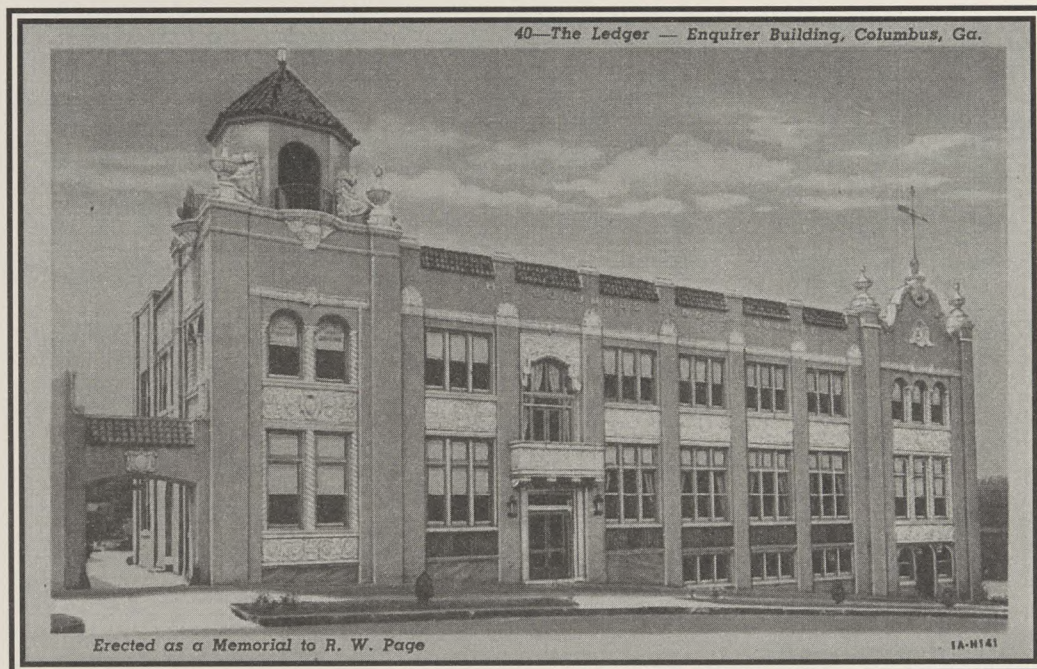


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JOURNAL OF THE MUSCOGEE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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Book Reviews

Book reviews of both local titles and general genealogical monographs are accepted for inclusion in *Muscogiana*. Reviews should be 350-750 words, and should contain an overview of the work and an analysis on the value of the work to genealogists and other researchers in the region. The editor maintains a list of books for review, which is available on request.

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COLUMBUS STATE
UNIVERSITY

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From the Editor's Desk

The spring 2010 issue of *Muscogiana* offers something for everyone who is interested in the history of Columbus and the Chattahoochee Valley. In the first piece, "In the News: Searching for Your Ancestor in Columbus Newspapers," Callie B. McGinnis, the executive director of the Muscogee Genealogical Society and former Dean of Libraries at Columbus State University, provides an overview of the various Columbus newspaper resources available to historians and genealogists. For her second piece, McGinnis has compiled a detailed list of "notable genealogical and historical collections in west central Georgia and east Alabama." In "Truman Thomas: The First Person Interred at Linwood Cemetery," F. Clason Kyle, local historian and author of *Images: A Pictorial History of Columbus*, examines the untimely demise of Jacob Truman Hogue Thomas. Kyle also offers a tantalizing glimpse into the early history of Columbus and some of the colorful characters who first traversed its muddy lanes. In the fourth piece, Linda Farmer Ames provides a genealogical survey of the Ritch Family Cemetery, located on the Fort Benning reservation. She also gives readers a brief introduction to findagrave.com, a web-site that offers assistance to anyone seeking the "final resting place[s] of family, friends, and 'famous' individuals." In "Schley Creek War Letters," Dr. John Ellisor, a history professor at Columbus State University, introduces two letters written to Governor William Schley during the Second Creek War. Dr. Ellisor's new book, *The Second Creek War: Interethnic Conflict and Collusion on a Collapsing Frontier*, will hit bookshelves in November 2010. For the final piece, I have transcribed an industrial, agricultural and demographic survey of Chattahoochee County from the *Georgia Historical and Industrial* (1901).

