

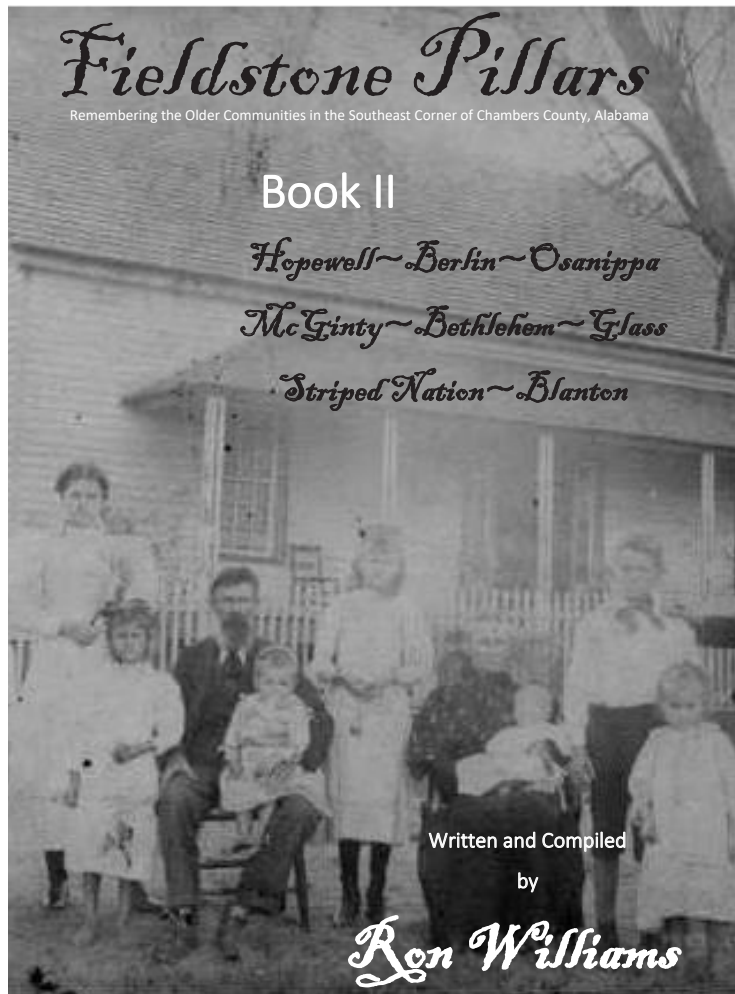
THE VOICE

of the *Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and Cobb Memorial Archives*

RON WILLIAMS, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR *By Program Chair, Charles Powers*

The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society would like to extend a warm welcome to the public to attend our quarterly meeting on Sunday, July 25th, at 2:00 PM Central (3:00 PM Eastern). Our presenter will be Ron Williams, a Valley area historian and author of several noteworthy books. His presentation will be on an early settler to the Valley area John Parnell and prominent members of his family.

Unlike our previous three quarterly meetings, which were virtual on ZOOM, this will be our first “in-seat” meeting since January of 2020. Unfortunately, we will not be meeting in the Bradshaw Library as we have in the past. For this meeting, Point University in West Point, Georgia, was gracious to offer to us the use of one of their upstairs classrooms in their Academic Center in downtown West Point. The Academic Center is located in the building that once housed the corporate office of West Point Home, and its address is 507 W 10th Street, West Point. In order to find the



classroom in question, we are asking that you please park on the western side of the building (with a student parking lot immediately across the street, in which you can also park if need be). The western door will be open for you and you will be directed upstairs

to Room 219. If anyone is unable to use the stairs, there is an elevator directly across from the door you will be entering.

Ron Williams’ topic for Sunday, July 25th, will be John Howard Parnell, the famed peach grower, who came to Chambers County after the Civil War. Parnell, an Irishman, is said to have started the first commercial peach orchard in America, and to be the father of the Georgia peach. Neither claim is true but he certainly is an interesting character in local history.

