

The Voice

of The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and Cobb Memorial Archives
 Speaking about the Past to the Present, for a Better Future

The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society Quarterly Meeting

Sunday, October 18, 2015, 3:00 p.m. EDT

The Ianier Room, H. Grady Bradshaw library, Valley, Alabama



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Ockfuskeenena, A Creek Indian Town, and the Events that lead to its Attack and Destruction

Presenter: Joe Thompson

Joseph H. Thompson, retired Historic Site Manager II, with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, will present "Okfuskeenena, a Creek Indian Town, and the Events that Lead to its Attack and Destruction." Joe is a graduate of West Point High School. He received his A.A. degree from Middle Georgia College, and his B.S. degree in History from LaGrange College. He served as Historic Site Manager at Sunbury Historic Site and as Historic Site Manager II at Wormsloe Historic Site, both Georgia Department of Natural Resources sites located on the Georgia coast. Joe serves as a board member of The Friends of Horseshoe Bend, Fort Tyler, The Troup County Archives, and the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society.

The presentation, "Okfuskeenena, a Creek Indian Town, and the Events that Lead to its Attack and Destruction," will establish the Creek town's origin and the events that brought about its demise. A chronological order will be established putting into perspective the events that came about with the end of the American Revolution and the establishment of a new U.S. government and their effects on the Creek Nation and the town of Okfuskeenena.

The conclusion of the American Revolution brought about the end of British Trade and

support for the Indians. The State of Georgia made treaties with the Indians but not all were in agreement. The eventual push back of the Native People against expansion and white settlements became known as the Oconee War. With the ratification of the Constitution of February 6, 1788, it became illegal for states to make treaties and maintain a standing army. The United States efforts to establish a treaty at Rock Landing in 1789 on the Oconee River ended prematurely with Alexander McGillivray leaving with the Creek delegation. In a second attempt the Creeks were invited to New York to sign a treaty on August 7, 1790. McGillivray after returning home found that neither the Creeks nor the Georgians were satisfied. With the Georgians' continued desire for more land, the Indian raids continued. The Indian raids increased with the death of Alexander McGillivray in February, 1793. The south was on the eve of an all-out war. In retaliation the Green County Militia burned a Creek town on the Chattahoochee, Ofuskeenena. During the Creek war 1813-14 General David Adams returned to the river crossing twenty years after burning Okfuskeenena with orders to burn the Okfuskee town of Neuyauka on the Tallapoosa River. In the mid-1960s the site of Burnt Village became an important archaeological site during the construction of the West Point Dam and reservoir.

President's Message

History has always been influenced by geography. Of course with today's technology and virtual reality, location isn't the key factor it once was. But to our ancestors, proximity to rivers and obtaining "good ground" were paramount. The quest for the "high ground" is a recurring theme throughout the annals of time. The Jews had their Masada. The patriots might well have repulsed the mighty British Army at Breed's (Bunker) Hill had their ammunition not run out. Robert E. Lee held Mayre's Heights at Fredericksburg, but failed to win the high ground at Gettysburg.

In the city of Lanett, there is a small patch of high ground that rises up from the floodplain. Mostly overlooked and unappreciated, this high ground has borne witness to several centuries of local history. Archaeologists believe Native Americans were occupying this area during the Woodland period, and perhaps even earlier. These hills witnessed Benjamin Hawkins' expedition in the 1790's, an exploratory mission on behalf of President George Washington. They welcomed emigrating Creeks from Georgia, forced west of the Chattahoochee by the Treaty of Indian Springs (1825).

When Chambers County lands opened up in the 1830's, settlers began building dogtrots and clearing nearby lands for cotton. As the West Point & Montgomery Railroad rolled into town in 1851, the West Point Land Company was already busy laying out business lots on the west side of the river, in the shadow of this stately bluff. Merchants and business owners began building homes on this overlook, which soon took on the name "Bluffton". One of these most notable merchants was Heyman Heyman, a Jewish merchant originally from Prussia.

During Wilson's Raid in April, 1865, the homes of Bluffton were literally in the line of fire between the

guns of Fort Tyler and the Union artillery on nearby Ward's Hill. After the artillery assault, the Union troops moved through the heart of Bluffton towards Ft. Tyler. Heyman had put his Masonic emblems on his front porch, which apparently saved his home from being ransacked by the enemy. Meanwhile, his wife, children and neighbors were hiding safely in the cellar. Heyman soon discovered that his nearby tannery, where he made leather goods for the Confederacy, had been burned.

After the war, old Bluffton grew as more and more Jewish business owners moved into the neighborhood. Heyman reopened his West Point mercantile establishment with Daniel Merz. Residents' children grew to adulthood during the Victorian period. The Heyman daughters married the Hagedorn brothers during a double-ring ceremony- the social event of the season in 1883. Bluffton had become a thriving community, and even boasted a Jewish place of worship, Temple Beth-el.

