and then the Kalchers. This supervision and care was provided in the homes of the individual couples. Planning for establishment of an orphanage began as early as April 1737. Moreover, it is likely that Boltzius and Gronau were thinking and hoping for a special facility for the care of the orphans from the first days at Ebenezer. Lorentz Huber and his wife Maria Magdalena had died promptly after their arrival in Georgia, leaving four children in need of assistance. While these and other children were card for by individual families, Boltzius commented in an October 1734 diary entry that better arrangements were needed.14 Despite his desires, the system of placement with individual families was the best that could be done during the very difficult years of 1735 and 1736 and even into 1737. In February 1737, for example, the daily diary noted that: "It does not seem possible at this point to make arrangements for a separate place for poor children or even to build a house for this purpose, although God had in His grace provided some funds for that purpose. Since food is so scarce here, and since laborers are expensive, the children will have to be cared for as best we can for the time being. Moreover, the land intended for the preachers' houses, for the church, the school, and therefore also for such an orphanage, has not yet been surveyed, as much as we would like this done."15 Boltzius nevertheless continued to hope, plan and pray. In April 1737, in what could be viewed as both a prayer and a further solicitation for financial assistance, he wrote in his diary report:

"If only we were more convinced of the Divine Will and if a proper location could be permanently assigned therefor, we would have a spacious house constructed as a residence for such children, since this would make it possible to keep them under one roof. Also, we would be better able to care for their Christian welfare by entrusting them to supervisors appointed to this task."16
The community determined to proceed with the building of the children’s home in early May 1737 but construction did not commence until November. Boltzius recorded in his diary of 14 November that “construction of the orphanage should begin today.” The construction was going well on 21 November and was “being completed” on 30 December. Incidentally, in a report that may remind us that “what’s past is prologue,” Boltzius noted on 20 December that there had been a significant cost overrun on the construction.18

The orphanage building was declared completed in the first week of January 1738 and it was dedicated with prayer and thanksgiving on 10 January.19 The basic building was 45’ long and 30’ wide. It contained 3 sitting rooms and 3 bedrooms. In addition to the main building, there was a separate kitchen with attached pantry, a large cowshed, a pipen with chicken coop above it under its roof, a spacious outhouse with 3 separate booths, for married people, boys and girls, and a cabin for the mill, baking oven and wash cauldrons. Additional improvements were made soon after occupancy. A small cellar was dug by 5 May to keep milk and other fresh foods cooler during the summer, and an excellent well was constructed and in operation by 6 July.

Boltzius stated in his 10 September 1737 diary: “Kalcher and his wife have been chosen to care for these children, both materially and spiritually; and both during the day and at night, in place of their parents. This couple is well equipped for this task above many others insmuch as they not only possess a true and sincere fear of the Lord but also much of the physical and other skills that are necessary for such an important undertaking.”20

Kalcher and the other ladies at the orphanage were given instruction. They and many of the girls learned to raise the worms and collect and process the silk. The community is encouraged the Salzburgers to grow “German” crops (grain) in addition to corn and beans which had been planted with the hoe.21 The transition to raising grain and stock profoundly influenced and improved the economy of the entire Salzburg community.

One of the most important contributions of the Kalchers was in the field of sericulture or silk production. Since this required skill and patience rather than strength, it was considered an ideal occupation for women and it proved to be exactly that. Mulberry trees were cultivated at the orphanage and at the homes of the citizens. Mrs. Kalcher and the other ladies at the orphanage were given instruction. They and many of the girls learned to raise the worms and collect and process the silk. The community is said to have received, in 1751, 110 pounds Sterling for silk sold in England.22 While silk production was a cottage industry to some extent in the early years, the orphanage was the center of the community effort and the Kalchers were quite influential in the entire activity.

It appears that the declining death rate in the 1740s lessened the need for the orphanage as a place for the care of orphan children. Dr. Jones notes that it was being used as a shelter for visitors by 1744.23 In this period, Kalcher seems to have become more of a special assistant to Boltzius with responsibility for miscellaneous administrative matters in the community. Thus he was designated as Supervisor of the Fourth Salzburger Transport, and distributed food and supplies to them.24 When Elizabeth Lechner died in 1742, he helped Boltzius in the settlement of her estate, making sure that the legacies to her husband and daughters were properly delivered. Later, in October 1742, he accompanied Boltzius and Muhlenberg to Charleston on the first leg of Muhlenberg’s journey from Ebenezer to Pennsylvania.25 Still later, he was elected by the residents to be an overseer of the community cowpen.26

As supervisors of the buildings and institution still referred to as “the Orphanage,” the Kalchers were frequently in contact with visitors. This no doubt made life more interesting. Thus, a number of residents of Frederica and Savannah benefited from this time at Ebenezer in the summer of 1742, having fled there because of a threatened Spanish invasion. Shortly thereafter, the Kalchers received a letter from a widow in Frederica thanking them for their help and kindness during her stay with them. She sent Mrs. Kalcher a pound of coffee and some silk ribbons in appreciation.27

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

The Kalchers contributed to the community welfare in many respects other than through the care and nurturing of orphan children. Ruprecht labored as a farmer and supervised a number of assistants in raising food, grain and stock for the benefit of the orphanage and the community in general. The farming enterprise was of particular importance to the orphanage since it furnished major support for that undertaking.28

In connection with the farming activity, Ruprecht conducted or participated in experiments suggested by Boltzius and initiated or helped in the development of practices and techniques that enhanced the community effort. For example, the orphanage experimented with the use of oxen for hauling and plowing. They developed a yoke that permitted more efficient use of the oxen. They developed a more efficient plow and used horses in their plowing. This was an important departure from existing practices since it encouraged the Salzburgers to grow “German” crops (grain) in addition to corn and beans which had been planted with the hoe.29 The transition to raising grain and stock profoundly influenced and improved the economy of the entire Salzburg community.

Kalcher was also appointed as the annual overseer of the orphanage and thus responsible for the care and nurturing of needy residents. Ruprecht labored as a farmer and supervised a number of assistants in raising food, grain and stock for the benefit of the orphanage and the community in general. The farming enterprise was of particular importance to the orphanage since it furnished major support for that undertaking.30

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Although there were no major epidemics in the 1740s, the death rate dropped and the Kalchers were always on the lookout for new applicants to their orphanage. In December 1738, Dr. Jones noted in his diary: “His wife Maria is now a widow and their child a fatherless orphan. Our orphanage stands open for both of them.”33 In time, the orphanage ministered to many widows, old men, women in labor or near labor, the sick and even to children of outsiders in need of schooling or temporary shelter at Ebenezer.
What was the financial status of the Kalchers? They obviously arrived in Georgia with very little although Ruprecht had property in Salzburg that he was entitled to sell before leaving. This writer has no knowledge of the amount realized on the sale or if in fact a sale was consummated. We do know that the Salzburgers were forced to sell under unfavorable circumstances.

The Kalchers apparently were not greatly concerned with the accumulation of worldly goods. For one thing, they lived in the original orphanage building from the time it was constructed in 1738 until shortly after it was rebuilt in 1750. During this entire period they devoted most of their time to communal affairs and very little to personal aggrandizement. For this reason and no doubt at the suggestion of Boltzius, some of the salzburgers who had moved from town out to the plantations donated their gardens just north of town to the Kalchers. Boltzius explained the transfer as something due Kalcher because he had not been able to start a plantation for himself and his children due to his responsibility as father of the orphanage. The Kalchers did take a step toward self-sufficiency in July 1750 by purchasing Mr. Meyer’s house in Ebenezer for the sum of 20 pounds Sterling. They apparently lived in this house very briefly and then moved into the “inn” by the mill in the Fall of 1750 after having agreed to serve as innkeepers and supervisors of the mills. A responsible person was needed to deal with the outsiders who came to obtain the services of the mills and to supervise the operation. Boltzius was grateful to have the Kalchers once again volunteer for civic duty in this time of need. The house or “inn” was consecrated by Boltzius and others on 17 December 1750.

Regarding the house bought from Meyer, Mrs. Kalcher moved from the inn back to town in 1753 after Ruprecht’s death. She went into the so called “silk house,” however, rather than her own home. The latter was being occupied by Mr. Rabenhorst, the Assistant Pastor, and she or someone else apparently thought it best not to disturb him.

The Kalchers had also acquired a 55 acre lot in 1751 in the old Uchee land Blue Bluff area. Whether they put this to use is not known but it seems further evidence of Boltzius’ effort to compensate the Kalchers for their services. Their standing in the community is also shown by the fact that they were assigned a servant from the indentured German group in November 1750. This, however, may have been due to the fact that such a placement was for the benefit of the community rather than as a reward for the Kalchers.

THE KALCHER FAMILY

Kalcher as a surname among local families ended with the demise of Ruprecht, Margaretha and their children. The parents had four daughters and no sons. Ursula, born in 1735 or 1736, married Christian Buerck (Birk, Birk) and they had 3 boys, all of whom died within a few months of birth. Ursula and Christian also had one daughter, Maria, born 20 April 1767. No further record of this Maria has been found. Ursula herself died at age 34 in 1769.

Maris, the second daughter of Ruprecht and Margaretha, was born in 1739. She married Martin Rheinlander in 1758 and died less than 18 months later, apparently without having had any children.

Skipping over Mary Magdalene momentarily, the fourth daughter was Hannah Margaretha, born about 1743 and married to J. G. Rentz in 1768. Rentz died on 27 July, 1770 and the young widow followed in less than one month, on 20 August. It seems that they had no children.

Ruprecht and Margaretha did ultimately have many direct descendants through Mary Magdalene (Maria Magdalena), the third daughter. Born in 1741, she and John (Johannes) Gruber were youngsters together at Ebenezer, attended confirmation classes at Jerusalem Church together, were confirmed there in 1754 and were married at Zion Church in 1765. Incidentally, their first child (John, Jr.) was born 9 months to the day after their marriage.

John Gruber is supposed to have been killed by Tories in 1780 at his home on Cowpen Branch in what is now Bulloch County. In those fifteen years, he and Mary Magdalene had seven children - John, Jr., Solomon, Joshua, Charles, David, William and Elizabeth.