While living in Chambers County, John was visited by his brother, Charles Stewart Parnell, known as the “uncrowned King of Ireland.” Charles Stewart Parnell was an Irish nationalist politician who

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**THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING**
Sunday, July 25, 2021, 3:00 p.m. EDT (2:00 CDT)
Point University, Academic Center Room 219

RON WILLIAMS, HISTORIAN AND AUTHOR CONTINUED

served as a Member of Parliament (MP) from 1875 to 1891, also acting as Leader of the Home Rule League from 1880 to 1882 and then Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1882 to 1891. His party held the balance of power in the House of Commons during the Home Rule debates of 1885–1886.

Prior to the Charles' political fame, he visited his brother John in the Valley in 1872. He pondered remaining here and growing peaches. It was said that in Chambers County the future of Ireland hung in the balances. Charles did return to Ireland and became world famous. At our meeting, Ron will discuss Charles' visit and his comical interactions with the "common American people" of Chambers County. Charles did not think John should be on such familiar terms with the locals or their pigs, according to one story. Ron will also describe other members of the Parnell family. Did you know that John H. Parnell's mother was American and the daughter of Admiral Charles Stewart, the famed captain of the USS Constitution, known as Old Ironsides? Or that the Parnell's mother lived as practically a pauper in her old age? We will also discuss the affair that led to Charles Stewart Parnell's fall from grace.

Charles Stewart Parnell died in 1891 and John sold the Peach Farm and returned to Ireland bringing an end to an interesting commercial venture in Chambers County, Alabama.

The presenter, Ron Williams, grew up in the old Williams Homeplace on Hopewell Road in the southeast corner of Chambers County, Alabama. He is descended from Chambers County pioneers and his children are the 8th generation of his family to call Chambers County

home. He currently lives in Valley with his wife, Jennifer, and two sons, Aaron and Kaden. His oldest daughter, Aubrey, lives in Auburn. Growing up in the Old Williams Homeplace fostered his love for family and local history. This old home was built by his 3rd great grandparents, David S. and Nancy Woodall Williams in 1839.

Ron has written and compiled the following books on Chambers County history: *When the Dinner Bell Rang: A History of the Hopewell Community, On Railroad Street: The Story of Carrie Hanson Breedlove and her Family, Past Times*, which is a collection of historical articles about East Alabama and West Georgia, and *Fieldstone Pillars: Remembering the Older Communities in the Southeast Corner of Chambers County, Alabama*. Additionally, he has assisted in compiling *Aaron Williams and his Descendants*, detailing the descendants of this Chambers County pioneer.

If anyone is interested in further information, please contact me at ccpowers02@point.edu for more information.



Remember that this is an in-person meeting and will be held at Point University, Academic Center Room 219. (This is the old West Point Home building.) Parking on the Western side of the building is best as the door you should enter is on that side.

Please plan to attend this wonderful program, which is also our first in-person meeting since January of 2020!

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.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Malinda Powers

After two postponements, we were finally able to embark on our summer bus tour a few weeks ago. We were blessed with beautiful weather, safe travels, and a roster of nineteen delightful participants. Our study, "Creek Indians in Alabama", focused on the history of the Muscogee people and their interface with American pioneers resulting from the expansion of early 19th century America into "the old Southwest".

As we traveled across the state-as well as a short foray into Tennessee-we visited historic sites and venues associated with this period of history. We were fortunate to avail ourselves of experts, such as leading archaeologist/anthropologist Dr. Gregory Waselkov, who provided helpful background and fascinating detail at Fort Mims.

We met local experts as well, most notably at Grove Hill Museum, county seat of Clark County. Here, Coleman Quinn provided insights into the plight of the settlers "between the Forks" of the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers. These settlers hastily constructed "forts" to which they fled when the Red Sticks ramped up their campaign of violence after the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek. Fort Mims was the first of these forts to be attacked by the Red Stick contingent of the Muscogee people. The massacre propelled what had been a "civil war" within the Creek Nation (Red Sticks versus "Friendly Creeks") into the national conflict with Great Britain at that time, known historically as the War of 1812. Today, the people of Clark County have established "Fort Siquiefield", on the grounds of a lesser-known fort battle a few miles outside of the county seat. Quinn accompanied us to the interpretative site, and shared riveting stories of what happened the day after the battle of Fort Mims.

