

THE VOICE

VOLUME XXXX No. 1

of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and
Cobb Memorial Archives

EARLY RESIDENTS OF OLD BLUFFTON AND THE TEMPLE THEY BUILT

When young Louis Merz arrived in Philadelphia, he quickly found his way to the residence of cousin Sam Cohen, a fellow Jewish emigrant from Bavaria. Cohen introduced his kinsman to another boarder in the house, Heyman Heyman from Prussia. These three young men were part of a tight-knit band of Jewish immigrants who had come to America's "City of Brotherly Love" to escape antisemitism in Europe and pursue the American dream. After a year of working in the city's mercantile trade, Heyman and Merz headed south, eventually opening a dry goods store in West Point, Georgia, in 1854.

Over the years, friends and relatives followed and became an integral part of West Point's business community and social life. Several of these families—Heyman, Merz, Hagedorn, and others—lived in "Bluffton", the Alabama heights overlooking the growing city of West Point. By 1859, they had established a Jewish congregation and held religious services in each other's homes until a temple was constructed in 1909 in "Grandma Heyman's (former) garden".

Their stories are the focus of the quarterly program of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society on Sunday, April 28, at 3:00 pm EDT. History educators Malinda and Charles Powers will serve as presenters. While the former specializes in American and Alabama history, Charles is a university instructor with a concentration in European and American history. Mr.

Powers will highlight the plight of the 19th-century Jews living in Prussia and Bavaria, lands which would later become part of the nation of Germany. In addition, he will examine their emigration to U.S. cities such as Philadelphia. A power-point presentation will include a variety of old photographs.

In 1959, the centennial anniversary of the founding of Temple Beth-el, Miss Fannie Herzberg presented a paper she had written on its history and pioneer members to our historical society. Miss Herzberg, a resident of West Point, was a granddaughter of Heyman (later "Herman") and Betty Heyman. At the close of her presentation, she stunned the crowd with her donation of the Confederate diary of her great uncle, Louis Merz. This diary was transcribed, and both Miss Herzberg's address and the contents of Merz's diary were published as CVHS Bulletin #4 later that year. The diary was



Temple Bethel, built in 1909 served the members of the Valley Jewish Community who primarily lived in the West Point-Bluffton residential area. The Temple was closed in 1963, purchased by a real-estate company in 1977, and later demolished.

then placed in a security vault for safe-keeping.

For the first time in 60 years, this diary will be on public display at our upcoming quarterly meeting. What a unique opportunity for those interested in local or Civil War history to view this important artifact! The program will be held at the H. Grady Bradshaw Library in Valley, Alabama, and is open to the public. For directions, please check our website at www.cvhistoricalsociety.org.

**THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING**

Sunday, April 28, 2019 3:00 p. m. EDT

*The Lanier Room, H. Grady Bradshaw Library
Valley Alabama*

*Members of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and
the general public are invited to attend this program.*

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Malinda Powers

While the subject of immigration continues to headline national news, I thought it would be interesting to revisit stories and contributions of some local immigrants who helped shape our Chattahoochee Valley in years past.

Our upcoming quarterly program will feature families of Jewish heritage who founded Temple Beth-El in Bluffton (present-day Lanett). During the mid-19th century, the city of Philadelphia had become a safe haven for Jews emigrating from discrimination and antisemitism in Europe. Two of these emigrants, Heyman Heyman and Louis Merz, would become friends while in Philadelphia and soon travel to the Southland to pursue the American dream. Their journey eventually brought them to West Point. Friends and relatives followed over the years, establishing a thriving Jewish community in West Point and Bluffton. For years they met for religious services in members' homes, until finally a temple was constructed on the Alabama bluff that overlooks downtown West Point. These families were an integral part of West Point's business community and social life for several generations.

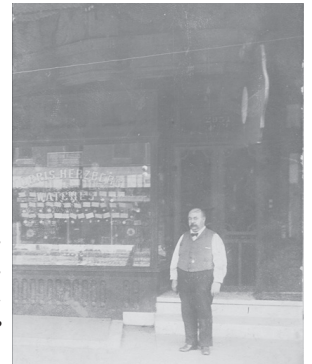
Jewish-Americans were not the only immigrants to enrich our locale. As the years progressed, a variety of foreign accents could be heard on the city's streets. Another immigrant to grace West Point's business district was Patrick Gibbons, a devout Catholic from Ireland, who was the popular proprietor of the Shamrock Saloon. Englishman Thomas Lang was recruited by the Lanier brothers to help their fledgling textile mill succeed. Italian-born Antonio "Tony" Palmisano owned a stand at the southeast corner of West 8th Street and 3rd Avenue, selling fruits, confectioneries, cigars and tobacco, and fancy candies according to CVHS Publication #11, *This Was Our Valley*. His son, Joe, had an outstanding baseball career at Georgia Tech along with Joe Jennings from Lanett. The young Palmisano went on to play with the Philadelphia A's, winning the World Series in 1931. Retiring from the big leagues in 1937, he returned home to manage the baseball team of the Lanett Bleachery & Dye Works.



Herman Hyman and the Merz Brothers, Daniel and Louis, arrived in West Point in about 1854 first as wagon peddlers and later to become significant commercial leaders by owning a large farmer and planter supply store. Louis was killed at The Battle of Antietam during the Civil War. This image dates from about 1900.

These immigrants and others gained respect and admiration from local townspeople. They worked hard and contributed to their new hometown. Heyman became a U.S. citizen in 1858. Louis Merz did not have that opportunity. He lost his life at the Battle of Antietam, making the ultimate sacrifice for his adopted homeland. Over the years, other immigrants followed Heyman in citizenship, leaving behind a legacy that truly enriched our collective heritage. ■

Morris Herzberg on November 12, 1902 stands at the entrance of his store on Gilmer Avenue in West Point. The lettering on the glass window bears his name and the word 'Watches.'



The VOICE is a quarterly newsletter of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 718, West Point, Georgia 31833

Editor: Dr. Horace (Mac) Holderfield (holderfieldh112@msn.com)

Find us on Facebook and visit our website at <http://cvhistoricalsociety.org>

MISSION STATEMENT: As a non-profit membership organization, the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society seeks to preserve and promote the history and heritage of Chambers County, Alabama, West Point, Georgia, and the greater Chattahoochee Valley area. CVHS produces and sells historical books and media, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and presents programs with speakers on historical topics of local and regional interest.