Ruprecht Kalcher died at Ebenezer on 10 January 1752 after a long illness. Margaretha lived considerably longer. We know for example that she was alive in 1767 but this writer at least is not aware of the date of her death. It is interesting that at least one publication states that she married Christoph Kraemer I after Ruprecht’s death. This seems doubtful, as indicated by the following:

(1) No date is given for the marriage.
(2) The book reporting the marriage also reports that Christoph Kraemer I was dead by 1741.
(3) If she and Christoph Kraemer had been married after 1754, it should have been recorded in the Ebenezer Record Book since she is referred to in that record several times after that.
(4) Margaretha Kalcher was still living in 1787 and referred to by that name in the Ebenezer Record Book.
(5) Christoph Kraemer II was married in 1752 to Johanna Margaretha nee Mueller, the widow Brueckner.

Mrs. Kalcher dearly loves the Divine word which she reads often and with enthusiasm. - - Her children benefit from her eagerness, and she teaches them in a pleasant manner the beautiful and pithy verses which we have examined publicly.

"Indubitably, she [Mrs. Kalcher] is - - - a precious jewel in the eyes of God."56

"Like the prophetess Hannah in the Bible, she (Mrs. Kalcher) is in prayer almost day and night and lets neither work nor physical weakness keep her from it. - - - Her husband is just like her in his righteous thoughts and seriousness in his Christianity."

"Last night our dear and righteous Kalcher died like a quiet and patient lamb, full of faith in his dearest Savior. - - - He has had a long lasting sickbed and suffered greatly. However, just as in the seventeen years that he has been an inhabitant of Ebenezer and an exemplary member of the congregation, so too in this last period of living and suffering he has shown himself so patient, quiet and content with God’s ways and dispensation that he has revealed here, too, the good basis...

"As the father in the orphanage and as vestryman and leader of the congregation..."
and manager of the mills he showed me and the community very great service." 59

Another favorable comment on Ruprecht Kalcher was made recently by Lothar Tresp of the University of Georgia in his review of several later volumes of the Detailed Reports:

"During these two years (1751-52) a total of twenty-eight persons died, an average of more than one every month. - - - Among them was Ruprecht Kalcher who, as supervisor of the orphanage and pioneer in silk culture, had been a leader by example and a tower of strength for Boltzias and the community." 60

It is hoped that this article will acquaint many descendants of the Kalchers with these worthy ancestors, and add somewhat to the knowledge of those readers interested in the Salzburgers or other aspects of local history.

NOTES

2. Salzburger Emigrants Estates Sales List, 1732. Published by Association of Descendants of Salzburger Emigrants (Detmold: Merkur 1972).
12. Ibid., Vol. IV p. 58.
15. Ibid., Vol. IV p. 29.
16. Ibid., Vol. IV p. 54.
17. Ibid., Vol. IV p. 73.
22. Ibid., Vol. VI p. 203.
23. Ibid., Vol. VII p. 256. This was John Gruber.
26. In 1743, Boltzius noted that wheat grown at the orphanage was better than most wheat grown in the community. In his opinion, this was due in part to the fact that Kalcher cultivated with a plow instead of the hoe. Detailed Report on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America, Vol. X pp. 90-91.
30. Henry Muhlenberg was on his way from Germany to Pennsylvania and had been routed through Georgia to learn about America and the Salzburger experience from Boltzius.
32. Ibid., Vol. X p. 117.
33. Salzburger Emigrants Estates Sales List, 1732.
35. Ibid., Vol. XIV p. 96.
36. Ibid., Vol. XIV p. 208.
37. Ibid., Vol. XVI p. 76.
41. Ibid., p. 126.
43. Ebenezer Record Book, pp. 88, 113.
45. Ebenezer Record Book, p. 130.
47. Ebenezer Record Book, p. 92.
48. Ibid., p. 40.
51. Ibid., p. 58.
52. Ebenezer Record Book, p. 43.
55. Ibid., Vol. XI pp. 94-95.
56. Ibid., Vol. XIII p. 3.
58. Ibid., Vol. XV pp. 144-145.
59. Ibid., Vol. XV p. 145.
THE ALDERMAN FAMILY IN BULLOCH COUNTY GEORGIA
--by Rita Turner Wall

There has always been some dispute about when Aldermans first settled in Bulloch County, Georgia (the descendants of David Alderman from the Daniel Alderman branch of the family). Most, with plat and deeds in hand argue that 1810-15 would be about right; but John Mathis, husband of Phoebe Alderman, the daughter of David, was present at Henry Parrish's sale in July 1802 and purchased a grindstone and a work ox, which is irrefutable proof that Aldermans were here at that date. John Mathis was granted a very large tract of land on the Statesboro-Dublin Road just west of Dry Branch, and was sheriff of Bulloch County for a goodly number of years; and even had to be called out a few times to help put down public disturbances after he left that office. His house was on the south side of the road about a half mile from Dry Branch. Later came Samuel Alderman and his wife Sarah Chestnut, and Susannah Alderman and her husband William Bland. Samuel received a grant of land just north of the Mathis tract on a road that forked off from the Statesboro-Dublin Road at Watering Hole Branch, and built his house on the south side of the road. William Bland received a grant of land west of the Mathises about three miles and built a house on the south side of the same road. Last of all, about 1815-16, came the aged parents David and Jemima and the younger children including the twins Timothy and James born in 1802. David, soldier of the Revolution, purchased from Edmund Goff, in the year 1817, for the sum of $100.00, two hundred acres of land where he was to make his home. This was at the intersection of a bypass from the Statesboro-Dublin Road and a road that was to be later called Alderman Road, on the hill overlooking Wolfpen Branch. It was the highest point of land in Bulloch County, and for decades was pointed out as the Old David Alderman Place. Whether or not there was a house or improvements of any kind on the land is not now known. That same year, for some unknown reason, David deeded this tract to his son Timothy, aged about fifteen. The next year he purchased from John Williams for $500.00 an adjoining tract of four hundred nine acres, which he also deeded to Timothy. The Alderman lands, approaching close to seven thousand acres, were all described as being in the headwaters of Lotts Creek.

Timothy married in 1822, twenty years old. In 1827, in the term of the Honorable John Forsyth, Governor of Georgia, he was granted a tract of four hundred twenty-two acres on Wolfpen Branch adjoining the two tracts he had been deeded by his father, and there he built a log house facing the south fork of the Statesboro-Dublin Road. This was no more than a mile from David and Jemima's homestead. The Alderman houses were all of log construction, barked logs, saddle-notched, long-leaf forest pine. We have found no evidence of the square-hewn, dovetailed houses which required a great deal more of craftsmanship. These houses were a far cry from the braced frame one- and two-room houses of their English ancestors in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The English settlers who first came to America knew nothing of log construction, but picked it up as they moved south generation after generation learning it from the Swedish, Norwegian, German settlers in New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire.
and Delaware. Later generations of Aldermans were to build large
from houses, mostly in plantation plain or add-on style, four of
which, over a hundred years old, still stand, but mostly in bad
repair or abandoned ruins.

These early Aldermans made a settlement to themselves. They
shared such things as a saw-gin powered by a mule pulling a sweep,
an gin that cleaned green-seed cotton much faster than the little
hand-operated gins that were replicas of the one Eli Whitney in-
vented at Mulberry Grove two decades before. One syrup kettle
would have certainly served all of them—and other neighbors as
well. They would have shared work in hog butchering, fodder pul-
ing, corn shuckings, hay making, log rolling, rail splitting, and
stump digging. And there was spinning and weaving, and quilting
which would be shared. David, like his father before him was a
muller, and his wife, Sarah, was expert at spinning and weaving and dyeing, and quilt making, and several of her
quilts survive in the hands of her great-grandchildren. All of
this was of course subsistence living, even at its best. Every
mouthful of food had to be produced on the land—or hunted in the
forests. Every stitch of clothing was produced at home: the cot-
toon had to be grown and picked; that cotton had to be ginned at
home, carded, spun, woven on hand looms (one yard twenty-eight
inches wide for a day's work dawn to dark), dyed with primitive
dyes, and then cut and stitched into garments. The same for wool
which had to be shorn, washed, carded, woven and dyed, and made
into garments. Little wonder the boys wore only shirts (knee-length),
until they became teen-agers and deemed to be worthy of a pair of
breeches and thus were called "Shirt-tails"! A later generation
of Aldermans were famed for needlework and lace making, and though
none of their work survives, there are some existing portraits
which show how beautiful were these creations.

The nearest market place was Savannah on the coast, a town of
seven or eight thousand people, a distance of about sixty miles.
This was a gruelling trip of two days with the night between spent
at a camp beyond Ogeechee River, and Shivers Swamp where bandits
waited for unwary travelers, and men rode shotgun fore and aft to
protect the wagons. With the heavy-wheeled road carts and
wagons to haul such heavy goods as cotton that distance on such
bad roads was a task to try men's souls. Other goods they carried
to Savannah to sell were live chickens and turkeys and goats,
smokehouse-cured hams and midlins, sausages, dried beef, tins of
hog lard, barrels of the luxury items cane syrup and muscovado
sugar, eggs, honey, cloth, soap, and bags of goose feathers. Mar-
ket cattle were tied behind the carts. Not until the Central of
Georgia built a railroad connecting Macon with Savannah about 1835
(the road was north of the Ogeechee River) was there a better way
to get cotton to market. After that they had to only haul it to
the stops Rocky Ford (68), Ogeechee Station (6), or Dover (5), all
of which were only numbers at that time. From these rail stops the
goods went directly to Savannah to be sold to English merchants or
factors on River Street.

In 1519, Phoebe Alderman Mathis died in childbirth, leaving
ten living children. She was thirty-six years old. They buried
her on the sandy knoll overlooking the Mathis house by a quarter of a mile, the first burial in what was later to be called Brannen Cemetery. Later when her parents died (the date of Jemima's death is not known, but David's death was in 1831), they were buried with her. The year after Phoebe's death, John married Suzannah Edmundson, but continued in the old place. Then, about 1837, the Mathis family along with the Timothy and James Alderman families moved to Brooks County. Later, Timothy and James removed again to the west coast of Florida below Tampa. At their removal from the area, Timothy sold his land to his brother Samuel for the sum of $800.00, three tracts totalling one thousand and thirty-nine acres. John Mathis sold his land to William Brannen. The Samuel Aldermans and William Blands remained in Bulloch County, and their families after them.