The scenic views along our journey were breath-taking. From the mountains surrounding Russell Cave to the rolling hills of the Coastal Plain, we saw the amazing diversity of Alabama landscapes. We walked a picturesque riverside trail along the Tennessee River and visited the Alabama River near the former location of Mims' Ferry.

We were greeted at Fort Mitchell by site director Dell McLendon, plus a large contingent of their support organization, the Russell County Historical Commission. They provided us with a lavish reception, which was the perfect way to conclude our tour. Thank you, Russell County!

This year we partnered with the Lee County Historical Society, who provided a wonderful farewell dinner at their beautiful Pioneer Park in Loachapoka. Their delicious home-cooking (which included homemade cakes for dessert!) was followed by a delightful trio of primitive stringed instruments, including autoharp and dulcimer. Net proceeds from this tour will benefit both organizations.



Along our journey, we supported historic venues via our admissions. In those cases where there was no charge, we made donations to assist communities and volunteer organizations that are working to preserve their local history. Here, LCHS President Charles Mitchell (left) and Malinda Powers present a donation to Dr. Farris Beasley towards continued development of the **Camp Blount Historic Site** in Fayetteville, Tennessee. The statue represents a "Tennessee volunteer" who mustered in with General Andrew Jackson at this site prior to their march into Alabama.



One of the most interesting stops along the tour was the **Poarch Creek Indian Museum** in Atmore, Alabama. The Poarch band was not forcibly removed to Oklahoma in 1836 in deference to their assistance and allegiance to the United States as "friendly, or allied, Creeks". Here, Museum Director and Creek tribal member Brandy Chunn accepts a donation on behalf of our tour group for the museum's outreach programs.

ADVICE AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE HOME-GROWN GENEALOGIST

by A. Stephen Johnson

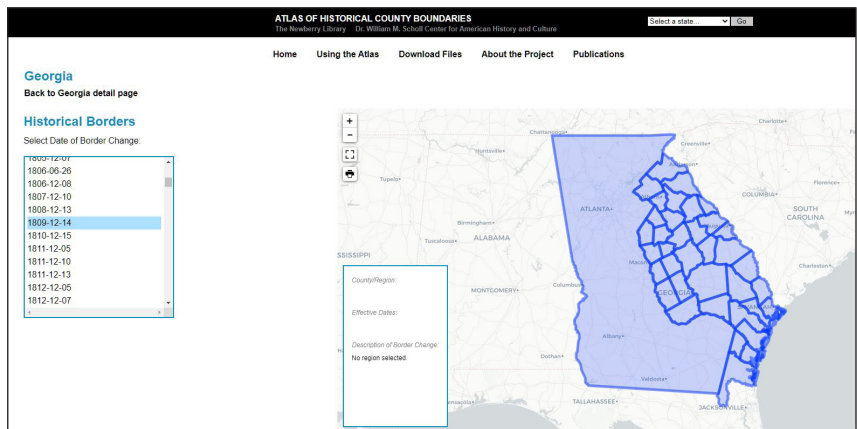
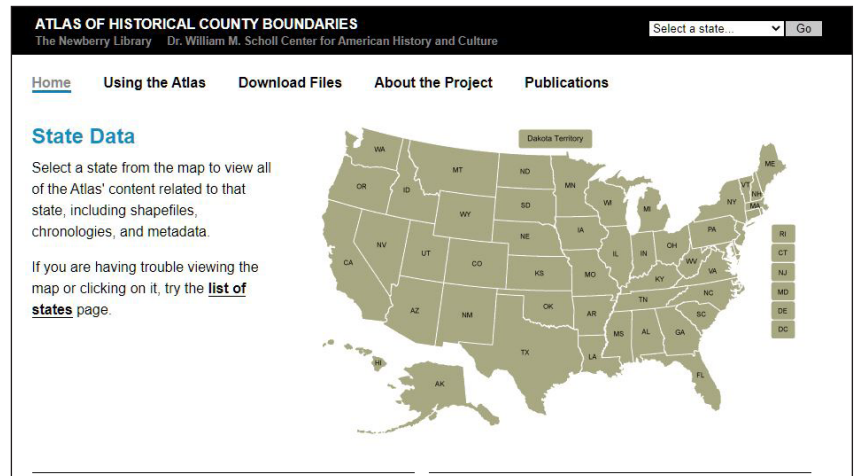
The Atlas of Historical County Boundaries: A Great Website for Genealogists