VISION STATEMENT: Having been in continuous operation since its founding in 1953, the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society strives to uphold the vision of its founders while posturing the organization for growth in the 21st century.

Some months ago, Robin Brown published the following article in the local newspaper, The Times-News. Robin, in the spirit of celebrating the 200th anniversary of the formation of our state Alabama, composed an article outlining the biography of Dr. Henry Chambers, who was memorialized when his name was given to this new county delineated from the final Creek land concession in east Alabama. We believed it would be worthwhile to document this research in The Voice. In February, the Chambers County Library and Cobb Memorial Archives commemorated the State of Alabama's bicentennial by hosting "Making Alabama: A Bicentennial Traveling Exhibit," prepared by the Alabama Humanities Foundation. Additional events and displays will be presented throughout 2019.

Henry Chambers may never have set foot in the county that bears his name. Although a prominent figure in the early history of Alabama, the extant records only tell the bare-bones of his life's story. Born in Virginia in 1790, Chambers grew up on his family's plantation, Flat Rock. After graduating from the College of William and Mary, he attended the University of Pennsylvania. With a dissertation on dropsy, he earned a doctor of medicine on April 25, 1811.

With his degree in hand, Chambers ventured to Alabama. In 1812, he established a practice in Madison, Alabama before it was officially a territory, much less a state. At that time, present day Alabama was part of the Mississippi Territory. As its lands were opened up for purchase, "Alabama Fever" gripped ambitious and adventurous spirits - including Dr. Henry Chambers. The influx of settlers between 1810 and 1820 exponentially increased the territory's population from 9,000 to nearly 128,000 people.

When the War 1812 broke out, Dr. Chambers enlisted. He served as part of the Mississippi militia and eventually with Andrew Jackson as a staff surgeon during the Creek War.

After returning from the war, Dr. Chambers entered public service in his adopted state. By 1817, Alabama had become a territory. Elected in 1819, Chambers was one of forty-four members of the Alabama constitutional convention. Tasked with drafting a state constitution, the members proposed a far more democratic document than most states. It granted suffrage to any white man, regardless of whether or not he held property. It also gave more power to the

legislative branch than the executive branch in an effort to keep the government responsive to the will of the people. Personal freedoms of religion and speech were also enshrined in the early constitution.

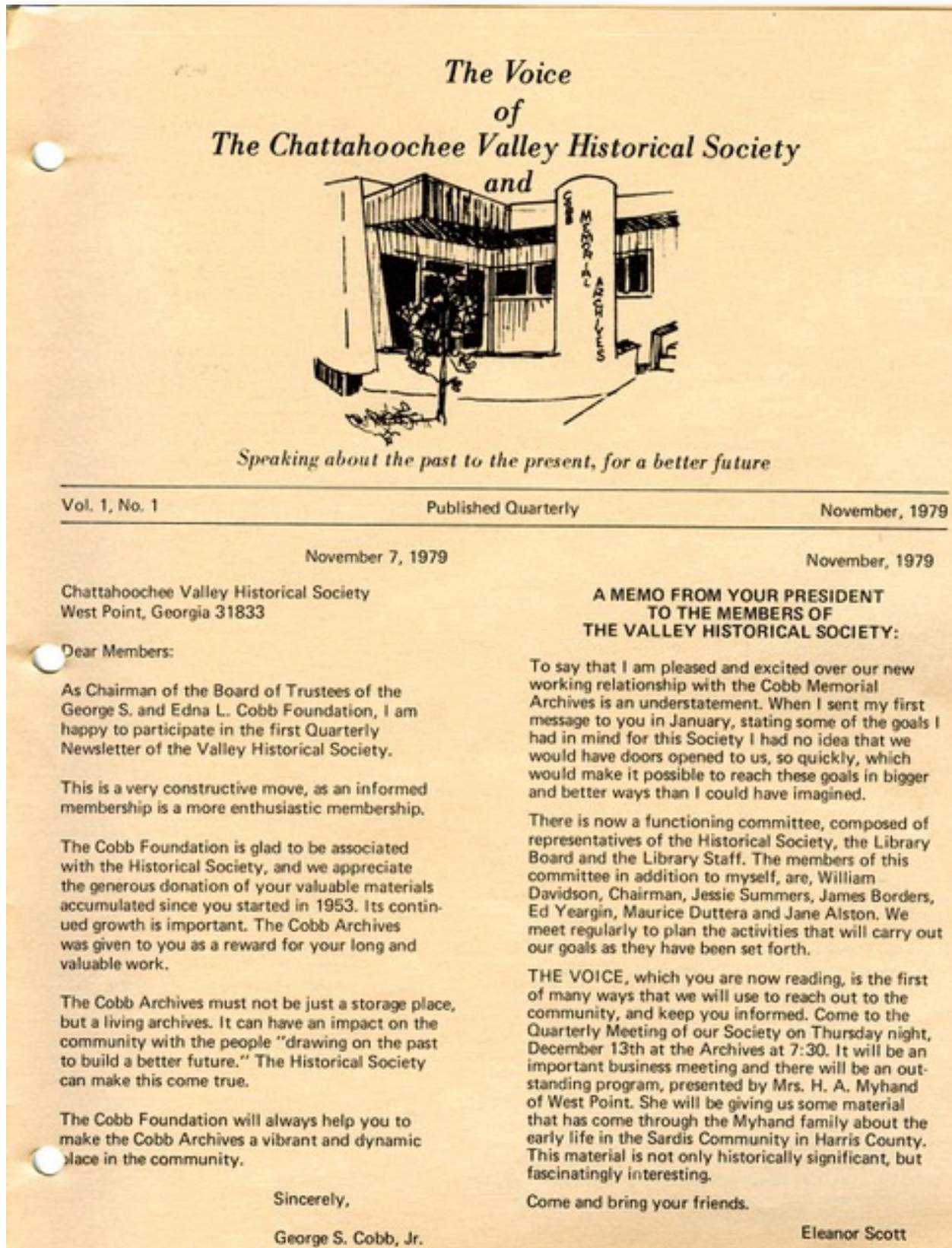
For its many progressive features, the Alabama state constitution was a document of its time. Suffrage did not extend to women and slavery was accepted. The successful constitutional convention submitted their document in August, and on December 14, 1819, Alabama was admitted as a state.