On Dec. 26, 1838, Samuel's oldest son Thomas married Polly Ann Porrish, daughter of Ansel Porrish who owned many slaves and built the great millpond on Lotts Creek just below Monk's Ford. On April 11, 1839, Samuel deeded to him the three tracts of land he had purchased from Timothy when he removed to Brooks County. Thomas and Polly Ann set up housekeeping in Timothy's log house fronting on the south fork of the Statesboro-Dublin road. Later, his grandfather David's old buildings at the crossroads having about rotted down. Thomas built on the site a two-story, single-pen frame house with a porch facing south. He divided it into two rooms with a board partition and against it installed an unbelievably steep stair to the loft. The lumber was hauled from Old DeLocch's Mill on Lower Lotts Creek near what is now Claxton, a mill with an up-and-down saw powered by an undershot wheel which had been in operation since Colonial times, sawing heavy framing and rough clapboards used for building houses. They lived in this dwelling until their growing family made it necessary to build a larger house. The house he began in 1853, THE HOUSE, was built directly in front of the old dwelling, on the exact site of his grandfather David's house though it was more elevated than the eroded yard on which the first house was erected. The house was framed in the old style brought from England by the early settlers in the time of King James—a braced-frame house. The sills were hewed out on the site—whole trees—raised on triangular wooden blocks; the joists, mere 3x6's, were laid flat in notches hewed out in the sills so that their surfaces would be flush with the tops of the sills. The uprights were all morticed into the sills. It was the style called plantation plain, facing east, two rooms down and two rooms up, with an open, ten-foot-wide stair hall between, (double-pen) and a wide porch across the front with rail and benches installed around the perimeter. A lean-to with two small rooms and open passage between was built on the back. The clapboards that closed the exterior (all hauled from the same place as the lumber of the first house, DeLocch's Mill) were of random widths and rough—straight from the saw. The windows were not glazed, but closed with wooden shutters hinged on the side. The doors were homemade, of perpendicular boards. The sheathing inside was of wide, planed boards laid horizontally, and the overhead joists (4x6's) on which the upper floors were laid were headed on a hand plane. At the south end of the house facing the old dwelling
which became the kitchen and dining room, was a great open-throated chimney that would have rivalled those of Thomas' ancestors in Massachusetts in the 1600's. It was built by an Irishman named Tom Fire--thus sprang the joke: "It oughta draw good 'cause 'twas built by Tom Fire!" And Tom Fire put the date on his chimney: 1853. The fireplace was in Thomas and Polly Ann's bed chamber; it was six feet in width, and four feet to the lintel, and the mantel shelf was close to seven feet from the hearth, a source of frustration to generations of pilfering children. Two foot bridges with sheltering pitched roofs, one on each side of the monstrous chimney, connected the kitchen house to the rig house, the one from the fireplace room admitting into the kitchen, the one from the porch admitting into the dining room. They were built on the level of the lower kitchen house which was on David's old eroded yard, and that necessitated two doorsteps on the bridges at the house-end to ascend to its level. When cookstoves came, one was installed in front of the kitchen fireplace with an elbow in the stovepipe to connect to the chimney flu, and that ended hearth cookery in that house.

The loft above the kitchen and dining room became the cloth room, and daily Polly Ann and her daughters climbed that ladder-step stairway from the dining room to work at the two spinning wheels and the two sets of looms. Polly Ann singing as she worked the treadles and threw the shuttle back and forth, "Swing Low Sweet Chariot", and "Comin' Thru The Rye". It took a long day from dawn to dusk to weave one yard of cloth five inches wide, and she sold the excess for ten cents a yard. From the windows of that high loft she could see the whole panoramic area about the house, the great virgin pine forests stretching toward William Little's adjoining plantation and endlessly westward, the two lonely intersecting roads, the orchard and garden and fields, the domestic animals and fowls, the accumulating outbuildings: barns, cribs, haylofts, smoke- and sugar-houses, cottonhouse and ginhouse, and the dairy on stilts. And the mysterious limesink to the east, a tree-shaded bottomless pool of water called the Goose Pond because the geese claimed and defended it. Once these feather-bed geese dared honk at a flock of wild geese migrating overhead, and the wild ones flew down and soundly trounced the domesticos for their audacity, and then resumed their high flight.

Thomas took up two more tracts of land for a total of 1434 acres. On one he built a ginpond, with a back-up pond, and installed two sets of 30-inch gins to clean greenseed cotton. This was a full ten years before the Civil War and the place was a center of activity in cotton ginning season. But later in a great spring fresh when no one was on hand to pull the gates, the pond overflowed and broke the dam in five places. After that, Thomas moved the gins back to the house and operated them in the old way, by horsepower--it took all day to gin one bale of cotton to the gin. Once when Thomas' son Remer and an ex-slave who had belonged to Polly Ann's father, quit ginning at nightfall and Jack struck a match to find his hat, the lint in the house fired all over and the men worked mightily to put it out.

Thomas and Polly Ann sent two sons to the Civil War, Chesley who died at Gettysberg, and Ansel who survived to come home in 1865.
In 1870 Ansel married Adeline Olliff, and was deeded the 428-acre tract originally granted to Timothy Algerman in 1827. They began housekeeping in Timothy's old two-room log house, the same in which Thomas and Polly Ann began housekeeping in 1839. Later they built a "nest" house facing on Alderman Road, and moved the old log house to a site behind the new one to be used for a kitchen and dining room (with one of the new cookstoves installed in front of the cooking fireplace) and built a roofed-over bridge to connect the two houses. Later, toward the turn of the century, they added on two more rooms on the north side of the bridge which became a porch--thus an "add-on" house. Facing the porch across the clean-swift side yard was a range of connected houses, eleven in number, mostly log, called "string barns". The buggy shelter was outside the yard so the buggy could be backed into place from the road. A tiny yard of two graves on the north side of the house near the road, one of them Tim's little girl who died of measles, was kept up by the family so long as they held the property, but in later hands was plowed under so that the site is now unknown.

In the 1930's the old Timothy house became so decayed that it was pulled down and a new kitchen was made of the back room of the section facing the side porch and opposite the new well dug at the edge of the porch. Today, only the front part of the house still stands, and it is unoccupied. Ansel's brother Remer married Laura Elizabeth Atkins on Dec. 30, 1880, and next year began on the opposite side of Wolfpen Branch from Ansel, a house that eventually grew to four sections and a length of one hundred and five feet, an add-on which is still standing, but is in ruins and covered with free ranging wisteria vines.

In the early 1930's, fifty years after Thomas' death and thirty years after the death of Ann Jane, his last descendant to live in the house (the land then being in the hands of a grandson), the old cook-house, being in bad-repair and considered to be an anachronism, was pulled down and a kitchen made from one of the shed rooms. And at last the house was glazed downstairs, but never the upper story. Later the great smoke chimney fell, and was replaced by a chimney built in the modern manner. The north chimney, built by a different mason than Tom Red in the newer improved way, was found to be in a weakened condition, so it too was rebuilt. The old house served as a tenant house with a long roster of families living in it, but the old outbuildings were not kept up and so fell in one by one until none were left. Now, bereft of all those periohal houses and sheds and barns, the old Thomas Algerman house still stands, is in repair, and is occupied; but a very strange-looking house indeed in a world of cubes, shotgun, match boxes, ranch houses, and bungalows.

This story would not be complete without mention of the Alderman cemeteries. The knoll where David and Jenima and Phoebe were buried is now called Erman Cemetery, as the Ermanas buried there too, as well as later generations of Aldermans. It is beautifully maintained with proceeds of funds given by descendants of those buried there. The Blands buried on the north side of the Statesboro-Dublin road about a quarter of a mile from the intersecting Bland Road (now called no. 6) on which William and Susanna built their first log cabin, in front of which William II
built a fine antebellum house which still stands. The cemetery is now closed, but the descendants of William and Susannah placed a layer of crushed stone over it so that it would remain in order in perpetuity. The Samuel Alderman cemetery is barely a quarter of a mile from their first old log house, but this one has fallen into ruin. The fence is down, cattle have trampled it, the grave stones are broken and carted away. It is a sad spectacle to see.

Thomas and Polly Ann had their first deaths in 1863, Chesley at Gettysburg (his burial place unknown), and two small children. They buried them a hundred yards behind the house, on that other knoll from the one on which the house stands—the pommel of the saddle on which Old David, Soldier of The Revolution, made his seat.

Thomas died in 1880, aged sixty-four. Polly Ann died fifteen years later, in 1895, aged seventy-six. Both were buried there. This cemetery is under a covenant deed, restricted to the descendants of Thomas and Polly Ann, and is kept up by those descendants.

Birth, life, death, burial, all on the plantation.

NOTE: It is said that when news came of Bill Sherman's approach on Sunday morning before Christmas, 1864, that Thomas, who imbibed freely of brandy, took his 'still and hid it under a clay root near the gin pond and then threw himself in behind it to protect it. He that as it may, the Yankees did find Thomas, and carried him off to their camp near Statesboro, astride his own horse and with his hands tied behind his back. He came home next day—but afoot. But the coil of the old 'still was last seen near an old sawdust pile near the house in the 1920's.

NOTE: Scarcely three hours after the above was written, in the early hours of June 6, this year, 1985, about one in the morning, while a frightful lightening storm swept the area, lightening struck the old cedar tree in the back yard and ran into Thomas' old plantation house and burned it to the ground. The house was a landmark of the Wolfpen community of Bulloch County.

—Laura Rite Turner Wall
The foregoing is a true representation of the line

... dividing the counties of Bute and Bogan.