The turn of the century was perhaps the heyday for Bluffton. As the years progressed, children's children moved to Atlanta or up north. Gradually, the storied families of the prior century began to fade away. Eventually, the Temple Beth-el was shuttered, and then torn down. Today there are a few of the old homes remaining, beautifully restored and occupied by souls who seem to have a deep appreciation for those who came before. But so much has been lost. On the site of the old temple, there is nothing remaining, not even a historical marker.

Thank you for contributing to our collective efforts to support the Cobb Memorial Archives and to encourage research in our regional history and families. Please stay interested in exploring and telling our local stories. The exploration is enjoyable and instructive.

Malinda Powers



Fredonia Heritage Day: *“Preserving the best of yesterday, for today and tomorrow!”*



Southeastern Mvskoke Chief Ronnie Williams and his wife Martha will again lead attendees in a traditional Creek “friendship dance” during this year’s event.

Coming this year on November 14, the Fredonia Heritage Association’s annual Heritage Day festival always includes historical re-enactors, local history presentations and discussions, and native American exhibits and presentations, all in the context of an old-fashioned fun-for-all country fair.

This year’s special historical focus will be on the Muskogee Creek original inhabitants of the area featuring representatives of the Southeastern Mvskoke Nation, including Chief Ronnie Williams and his wife Martha, Vice-chief (and Fredonia-area resident) Elbert McCarley, and medicine-maker John Winterhawk Johnson.

In addition to inside presentations and discussion of Mvskoke history, traditions and rituals, Chief Williams will set up an example hunting camp and demonstrate traditional skills such as flint-knapping.

Offered free of charge and held on the grounds of Fredonia’s “Old School” community house, Heritage Day provides a venue for local-area art and craft workers to sell or demonstrate their wares, thus encouraging preservation of heritage artisanal skills such as blacksmithing, spinning, weaving, pottery, painting, quilt-making, etc. Local artists provide a variety of gospel, bluegrass, folk, and country music entertainment, and vendors offer varied popular and traditional foods, from basic barbecue to fried pies and funnel cakes.

Mac Holderfield always has a table with CVHS information, books to sell, and history to share and discuss.

Heritage Day 2015 will happen from 10 am to 5 pm Eastern time, located at 6160 Chambers County (AL) Road 222. For information, call 334-499-2380 or go to FredoniaHeritageDay on Facebook.



For Heritage Day 2014 Malinda Powers showed children and adults how hand-carding of cotton was done. Malinda also portrays Fredonia founder Sarah Hurst, telling stories from her diary entries about life in the 1830s. .



Heritage Day always includes a “museum” display of yesterday’s treasured implements and artifacts, along with old maps, photos, scrapbooks and other items from Cobb Memorial Archives.



This beautiful heirloom “Tulip Block” quilt, handmade in the 1930s, will be given away to the lucky winner of the drawing at Heritage Day.



Park Ranger Heather Tassin and volunteer re-enactors from Horseshoe Bend National Military Park will bring a War of 1812 cannon; women volunteers demonstrate spinning, weaving, and other domestic crafts.

Cobb Memorial Archives Report

By Robin Brown

Along with cooler weather, the coming of October also marks the beginning of American Archives Month. The idea to promote archives during a specific week or month took form in 1979 and continued to grow on a grassroots level. By 1999, the movement to recognize and publicize the value of archives had gained enough traction that the Society of American Archivists adopted October as its official Archives Month. Archives Month continued to grow, and in 2006 the celebration of Archives Month spread nationwide.

To promote Archives Month this year, the Alabama Department of Archives and History has designed a poster and a bookmark that feature Alabama archives. A photograph of Cobb Memorial Archives appears on the poster, which is on display in the archives. Come by and see it next time you visit the archives!

The Archives remains busy processing and preserving its expanding collections. We are grateful for the support of area residents who deem the archives a suitable repository for their historical items. Family members of the late Kenneth Gresham have generously donated his papers, artifacts, and photographs that richly document his involvement in the local Boy Scouts. Stephen Johnson has generously donated more items to his already sizeable collection. Owen Hodges has also graciously donated photographs that depict the history of our area. Among his donation are photographs of the Twentieth Century Club, the Langdale Post Office, and of President Roosevelt touring the area in 1939. Mr. Hodges also donated trophies he had earned while participating in recreation and company teams and a number of Valley High yearbooks. Marilyn Terry Stokes donated a document from the Civil War by which her great-grandfather received permission from the Confederate Secretary of War to return the body of his deceased brother home for burial. These repre-

sent a few highlights of the recent additions to our collections. The Archives is deeply appreciative of the myriad ways it is supported by its patrons.