If you live in Alabama, there's a good chance your ancestors came from Georgia. So if you're researching your family tree, you will have to do research in Georgia counties. The first thing you learn is that Georgia counties can be very frustrating. Not only does Georgia have more counties than any other state except Texas (159 and there were formerly 161), but the boundaries of those counties have constantly changed over time. When Georgia created a new county, they didn't just split one county into two; they took parts from as many as four counties and put them together to form a new county. And after that, the boundaries of the new county continued to change. So your ancestor may have lived in three or four counties without ever moving from his home.

If you have the book, *Georgia Counties: Their Changing Boundaries*, compiled by Pat Bryant (1983), State Printing Office, Atlanta, this monograph gives you the dates each county was created, and the dates that the county gained or lost land, and to which county the land was given or lost. But it doesn't tell exactly where that land was, or how many acres it was, or what towns or communities were in that land transfer. There is, however, a website which does show you exactly where and when the land was transferred. And the website shows the changes in county boundaries for all states in the U. S., not only Georgia. The Newberry Library in Chicago is responsible for the website and it is free to the public. You don't need a user name or password, and the URL is: <https://digital.newberry.org/ahcb/>

When you open the website, you see a map of the U. S. Click on the state you wish to see, such as Georgia, and the site will open with a map of the state and a list of items. Click on the first item, "View interactive Map". All the other choices are not useful to genealogists, but contain much more detailed information, some of which is repeated in the book cited above.

The interactive map shows a map of the state at its earliest date of creation, with the original counties outlined



Above are two screenshots of the site.

in blue. On the left, there is a table of dates, headed "Historical Borders". Scroll down through the dates as you look at a particular county and see how its boundaries change. For example, on the Georgia map, look at original Washington county, created in 1784, and as you go down the table of dates you can see how many counties were created from it. You can zoom in and see more detail, including present-day roads and cities.

This has already been of great help to me in learning some interesting details about the lives of my ancestors in the central Georgia area. For example:

My ancestor Jacob Roberts obtained a headright grant in Montgomery County on 5 December 1804, with the plat surveyed 15 July 1800. A man named William Roberts obtained a headright grant in Montgomery County on exactly the same date, with a survey dated 15 September 1801, and the plat shows Jacob Roberts as one of William's chain carriers. This strongly suggests that Jacob and

continued on next page

William were brothers. On 15 December 1811 William had moved to Pulaski County and sold his land, which by then was in Laurens County. The deed describes the land exactly as that given in head right grant of 1804. (Actually, William didn't move very far. The interactive map shows that Pulaski County consisted only of that portion east of the Ocmulgee River, plus present-day Bleckley County and most of Dodge.) Further evidence that Jacob and William may have been brothers is found in William's 1815 will and a list of Jacob's children, evidently copied from a family Bible. Both William and Jacob named their oldest son Josiah, suggesting that their father was Josiah Roberts, who arrived in St. George Parish (now Burke County), GA in 1768, "lately from Mecklenburg Co., NC, has wife and 3 children, asks for 200 acres". In 1770 Josiah had a fourth child (this was Jacob) and petitioned for more land.