It was on Tuesday the twelfth of November
We began the work as I do remember
As we climbed along to a little thick branch
We tied to it—tell someone before we could climb
The next thing we came to was to pass out from

It was a thick sort we could not walk through

Bullock's Bay is the first thing that we ski,
Witeat's thick head stuck out of its side
And advancing along we drew near to it
And it was thick we could not walk through it
Cutting an effort and surrounding it near
We found it too thick for a scaffold or a don

So we made the line and in it we will tie
You'll find it in width will one mile wide
With trees and bushes thick on that flat
We think it will do for a prison and cat

Bullock's Bay whatever we'll pursue our course
But find toppy branches of several worse

It is transplanting of it we find it quite tough
With trees and bushes with all very tough
It was all warm without any wind

When we got to one place it had just begun.
If you look at that distance with all quite bare
Everything in the distance looked silent and sad.
When we got out of it

Then showed our course and drew off from it
The next thing we met with was the Caleb's fons.
At that time we was quite found
It was open and here under all day
You may wonder at our ignorance and this is why
Through this other Parts and Continuation to

We left our course in a round and did pursue
They went and ride this land until and after
Where we had to go down and go all hard to creep.

It is six miles wide to pass Bullock and Bay.
And is almost too thick for a boat or for
It was too thick we had to retreat.
And take an effort to when we could judge
We turned this place that is called Expedition.
TWO FRAMED NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS
FOUND IN THE PAPERS OF
WILLIAM LAWTON BRANNEN

These papers are unnamed and undated. The
approximate date of the first article is 1907.
Research will show that the second article is
from the Bulloch Times dated, November 15,
1911.

--Transcribed by Smith C. Banks

"EXPERIENCE."

"Elder Lee Hanks:

"Dear Brother--I send you the experience
of Sister Rogers. Please examine and publish
it if you see fit.

Yours in hope,

H. B. Wilkinson.

Claxton, Ga."

"THE EXPERIENCE"

"Experience of Mrs. Juliann Rogers, wife
of Ervin G. Rogers, deceased, a faithful deacon
of DeLoach church.

"My Dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord--

I have been impressed to write a sketch
of my experience, but I have let it alone
until this late hour. I am now in my 85th
year. Was born May 23, 1822, and married May
27, 1841 to Ervin G. Rogers. Received a hope in Christ, July 1846, and joined the Primitive Baptist, the church of Christ as I believe, the second Saturday in January, 1847. Was baptized on Sunday following by Elder John G. Williams... (illegible)... Christ. I have never forgotten my experience. It is just as bright today as it was in 1846. I must say from my girlhood when I did anything wrong I was chastened. Something would tell me that (it) was wrong. My troubles came on slowly, when I was about twenty years old, and up until my deliverance from the burden of sin, I went mourning, day and night begging for mercy. My troubles grew more heavy. I would get up during the dark hours of the night and go out of doors and try to pray, my eyes looking up to heaven. My prayers seem(ed) to roll off of my lips to the ground. No rest for me! I went back not benefitted, as it seemed. Oh, I was miserable. I would read the good Book, the Bible, and read where I would, it would condemn me. Finally I come to the places where it said, "Seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." In them passages I found some consolation. But my burden was not lightened. I would take my work and my book, and when I thought no one was near-by I would read and cry. If I heard the least noise, thinking it to be someone, I would put my book under my apron. I did not want anyone to know my condition. It seemed the more I tried to pray, the worst I got. Old Brother Barnabas Bennett thought I wanted to join the church and would come to see me and ask me why I did not join. I told him I never would go to the church until I had something to carry. To my surprise in July, 1846, while standing at my loom, mending a thread or something else, do not know exactly what, I found myself singing.

Previous to that time I had no heart to sing. I was in so much trouble. But then I felt a change in soul. I suppose I got out of that loom as quickly as I ever did, praising God! Oh, I did feel so light and so good! I would walk from one house to the other looking up and down. It was the prettiest and best day I ever experienced! About 10 o'clock in the morning I cast my eyes over the branch on a bunch of pines. I thought they resembled the angels of heaven. They did look so good! It was not long before doubts and fears came and I began to pray, "Lord, if I am deceived, undeceive me!" Since the hour of my delivery I have never felt burdened of sin as before. I cannot say that I know I am a Christian, I can only say I have undergone a change. If I am saved, I am a sinner saved by grace. It is a great satisfaction to me to go to meeting and hear good preaching. My time is short in this world. I have a hope when I leave this world that I will go home to my blessed Savior where parting will be no more. Oh, that blessed place to think of! Brethren and sisters in the Lord, can you witness with me? If not I am one to myself. The half has not yet been told. I need the prayers of Christian people."

Note:

Mrs. Juliann M. DeLoach Rogers was a daughter of John Calvin DeLoach. Her daughter, Ursula Amanda Rogers Brannen, is the mother of William Lawton Brannen and also the mother of Sarah Juliann "Annie" Brannen Banks, my grandmother. Elder John G. Williams baptized Juliann. He is my great great great grandfather. Juliann Deloach Rogers is my great great grandmother.

-Smith Callaway Banks-
"OBITUARY"

"Mrs. Julia Ann M. Rogers, a sister, friend and devoted member of the Primitive Baptist Church departed this life at the home of her daughter, Mrs. J. G. Brannen, Oct. 19, 1911. She was a true and consistent member of DeLoach church for nearly sixty-five years. We hope that her soul has returned to the God who gave it. I was with much courage and fortitude that she ran the race set before her.

"Her stay on earth was eighty nine years, four months and twenty seven days, when her dear Savior called her to his arms, which was a sweet relief to her. During her illness she frequently expressed her willingness in prayer to God to take her home.

"We have lived around her, about her and with her for many years and perhaps know as much about her walk and talk in life as any two living. We feel sure that we can truthfully say that she was the most truthful and energetic woman we ever saw in urging Christians to do their duty in a Christian-like manner. Her beautiful life caused her to be loved by all who knew her, and has left a lasting impression. Even her very young grandchildren often speak of grandmother's righteousness and her upright conversations and how much they desire to follow in her footsteps.

"The number of years that she lived fully ripened her so that when her Savior called her, she was prepared to drop off into His everlasting arms, there to join her dutiful husband, Irvin G. Rogers, whose soul took its flight when he was eighty two years, eight months, and twenty-five days old.

"We feel sure that they are hand in hand in the New Jerusalem, God's glory which no other sing except those who press forward to the mark of the prize of the most high calling as did those two model saints.

"She is survived by four brothers and three sisters, viz: J. Hoyt DeLoach, R. W. DeLoach, Z. T. DeLoach, and Mrs. W. W. Williams, of Bulloch County; W. H. DeLoach and Mrs. Amanda Roach, of Tattnall County and Mrs. Emma Mikell, of Savannah, the oldest of whom is J. Hoyt DeLoach, who is now in his eighty-eighth year; the youngest, Mr. Z. T. DeLoach.

"She is also survived by eight children, viz: Mrs. Martha Lanier, of Bryan County; J. E. Rogers, W. H. Rogers, Mrs. J. G. Williams, Mrs. Mike Akins and Mrs. J. G. Brannen, of Bulloch County; Mrs. Matilda DeLoach and J. L. DeLoach, of Tattnall county, the youngest of whom is fifty-one.

"Though her children are advanced in age, she received the same excellent attention and tender care by them that could have been rendered by children of any age. They stood by her bedside during her illness in readiness to do anything in their power for her comfort and relief; but after all, they had to undergo the sad experience of seeing their precious old mother breathe her last and pass over into the great beyond. Approximately one hundred and seventy grandchildren and great-grandchildren survive her."
"We believe and hope that her Christian life and suffering death will have a lasting impression on those who stood around her deathbed and heard her sweet words of consolation and craving to meet her dear Savior in that world so high and fair. We feel today that we can view them lying in the tomb reunited in arms of our dear Savior who has promised never to leave or forsake them.

"Sleep on, dear saints, in the great eternally,
When you've been there ten thousand years,
Bright-shining as the sun,
You've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when you first begun."

"There everlasting spring abides,
And never-fading flowers;
And infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain."

"The interment took place on Oct. 20th, in the cemetery at DeLoach's and the funeral was conducted by Elder H. B. Wilkinson, the second Sunday in November at DeLoach's Church.

MRS. EMMIE MIKELL
J. G. BRANNEN"

JAMES C. HODGES
AND
THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

By
Smith C. Banks

Yesterday, November 23, 1991, I "unearthed" from my files the poem shown below. It is titled, "The Finding of James Hodges, A Wounded Soldier on the Battlefield in Maryland", and was written by J. W. Alderman. I felt challenged to see what information I had in my files and records about the folks mentioned in the poem or connected with the poem. These people are all my relatives. I am pleased to share my findings.

James C. Hodges, the subject of the poem, was a young school teacher in an Old Field School in the Westside section of Bulloch County. No doubt, he was responsible for the literacy of many of my family members! I write this as a tribute to James C. Hodges, in appreciation of his scholarly efforts. Hodges was my father's Great Grand Uncle, a brother to my Great Great Grandmother, Sarah Hodges Brannen, wife of Alexander Brannen, Jr. Hodges was my mother's first cousin-once removed. He was my Grandmother, Sallie Alderman Smith's, first cousin.

George Washington Nichols, who wrote, A Soldier's Story of His Regiment, refers to James Hodges as, "an excellent school teacher" and "my old professor". I would like to think that because of Hodges teachings, Nichols was inspired to write his fine book. In writing the book, Nichols reported Hodges' death, and because of the book, William Alderman's poem
was published. We, the later generations, are the richer because we have all this recorded knowledge.

Here is the poem:

"THE FINDING OF JAMES HODGES
A WOUNDED SOLDIER
ON
THE BATTLEFIELD IN MARYLAND

by
J. W. Alderman

1
Oh, in this land so far from home,
My Mother's son was bound to roam
In search of one whom I did love,
Who in this bloody war has served.

2
But, Oh! Alas! My friend I found,
All in blood upon the ground.
No cheering friend to raise his head,
Or comfort with a tender word.

3
Now to my knees I did fall and say:
"Dear Jimmie how are you today."
His mind was so deranged with pain,
He did not answer though I asked again.

4
I washed and dressed his broken head,
Which was bad, I too have said.
His broken head, skull and brain
Was all exposed to sun and rain.

5
I closely watched both night and day-
Obeyed his calls in every way-
Hoping he'd get well again,
Although the wound was in the brain.