As always, I would like to invite readers to send in their submissions. We need good book reviews, articles, queries, primary sources, and genealogy for upcoming issues. If you are working on something, please send it to me at: Gary S. Sprayberry, Department of History & Geography, Columbus State University, 4225 University Avenue, Columbus, GA, 31907. Or you can send an electronic copy to me at sprayberry_gary@colstate.edu.

Gary S. Sprayberry

Editor

On the Cover:

Ledger-Enquirer Building, Columbus, Georgia, 1931

From the Columbus Museum Postcard Collection, 1905-1999

Courtesy of the Columbus Public Library

In the News: Searching for Your Ancestor in Columbus Newspapers

by

Callie B. McGinnis

In the past, newspaper research was always a tedious ordeal for genealogists. There were so many negative aspects to this kind of search, including:

- Identifying a newspaper title for the locale you were researching.
- Once a title had been identified, determining if the paper was published for the dates you were interested in.
- Once the title and dates had been affirmed, locating copies of the issues you needed; copies may have been in print or on microfilm.
- Once you got your hands on the copies, you had to browse all the pages – since there was no index.

Today, thanks to the World Wide Web and the magic of digitization, genealogists have a much easier time with newspaper research. The main advantage is that many newspapers are now accessible as digitized images, and the papers are searchable. That means no more browsing through pages and pages of newspaper print!

Genealogists searching for Columbus, Georgia, ancestors are lucky to have a number of new electronic resources to facilitate newspaper research. This article will attempt to assist such researchers in navigating these new electronic paths to Columbus newspaper information. As an introduction, a brief look at Columbus newspaper history will give the researcher an orientation to the scope of what is available. Also, since not all local papers have been digitized, it will be essential to discuss non-electronic access to Columbus newspapers. And, in this discussion of both print and electronic access, there will be mention of general caveats to heed. At the end of the article, I have

provided a list of Columbus newspaper resources, with web addresses and other access information for electronic sources.

Columbus Newspaper History Overview

Columbus, Georgia, was created on December 24, 1827, by an act of the Georgia legislature. Even before city lots were sold in the summer of 1828, a local newspaper had been established. Mirabeau Lamar, a native of Jefferson County, Georgia, published the first issue of the *Columbus Enquirer* on May 29, 1828. As the town grew, the paper flourished, but Lamar soon sold the enterprise after the death of his young wife, Tabitha. He moved to Texas in 1835, where he served as second President of the Republic of Texas.

Early on, the *Columbus Enquirer* established itself as the official newspaper for Columbus; it was published for over 160 years, with slight iterations to its name over the year. A number of other Columbus papers came and went. (A discussion of all the newspapers published in Columbus would be a topic worthy of a separate article.) The *Columbus Ledger* was founded in 1886. In 1936 it came under the auspices of the *Columbus Enquirer* corporation and was designated the city's afternoon paper (the *Columbus Enquirer* being the morning paper). In 1988, the *Enquirer* and the *Ledger* officially merged to become the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, a daily paper that has continued to the present day.

Unfortunately, extant copies of early *Columbus Enquirer* issues are scant. The reason? In 1838, the Muscogee Courthouse burned – destroying the *Enquirer* back files. Thankfully, some pre-1838 papers have survived (apparently housed outside the courthouse at the time of the fire), and some of those are being digitized. Also, the first history of Columbus by John H. Martin (mentioned below) chronicles events cited in the *Columbus Enquirer* for the 1828 – 1837 period. Modern-day Columbus genealogists and historians are still puzzled as to where Martin found those early issues – and wonder if they still exist.