From this information I knew that Jacob and William's lands were in the part of Montgomery County that became Laurens County, and I assumed that Laurens County was first created from land east of the Oconee River, where Montgomery County is located. But the interactive map shows that's not the case. Laurens County was first created on 10 December 1807 from land west of the Oconee River, taken from Wilkinson County, with the part east of the river being taken from Montgomery County and added on 10 December 1811. So now I can state with some degree of certainty that Jacob's children born before that date were born in Montgomery County, and those born after that date were born in Laurens County. My g-g-grandfather William Roberts was born in April 1813, and his obituary states that he was born in Laurens County "east of the town of Dublin".

Another example: Macon County has had its boundaries changed many times. The present boundary between Macon and Dooly is Hogcraw Creek (My grandfather always told me that as a joke every time we drove it.) The now-dead town of Travelers' Rest is currently in Macon County, but was once in Dooly. My g-g-grandfather James G. Oliver, ran a "grocery" (i.e. a barroom) at Travelers' Rest, in the 1840s. *The History of Macon County* states that when the railroad came to Montezuma in 1851 most of the storekeepers in Travelers Rest moved their buildings to Montezuma (How in the world did they move entire buildings without mechanized heavy equipment?), and among these was the Manley House, occupied as a saloon; "James G. Oliver had run a barn in Travelers' Rest." A petition in the Dooly county Minutes of Court of Ordinary, Book A, July 1847, had always puzzled me, until I learned that a "grocery" was a barroom:

"The petition of Thomas H. Dawson respectfully sheweth that Henry Mashburn a minor has in his right some six thousand dollars in property money and effects a Sum that would guarantee a refined education and manners, if properly directed that the same has heretofore been judiciously managed in that respect by his late Guardian Allen Walters but that unfortunately the Guardianship has been placed on James G. Oliver, Jr., since which the said Henry Mashburn has been kept from school placed as a tapster in a crocery (sic) shop commingling with a society of the most dissolute habits far from being educated in that moral and genteel way as pursued by said late Guardian... Your petitioner prays that that the said James G. Oliver be removed from said Guardianship."

In other words, James G. Oliver was forcing his minor brother-in-law to work behind his bar instead of sending him to school! Apparently, the petitioner was not successful. James Oliver was still Henry's guardian when Henry turned 21 in 1851.

If you have the book on Georgia County Boundaries, cited previously, check the dates on which Macon got land from Dooly; or if you don't have it, on the website scroll down the list of dates, and you'll see that Travelers' Rest became part of Macon County on 25 November 1861, with Hogcraw Creek as the boundary between the two counties.

Alabama has only 67 counties, but its county boundaries have also changed many times. For example, Lee County was created in 1866 from Chambers and Russell Counties. My g-g-grandparents moved to Salem, AL in 1840, which was in Russell County. After 1866 it became part of Lee County, so for their early land records I would have to look in Russell County. Another relative died in Autauga County in 1852, and the 1850 census shows him in Wetumpka, which is now Elmore County, created in 1866. I looked for his gravestone in the Wetumpka cemetery without success; it's possible he is buried elsewhere in Elmore County.

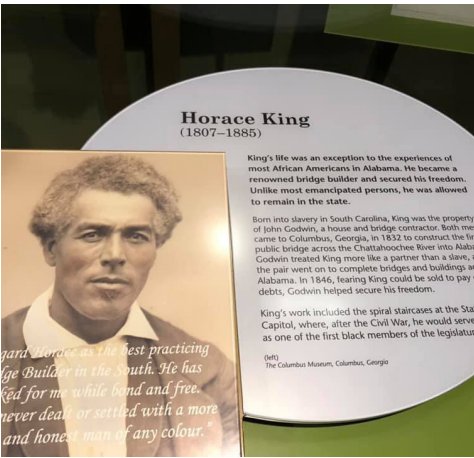
The preceding paragraphs, descriptions of experience in personal historical research, demonstrate the crooks and turns that are always a challenge to research. Hopefully my suggestions are helpful and that you will always be digging up the past in the correct county.