As we look to the months ahead, we are excited by our possibilities. Our exhibit on the history of Lanett City Schools will be dismantled within the next few weeks. The display drew a strong crowd of visitors, mostly Lanett alumni, though many people who had not attended Lanett took the time to peruse the exhibit cases. Although the artifacts centered on Lanett, the exhibit spoke to the larger history of the area as it explored the West Point Manufacturing Company's commitment to education and to serving the community as a corporate citizen. Please set aside some time before the end of this month to view the exhibit if you have not had an opportunity to see it or perhaps take a few minutes to revisit a point of particular interest.

As the Lanett City Schools exhibit comes to a close, the Archives is beginning to prepare for its next project: collecting and preserving records of the Valley's civic clubs. The Valley Kiwanis Club, the Little Boston Club of Shawmut, and the West Point Rotary Club have donated club records or other historical club artifacts to the archives. The Valley area was abounding in civic clubs after World War II and the archives asks anyone with information about the records of a local civic club to please contact us. In addition to collecting civic clubs' records, the archives will begin creating an exhibit that explores the history of the Valley's civic clubs sometime after the first of the year. To help in its efforts to collect, preserve, and make available the history of the Valley's civic clubs, Cobb Memorial Archives was awarded a grant through the Alabama State Historical Records and Advisory Board. As we proceed with our project, we deeply appreciate the support and recognition we will receive from the Board's decision to help fund our project and for the local support we will undoubtedly receive.

Reminiscences of Public Men in Chambers County, 1838-1860

In 1872 William Garrett published his 800 page book entitled *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama*. He was a man of considerable public and private political knowledge. William Garrett, reared in East Tennessee, came to Alabama in 1833 and became Assistant Clerk of the House of Representatives, Alabama Legislature, in November 1837. In 1838 he was elected Principal Clerk of the House and again in 1839 and in 1840. In 1840 Garrett was elected Secretary of State and held this office until 1852. In 1853 he was elected to the House for one term and unanimously elected Speaker. In 1859 he, as Democrat Party candidate, was defeated by 47 votes in a campaign for State Senator from his home in Coosa County. He was elected to the State Senate in 1863 and 1865. William Garrett witnessed, recorded, and participated in the creation of the Alabama political culture prior to and during the Civil War. His observations on the personalities of specific legislators and their impact upon the debates of significant issues across the sessions for thirty year enrich our view of the past and enliven our perspective of the legislators from Chambers county who represented our ancestors and politically shaped the destinies of our families and the people of Alabama for generations. Garrett's book is a unique primary resource for historical research, but as we all see life from particular points of view, we must realize that William Garrett had his own frame of reference which is obvious in his writings. I do not have space to explain terms or political issues mentioned in the following material and refer you to www.encyclopediaofalabama.org for any assistance. I have selected all the short biographies of the Chambers Legislators presented by Garrett to be reproduced here verbatim as well as the J.J. Hooper biography and three biographies for Randolph County legislators well known in Chambers County. We must read Garrett's words to feel the emotions and the nuances in his writing which will seem to us as excessively florid and bombastic as the writing and public speaking styles of the period dictated.

Following are presented William Garrett's remi-

niscences of Chambers County Legislators and three familiar others, recorded in his monograph of 1872:

George Reese, of Chambers, was formerly of Georgia and a brother of the Hon. David A. Reese, Representative in Congress from that State before the war. Mr. George Reese was selected to the Senate of Alabama in 1839, as a Democrat, and served a term of three years, after which he retired. After the Provisional Government had been formed, and a new Constitution adopted for the State, in 1865, Mr. Reese was a candidate for Congress in the Third District, and was defeated by Gen. Cullen Battle, who was then fresh from the war with great personal popularity. As it turned out, the election availed nothing to Alabama, whose Representatives were denied admission into Congress. Mr. Reeves did not thrust himself forward in the Senate in party schemes, nor did he often engage in the debates. He looked on quietly, did good Committee Work, and was polite to all around him. What he said was generally in few words and always to the point. He displayed no ambition to lead, nor would he blindly follow others who might assume this privilege, Always calm, and always independent, he appeared to be upon good terms with himself and with all the world. It is hoped that his subsequent experience has not disturbed this enviable relation which is the main source of happiness. His presence at Tuska- loosa in public and social circles will long be favorably remembered.(p.166)

Mr. Charles McLemore, of Chambers, was born in South Carolina. My first knowledge of him was in the House, in 1837, and in 1840 he was again elected. From that time until 1853, he was continuously in one or the other branch of the Legislature. In 1851, he was unanimously elected President of the Senate. From some cause, perhaps on the Know- Nothing question, he was defeated for the Senate by Dr. W. H. Bacon, in 1855. While on a visit to Arkansas, to look after lands in which he was interested, Mr. McLemore died at Fort Smith, in 1859.