Indexes

There has never been a comprehensive index for Columbus newspapers. Back in the 1970s, a few Columbus College librarians attempted to index the Columbus papers, but in a matter of months the project had become unwieldy and was abandoned. Over the years a number of individuals have extracted genealogical information from the local papers. In his 1874 work, *Columbus, Geo., from Its Selection as a "Trading Town" in 1827 to Its Partial Destruction by Wilson's Raid in 1865*, John H. Martin extracted births, marriages, deaths and general events from 1828 to 1867. In 1997, Elizabeth Evans Kilbourne and Tad Evans began publishing a series entitled, *Columbus, Georgia Newspaper Clippings*, which abstracts mention of individuals in the *Columbus Enquirer*. This ongoing series begins with the 1832 issues and is currently up to 1858.

In 1980, local researcher Buster Wright produced two volumes on deaths and marriages in the *Columbus Enquirer*, 1832-1852. He expanded his death volume with *Burials and Deaths Reported in the Columbus (Georgia) Enquirer, 1832 - 1872*, which he published in 1984. In the early 2000s, Dan Olds, a member of the Muscogee Genealogical Society, updated this work by extracting death notices in the Columbus papers from 1872 to 1918. The year 1918 was chosen as the ending date since the State of Georgia officially began to require death certificates in 1919. Olds' index, *Columbus, Georgia Newspapers Obituary Project, 1872-1918*, is available online. Staff members of the Columbus Public Library have also compiled a database of modern-day obituaries in the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* from 1998 to 2005.

Online Access to Columbus Newspapers

Today, thanks to a number of major digitization projects, researchers do not have to completely rely on indexes to search Columbus newspapers for genealogical research. The main historic newspapers that genealogists and historians have access to are the *Columbus Enquirer* (with its variant titles). Online access to these papers is provided by two online repositories: the Digital Library of Georgia and GenealogyBank.com. Both resources provide digitized images and are searchable by names or words. In other words, one can search for a person or for mention of a

particular item, like "telephones," "streetcars," or "murders." Using these sources, the researcher has access to Columbus newspapers, roughly, from 1828 to 1922, as will be explained below.

The Digital Library of Georgia's *Columbus Enquirer Archive* is a free searchable resource containing over 32,000 images. It covers the years 1828 – 1890 and includes issues of the *Columbus Enquirer* as well as some of its variant titles, such as the *Weekly Columbus Enquirer* and the *Columbus Enquirer Sun*. Amazingly, there are a few pre-1838 issues, including the May 29, 1828, inaugural issue of the *Columbus Enquirer*.

The second major online repository for historic Columbus newspapers is GenealogyBank.com, a subscription digitization project sponsored by NewsBank that includes digitized images from the *Columbus Enquirer* and the early *Columbus Ledger*. A major fault with GenealogyBank lies in the fact that it is not bibliographically accurate in describing the Columbus newspapers it has digitized. While it purports to provide access to the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* from 1858 – 1932, it actually only provides access to Columbus papers (the *Enquirer* and its variant titles) up to 1922. Also, the statement that its coverage of the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* stretches from 1855 to 1927 is erroneous (particularly considering that the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* did not exist until 1988). Instead, it provides coverage of more of the variant *Enquirer* titles from 1855 to 1902. In 1903 it picks up coverage of the *Columbus Ledger* and continues with it through 1922. Even with these faults, however, it is important to note that GenealogyBank is currently the only online resource for early twentieth century Columbus newspaper research. Also noteworthy is the fact that GenealogyBank provides access to hundreds of other newspapers from all over the country. It also provides access to some printed books and documents, along with newspaper obituaries and the Social Security Death Index.

For electronic access to more recent Columbus newspapers, there is the archive of the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* from 1993 to present. This resource is available through the Columbus Public Library's subscription to NewsBank. It is also available through America's Newspapers, a database accessible on site at Columbus State University (CSU) and directly through the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* for a fee.

Microfilm and Print Copies of Columbus Newspapers

As stated above, all the issues of every Columbus newspaper have not been digitized. There will be times when the researcher will have to rely upon microfilm or print newspaper copies.

Microfilm of the *Columbus Enquirer* and its variant titles, from 1832 to the present, is available at CSU. The Columbus Public Library's Genealogy Room also has historic Columbus newspapers on microfilm. For out-of-town researchers who cannot travel to Columbus for newspaper research, the easiest way to obtain copies of newspaper articles is to submit an Interlibrary Loan request at his/her local library for the article in question. In this case one must have the specific date of the article. Some libraries will search a few days before and after the supposed article date; others will not. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to borrow microfilm copies (i.e., reels) of newspapers.