HERE ARE A FEW IMAGES OF WHAT YOU MISSED ON THE 2021 CREEK INDIAN TOUR.

A full listing of photos can be found on the following page and all can be viewed on the CVHS Facebook page. Thank you, Jason Williams!





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THE 2021 CVHS STUDY TOUR OF THE HISTORY OF CREEK INDIANS IN ALABAMA

Following, is a list of trip locations and quantity of accompanying images ready to view on the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society Facebook Page.

These images are shared courtesy of Jason Williams.

Fort Mitchell and the Federal Road	72 images
Fort Sinquefield	10 images
Alabama Department of Archives and History	77 images
Huntsville	23 images
Andrew Jackson, Hermitage	19 images
Poarch Creek Indian Museum	73 images
Horseshoe Bend	48 images
Ft. Claiburne, William Travis House	2 images
Pioneer Park in Loachapoke	25 images
Ditto Landing, Huntsville	12 images
Battle of Burnt Corn	4 images
Old Federal Road in Macon County	1 image
Ft. Mims in Baldwin County	38 images
Moundville	65 images
Ft. Toulouse	47 images

Five hundred and sixteen images to inform and inspire you in your study of the history of the Creek Indians in Alabama.

THE CONTINUING RESEARCH OF A. STEPHEN JOHNSON

We appreciate our member and former President A. Stephen Johnson continuing to spend hours in research seeking to find additional descriptions of how our families lived and the many influences which shaped their lives in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. -Editor

**From the *LaGrange Reporter*, 6 May 1886.
(Names are in bold by Editor.)**

On Tuesday, April 26th, his Honor, Mayor Harrington, called a citizen's meeting at Wright's Hall. On motion, **Prof. W. J. McKemie** was called to preside as chairman. Mayor Harrington explained the object of the meeting to be to consider and take steps preparatory to a demonstrative welcome to the great chieftain, **ex-President Jefferson Davis**, who was to pass through the city on the 30th. On motion, a committee was appointed by the chair, consisting of **Mayor Harrington, Daniel Merz, and Jas. S. Barker**, to report a program for the day. The committee suggested the appointment of **Maj. W. S. Jackson**, as marshal of the day, with power to appoint assistants and organize for the reception and welcome of our chieftain, whereupon **Captains J. J. Smith, R. A. S.**

Freeman and J. W. F. Little were appointed assistant marshals. An arch, festooned with evergreens and flowers, was erected south of the carshed over the railway track, representing the doorway to the State of Georgia. On the leaving of the mail train, the children of all the schools of West Point and vicinity were formed in procession in the ranks, according to size, the smallest in front, and marching in ten lines forming the letter V, the foot of the column resting at the arch, the lines headed, respectively, by **Captains J. J. Smith and Little**. Upon the arrival of the special train (*Editor: On April 30, 1886*), at the command of "close order," the head of each line moved towards the rail road track and headed by the speaker chosen by the

ladies, who with **Prof. McLeod**, bore floral offerings to the rear platform of President Davis' car. **Judge Blanford** introduced the old chief and **Dr. Griggs**, in a most unique and appropriate speech, presented the floral offerings and welcome, offering him a beautiful Confederate flag of flowers and the keys to the grand old State of Georgia. It was, indeed, a great day in our little city. Many deafening cheers went up and many an old veteran wept tears of joy. The West Point Cornet Band discoursed fine music from an open car placed for the purpose.



On April 30, 1886, Jefferson Davis, former President of the Confederacy, passed through LaGrange on his way to the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta for the unveiling of the Benjamin Harvey Hill statue. Earlier during a stop in West Point, General John B. Gordon, whose wife was a LaGrange native, introduced Davis's daughter Winnie as the "Daughter of the Confederacy." This was the first time the term had been used. (J. L. Schaub, photographer, courtesy of James Boykin)

Source: *TREASURES OF TROUP COUNTY A PICTORIAL HISTORY*,
Glenda Major and Forrest Clark Johnson, III,
(Published by the Troup County Historical Society, LaGrange, Georgia), 1994

Our people (*LaGrange*) met Mr. Davis's special train on Friday. All were anxious to see him. There was a large arch erected near the track and on it were the words "Welcome, our President." Large quantities of flowers and many flags were on the arch and flowers were all around the platform.