6
But Oh! Alas! he had to die,
And leave me here to mourn and cry.
My heart did tremble ache and smart,
To see my friend from me depart.

7
Dear James is gone and here I stay,
In trouble and toil from day to day.
His soul to a world of bliss is gone,
His mother and brother there to join.

8
But if like James my life I yield,
While here on this bloody battle-
field,
I hope to meet him around the throne
Where wars and sorrows are unknown.

9
Now in Maryland I am and as a
prisoner I am bound.
No cheering friend or kindred nigh
Which brings on me the deepest sigh.

10
Now to his father who loved him dear,
and watched his steps with tender care,
While raising him to be a man,
Not knowing he'd die in a foreign land.
Now to his brothers I would say, Whatever you intended you may, Perhaps like James soon die, Then all your works you must lay by.

Now to the sisters of this youth Pray seek and love this holy truth, And pray to meet your brother where There are no wars to interfere.

Now to the circle of his friends The monster death that God will send, For he will lay your bodies cold And to himself He'll take your soul.

To hear the cannons loudly roar And men all standing in a row, To face the balls and grapeshot too- Some must be killed no telling who.

To see young men torn up with bombs, And knowing they are some mother's son, How would it make a mother feel to see her son dead on a battlefield?

In battles fought and wars of old, I have read and oft been told. But never viewed such awful scenes, Until this bloody war has been.

Now to his pupils young and fair, Your kind teacher is done with care, While you are here to mourn and cry, Your teacher dwells above the sky.

(I had added this note):
"Typed from a copy made by H. A. Alderman-June 20th, 1921
August 17, 1967."

Math Alderman kept this copy of the poem in his safe at his store in Statesboro. I borrowed the poem from "Mr. Math" and made this note when I copied it. At the time, I knew of only one copy of Nichols' books. The one printed in 1898. It belonged to the someone in the Nichols family in Jesup.

James C. Hodges was the son of Joseph Caruthers Hodges and Mary Ann Alderman. He joined the Confederate Army on September 9, 1861 as a private in the "DeKalb Guards". This unit was Company D, 61st Georgia Infantry Regiment. He was later appointed Sergeant. James was mortally wounded in the Battle of Antietam, at Sharpsburg, Maryland, on September 17, 1862 and died eleven days later in a Field Hospital. "Jimmie", as he was called, was born February 4, 1839 and died September 28, 1862. He was only 23 years old.

The poem was written by J. W. Alderman, an uncle to James C. Hodges. He was known as, "Uncle William", and served in the same company as Jimmie. William was eight years older than Jimmie. As the poem states, he found Jimmie dying on the battlefield.

H. A. Alderman, who copied the poem in 1921 was a son of J. W. Alderman. He was Dr. Hiram Alonzo Alderman, familiarly known as "Dr. Lonnie." Dr. Lonnie, was a highly respected physician and lived in Portal. He was my Grandmother Sallie Alderman Smith's first cousin and also a first cousin to Jimmie.
Hodges. Dr. Alderman was born in 1877.

J. W. Alderman is James Timothy William Alderman, eleventh child of Samuel and Sarah Chestnut Alderman. When he grew up he was known as William and signed as "J. W. Alderman." He joined the Confederate Army and was a member of "DeKalb Guards" from Bulloch County. This company was officially known as Company D, Georgia Volunteer Infantry, Evan's Brigade, Gordon's Division, Army of Northern Virginia, Confederate States of America. According to A Roster of Confederate Soldiers of Bulloch County, Georgia, Uncle William, joined the company as a private, Sept. 9, 1861, and was later appointed a Third Sergeant. He was reported missing at the Battle of Cedar Creek, Va., October 19, 1864, but he had been captured. In Verse 9 of the poem, Uncle William calls himself "a prisoner". I wonder if the poem was written while he was in a Yankee prison? William died November 13, 1886.

The following is the letter Uncle William wrote home to Jimmie's sister-in-law, Ruth Hendrix Hodges, wife of Asbury W. Hodges. It concerns Jimmie's last requests; and money in Jimmie's wallet belonging to Jimmie's brother, Asbury, (this had been sent home to Joseph C. Hodges, Jimmie's and Bury's father); and also gives circumstances of Jimmie's death. The letter also mentions the two Hodges sisters, Penny and Sarah and G. W. Nichols:

"Hamilton's Crossing
March 24th 1863

Dear Rutha,

I thot I would write you a few more lines to let you no I recived your kind & cheering letter a few days ago, but has not had a chance to answer it till since drilling this morning. I have put on my dinner & thot I would write home while it is cooking. Perhaps you would like to no what I am cooking for dinner. Well, I've bought some peas & has just washed them and put them in the pot with some bacon that we drawed but I've got no good corn bread to eat with them when they get done. It will be fat meat, peas & biscuits for dinner. I would be mity glad of some of your good bread.

Rutha, I dont no that I ever tod you anything about the money you sent Asbury last summer & how it went. I think I rote to Penny about it if I didnt to you. I was present when Jimmie opened the letter, & there was ten dollars in it, & he asked me what to do with it, & I told him to keep it & maybe Bury would come back some time & want it, & Bury never came during his lifetime, & when I got to Jimmie after he was wounded & took his Pocket book from his pocket, he was able to tell me there was ten dollars for Bury. He said he had saved it for him & he had never come & he says, Uncle Wm., you must take care of it for him. Well Jimmie, I will do that if I live to get back to the Co. & when I got back to the co., (I) didn't no anything of Bury, & I didn't no that I ever would see him anymore. So I thot it best to send the money with Jimmie's & I put it in the Capt's hands to send home. I want you to have your money if you have not got it for that was Jimmie's dieing request & it was my promis & I do believe he put all confidence in me that I would do what was right, & that is the way I wish to do at all time. The old man Joseph may think it belonged to Jimmie as it was put with his. I dont no that I ever told you
about it but I think I did Penny or some of the family. Jimmie was always such a good boy to me. I want his affairs fixed right & more especially, what he left in my care. I guess I’ve rote enough about that for you all to understand it, if not & any of you wish to ask me any questions about it, do so, for I think I’m calculated to answer correctly, for I knew more about Jimmie’s affairs than anybody else in the Co.

Well, Rutha, I’ve not heard from Bury lately as he is gone to the hospital again, but I guess he has rote to you all about that. My health is very good yet, also the rest of the Co. G. W. Nickles is quite harty, he has bin washing today. The weather is pretty cold yet, & it looks very much like snow today. This is the coldest country I ever was in. I see no preparations at all for another crop.

I’m glad to hear of you and all the rest of the neighbours getting along so well. The last letter you sent Bury came here day before yesterday bearing date the 13th. I broke it and read it & it done me most as much good as if it had bin for me. I tell you it was a cheering letter. Bury told me to read them & then send them or their contents to him.

I don’t see no more prospect of peace now than when I first came to Va. The yankees are up in the balloon most every day. It seems like I get almost out of hart sometimes of ever having peace while I live. Oh! how I want peace & (to) go home to my Dear friends. May the Lord give us strength to bear our troubles with patience.

I remain as ever your friend & Affinity,

WILLIAM ALDERMAN

Do write soon & tell Sarah to write for I think the time long.

(This and letters written by and to Asbury ("Bury") W. Hodges are published in A Bulloch Tapestry, Reading in Bulloch County History: Book 6; page 85. That article was written and transcribed by David R. Williams. He used my collection of these letters. Asbury was in Co. D, 61st Georgia Infantry Regiment, the "DeKalb Guards", was later discharged and joined the 1st Georgia Regiment and was killed at Battle of Peachtree Creek, July 22, 1864.)

George W. Nichols, author of A Soldier’s Story of His Regiment, gives the account of the Battle of Antietam. Here it is as it is taken from pages 52-54 of his book:

".... We left Harper’s Ferry on the evening of the 16th of September. We had to march all night, crossed the Potomac at Shepherdstown at midnight, and rejoined Lee and were in line of battle at daylight at Sharpsburg or Antietam Creek.

"McClellan attacked Lee with his massed forces. He had Pope’s and his own armies combined, which made over 120,000 men. Pope had been relieved of the command and the cautious little "Mc." put in command of both armies.

"The battle raged all day with fearful loss of life on both sides. At one time the Union army broke Lee’s lines, but it was soon retaken and established, and was held the remainder of the day. It was all General Lee could do to hold the lines with Jackson’s corps added to his own forces."
"If Jackson had not come, with lightning-like speed, from Harper's Ferry and joined Lee, it looked like Lee would have been crushed by General McClellan's powerful army, which was as large as two of Lee's and Jackson's combined. Here our brigade lost its commander, the brave Colonel Marcellus Douglas, of the Thirteenth Georgia Regiment, was killed and our good Major A. P. McRae. Lieutenant Colonel Crowder, of the Thirty-first Georgia Regiment, was severely wounded. Major W. H. Battey, of the Thirty-eighth Georgia Regiment, and probably other field officers were killed. Lieutenant T. L. Moss, of Company G, Sixty-first Georgia Regiment, was also killed. Captain Daniel McDonald was severely wounded.

"The Thirty-eighth Georgia Regiment carried only 123 men into battle. After fighting hard all day their losses were forty killed and fifty-five wounded. At night they had only twenty-eight men and three officers left. Lieutenants Wells, Baxter and Matthews were the officers left. Company K carried eleven men into the battle commanded by Corporal James E. Chandler. He and four of the men were killed. In this battle company D, of the Sixty-first Georgia Regiment, was in a very good position, among some large rocks. Our casualties were not as great as some other companies.

"Sergeant James C. Hodges was mortally wounded, his brain being shot out. He lived eleven days before death came to his relief. He was one of the best boys I ever saw, and an excellent school teacher. (He was my old professor.) He was almost an idol in his company and regiment, and the community in which he lived before the war, and with his pupils in school. Our officers left his uncle, William Alderman, to take care of him and the other wounded of our regiment. Alderman composed some verses on "Jimmie," which you will find at the close of this chapter."

(Note by Smith C. Banks: This is the same poem as shown above but the title is different. It reads:
"THE FINDING OF A WOUNDED AND DYING SOLDIER BOY.")