His nature was lofty, and his gifts brilliant. Never did courtly knight grace a tournament with more

skill than Mr. McLemore displayed on the floor, in a skirmish, or in a pitched battle, hand-to-hand and shoulder-to shoulder with an adversary, in debate.

His scimitar was always keen, and he often killed his antagonist by so rapid a thrust, with lightning on the blade, as if to dazzle the vision, so that no wound was perceived, and nothing but the catastrophe. His soul was all fire and his heart all magnanimity. An instance or two of the latter may be given.

On the first day of the session of 1842, Mr. Kennedy, of Lauderdale, offered a resolution reciting that the action of the Legislature, hitherto, had been in a great measure controlled, in reference to the banks, by the standing Bank "Committees," which had been "unfortunate," and as a remedy in future, it was required of each member of the House, by nine o'clock next morning, to furnish the Clerk with a statement of his liabilities in the State Bank and branches, as principal or endorser; and from said list the Clerk to annex the amount to each name, and hand it to the Speaker, by five o'clock p.m., who was to appoint no member so indebted, on any of the Bank Committees. Mr. McLemore took the floor and denounced the resolution as insulting to members who happened to owe to the banks as principals or endorsers. For himself, he admitted that he was thus indebted; but he was not willing to be shorn of any rights or privileges in the House which would imply that he was incompetent to legislate honestly on bank questions, or for the collection of bank debts. His notice of the imputation was scathing--it was perfectly annihilating. The young member from Lauderdale quailed under the blow, which was, indeed, of force to prostrate a giant in the arena of legislation. A heavy weight rested upon him, and he was comparatively silent and downcast during the balance of the session. The day before that fixed for adjournment, Mr. McLemore obtained leave of absence for the balance of the session, had settled his accounts with the treasury, and was about to leave for home. After this, he came within the bar of the House, and stood until he could catch the eye of the Speaker, whom he addressed:

'Before quitting this Hall and taking leave of members whom I may never meet again, I desire to make amends to my young friend from Lauderdale. The idea that I have done him injustice gives

me pain; and I now take this occasion to say that I exceedingly regret the spirit of my remarks, though, at the time, I believed the provocation justified them I have since been better informed, and have learned more of the character of my young friend. I cheerfully withdraw all that was offensive, and am ready to meet him with the hand of reconciliation. In this presence the wound was inflicted, and here I desire to close it.'

With tears streaming down his face, Mr. Kennedy, full of emotion, advanced toward Mr. McLemore, with his hand extended which the latter cordially grasped. A few kind words were spoken in a broken voice, while all the members of the House were deeply affected, some even to tears. It was a beautiful scene, and reflected honor on both parties, especially on Mr. McLemore for the noble atonement, where redress was impossible.

Then resuming his place, Mr. McLemore said: "There is still another gentleman on this floor, between whom and myself there has been no communication, owing to certain remarks I felt it my duty to make at the last session, when his father resigned his seat in the Senate of the United States, and imputed Abolition principles to the Whigs of the South. I refer to the gentleman from Madison, (Mr. Clay.) I honor the motives which induced him to consider the enemy of his father as a personal enemy of his own. What I said may have been too violent, and on reflection, I think it was too much so, from a comparatively young man, to a gentleman so old in the public services as Gov. Clay. My nature forbids malice, and I wish to place myself right on all occasions when I have done injustice to others. Will the gentleman from Madison accept this as a peace-offering, and let the past be forgotten?" Mr. Clay promptly arose, and said he had listened to the manly explanation of the gentleman from Chambers with pleasure, and could not refuse to grant oblivion to the occurrence which had been referred to, through the injury, for the time being, derived peculiar aggravation, as it was leveled at one whose honor was ever dear to him. Waiving all formalities, he met the advances of the gentleman from Chambers in the same spirit of generosity, and here he was willing to bury all unkind recollections. Mr. McLemore and Mr. Clay then mutually advanced, and shook each other cordially by the hand. The

members and the audience in the galleries appeared to be lighted up with good feelings at such an exhibition. It was truly a scene long to be remembered by those who were present. It added a fresh laurel to the bow of the noble McLemore, and gives luster to his memory.(p. 185)

Matthew Phillips, of Chambers, was from Georgia, in the Legislature of which State he had been a Representative from Jasper county, about the year 1828. He was a Lawyer by profession, of moderate abilities, making up by his attention to business for what he lacked in other respects. This was probably the secret of any success he had in life. He was quite genial in his disposition, and very neat in his person and dress, and moved in a very respectable circle. Messrs. John T. Hefflin, of Talladega, and William H. Barnes, of Lee both since distinguished for legal ability, studied law under his direction.(p.228-229)