Dr. Chambers became an early legislator, taking a seat in the state House of Representatives in August 1820. He ran twice for governor against Israel Pickens, a fellow constitutional convention member and an experienced North Carolina politician. Chambers lost both gubernatorial elections, but secured a place in the U.S. Senate in 1825.

En route to assume his seat in Washington D.C., Chambers visited his childhood home in Virginia. A serious illness ended his journey. He died on January 24, 1826 before taking office. Six years after his death, the memory of Dr. Chambers still lingered among his friends and colleagues. With the Treaty of Cusseta in 1832, eight new counties were formed from Creek lands. One of them, Chambers County, was named in honor of a brave young doctor who chose to be an Alabamian. ■

FORTIETH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF *the VOICE*

Volume XXXX marks our 40th year in publication. In honor of this event, we found the inaugural edition in the archives and wanted to share that with you. Happy Anniversary!



The Voice of The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and



Speaking about the past to the present, for a better future

Vol. 1, No. 1

Published Quarterly

November, 1979

November 7, 1979

November, 1979

Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society
West Point, Georgia 31833

A MEMO FROM YOUR PRESIDENT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

Dear Members:

As Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the George S. and Edna L. Cobb Foundation, I am happy to participate in the first Quarterly Newsletter of the Valley Historical Society.

This is a very constructive move, as an informed membership is a more enthusiastic membership.

The Cobb Foundation is glad to be associated with the Historical Society, and we appreciate the generous donation of your valuable materials accumulated since you started in 1953. Its continued growth is important. The Cobb Archives was given to you as a reward for your long and valuable work.

The Cobb Archives must not be just a storage place, but a living archives. It can have an impact on the community with the people "drawing on the past to build a better future." The Historical Society can make this come true.

The Cobb Foundation will always help you to make the Cobb Archives a vibrant and dynamic place in the community.

Sincerely,

George S. Cobb, Jr.

To say that I am pleased and excited over our new working relationship with the Cobb Memorial Archives is an understatement. When I sent my first message to you in January, stating some of the goals I had in mind for this Society I had no idea that we would have doors opened to us, so quickly, which would make it possible to reach these goals in bigger and better ways than I could have imagined.

There is now a functioning committee, composed of representatives of the Historical Society, the Library Board and the Library Staff. The members of this committee in addition to myself, are, William Davidson, Chairman, Jessie Summers, James Borders, Ed Yeargin, Maurice Duttera and Jane Alston. We meet regularly to plan the activities that will carry out our goals as they have been set forth.

THE VOICE, which you are now reading, is the first of many ways that we will use to reach out to the community, and keep you informed. Come to the Quarterly Meeting of our Society on Thursday night, December 13th at the Archives at 7:30. It will be an important business meeting and there will be an outstanding program, presented by Mrs. H. A. Myhand of West Point. She will be giving us some material that has come through the Myhand family about the early life in the Sardis Community in Harris County. This material is not only historically significant, but fascinatingly interesting.

Come and bring your friends.

Eleanor Scott

continued on next page

OFFICERS

President..... Mrs. William H. Scott, Jr.
 Vice President..... Mr. James Borders
 Vice President..... Mr. John Higginbotham
 Recording Secretary..... Mrs. Roy Brown
 Corresponding Secretary..... Miss Alma Holladay
 Treasurer..... Mr. Jim Murphey

DIRECTORS

Mrs. Howard Syler
 Mr. Earl Edwards
 Mr. & Mrs. Grady Fowler
 Mrs. Bill Wheeling
 Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Blanton
 Mrs. Claude Milford

MEMBERS

Mrs. Jane Alston
 Mr. & Mrs. George W. Adams
 Mrs. John Hollis Allen
 Mr. Randall Allen
 Mrs. Paul E. Ames
 Mr. & Mrs. O. D. Alsobrook
 Miss Marjorie Andrews
 Mr. & Mrs. Joe Barrow, Jr.
 Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Blanton
 Mr. James Borders
 Mrs. Louise Brown
 Mr. & Mrs. Grover O. Batson
 Miss Rita Burke
 Miss Mattie Lou Cato
 Mrs. D. Z. Cauble
 Mr. & Mrs. J. V. Chambers
 Mr. & Mrs. George S. Cobb, Jr.
 Mrs. James S. Collins
 Lewis Cooper
 Miss Mary Crowder
 Mrs. Thelma B. Crowder
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Crump
 Mr. & Mrs. Gordon A. Cumbaa
 Miss Kathleen Cumbee
 Miss Lillian Cumbee
 Mrs. H. B. Danforth
 Mr. William Davidson
 Mrs. Fred Davis
 Mrs. James O. Donald, Jr.
 Mr. Earl Edwards
 Mr. Bradley Easterwood
 Ms. Linda Eller
 Mrs. Charles Estes
 Mr. & Mrs. Grady Fowler
 Mr. Gene A. Fox
 Mrs. Julian Frazer
 Mr. & Mrs. Mark Fretwell
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Gay
 Mrs. Edwin F. Graham
 Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Guinn
 Mrs. Charles W. Greene, Jr.
 Mrs. Emma C. Hammett
 Mr. Taplin Hanson
 Mrs. Jack T. Harber
 Mrs. John T. Harris
 Miss Nina Heard
 Mr. & Mrs. Shaefer Heard
 Miss L. C. Lovelace
 Mrs. Mary Croft Hebble White
 Mrs. Joe Henderson
 Mrs. John T. Higginbotham, Sr.
 Mr. John T. Higginbotham, Jr.
 Miss Alma Holladay
 Miss Estelle Huguley
 David Hollis
 Mrs. Moody Jacobs
 Mr. Judd Jarrell
 Mrs. J. W. Jones
 Mrs. Robert L. Jones
 Mr. William E. Keith
 Mrs. M. J. Kiser
 Mrs. Bruce Lanier
 Mr. Joseph L. Lanier, Sr.
 Mrs. LaFayette Lanier, III
 Dr. W. E. Martin, Jr.
 Mrs. W. E. Martin
 Mrs. Claude Milford
 Mr. & Mrs. Tom Morgan
 Mr. Hugh Morris
 Mrs. James H. Morris
 Mr. & Mrs. Jim C. Murphey
 Mr. & Mrs. C. Jim Murphey
 Mrs. John Wise McCleadow
 Mrs. Oran H. McCleadow
 Mr. & Mrs. J. C. McGinty
 Mrs. Caroline Newton
 Dr. & Mrs. Alexander Nunn
 Miss Gladys Ozley
 Miss Cornelia Ozley
 Miss Sadie Shannon
 Miss Ethel Owen
 Mrs. J. A. Parker
 Mrs. Roy Parrish
 Mr. T. Frank Pate, Jr.
 Mrs. Nevada Pickett
 Dr. Norman C. Poer, Jr.
 Mrs. Anna Trammell Pratt
 Mrs. F. J. Ransom
 Mary Louise Richerson
 Mr. O. P. Roberts
 Mrs. Aubrey C. Robinson, Sr.
 Mr. & Mrs. William H. Scott, Jr.
 Mr. John C. Sharpe
 Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Shaefer, Jr.
 Mrs. John Simmons
 Mrs. Hugh Smith
 Mr. & Mrs. Posey Sorrell
 Mrs. Sherie Sorrell
 Miss Julia Stanfield
 Mrs. Roy Stewart
 Mrs. J. H. Strother
 Mr. & Mrs. Carl Summers
 Mr. & Mrs. Howard Syler
 Miss Jenny Syler
 Mrs. R. B. Tatum
 Mr. & Mrs. G. T. Terry
 Mr. & Mrs. L. R. Tillery, Sr.
 Miss Mary Alice Tucker
 Mr. & Mrs. Luther Turner
 Miss Eunice Turnham
 Mr. & Mrs. John L. Underwood
 Dr. & Mrs. Howard Waddle
 Mrs. Bill Wheeling
 Mr. & Mrs. Ray Warner
 Miss Sara L. Webb
 Mrs. E. S. Williams
 Mrs. Edgar Wright
 Mrs. Denson Yates
 Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Young
 Mr. & Mrs. George C. Zachry
 Mr. & Mrs. Jim Zachry
 Mr. & Mrs. Griggs Zachry