"The battle ceased before dark, with both armies holding about the same position that they held before the battle began. Next day both armies buried their dead. General Lee leisurely crossed the Potomac river at Shepherdstown ford, (with Jackson bringing up the rear), back into the Shenandoah valley. A part of McClellan's forces followed the retreating Confederates. Jackson backed off a mile or two and formed some of his men in line (Hill's Division), and permitted a few thousand Yankees to cross the river. He then made a dash on them and drove them panic-stricken back. Some of the Union army fell off the bluff, fifty or sixty feet, into the river and were killed. When the Union army was passing through the old Sharpsburg battlefield one little Dutchman went by the hospital tents, where our hospital nurse (Alderman) was cooking for the sick and wounded. He asked Alderman for some of his bread. Alderman gave him some bread, and asked him where he was going. The Dutchman replied, "We dosh be going to hunt Shockson." Alderman said the little Dutchman was gone about three hours and returned, wet all over and his hat and gun gone. He had been churning the Potomac river trying to get back. He called on Alderman again on his return, who asked him if he found Jackson. The Dutchman
replied, "Vel, yas, and he dohsh give us hell dish day."

George W. Nichols, the author, was another of the Alderman cousins. He was a third cousin to the Hodges brothers. After the war he married Jency Parrish. She was a daughter of Absolom Parrish and Rebecca Alderman. Jency was a first cousin to the Hodgeses and a third cousin to her husband.

Thirty years after the death of Jimmie Hodges, family members were still remembering him. This is shown in an excerpt of a letter written in 1893, by Samuel W. Hodges of Providence, Florida. Samuel, born Jan 24, 1844, was another brother to Jimmie and Asbury Hodges. He too, was a member of Company D. of the 61st Regiment Georgia Infantry. Samuel was listed as S. W. Hodges. He enlisted in the army as a private October 31, 1861. He was discharged because of a disability on December 25, 1861. The letter is addressed to my Great Grandfather, James Gross Brannen. Brannen is the son of Alexander Brannen, Jr. and his wife, Sarah Ann Hodges Brannen. Sarah Ann is a sister to the Hodges brothers. An excerpt of a note in the letter addresses "Sister Sarah Ann" and concerns a picture taken of Samuel and Jimmie some time late in 1861. The picture showed the brothers in their Confederate uniforms. Jimmie would have been 22 years old and Samuel would have been 17 years old. Here is the excerpt:

"Providence, Florida
May 28, 1893

"Sister Sarah Ann,

"...... Sister, I wish that if it bes
plum agreeable that you would send me by
register(ed) mail mine and my brother James's
Uniform pictures so that I might show the same
to all my children that they might see where I
have stood and in what position my youngest
days ......?...... are when in my prime like
they are now. If you should do so, send it to
Providence, Fla. by registered letter and I
will be very thankful. Besides, I will pay
all mail fees and as soon as I can I will send
for the same a picture of myself now.

"Sister, I now have written, it seems to
me, to you both all that's necessary for one
time as I have come very nervous in my old
days and my understands on matters and things
are in the same shape, so no more from
Your older Brother,

SAMUEL W. HODGES

(write often)"

We will never know if Sarah sent Samuel the
picture. I hope that she did and that it
survives today. It would truly be a treasure!

The following notes about the Hodges family
are taken from records in Alderman in America.
Samuel W. Hodges, who wrote this letter, (and
Jimmie, Asbury and Thomas M., etc.), are the
sons of Joseph Caruthers Hodges and grandsons
of Joseph Hodges, Revolutionary Soldier and
great grandsons of Revolutionary War Soldiers,
Joshua Hodges, Sr. and David Alderman, all
Soldiers of North Carolina.

Joseph Caruthers Hodges, was born August 7,
1801 and married Mary Ann Alderman, daughter
of Samuel Alderman. She was born January 10,
1813 and died in 1860. They married March 4,
1828. Both are buried in the Samuel Alderman Cemetery, Bulloch County, Georgia.

Children:
1. Asbury W. Hodges b. 1829 d. 1864 m. Ruth Hendrix
   *Killed Battle of Peachtree Creek
2. Sarah Ann Hodges b. 1831 d. 1920 m. Alexander Brannen
3. Wesley A. Hodges b. 1832 d. 1862
   *Killed at Cold Harbor, Va.
4. Katherine J. Hodges b. 1834 d. 1904 m. Bryant Wilkerson
5. Penelope S. Hodges b. 1836 d. 1908 m. Richard Scarboro
6. Thomas M. Hodges b. 1837 d. 1863 m. Annie Lanier
   *Died CSA Hospital, Atlanta, Ga.
7. James C. Hodges b. 1839 d. 1862
   *Died CSA Hospital, Antietam, Md.
8. Mary A. Hodges b. 1842 d. 1844 X
9. Samuel W. Hodges b. 1844 d. 1911 m. Sarah Atwood
   *Disabled in the War
10. Joseph A.G. Hodges b. 1846 d. 1871 m. Susan Summerlin
11. Ansel H. Hodges b. 1848 d. 1916 m. Pollyanne Roundtree
12. Hiram Caruthers Hodges b. 1853 d. 1871 m. Ellen Wilkerson
13. Hardy Nathan Hodges b. 1855 d. ? m.
   1. Ida V. Turner
   2. Katie Mizelle

As you can see, the Hodges family paid a heavy toll in the War Between the States. The family had four brothers killed and one brother disabled! Wesley A. Hodges was in the "DeKalb Guards", too. He had enlisted at the same time as Samuel, Asbury, Jimmie. He was killed at Cold Harbor, Va. on June 27, 1862. This was just two months before Jimmie was killed. Another brother, Thomas M. Hodges was in Company C, 47th Regiment of Georgia Infantry, the "Bulloch Guards". He died in the Institute Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, December 12, 1863. He is buried in Atlanta at Oakland Cemetery. Samuel W. Hodges was the only survivor of the five oldest Hodges sons and he was disabled! The son-in-laws were also away at war. The wives, widows and children were having a difficult time at home, too. They were left with the responsibilities of running the family farms. They also paid a heavy toll.

The Hodges, Brannen, Nichols and Alderman families all lived very near each other. All were in the path of Sherman's Raiders when they came through Bulloch County. Sherman's men showed little mercy to our families!

This Hodges family was not the only family with a sad war story! Almost every family in the South had its own tragedy connected to the War. We are fortunate to have so very much of this story written down, recorded in letters and other written materials. It is the best documented account of any of my family stories about The War Between the States. The Hodges and most of their kinfolk and neighbors were literate people. I like to think that this story of Jimmie Hodges is preserved because of what he, the school teacher, had taught his pupils. He taught them to read and write!

"THANKS, UNCLE JIMMIE!"
PRINTED SOURCES FOR FURTHER READING:


Bulloch County Historical Society; A Bulloch Tapestry—Readings in Bulloch County History: Book 6; 1987.

Nichols, G. W.; A Soldier's Story of His Regiment. (61st Georgia); Reprint 1988.

Parker, William Alderman; Aldermans in America; Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Co.; 1975.

Register, Alveretta Kenan; Bulloch County, Georgia—Genealogical Source Material; Swainsboro, Georgia; 1985.

All these books are available for research or for sale at the Statesboro Regional Library.

GENERAL SHERMAN'S ARMY AND THE BANKS' FERRY

By SMITH CALLAWAY BANKS

Yesterday, after searching for over 35 years, I finally rediscovered the only printed reference that I ever read of THE BANKS' FERRY and of its being the place where General Sherman's right wing crossed over the Ogeechee River to join his left wing during the March to the Sea.

Here is the reference as it was written by Gene Fletcher for the Bulloch Herald on December 1, 1955. Gene wrote his article based on an earlier article written by Mr. Jim "Hawkeye" Miller, an editor of one of the Bulloch newspapers in the early 1900's. The story was titled, "Newspaper account of Battle of Civil War fought in Statesboro".

Here is the second paragraph of the article:

"The main wings of Sherman's army which consisted of about 60,000 battle-hard veterans, had divided and were using the river roads on both sides of the Ogeechee River. But the southern wing of the great federal army, in its march from Atlanta to the sea, swung down the Moore's road, about if not where U.S. 80 now runs, thru Statesboro, and joined the main army in crossing the Ogeechee River at what was known as BANKS FERRY, near where Cone's Steel Bridge is now located and a ferry where Jenck's Bridge now stands. There being no bridges in that day (There were bridges in that day, of course, but none on..."
that part of the Ogeechee.)"

The BANKS FERRY, to my knowledge, had never been referred to or mentioned anywhere except in this article. Later Miss Dorothy Brannen mentions it in her History of Old Bulloch, in writing about Sherman’s March. I am certain that she had read Mr. Miller’s article mentioning the BANKS FERRY.

Because most of my older Banks relatives died when I was very young, I knew almost nothing about the exact site of the Banks family home in Bryan County. My dad did tell me that they were members of Lower Black Creek Primitive Baptist Church in Bryan County and lived in the vicinity of the church. In my dad’s younger days he had visited in the homes of his Banks cousins. No doubt this was during the times my granddaddy was preaching at Lower Black Creek Church. I had also found old Church Association Minutes in my Grandfather David C. Banks’ papers. These were from the 1840’s and 1850’s and showed Simeon Banks and his son, Elisha, as being clerks or delegates of Lower Black Creek Church. The records in the Georgia Archives show that Simeon Banks was the 1842 Senator from Bryan County in the Georgia Legislature when the Capitol was in Milledgeville.

In the 1970’s I decided that I would try to locate the home place of my Great Great Grandfather Simeon Banks. The only way for me to do this was to search the Banks deeds in the Bulloch and Bryan County courthouses and make rough sketches of the land by using the descriptions given in the deeds when Simeon bought the lands in the 1830’s. This land is situated on the Ogeechee River and more or less straddles the Bulloch-Bryan County line. I knew that the home place was located in Bryan because Simeon was listed in all the Bryan County census records after 1840.