Wyatt Hefflin was a Georgian, and settled in Randolph County soon after its organization, when the Indians vacated East-Alabama, in 1836. He was elected a member of the House in 1841, and again in 1843 and 1845. After this his health became infirm, and he persistently declined the repeated calls made upon him, by the people, for further service in the legislature.; He belonged to that class of plain, practical men who are general safe and useful in a legislative body. He was far above the average in ability and enjoyed throughout his connection with the Legislature the respect and esteem of his fellow –members. In the days of Troup and Clark, in Georgia, he was a Democrat on the Clark model. Mr. Hefflin is the father of Judge John T. Hefflin, of Talladega, of the Hon. R. S. Hefflin, a Representative in Congress and of Dr. Wilson S. Hefflin, of Louina, Randolph county. (p.241)

James E. Reese, of Chambers, succeeded to the seat occupied for three years by his brother, George Reese, who has been noticed in another part of this work. The brothers differed in politics---the ex-senator being a Democrat, and the sitting member a Whig---the one a planter, the other a lawyer---but both were favored by nature with respectable en-

dowments, physical and mental. After serving out his term, Mr. James Reese was not again connected with public life, but pursued the practice of the law in Chambers, where he still resides. Mr. Reese had a prepossessing face, and very courteous manners. He was very neat in his person, and always appeared so genteel that he could have entered at any time a saloon of fashionably dressed ladies, with credit to his taste. He looked as if the world went smoothly with him. No traces of dejection or care could be perceived in the expression of his features. When addressing the Senate, he was calm, fluent, and in every respect an agreeable speaker. His arguments were always listened to with respect, and his influence was felt, through he belonged to the political minority in the Senate. Had his ambition been equal to his merits, and to the suavity of his deportment, he would probably have made a more conspicuous figure before the public. There is no spot or blemish in his short legislative record.(p.280)

Jefferson Falkner, of Randolph, served this session (1845) in the Senate from that County and Tallapoosa. He was an early settler in Randolph, where he was Clerk, and Judge of the County Court. He has been for many years a respectable lay-minister of the Baptist Church and has dispensed ministerial services extensively in East-Alabama. In 1851, he was a candidate for Congress in the Talladega District, and, after a partial canvass, was ruled off to make way for Mr. S. F. Rice, by which Mr. Alexander White was elected. During the War between the States, although he was exempt from service, as well by age as his profession as a minister, Judge Falkner entered warmly into the struggle, and raised a company of cavalry, with which he was sometime connected. He has several times been brought forward by his friends for Chancellor and Judge, and generally made a fair run, but never won the prize. He was an active member of the Senate, and often participated in the debates of that body---indeed, a good many of his friends thought he occupied the floor too frequently for a new and inexperienced Senator. He was fully allied to the Democratic party. (p.428)

Benjamin L. Goodman, of Chambers, was a member only through the session of 1849. He was a Georgian, and a Whig, settled early in Chambers,

and had success as a lawyer. In conversation he was quite showy, and was quite pretentious, especially at the bar, where he was bold and positive in manner--a quality from which he derived so much practical benefit that it became his forte. In the Legislature, Mr. Goodman took an active part, which his age and experience in political and professional life enabled him to sustain, so that his influence was felt and acknowledged. He was a ready, effective, although not a pleasant speaker, having taken his lessons mostly in the school of practical expediency. He removed to Texas not long after the session, with a large property acquired in an active career of law practice and trading, and in a few years he died. (p.535)

Johnson J. Hooper was born and raised in North Carolina. It has been generally reported that he was a grandson of William Hooper, one of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. He was a collateral kinsman, his father, Archibald McLaine Hooper, being the son of George Hooper of Wilmington who was a nephew of the distinguished signer and Revolutionary patriot. Mr. DeBernier Hooper, of Fayetteville, a gentleman of high moral worth and literary attainments, is a brother of Mr. J. J. Hooper. After a stubborn contest in the Legislature, at the session of 1849, Mr. Hooper was elected Solicitor of the Ninth Circuit, over Messrs. Bowie, Latham, Spyker, and Presley, his competitors. At the end of four years, when his term of office expired, he was a candidate for reelection, but was defeated by Judge Woodward. He afterward established the "Mail" newspaper, which was for awhile the organ of the Whig party taking the place of the "Alabama Journal," and acquired a large influence. In 1860, the paper went into the support of Mr. Breckinridge for President, and assumed an extreme position on the leading questions which progressed in bitterness between the North and the South. When the Provisional Congress of the Southern States met at Montgomery, in February, 1861, Mr. Hooper was elected Secretary of that body and continued to hold the office until the organization of the two Houses of Congress at Richmond, after the Confederate Government was formed under the Constitution, and was defeated for Secretary of the Senate. He never returned to Alabama. The convivial habits which had been growing upon him for several years, increased no doubt by his defeat, terminated his life in 1863, while he was compara-

tively in the vigor of his days.