MR. MAURICE DUTHERA

COBB ARCHIVES NOTES by Jane Alston

It is with great pleasure that I bring you this first column on the activities and the most recent acquisitions of the Cobb Memorial Archives.
 The hours for the Archives are now the same as for the Bradshaw Library. They are as follows:
 Monday - Thursday - - - 10AM - 9PM
 Friday and Saturday - - - 10AM - 5PM
 Sunday - - - - - 2PM - 5PM
 Mrs. Louise Brown, Archives Assistant is available from 1 - 5PM on Wednesdays.
 A Cobb Archives and Historical Society brochure is being prepared and should be available by early January.
 Plans are in progress for a West Point Pepperell Historical Memorabilia show to be exhibited at the Archives during March and April. Our School Visitation Program will coincide with this.
 Recent Archives Acquisitions include six collections:
 Collection 70 - - containing brochures and correspondence of World War I, given by Mrs. Aldine Johnson
 Collection 71 - - - a history of Lebanon Church

Collection 72 - - - a framed collection of photos of the 1920 cyclone damage, in West Point, presented by Mr. L. R. Tillery, Sr.
 Collection 73 - - - The Richard Guinn collection which contains several newspapers and a hand drawn map dating from Civil War days.
 Collection 74 - - - sheet music, circa 1898 - 1916, given by the Bradshaw family.
 Collection 75 - - - a twelve volume set of books, The Library of Entertainment, from the estate of Mrs. Robert Causey.
 Finally, a collection of great importance has come in from the Hawks Library of West Point. There are several hundred books and other materials and they deal largely with Southern history and range from material on Southern women to records of the Confederate Navy. There are also some lineage books of the DAR, bound volumes of World War II valley newspapers, Red Cross Records from World War I and two scrapbooks of West Point history. The material has not been processed, but will be available for use as soon as possible.
 I hope you will find time to come to the Cobb Archives soon.

*The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society
 West Point, Georgia 31833*

DID YOU KNOW ? ? ? ? ?

When Riverview, Alabama was known as Collin's Mill, in antebellum days, two men built one of several boats planned for navigation of the Chattahoochee River from the mill to West Point, in Troup County, Georgia and Franklin, in Heard County, Georgia. Beck and Fleming, asserting the river could be made navigable with boats of their design, were underterred by those who considered their investment an impractical experiment.
 On a Sunday evening in October, 1859, their boat arrived at West Point from Collin's Mill, about ten miles down river, bringing a small lot of baled cotton. Early Monday morning, buyers bought it at 10¼¢ per pound.
 A "West Point Citizen", probably George H. Winston, son of a pioneer plantation owner with a sense of the historic who kept a diary for many years of vicinity happenings, wrote the editor of the Columbus, Georgia, DAILY ENQUIRER, that "the arrival of the boat created considerable excitement among our citizens, as there were some who were well acquainted with the river below, who entertained doubts of its getting over the shoals which they knew to exist."
 "Since Messrs Beck and Fleming have succeeded in running up through the shoals below this city, we believe every doubt has been dispelled as to their ability to navigate the river above us." The writer said that the river was at an unusually low stage for the season. He predicted that as soon as the winter rains began, there would be nothing to prevent the boats running regularly between West Point and Franklin, "and farther, if necessary."

(Joe Peddy, of Columbus cited this reference to me)
 William Davidson

Society publications are on sale at John's Village Shoppe, Cherry Valley Shopping Center, Lanett, Alabama 36863.

Still available: PINWOOD - \$7.00; PRODEST INHERITANCE - \$5.00; VALLEY SCRAPBOOK - \$2.65; STORY OF BLUFFTON - LANETT - \$6.25

DO YOU KNOW ? ? ? ? ?

- (This will be a regular feature of THE VOICE and your questions will be welcome - send them to Mrs. Louise Brown, Cobb Memorial Archives, Shawmut, Alabama)
1. Mrs. Claude Milford of 913 1st Street, Lanett, Alabama, wants to know the land lot and district that was the site of the Sand Creek Academy of Harris County. It existed around 1880.
 2. Mrs. William Scott, Jr., Route 1, West Point, Georgia, wants any information about the Military School that was a part of the Fredonia Community before the Civil War. Are there school records in existence, or letters that contain information other than what is on the Historic Marker in Fredonia?
 3. The flag flown over Ft. Tyler was at one time a part of the Historical Society Collection. It has gotten misplaced and the Society would like to have it at the Archives. Any information about this would be appreciated.
 4. Descendants of Paschal E. Ward (1801 - 1851) came to Chambers County in 1839 from Putnam County, Georgia. Please contact John Higginbotham, Rt. 1, West Point, Georgia if you have any information about his parents.