One hundred and two of our citizens (*LaGrange*) went up to Atlanta Saturday, to be at the unveiling of the Hill Statue and to get a better look at our old chieftain. Doubtless, it will be the last time many of them will ever have the pleasure of looking on the grand and noble face of Mr. Davis.

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Mr. Davis continued his triumphant journey to Savannah, where he is now receiving additional honors om the assembled thousands of military men and civilians. The occasion is the Centennial of the Chatham Artillery.”

Image source: civilwartalk.com

Appendix from the Editor:

CONTEXT FOR THIS NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

This item in the LaGrange newspaper in 1886 describes a scenario of preparation and emotional outpouring when the train from Montgomery to Atlanta made a brief stop in West Point. The object of adoration was a seventy-eight-year-old man who would live for only three more years. Through his writings and speeches Jefferson Davis reassured the former Confederates that he and they were the true Americans and constitutionalists. He maintained that he and they were honorable and had never done anything wrong. He became the revered, honorable icon of the lost cause. He was adored. Jefferson F. Davis in 1881 completed his 1,500 page two-volume publication *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*. American readers, in the 1880s, demonstrated a new interest in the War and its personages. The two volumes sold well. In the increasingly affluent national society of the 1880’s multiple periodicals sought Davis to write about the past. In the South, state governments, agricultural societies and organizations sought Davis as an event speaker. Due to his bouts with poor health and other reasons, he limited his publishing and speaking.

Davis’ most demanding speaking tour of two weeks on the road occurred in 1886 in response to a request from the Chatham Artillery, a county battalion in Savannah, Georgia, with a proud history dating from 1751. The event would be six days of celebrations in the Centennial of the Chatham Artillery where Davis would participate in the dedication of a statue of the Revolutionary War hero General Nathanael Greene. Davis’ father had served in General Greene’s command during the Revolutionary War. Davis traveled by train to Montgomery where he stopped to dedicate a monument to Confederate dead and experienced 15,000 people waiting in a light rain to cheer him. Women dressed in black fell at his feet. His presence solicited copious floral displays and extreme emotional outbursts. From Montgomery his train moved northward, pausing at West Point sufficiently long for the presentation of flowers and speeches as described in the LaGrange newspaper.

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Above image shows Jefferson F. Davis addressing a contingent of troops during the Centennial. Many military and political notables attended the six-day celebration. A number of military units also attended the events and parades. The writing on the photograph indicates that these troops are Vicksburg Volunteer Southerners. Image source: Cowan's Auctions.

In Atlanta, where he participated in the dedication of a statue of his friend and ally Senator Benjamin H. Hill, and in Savannah the receptions of the ex-President of the Confederate States of America were emotional for the masses of well-wishers. Cheers, flowers and crowds pressing to meet him, touch him characterized the initial receptions. Davis admitted he was somewhat shaken by the adulations. The emotional and physical trip caused him to collapse after his return to his Mississippi home, Beauvoir.

(Source for above statements: William J. Cooper, Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American* (New York, 2000), Chapter 19.



The stereoscopic slide image above shows the headquarters building, the Armory of the Chatham Artillery in Savannah, Georgia. Note the sculpture of the cannon and revolutionary war soldier on the roof of the building. Jefferson Davis and other dignitaries would have met in this building for some functions of the Centennial. Image source: 1886 Launcey & Goebel, Photographers; New York Public Library Digital Collection



*The 2021 Creek Indian Study Tour group on the steps of the **Alabama Department of Archives and History**, Montgomery, Alabama.
More photos inside.*



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