The associations of Mr. Hooper, and his great fund of wit and humor, which made his society much sought and enjoyed by the lovers of fun, had never tended to a very moral course of life, and the subject of religion seemed never to have entered his thoughts, or at least never had any perceptible influence on his conduct. But it is said that, when his last hours drew near, he became deeply interested for the salvation of his soul and in the extremity he sent for a Catholic priest, to whom he confessed and who administered to him the sacraments of the Church prescribed for such occasions. The humble penitent had seen the error of his ways, and it is hoped that he died at peace with God and man.

The character of Mr. Hooper was peculiarly marked. He first edited the "Whig," or some paper of like politics in East-Alabama. His articles giving the experience of a census-taker in 1840, when the old women flourished their broomsticks on being interrogated in regard to their poultry, dairies, and "garden truck," were so humorous and natural that they were copied in nearly all the papers of the south, and afforded general amusement. Then followed "Simon Suggs," which was a delineation of character, bad enough no doubt in the original, but highly embellished and aggravated in the romance, with scenes, occurrences, sentiments, and other details of a cunning, unprincipled man, whose art, in the perpetration of fraud, was greatly assisted by the cant and hypocrisy of a pretended piety and church membership! This work was published by Messrs. D. Appleton & Co., of New York, and the volume had a very extensive circulation. Thousands and tens of thousands of readers have laughed over it, and the grotesque situations and characters introduced; but probably not one of them all has had his reverence for virtue increased by the perusal. While Mr. Hooper gained celebrity as a humorist, he lost something of a higher value in public estimation. His own authority will be here given for the effect.

In December, 1856, a Southern Commercial Convention was held in Savannah, to which Mr. Hooper and other gentlemen from Alabama were delegates. His arrival was announced in the city papers in terms quite complimentary, as the author of "Simon Suggs," that inimitable production so popular throughout the country. When the Convention met in the Atheneum, and while the Mayor was

in the chair, waiting for the committee to report officers for permanent organization, Judge John A. Jones, of Georgia, himself a wag and humorist, formally moved, in presence of the six or eight hundred delegates, that Simon Suggs be called upon to give an account of himself for the last two years. The Mayor, with great politeness, put the question, and on its being carried in the affirmative by a unanimous vote, he requested "Mr. Suggs," if present, to comply with the expressed desire of the Convention. There sat Mr. Hooper in the pit, wrapped in a green blanket coat, near Albert Pike, of Arkansas, as if overwhelmed by the pressure. From the character which his writings inspired, he was supposed by everybody to be always ripe for a frolic, and for a roar of merriment, and that he was as good at telling stories as in writing his droll descriptions, and thankful for the privilege. He stirred not an inch. More than a thousand persons, in the galleries and elsewhere, were on the tiptoe of expectation at hearing "Simon Suggs" deliver his convulsive jokes. But the feast came not, when the entrance of the committee put an end to the embarrassment of Mr. Hooper.

This call by Judge Jones was referred to at the hotel, in presence of Mr. Hooper, as an evidence of the popularity of the latter, even out of his own State. He replied that a liberty had been taken with his name which was really offensive, as showing that others looked upon him as a mere story-teller, with nothing solid in his composition. He confessed and regretted that his writings had established that character in public estimation, and that he felt its depressing influence whenever he desired, or aimed, to soar above it, to a higher rank before the public. His ambition had been to move in quite a different channel, to enjoy the respect of men; but he had unfortunately obtained a reputation which cut off all such hopes. It was an evil day to his fortunes and to his happiness when he embarked in that class of literature, or otherwise became a chronic story-teller for the diversion of his companions. He said it was probably too late to rectify the blunder, and that he must continue to suffer the consequences.

For once in his life, Mr. Hooper appeared to be in earnest, while deploring his notoriety. There is a salutary moral in his experience which, it is hoped, may have the effect on others to cultivate habitual self-respect and a due regard for public opinion, while cherishing at all times lofty feelings and

resolutions to possess the gold of character, without the alloy which defeated the genius of Johnson J. Hooper. Here let him stand as a beacon-light, to give warning of the rock on which the manly ambition and hopes of his youth perished.

Mr. De Bernier Hooper, of North Carolina, having been mentioned as a brother, it is proper to introduce here the name of George D. Hooper, Esq., also a brother, a worthy member of the legal profession, now residing at Opelika. For a number of years, Mr. George D. Hooper was a citizen of Russell county, where, at Crawford, the county-site, he pursued the law as a vocation, and enjoyed a large degree of public favor. He was a member of the State Convention in 1865, and assisted in framing the Constitution of that year.(p226-228)

John T. Hefflin, of Randolph, represented that county and Tallapoosa in 1851 in the Senate, which was his only session in the Legislature; but his position, was a respectable one, and he exerted no little influence in the political deliberations of that exciting session. His father, Wyatt Hefflin, represented Randolph for many years; and the son studied law, and in early practice resided at Wedowee, where he continued many years. He exhibited from the start a close, discriminating legal mind, and made haste slowly to assert his rights to a higher place in his profession. He was elected to the Circuit Court bench, in which station he sustained himself and the public good by his profound legal knowledge, and his pure administration of justice.