**QUARTERLY MEETING
 OF
 CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY
 HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 DECEMBER 13, 1979
 7:30 P.M.
 COBB MEMORIAL ARCHIVES**

IF YOU LIKE RECEIVING THE VOICE AND WANT TO HAVE IT SENT TO YOU, QUARTERLY, JOIN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY. SEND THE \$3.00 MEMBERSHIP FEE TO MR. JIM C. MURPHEY, ROUTE 1, WEST POINT, GEORGIA 31833.
WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

PUBLIC VIEWING - RARE OPPORTUNITY!

The CVHS will have the Merz diary on display at the April 28th Meeting. This is the first time it has been on display since it was donated 60 years ago. More details on page 1.

The following is reprinted from the VOICE April, 2018.

Louis Merz was born November 8, 1833, at Durkeim, Barvaria (the present Bad Durkheim, Rhineland-Palatinate). Due in part to discrimination against the Jewish population, he immigrated to Philadelphia when a young man. Louis soon became friends with Heyman Heyman, an immigrant from Prussia who lived with Louis's cousin, Sam Cohen. Other close friends originally from Prussia were Levi Stern and Stern's wife, the former Lena Herzberg. All were in the mercantile trade.

In 1853, Heyman and Merz moved south to LaGrange, Georgia, where Heyman was a bookkeeper and Merz a countryside peddler. While in LaGrange, they boarded with Reuben and Arabella Lanier whose young boys would decades later become textile pioneers. In 1854, when the Atlanta & West Point Railroad extended its tracks to West Point, Heyman, Merz, and the Lanier family heard opportunity calling and moved to the region's latest "boom town". At West Point, the mercantile firm of Heyman & Merz grew quickly. Within a few years, Louis's sister immigrated from Bavaria to Cincinnati, Ohio, and on his trips north to buy merchandise for the store, Heyman and Betty Merz became acquainted. By the end of the decade, Heyman and Louis were not only business partners, they were brothers-in-law. Louis's brother, Daniel, joined the firm as well.

Two weeks after Fort Sumter was fired upon and the War of the Rebellion began, Louis Merz joined the West Point Guards, Company D of the 4th Georgia regiment. After organizing at Augusta, the regiment was sent to the Tidewater region of Virginia, and trained at Camp Jackson near Norfolk. It was here, on January 1, 1862, that Merz recorded his first entry into the cherished diary. In July, Company D lost several of its best men at Malvern Hill, including Captain George F. Todd. Merz continued to write a few days after the battle, with his final entry on July 9 documenting a visit from none other than Heyman Heyman.

Doles-Cook Brigade was part of Lee's invasion into the North. Undoubtedly, there was little time for journaling as Company D marched through the Shenandoah Valley that



Private Louis Merz, C.S.A. Enlisted in the West Point Guards, Company D, 4th Georgia Regiment Volunteer Infantry, Doles-Cook Brigade

summer towards Antietam, Maryland. It was there that he fell. His small diary- along with a poem clipped from a Richmond newspaper, "Prayer During Battle", by the famous German poet Theodore Korner- was found in an inside pocket of his uniform.

Louis Merz was buried in a soldier's grave in Richmond. His diary was discovered in the aftermath of the battle and, eventually, returned to sister Betty in West Point. She passed it down to her youngest daughter, Bertha.

The diary was presented to CHVS by Miss Fannie Herzberg at the Society's meeting on June 25, 1959, on behalf of the diary's owner, Miss Bertha Heyman. Miss Herzberg was a granddaughter of Heyman (who had eventually changed his first name to Herman) and niece of "Miss Bertha", who was 94 years old at the time and unable to be present at the meeting herself. Bertha Heyman was a charter member of CVHS and the first president of the West Point Woman's Club.



The Confederate soldier's diary is a pocket-sized leather bound notebook of 64 pages. Merz began his diary on January 1, 1862, with his last entry on July 9 of the same year.

WORKS CITED:

- Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society. *Pioneer Members and History of Temple Beth-El: 1859 to 1959*. Bulletin 4. Nov. 1959.
- Merz, Louis. *Diary of Private Louis Merz, C.S.A. of West Point Guards*. 1862.

Sixty years ago, the oldest members of my families discouraged my opening the door and digging too deeply into the long-closed closet of family history. They were afraid that I would churn up that closet's contents to uncover a flock of black sheep and the related embarrassments. Many of us have experienced the lack of cooperation by elderly cousins, uncles and aunts in our attempts to get them to recount the true facts of life, the uncomplimentary old stories, untied and unwrapped from repressed memories. The older generation of family cautioned that youngsters were not to speak ill of the dead nor were we to discuss perceived flaws in the lives of family, friends, or neighbors. This code of silence was strongest among the elderly women relatives. In studying family and local history one should remember that our pioneer families long-living in and on the edge of the southeastern frontier endured most remarkable experiences where some of their actions may have failed public approval. In my personal challenge to comprehend the full experience and behavior of ancestors following the frontier, I have learned many things that would not be acknowledged in the past as my families sought to improve themselves and model their behaviors. Contemporary historians analyze and interpret historical records which demonstrate the complexities and conflicts in human behavior that many times were inconsistent with the social norms, past and present. Now it seems that the full critical examination of a human in its historical context and in its contributions to cultural institutions or even to family or group existence may be instructive and essential to our learning, applying a critical and discerning eye to the social, political and economic complexities of contemporary times. In the spirit of opening the door behind which black sheep stories may be found, I introduce a possible descendant of David Dunlap and her telling her story of David Dunlap and the legacy of her family.

At the July 2018 meeting of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society, Wayne Clark the Vice President for Programs orchestrated a meeting where attendees sat in a large circle and told family stories about past experiences of their families living in the counties surrounding the Chattahoochee River. The stories were varied and engaging. One story, we decided to memorialize by publishing it in *the VOICE*, was told by Louise Chambers Smith and her husband Bill Smith, a retired lawyer. Louise and Bill are to be commended for an honest and insightful story about a family legacy in Chambers County emerging from the pioneer days. With their permission, the following paragraphs are constructed from the oral presentation by Louise and Bill, their documentation, additional census information and local newspaper articles. This is Louise's story.