Simeon moved to Bryan from his farm that was situated on banks of Skull Creek and bordering the Ogeechee River in what was then Emanuel County (now Jenkins). This tract consisted of about 2,000 acres and was sold to Littleberry Johnson. This was part of the land that Simeon’s father, Elisha Fowler Banks, had settled when he came to Georgia in the early 1790’s from South Carolina. This land had been in Screven County and became Bulloch County (in 1796) and then became Emanuel County (in 1812) when it was created. Now the land is located in Jenkins County which was created in the 1900’s.

It is fun to note that the land did not move, it is on the same spot where Elisha F. Banks settled, but it has been in four different counties. It is interesting to note that this land is located along “The Old River Road”, as the road is called in Bulloch County (sometimes it is referred to as the “Milledgeville Road”). The new place Simeon bought in Bulloch and Bryan Counties is located on this same “Old River Road”.

Today the land is located about a mile from Blitchton on the paved “new” River Road. Blitchton is located on U.S. Highway 80 (known locally as the Savannah Highway) at the intersection of US Highway 280 (The road from Pembroke --called “Black Creek Road” in the 19th century) and the “new” River Road. The Savannah Highway (U.S. 00) crosses the Ogeechee River at Jenck’s Bridge. The original “Old River Road” came into the Savannah Road much closer to the river than it
The day I did my search for the Banks land was a dreary, rainy day in March. I had my county maps and rough sketches as I drove from Stilson to Ivanhoe and toward Blitchton on the paved "new" River Road. About a mile from Blitchton I stopped at a house that I thought should be on old Banks land and I knocked at the door. A Mr. Shumans answered the door. When I told him what I was trying to find, he said, "Yes. This is part of the old Banks home place. The site where the old house stood is in the woods on the other side of the field -- here, back of the house. I'll drive you as close as we can get in my truck and then we can walk the rest of the way."

Mr. Shumans told me that we would see an "Old Stage Coach Road" before we got to the home site. He said that this road was really the Old River Road and that the road had been in use for 150 years until the present road was paved in the late 1940's. The old road was hard-packed dirt and sand and the tracks were about a foot or more deeper than the land around it and was grown-up with trees. There were bigger pines growing in the rest of the woods. As we went deeper into the woods, I was told that I should watch my step--this was rattlesnake territory! After a while we came to the site of the Banks home. All that we found there was thick forest and a gigantic oak tree. Mr. Shumans told me that there was a very deep well somewhere around where the house had stood. The well was supposed to be one of the deepest wells in this section and was supposed to have the coldest water around. I should think that this well is a terrible hazard today, if it has been left uncovered.

I asked him about the BANKS FERRY. He said, "Oh, yes. The old ferry was down on the river. You can still see the pilings and the cable. Come back when the weather is better and we'll go up the river in my boat. We'll put in at Jenck's Bridge and go up the river a piece, it's not far."

I'm sorry to say that I never visited him again. And I regret that I have never been up the river in a boat to find the site.

The only other reference I know of for a BANKS FERRY was from Scott Collins when he read his research paper that won him a national history award when he was at Georgia Southern College.

Scott's paper was about the Young family of early Bulloch County who lived at Blitch who had owned the property now owned by the Jones Lane Family.

It seems that Scott found reference to one of the Youngs having a partnership with Simeon Banks or one of the Banks sons in a ferry business. Scott now lives in Washington, D.C. and I have been unable to get more information.

The first week in December 1864, is the time that the Union Army would have arrived at the Banks home and at THE BANKS FERRY. With our knowledge of how the Yankee raiding parties operated we can know that Simeon Banks's home and property were totally devastated by Sherman's army!!! Imagine!!! 30,000 men---Sherman's Bummers, who had burned, looted, stolen and pillaged anything and everything they wanted from Atlanta to Banks' Ferry on the Ogeechee ---all "bottle-necked" here ---all camped out and lined-up in the yards and fields at the Simeon Banks home
place. All waiting to cross the Ogeechee River. I wonder if they had a pontoon bridge set up across the river in addition to the ferry to make their crossings faster??

Simeon Banks was 75 years old at the time all this happened and would have been considered a very old man. His two sons, Amos Banks and Simeon Callaway Banks (my great great grandpa) and grandson, Thomas E. Banks were already dead, or would soon die in The War. His two grandsons, sons of Elisha Banks, had done their duty—Charles F. Banks was in Elmira, N.Y. in a Yankee prison and John Calvin Banks was at home sick with T.B.—sent home from the army to die. Simeon would have had the responsibility of looking after his daughters-in-law and their many children.

Simeon had been considered a wealthy man in Bryan County in 1860. I am certain that after the Yankees left his home in those early days of December 1864, Simeon could have been called a pauper. Those Yankees literally took the food out of the mouths of the orphaned Banks children! Our family traditions has it that the family almost starved to death!!

I can only imagine how bad conditions were. After The War the orphaned Banks children were given to other members of the Banks family to be raised. Because of these unfortunate circumstances, much of the lore and legends of our family was lost. My Grandfather, Elder David C. Banks, loved family history and loved his relatives and loved to talked about his relatives. With his preaching all over Southeast Georgia, he would have asked all the questions I now would like to ask. And he would have had the answers! He would have known the Banks traditions and lore. I am told that he would claim a cousin to the "tenth generation". He died when I was too young to be interested in these things and his own children were bored with hearing him tell his stories, therefore, all his knowledge of his family was for nothing and was lost. It is for this reason that I have written this paper.

SMITH CALAWAY BANKS
14 AUGUST 1991
WALTER HENDRICKS’ RECOLLECTIONS ON EARLY U. S. MAIL DELIVERY
--by Rita Turner Wall

The old mail route was a very long route. It began at Swainsboro, Ga. and went to Parrish’s millpond on Fifteen-Mile-Creek where it crossed the pond dam and meandered eastward by now mostly forgotten post offices to Upper Lott’s Creek Church where it crossed the creek bridge (described in an early 1812 report as a puncheon bridge) and served post offices Laston, All Sam, Star, and others now mostly forgotten, and on to Statesboro.

Walter Hendricks, born Oct. 21, 1873, and his three brothers, teen-agers drove the old mail cart which he described as the product of the combined efforts of a wheelwright and a blacksmith, big wooden wheels with iron rims, wooden body with homespun cloth hood waterproofed with beeswax and turpentine. He said the old cart was heavy as a long cart! But when the weather was good and the mail not too heavy, they would go in the buggy which made much better time. Walter felt that he and his brothers were instrumental in starting the modern rural mail delivery system. It came about in this way: it was during that time that Walter and his brothers carried the mail from Swainsboro to Statesboro on a route that took them by that famous old mill pond, Parrish’s, now on the National Register of Historic Places. At the east end of the dam a man named R. T. Smith kept the post office named Ray Branch. Mail would be exchanged there, and they would move on to Statesboro or back to Swainsboro as the case might be. A man named R. C.

Patterson made himself a neat pine board box and nailed it to a dead pine tree by the side of the road at Sam’s Creek some seven or eight miles east of Ray Branch post office. When the boys left Ray Branch the mail for Patterson was given to them by postmaster Smith and when they came to his box they allowed the mail in there, and Patterson would come and get it at his leisure or convenience. And at Christmas time, to show his appreciation for their personal service to him he would meet them at the box and give them a quarter. Some time back then, Tom Watson passed that way electioneering and saw that box, and Walter believed that gave him the idea for rural mail delivery. And so a Bulloch County man had a hand in creating the rural mail delivery system of the United States.

The following photograph of the old store-
Post Office Laston, near Upper Lott’s Creek Church by Conrad Vogel.
Minnie Stewart Evans
Educator and Religious Leader

Minnie Stewart Evans was born in Coats, North Carolina in Harnett County. Her parents were Hillery and Larceny Stewart. Minnie was born on their 500 acre farm of which the father sold timber, operated a sawmill, and several other small businesses to pay for the property that he had purchased. Hillery and Larceny were the parents of twenty children of which Minnie was the 18th.

Minnie began her formal schooling around 1917 where she attended the rural Black River Grove School. This was a small one-room school which comprised grades 1-5. To attend grades 6 & 7, she had to move to the small town of Coats. She moved to Coats and lived with one of her sisters. She attended school and helped the sister raise her nine nieces and nephews. Upon completion of the 7th grade at the Coats school, her education was interrupted for the next 5 years. However, Minnie never gave up on continuing her education. Five years later she enrolled at the Harnett County Training School in Dunn, North Carolina. She persisted and earned her high school diploma in 1932.

Having completed high school and unable to attend college immediately, Minnie continued to be thirsty for knowledge and a career in teaching. This void was to be filled when she entered the Fayetteville State Teachers College in 1937. This was not only an exciting year for Minnie because she was entering college, but this was also the year she married James Evans. She matriculated at
Since her husband was a farmer and felt he needed her home to assist in the operation of the farm, Minnie did not attend school for the next two years. Being a persistent and persuasive person, she convinced her husband that she desired to complete her education program began at Fayetteville State Teachers College. He tended the farm for the next two years while she attended college. She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from the Teachers College the summer of 1943.

Although Minnie was a very good student in college and maintained good grades to prepare her for teaching, she did not begin teaching immediately. She would not begin teaching until 1943, after she had devoted the next four years to the care of their child, Vivian Elaine. (They also have a son, Ranier Decarlo Evans).

In 1947, she received a message from Fayetteville State Teachers' College president, Dr. Seabrook. He informed her that he had received word that there was a need for a Teachers College graduate to teach school in Bulloch County Georgia. From President Seabrook's and Miss Theodoria Thomas' recommendations, she obtained her first official teaching position in Bulloch County.

She was employed to teach in a Bulloch County School located in Mt Olive Church near the Evans County (Claxton) line. There she taught with enthusiasm and commitment for two years (1947-1949) in grades 1-7. The next appointment

of both teaching and principalship from the Bulloch County School Superintendent was in 1949 when she was moved to the Harmony School which was located in Harmony Baptist Church. There she taught a combination of grades 1-7. During the spring of 1949 she became ill, and Laura Bell Martin taught her class until she recovered and returned to school the following fall.