Judge Hefflin was a Democrat, and exerted a large influence in the counsels and measures of that party. Since the war he has been largely and profitably engaged in the practice of the law, residing at Talladega. After spending a part of his manhood in the circle of bachelors, a few years ago married Mrs. Bowdon, an accomplished lady, widow of the Hon. F. W. Bowdon.(p.566)

Gibson F. Hill, of Chambers, served only through the session of 1853, in the House. He was a lawyer, and had received a good education in Georgia, where he was raised, but he never engaged much in the practice of his profession. He came to the Legislature with the project of a lottery, to raise money for the endowment of a Military and Scientific Academy, in Chambers county, where he proposed to teach and educate a certain number of indigent young men, and his efforts, quietly di-

rected, succeeded in getting such a bill through both Houses, without that due reflection and examination which ought to have governed. The measure was fraught with mischief. The Agency was given to a sharp man, Mr. Samuel Swann, and every appliance brought to bear on the public mind to excite it to dealing in tickets, with a prospect of getting rich. Some drew prizes, of course, and this was heralded over the country, and others ventured; and on it went in its influences and ravages, taking money out of the pockets of men of all classes, and appropriating it to individual uses, until the country, in many portions, was impoverished of money.

The Agent, in the meantime, from being an operative in a jeweler's store, rose to the position of a banker, and with the surplus of his abundant means planned and built (at a cost, it is said, of \$40,000) the fine residence in Montgomery, owned in his lifetime, by Col. Seibels. How much fell to the lot of Col. Gibson F. Hill, in this transaction, I never heard; but he ought to have received a good sum to compensate for the "wear and tear" of such a proceeding, gotten up by him with the most plausible pretexts, to obtain money without a valid consideration, from an over credulous people. This is the only measure with which he was identified during his service in the Legislature. Col. Hill was favored with an attractive person, and cultivated, insinuating manners, which secured him access to the better feelings of his fellow members. (p.609)

Daniel S. Robinson, of Chambers, was a substantial, intelligent planter, a native of Georgia, but settled in Alabama at the opening of the creek country, and, by industry and good management, had grown rich. He was a quiet man, attentive to business, and rendered the State good service. He was several times honored with the confidence of the people of his county, his first session in the Legislature being in 1845. That of 1853 was his last. His health was declining ---so much so that he was unable to attend regularly upon the sittings of the House, or to meet the Committee of Ways and Means, of which he was a member. He continued to decline until the Summer of 1855, when he died. Mr. Robinson was a Whig, and was greatly respected as a citizen by all parties. (P.612)

Dr. E. J. Bacon, of Chambers, was a physician of good repute in LaFayette, and an Old Line Whig. Upon the issues in 1855, he allied himself with

the Democratic party in opposition to the Know-Nothings, and was adopted as a competitor of Col. Charles McLemore. Unpromising as the prospect seemed at the Commencement of the canvass, he succeeded, after an exciting contest, by a majority of thirty-seven votes in the county. This result was aided, no doubt, by the high social position of Dr. Bacon, and the influence he had in the Whig ranks. His election over such a champion won for him great prestige, and he took his seat in the Senate under favorable auspices. He was a gentleman of fine person and address, and bore his honors with a consciousness that he was observed, but without arrogance or vanity. Dr. Bacon was a Georgian, well educated and intelligent, kind and companionable. He took good position in the Senate, and was made Chairman of an important Committee. In debate, he was a ready and fluent speaker, and had much influence in the Legislature. He was an enthusiastic, consistent and faithful Mason, and filled in Alabama a large space in the fraternity. Not long after his term in the Senate expired, he removed to Arkansas, in the vigor of his manhood and profession. (p.624)

Dr. George F. Taylor, of Chambers, was a Georgian, and an Old-Line Whig, who in the organization of parties in 1855, upon the Know-Nothing basis, allied himself with the Democratic and Anti-Know-Nothing party; and being a gentleman of intelligence and large influence, he was placed on the ticket, and elected. He was made Chairman of an important Committee, and acquitted himself as a useful, industrious member. He was well educated, possessed good qualities and extensive information, and was much respected by his fellow-members in the Legislature. This was his only session. He still resides at LaFayette, engaged in the practice of his profession. (p.631)

Toliver Towles was an old stager, who first made his appearance from Chambers, as a member of the House in 1839, the colleague of Arnold Seale, Esq., a gentleman of wealth and worth, intelligence and energy. Mr. Towles was a Democrat, and it took him several years to fix up so as to go successfully through the ballot-box in Chambers, where the political majority was against him; so he did not return until 1847, and again in 1855---eight years between times. Mr. Towles belonged to a valuable class of members who saved time by not speaking, and rendered ready service in carrying forward the business

of the House with an eye to its dispatch, and the public interest. Socially, he rendered himself quite agreeable, and possessed a generous nature. He was a Georgian, a planter, and a good citizen.