David Dunlap, Jr. is perhaps best known by local folks and historians as a pioneer landowner in the Valley area whose lone grave until recently was located behind the Pizza Hut south of Interstate 85 on Highway 29. David Dunlap, Jr. was born about 1790 in South Carolina according to the 1850 census. Family history records his living in the Pendleton District of South Carolina. Deed documentation in South Carolina identified Dunlap in 1817 selling 100 acres of David Dunlap, Sr. land where the family lived on Chauga (Cane) Creek, which is a tributary of the Tugaloo River in present Oconee County, South Carolina. In 1819 Dunlap, Jr. sold an additional 440 acres of the home property on the "Indian Boundary."

In 1834, just two years after Chambers County was established, David Dunlap, Jr. purchased 320 acres of land from a Creek Indian woman named Ann. The modestly rolling land of the lower piedmont river valley was in great contrast to his family's mountainous South Carolina land where the average slope of the Chauga watershed was 22 feet for every hundred feet. The Chambers County purchased property lay along and around US Highway 29 south of US Interstate 85 from the areas of Shawmut and the Bradshaw Library northward towards the Interstate. David Dunlap, Jr. obviously arrived in the valley with resources as evidenced by his purchase of Ann's land and by the 1840 Census where he reported ownership of 13 slaves. He reported he was between the ages of 40 and 49 years, the single white male and inhabitant in his household.

County records trace David Dunlap's involvement in additional local land transactions. His brother, Joseph Dunlap, also purchased land in Chambers County in this first decade as evidenced by County records showing the purchase of 280 acres from William Freeman for the sum of \$1,060. David Dunlap and Robert L. Dunlap, Joseph's son, witnessed the legal transaction. At that time the brother, Joseph, and nephew, Robert, resided in Meriwether County, Georgia. In 1849 David Dunlap sold a total of 139 2/3 acres to James J. Robinson for \$100 "paid in hand." This purchase has the appearance of a gift consideration due to the low price for the land. The deed also gave special description to three acres in order that Robinson's existing "buildings, yard, and garden" as they stood would be conveyed in the deed where one line of

continued on next page

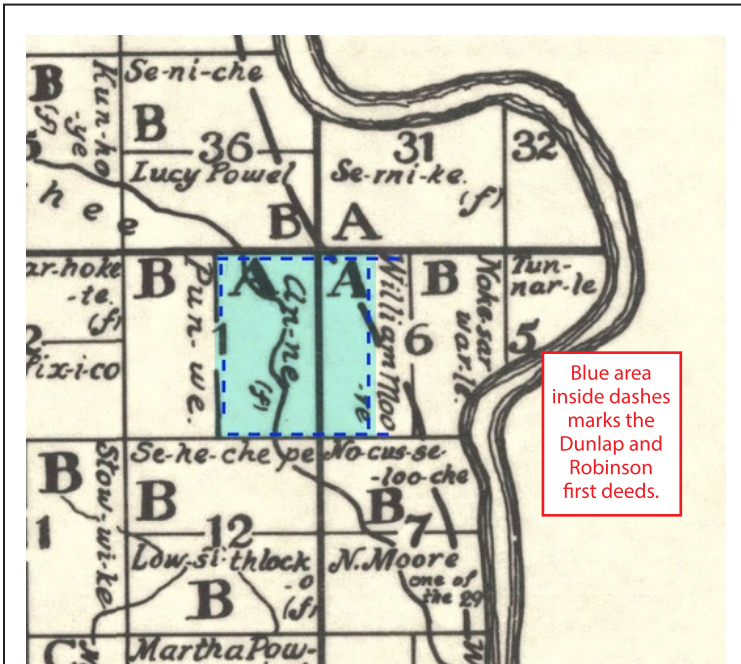
this grant would be the north and east line would be the Gerard Road. Dunlap, in the deed, reserved the right to control the resale of the property by J. J. Robinson. The wording of the deed suggests Robinson, his wife Mary Ann and four children were living on, and farming Dunlap's land before the purchase.

Family research found that a strong friendship developed between Dunlap and the Robinson couple about the time of their migration through Georgia into Chambers County in 1834.

In the early years the landless Robinson aided the older (by 12 years) Dunlap through some type of arrangement in all those actions and efforts required to develop cotton plantations on frontier land in New Alabama. Both the 1840 census and 1850 census listings show the men established and maintained households as near neighbors. The excellent cotton land, friendship and the working arrangement between the two men contributed to their growing success as farmers.

The information in the 1850 population census and the agricultural census provide a description of the farming operations of the two men. In 1850 David Dunlap was a 60-year-old white male living alone in his household owning 11 slaves with real property valued at \$3,000. (Remember that you must always expect values self-reported in this era in the census to be undervalued.) The agricultural census shows that his land consisted of 260 acres of improved fields and 200 acres of unimproved land. He gave a cash value of the land to be \$5,000 and the farm implements to be \$200. Dunlap owned 92 head of various livestock he valued at \$750. He grew wheat and Indian corn on the farm. In that year ending in June 1850, the farm produced 15 bales of cotton when the standard bale weighed 400 pounds. Other produce included Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, honey and wax, and slaughtered animals. The work animals of the farm are shown to be four horses and two mules.

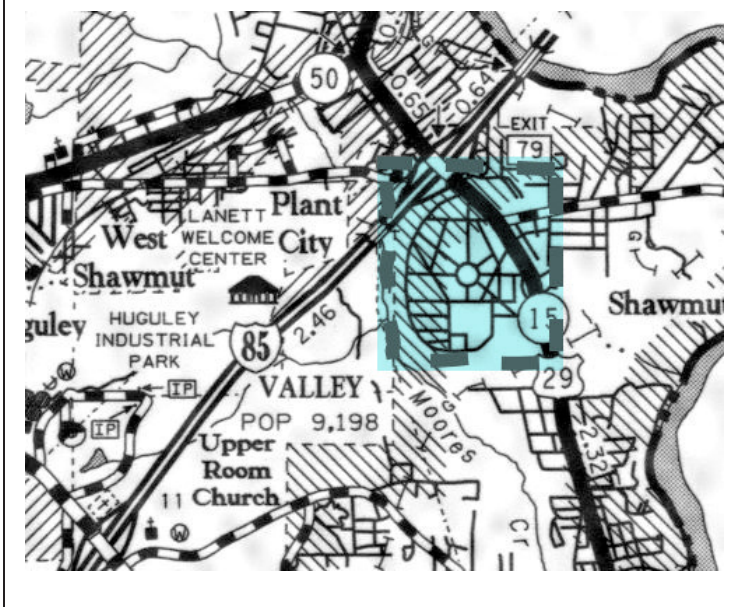
In comparison, the friend and neighbor, James J. Robinson, listed next to Dunlap in consecutive order of households in the 1850 census, is a 45-year-old white male with a 42-year-old wife named Mary Ann and four children: David O. (13 yr.), Mary J. (11), James J. (8), and Joseph D. (7). Robinson reported that he owned 8 slaves and had \$1,475 of real property. In the agricultural census Robinson reported 115 acres of improved land and 120 unimproved acres in his farm which he valued at \$1,075 and his implements at \$30. Although he owned 64 head of livestock, he owned only one horse, no mules and 2 oxen to work the fields. He grew fewer produce items than his neighbor Dunlap, reporting only wheat, corn and rice. He produced 25 pounds of rice that year when William B. Gilmer, listed on the same page of the census, reported 40 pounds of rice harvested. Robinson ginned three bales of cotton, and also produced sweet potatoes and butter. The value of his slaughter meat was \$25 in contrast to Dunlap's meat which was valued at \$111. The reporting in the 1850 agricultural census