Minnie instructed for the remainder of her teaching career in several schools of the system. She taught at the Piney Grove School for approximately 15 years. At this school near Denmark, she taught 5th, 6th, and 7th grades. Upon consolidation of the school in Bulloch County, Minnie taught in Nevill for several weeks. Then she was placed at the Julia F. Bryant School in Statesboro for two years where she taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. Here last 12 years of teaching in Bulloch county were completed at Brooklet Elementary School. There she taught reading and mathematics. While employed in the Bulloch county system, she worked with Dennis Raith, Billie Rice, and Linca Lewis in Brooklet. While employed at Julia F. Bryant School, she had the opportunity to work with Mr. Julius Abrahams. She also worked with Mr. J. D. Redwine and Mr. Rufus Butler who was a principal and whose name is remembered by Butler Homes.

In the community in which she was employed as an educator, Minnie was not only involved in the schooling of boys and girls but also very active in community affairs.
As a pianist, she has taught music to numerous boys and girls. This music instruction was often provided at the church-schools where she worked and for many years, she taught music in her home. She loved music and wished to pass the ability to play and enjoy music on to others through her teaching.

Minnie began her work as a religious leader at an early age when she became a member of the Coats Chapel Freewill Baptist Church of Coats, North Carolina. One of her earliest recollections of church work was when, as a little girl, she was asked to become church secretary. She accepted this position with reservation, but her brother assisted her with keeping records and she soon became a very capable and accurate church secretary.

Being a very good musician, especially with Christian music, Minnie has performed as musician for numerous churches in the areas several of the churches in which she has played, she was instrumental in organizing church choirs. She has been musician at the following churches: Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Harmony Baptist Church, Pine Grove Baptist Church, Little Bethel Baptist Church of Brooklet, Bethel Primitive Baptist Church, Magnolia Baptist Church, and Scarboro Grove Baptist Church of Portal.

In Bulloch County, Minnie has distinguished herself in the religious community through her unselfish dedication and commitment to working for Christ and helping others. She was instrumental in maintaining the Sunday Schools of several churches. Noteworthy is her work with the Education and Youth Departments of the Original First African Baptist Church. She served many years as a Sunday School teacher not only for the youth of the church but also for the adult Sunday School Class.

Minnie's most outstanding and noteworthy service to mankind is through her church involvement. She has given innumerable hours of missionary work to helping the less fortunate. She is well known in the community as a person who will help the less fortunate in any way possible. Through her work as a a member of the Original First African Baptist Church Missionary Society, she continues to visit the sick and provide food and other goods and services for poor if she knows they need help. She has been named mother of the church for more than twenty years. This position of respect and honor is delegated to that female of the church who exhibits those qualities of love, carina, and concern for any member of the the church and community.

Minnie has help or been a part of numerous organizations and efforts of the church. She has served as president of the Deaconess for three years. She was the principal organizer of the Weekly Prayer Service Meetings, and has served as president of the Original First African Baptist Church’s Senior Choir.

Minnie did not relinquish her love of working with children when she retired from teaching after 36 years in
Bulloch County. She worked as a volunteer teacher in the Bulloch County NAACP Summer Tutorial Program for three years. She was instrumental in developing two special programs at First African Baptist Church for youth involvement and training. She sponsors the Mother's Day Program and the Children's Day Programs which involve the youth of the community and the Original First African Baptist Church. She has served as teacher of Vacation Bible School numerous summers prior to and after her retirement from the teaching profession. She continues to see the value of working with and training youth.

Minnie Stewart Evans, educator and Christian leader will be remembered for the many years devoted to educating the boys and girls of Bulloch county and the unselfish service she rendered to the Christian community.

Minnie Stewart Evans (1911– )
Submitted by Dr. Charles Bonds

**Shearwood Railroad**

In the early 1900's John N. Shearouse had moved his sawmill from a stop on the Savannah and Statesboro Railroad to Brooklet, Georgia. In order to get logs to his mill he built a railway. The main railway was kept straight and its tram lines went out like spokes of a wheel either to the left or to the right depending on which side the timber had been purchased. After an area had been cleared of timber, the tram line was taken up and laid down again where new timber was purchased. When the main railway reached Nevils John N. Shearouse decided to go into the railroad freight business.¹

In March of 1911 newspaper accounts revealed there were meetings of citizens interested in discussing plans to extend the Shearwood Railway from Brooklet to some point on the Seaboard Air Line (sic) to the west and the Central of Georgia to the east.² One such meeting was held at the home of Morgan Nesmith. Three farmers present offered to take a thousand dollars worth of stock each if it would go through the Sink Hole District. R. R. Simmons offered one thousand dollars and fifty acres of land at Enal to induce the railroad to come by his property which would be on the line running from Brooklet to the Seaboard Air Line (sic) at Cleston.³

¹ Fred Shearouse, in an interview with the author, 19 November 1979.
³ The Statesboro News, March 24, 1911.
However, the railroad did not go through this district.  

On June 8, 1912 application for charter was filed with Secretary of State Phillip Cook for the Shearwood Railway Company. This railway proposed to build a line from Claxton in Tattnall County through Brooklet and Egypt, to Clyo in Effingham County. The capital stock was to be $350,000 and the principal office was to be located at Brooklet, Georgia. The incorporators were: John A. Calhoon of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; N. J. O'Byrne and John E. Foy of Savannah, Georgia; George M. Brinson of Springfield, Georgia; and J. H. Shearouse, T. R. Bryan, P. C. Waters, George E. Wilson, H. M. Robertson, J. A. Warnock, John I. Lane, T. H. Waters, J. N. McElveen, Wayne Parrish, D. L. Alderman, C. C. Deloach, J. C. Denmark of Bulloch County. The length of the railroad was to be fifty miles. On June 10, 1912 the charter was granted.

On November 28, 1912 procedures were started to extend the railroad beyond Brooklet to Egypt in Effingham County. There was a contest between the Midland Railroad and the Shearwood Railroad to see which one would have to pay for the crossing at Leefield where their lines met. The Shearwood got there first and laid track on the other side of the crossing, thus the Midland Railroad had to pay for the crossing.

Following the completion of the line to Egypt in Effingham County, the Shearwood gave all its freight business to the Central of Georgia. The terms of the contract were that the Shearwood Railroad had ceased being only a logging train and had become a common carrier of mixed freight with an accommodating passenger car attached. Because of the scarcity of the means of transportation this freight line not only carried passengers, but, according to Fred Lee, native of Brooklet, a coach was used to transport students daily from Nevils to Brooklet to school. The railroad also had a contract for carrying the mail.

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road would receive 70 percent of all the rates of the freight which originated on its line and the Central of Georgia, 30 percent. 13

The first engine, a steam locomotive, was a wood burner with a cabbagehead smokestack. Later the engines were coal burners. 14

The track was standard gauge and the total number of cars pulled varied from six to eight, except during the watermelon season and the fertilizer season, when extra cars were added to take care of the additional freight. 15 The train started its day's run from Egypt in Effingham County. It stopped first at Leefield, then Brooklet, then Watersville, Denmark, Nevils and on to Claxton. It would make the return trip in the afternoon, to finish its daily run in Egypt. 16

The first auditor of the railroad was W. H. Saffold, who had been a railroad agent in Guyton along with J. N. Shearouse for the Central of Georgia Railroad. 17 Upon W. H. Saffold's death, H. M. Robertson was appointed auditor. Hinton Booth was secretary and general counsel for the railroad. Some of the other employees of the railroad were: Clyde Shearouse, half brother of J. N. Shearouse, conductor; E. A. Usher, master mechanic; Hugh Brinson, engineer; Frank Hughes, office worker at Brooklet; Sam Scott, fireman; Uncle Pick Thompson, in charge of the black railroad workers; Connie Warnock, agent at Brooklet depot; "a fellow named" Nesmith, agent at Nevils station; Gordon Donaldson, a later agent at Claxton; J. W. Robertson, Jr., a later agent at Brooklet; and "a fellow named" Horn, agent at Leefield. 18

An accident that occurred in 1926 marked the beginning of the end of the Shearwood Railway Company. 19 An account of the accident given by Fred Shearouse, son of J. N. Shearouse follows. On the night of July 28, 1926 there had been six inches of rain. The following morning, July 29, the railroad station at Brooklet received a call stating that the train was off the track near Leefield. J. N. Shearouse and his son, Fred, drove to the sight in Fred's automobile. When they reached the sight, the workers had gotten the train back on the track. Since Fred's automobile would not start, he and his father hopped aboard the engine. A few miles down the line, where Spring Creek and Mill Creek meet, a wash-out occurred. The wash-out was not visible to the engineer until the engine was upon it. The engine fell into the wash-out, pinning J. N. Shearouse and Fred Shearouse between the engine and the tender car. J. N. Shearouse was killed and Fred Shearouse was badly burned. 20

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13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Parrish interview.
16 Lee interview.
17 Shearouse interview.
18 Ibid.
H. M. Robertson, Jr., in an interview with the author, 20 November 1979.
19 George M. Johnston, in an interview with the author 9 November 1979.
20 Shearouse interview.
J. N. Shearouse's widow was appointed President of the company but served in name only. H. M. Robertson was appointed vice president and general manager.21

In the middle or late 30's the final end came. At this time there was a great depression in the country and road systems were much improved, allowing for more truck traffic. The railroad could not withstand the competition. The railroad went into receivership and many claims were filed against the railway company.22

On October 26, 1936 a claim was filed by Randall Fuel Company for the amount of $113.28. The railway company was ordered to pay.23

On November 9, 1937 the first liquidating dividend of $125.00 was received. Some of the railroad's tracks were sold to other railroad companies, and most of the engines, tracks, and parts were sold for scrap metal. According to George M. Johnston, Hinton Booth recounted that during the entire last year of the railroad's operations only two passenger tickets were sold—one from Brooklet to Claxton and one from Brooklet to another stop down the line.26

22 Johnston interview.
23 Minute Book of Bulloch County Superior Court, 1931, 555.
24 The value of the liquidating dividend was determined from a comment wrote on the back of a Shearwood Railway Company gold bond certificate in the files of the Bulloch County Historical Society.
25 Robert, Jr., interview.
26 Johnston interview.

As was common for most short line railroads at this time in the history of our nation, the Shearwood Railway Company dissolved because it had no money to cover its debts.27
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