In 1865, he was elected a member of the Constitutional Convention for reorganizing the State, and was also a member of that in 1867, organized under Congressional rule; but I do not think he voted for the Constitution that was adopted by that body. And while it is to be regretted that a gentleman who so long enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens, should, in after-life, become embarrassed in his political relations, by causes of such a vital nature, fair allowances should be made for surroundings and prejudices which, if known perhaps would relieve Mr. Towles from misapprehension, at least so far as his motives are concerned. (ed. Toliver Towles was a consistent Unionist.)

The observation of a life-time satisfies me that one misstep, or a step in the wrong direction by an old man of pride of character, and position, and opinion, is difficult to retrace, and that relations thus impaired are seldom reestablished. Confidence is destroyed, and when that is gone in public men, or when men find themselves deceived, the feelings revolt from any further reliance. Looking at Mr. Towles away back twenty and thirty years, in the freeness of Political associations and personal friendships, I confess that my mind rests with more satisfaction upon his early political history; and I have no doubt he finds more pleasure in reflecting upon those days and associations, than he does upon his recent experience and attachments as a politician. (p.632)

Robert S Hefflin, of Randolph, is a Georgian, and in 1848, was elected to the House, following his father in the same relation by four years. Under the old organization he was allied fully with the Democratic party. In 1859, he was elected to the Senate, as the successor of Mr. Henry M. Gay, a modest, worthy gentleman, who represented his constituents honestly for a term, and died a few years ago. Mr. Hefflin's service in the Senate extended through six years. In the elections of 1860, he supported Mr. Douglas as the representative of the National party. During the war his relations became complicated with the Confederate Government, and he felt justified, in self-defense, in a transfer across the line. After the surrender, he was appointed by Provisional

Governor Parsons, Judge of the Probate Court, and in 1868, he was upon the Grant Electoral ticket. In 1869, he was the nominee of the Republican party for Congress, got the return certificate, and served through his term, just now expired.

Mr. Hefflin's life has been chequered by various political shades and relations. It is not my province, or desire to criticize or to pass judgment in such cases on public men. Many of their acts, in junctures of peculiar trial, however much we may regret and disapprove them, should be forgotten, and the waves of time be allowed to roll over them with obliterating effect upon whatever of error or mistake the involve. My personal and official connection with Mr. Hefflin, many years ago, was friendly and agreeable. He was true, straightforward, and reliable in his actions. His present affiliations as a politician are his own. Whether for good or for evil, he has the right to determine for himself, even when public opinion assumes the prerogative. (p.666)

Samuel Jeter, of Chambers, was elected as a Democrat, and served only through the session of 1857. He was a Georgian, originally, but had long resided in Alabama, where his political relations were well established in the Conventions and consultations of his party, in which he took a prominent part. He was somewhat advanced in years, was wealthy, and had a force and decision of character that gave him much influence in political and social circles. He still possesses the mental vigor of earlier days." (p. 675)

Editor's Comments:

In the previous *The Voice* you were acquainted with America Trammell and a few descriptions of the Reconstruction period of our local history. I am continuing to search for information about the Methodist Church and its policy, mission to convert slaves to Christianity locally. I hope to document for you aspects of our local history which are unknown to us as well as to document the preaching of a slave, America Trammell, to a white and slave congregation. Keep studying and telling your story in the history of our region of the Chattahoochee.
Horace McLean Holderfield

ANNUAL DUES

The annual dues of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society are due each year on the first of January.

Dues are \$20.00 per individual and \$5.00 for each additional member of the same household, and \$5.00 for any student who is still in school and is under 21 years of age. Other membership levels include Benefactor-\$250; Patron-\$100; and Friend-\$50. For any NEW member who subscribes after September 1, their membership will be for the remainder of the current year and also the following year. In becoming a member you will receive a quarterly newsletter *The Voice* that will inform you of quarterly meetings, new publications, articles of historical interest in the tri-county coverage area and upcoming events.

Please make checks payable to CVHS and mail with your name and full address to The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society, Inc., 3419 20th Ave., Valley, AL. 36854



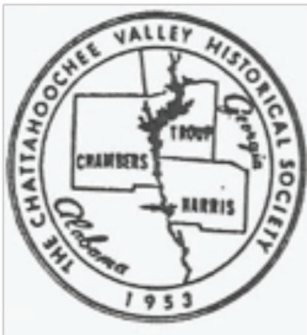
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Feeling
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to hope you'll soon
be up and on the
go again!

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