Blue area inside dashes marks the Dunlap and Robinson first deeds.

Above, first map of Chambers County (1832), showing the Indian Reservations and the location of first David Dunlap and Robinson Deeds.

Below is a modern map showing that same location.



indicates that both Dunlap and Robinson had acquired additional acreage since the purchase of Dunlap's original 320 acres from the Indian woman Ann in 1834. The combined acreage of the two men in 1850 as reported was 695 acres. One might suspect that these two large farms shared some work with manpower and draft animals to maintain their productivity but such as fact has not been documented.

On September 9, 1852, David Dunlap, Jr. dies at the age of 62. He leaves a will where James J. Robinson is designated the executor and Dunlap's entire estate is willed to Mary Ann Robinson and her children. Within nine days four siblings and a nephew of David Dunlap file with the Chambers County Probate Court a contest to David Dunlap's last will and testament. At this point in the flow of the legal process, the first unusual event occurred: the Dunlap contestants sought and received a change of venue to the Macon County Circuit Court. The reason for the change in venue can only be guessed. Possibly the Dunlaps did not want adversarial salacious information displayed before friends and neighbors in the valley area and they anticipated a potentially friendlier jury in Macon County. The trial proceeded in Macon County where the jury ruled the will to be valid. Not accepting the ruling of the Macon County Circuit Court, the Dunlaps posited that the Circuit made mistakes to the prejudice of the contestants and immediately appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court, which accepted the case. The deliberations on the case were available to the public, published in the *Reports of the Supreme Court of Alabama, January Term—1856*. It was most unusual for the State Supreme Court to consider this type of contest that in most circumstances could be well settled in the local circuit court. A Supreme Court review was the second most unusual development in establishing the validity of David Dunlap's last will and testament.

The Dunlap relatives contested the validity of the will where "the testator gave all his property, both real and personal, amounting in value to about \$20,000, to the four children of Robinson and Mary his wife; reserving to their mother a life estate in two of the slaves, and appointing their father his sole executor." The Dunlaps presented nine stipulations which challenged the validity of the will including the ruling of the Circuit Court. The challenges made by the contestants asserted that Dunlap was suffering from "insane delusion, that he was under undue influence by the Robinsons over "his mind and will," that he was not of "sound mind and disposing mind and memory," and that the will was a "fraud" and "procured by illegal and immoral consideration." Basically, the Dunlaps advanced the argument that the calculated immoral behavior of Mrs. Robinson resulted in a false will and testament.

The Court noted that "The Contestants (The Dunlaps) took a wide range in their efforts to impeach this will." The basic assertion was that Mary Ann Robinson had "procured" David Dunlap, had led him to acknowledge his long-term adulterous relationship with her in order to influence his writing of the will. Witnesses testified to and were questioned in detail about the intimacy between David Dunlap and the Robinson family, when he visited and stayed at the home when James Robinson was absent, when the children slept in the bed with him, when he gave the children their presents, when the mother and children visited him over night without James Robinson, and when David Dunlap and Mary Ann Robinson attended Methodist meetings together. The contestants spent much time in their efforts to portray Mary Ann Robinson as having illicit intercourse with David Dunlap in order to construct the proposition of her influence over David Dunlap. To establish her immoral character was key to their case.

The Supreme Court ruled that the contestants did not offer sufficient evidence to prove the points of their case and basic postulations were inconsistent with case law. Much case law was cited by the Court to demonstrate that any adulterous relationship was immaterial and that the testator, David Dunlap, might dispose of his property as he saw fit so long he was sane and of clear mind. No evidence provided convinced the Court that Dunlap was mentally unfit. Mary Ann Robinson and her husband James were required to listen to much adversarial argument about Mary Ann's morality. The salacious testimony and cross examinations would have created much gossip in any community.

The Supreme Court concluded there was no evidence contained in the record condemning Mary Ann's morality and: "We would be sorry to be understood as affirming that the record exhibits any want of fidelity on the part of Mrs. Robinson towards her husband or that the children provided for in the will are not legitimate. True there are circumstances of familiarity which, unexplained, might furnish strong ground for suspicion, but which when we consider the long and peculiar friendship existing between the parties, and this bachelor was treated as a member of Mr. Robinson's family for many years, accustomed to the familiarities, and interchanging the kindly offices which obtain among near relatives, lose much if not all of their force and may consist with the most upright deportment." "Let the judgement be affirmed."

Following the action of the Alabama Supreme Court in 1856, Mary Ann and the four children had clear title to

the real and personal property valued at \$20,000. In 2019 dollars the inheritance would be worth \$594,767.06 using an inflation factor calculation. To see the immediate impact or use of this inheritance we need only to examine the 1860 population census and agricultural census. James Robinson is listed as head of household, a 56-year-old farmer with real property valued at \$1,500 and personal property valued at \$11,000. He owns 11 slaves. Wife Mary is listed as 49-year-old woman who reports no property but son James J. appears as a 19-year-old in school with \$5,000 in personal property while his brother Joseph D. is listed as 18 years old in school and \$5,000 personal property. Next door in his own household living alone is David Robinson, 22 years old, a farmer with \$1,500 in real property and \$6,000 personal property owning 4 slaves. The daughter Mary J. of James and Mary Ann is not shown in the Robinson households. According to family research she married George Heil Chatfield on December 1, 1859 in Chambers County and possibly moved to Georgia. The above information suggests that the Dunlap estate distribution had occurred among the male heirs.

David Robinson's household was enumerated, as a farmer, single male, 22 years old with a real estate value of \$1,500 and personal property of \$11,000. The farms of James J. senior and son David were also enumerated on the agricultural census of 1860. James J. reported 60 acres of improved land and 90 acres of unimproved land at a total value of \$1,500 and \$400 in implements. He had fewer but more valuable acres than in 1850 and more than ten times the value of his 1850 implements. He reports ownership of 10 slaves, one less than reported in 1850. In terms of the productivity of his farming efforts, James reported 38 bales of cotton, which was more than 10 times the 1850 crop. The value of cotton was subject to fluctuation yearly but estimating a value of \$.10 per pound for 1850 (\$40/bale) and \$.135 (\$54/bale) in 1860, the Robinson production worth in 1850 was \$400 (\$12, 877.27 in 2019) in comparison to 1860 of \$2,052 (\$62,493.52 in purchasing power in 2019). Because the son David Robinson is farming next door to his father James, one would expect that David's property was his inherited share which could include his slaves. The 22-year-old David produced 17 bales of cotton with a value of \$918 in 1860 or \$27,957.63 in 2019 dollars. The family over the past two decades had enjoyed increasing prosperity. The inheritance of David Dunlap's estate would have contributed to the continued growth of wealth in this family.

One would anticipate that agricultural prosperity severely declined in the decade in the aftermath of the Civil War. The costly investment in slave manpower by the Robinsons

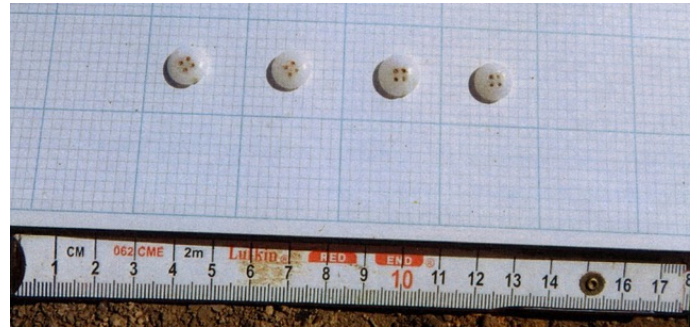
was totally wiped away at the war's end. James Sr. 68 years old in 1870 reported that he, wife Mary Ann (65) and son Joseph (27) comprised the household. He reported a value of \$750 in real estate and \$800 in personal property for a total estate value of \$1,550.00. In 1860 he reported \$12,500.00 as the total value of the household. In a decade the farm and home had lost 88% of its value. Fortunately, the price of cotton rose dramatically to over \$.20 per pound for a number of years in the late 1860's and settled at \$.16 per pound in the New York market in 1870. The agricultural census listed two James Robinson farms in Beat 13 in 1870. One farm produced one bale of cotton and the second produced 40 bales at 450 pounds per bale. The value of 41 bales would approximate \$2,952.00 in 1870 dollars or \$56,961.43 in 2019. The Robinson families faced new challenges in a new free labor economy, the future decline of the price of cotton and the declining fertility of the once rich frontier soil in the river valley.

In her presentation Louise Chambers concluded that the true legacy of David Dunlap for her and her relatives as descendants of James Jefferson Robinson, Jr., was the value placed upon obtaining higher education. The inherited resources allowed James, Jr. to attend and graduate from the University of Georgia in 1861. He joined the local West Point Guards as a private in that year, was severely wounded at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1864, and was invalided home after his left arm was amputated. James Jr. returned to Chambers County to read law and establish a practice in LaFayette, becoming a member of the Alabama Legislature, a state senator, probate judge for 10 years and member of the Alabama Constitutional Convention of 1901. Although multiple generations consumed the physical legacy of David Dunlap, that legacy for James Jr. which had lasting impact was the family valuing higher education and public service demonstrated by each succeeding generation of his descendants. In her oral presentation Louise concluded that not only did David Dunlap leave a rich estate but possibility he left descendants in the Robinson children.

This story began with the history of David Dunlap and must conclude with his history also. David Dunlap remained in his burial in the vegetative growth behind the Pizza hut until 2018. In the spring and summer of that year the Valley Historic Preservation Commission employed Terracon Consultants to use ground penetration radar to study the burial ground, to examine the surrounding area to find additional graves. The purpose was to exhume the remains and relocate them to the historic Bethlehem Church Cemetery. The findings, all belonging to David Dunlap, were the grave capstone, slabs of marble, very

continued on next page

rusted coffin nails and tacks and four glass shirt buttons. David Dunlap had completely disappeared into the earth and its minerals. No other grave or markers were found even though oral history asserted that Dunlap was buried with his slaves. The absence of proof does not deny the possibility for the oral history to be correct. David Dunlap's grave earth was re-interred with a new grave marker in the Bethlehem Cemetery and a kiosk under the new pergola memorializes Mr. David Dunlap who appeared as a pioneer in the Valley community of more than 175 years ago. ■



Above are four glass shirt buttons belonging to David Dunlap.

Below, are rusted nails and tacks from the coffin of David Dunlap. These items were found during the process of relocating the grave.



About the VALLEY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

In August 1992, an ordinance was adopted by the Valley City Council that established the Historic Preservation Commission. This commission has 10 members who are appointed by the City Council. In 2002, the Historic Preservation Commission won the *Distinguished Service Award* from the State Historic Commission.



5TH ANNUAL MOTOR COACH HISTORY EXPEDITION

Join the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society on our 5th annual Motor Coach History Expedition

200

ALABAMA BICENTENNIAL

www.alabama200.org



THE ALABAMA ANNIVERSARY TOUR An Alabama 200 Sanctioned Event!

JUNE 22-26, 2019

Fully endorsed by the Alabama Bicentennial Commission, this tour, during the state's 200th anniversary, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



Take a fun trip through history that is completely planned for you. One price pays for all admissions, accommodations, all presentations, deluxe motor coach transportation, daily breakfast, and snacks/beverages aboard the bus. Leave all the details to us so you can truly enjoy this tour. Chances are good that your friends are already signed up, so come along!

Proceeds from this event benefit Historic Preservation in our area.

For full details, please visit www.cvhistoricalsociety.org today!



Follow the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society on Facebook and on our website: WWW.CVHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG



The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 718
West Point, GA 31833