While microfilm is the format most genealogical researchers are expected to use (when electronic access is unavailable), there may be times when a look at the original print copy becomes necessary. This would be the case if the microfilm copy were illegible or if the particular issue in question was not microfilmed. CSU owns print copies of Columbus newspapers from 1838 to 1953.

General Caveats

There are a number of caveats to heed in online newspaper research, including:

- Remember that not all issues of a particular newspaper have been scanned (some were missing when the scanning project was in process).
- Sometimes the scanned images are of poor quality. This was because of the poor condition of the original image.
- Sometimes the online indexing feature misinterprets the spelling of a name. This is usually due to the poor quality of the scanned image.

Likewise, there are caveats to consider when using print and/or microfilm newspaper copies, including:

- Remember that not all issues of a particular newspaper have been bound (for print) or microfilmed. Many print volumes and microfilm reels have missing issues.
- Sometimes the microfilmed images are of poor quality.
- The researcher should use any available indexes to pinpoint the date/issue of the newspaper that is needed. The available indexes are limited in coverage by time period; also, some names could have inadvertently been omitted.
- When no index is available for the date in question, the researcher will have to browse the paper. Nineteenth-century newspapers are usually not well organized; every page must be scoured in the hopes of locating information.

Summary

Genealogists researching their Columbus ancestors and relatives have good access to historic online newspapers from the mid-1830s to 1922. Online access to current Columbus newspapers begins in 1993 and continues through the present. The period of 1923 – 1992, then, is a genealogy no-man's land, where knowledge of birth, death, marriage dates, etc. is essential in order to locate obituaries and other notices. For this period, one will need to tackle the tedious job of browsing microfilm copies.

List of Columbus Newspaper Resources

Below is a list of Columbus newspaper resources that should aid genealogists in researching their Columbus ancestors. The list is classified into the following five categories for easy usage: Electronic Access – Historic, Electronic Access – Current, Microfilm Copies, Print Copies, and Newspaper Abstracts/Indexes. Under each heading, information on access and/or location is noted, along with notable caveats. Most non-electronic resources cited are located in Columbus; the out-of-area researcher will need to consult WorldCat (www.worldcat.org) for other libraries that hold these titles.

Electronic Access – Historic:

Digital Library of Georgia's *Columbus Enquirer Archive, 1828 - 1890*

www.galileo.usg.edu/scholar/databases/cole/?Welcome

This is a free resource that can be accessed by anyone anywhere. However, there are a few caveats about using this resource. First, it must be noted that there are gaps in the coverage – some years have scant issues. Secondly, the images are only as good as the copies that were scanned; some copies were of poor quality and are difficult to read. Finally, to access images, the user must first install Deja-Vu software. While this software is free, it may be tricky for some researchers to install. Searchable by names or words; can limit by date.

GenealogyBank's *Columbus Newspapers, 1858 – 1932*

www.genealogybank.com

There are a number of issues relating to GenealogyBank.com. First, it is not free. Individuals must pay about \$80 a year (or \$20 a month) for access to articles in the database. However, it is free to search. Search results display brief snippets of articles rather than the full articles. Secondly, access to the articles and navigation within them can be cumbersome. Like the Digital Library of Georgia's product, this contains scanned images, which are sometimes difficult to read. There are definitely gaps in the coverage, and it is difficult to identify them. Searchable by names or words; can limit by date and location.

Electronic Access – Current:

NewsBank's *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, 1993 – Present*

This resource is available from three different sources:

- The Columbus Public Library's NewsBank subscription
infoweb.newsbank.com/signin/ColumbusPublicLibrary
- CSU Libraries' America's Newspapers subscription

Accessible to the general public on campus via the CSU GALILEO webpage

- The web page of the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*
www.ledger-enquirer.com – click on “Archives” button

The NewsBank product is searchable, but it does not contain scanned images. These are text-only articles, with no photographs. The subscription at the Columbus Public Library may be accessed online by users with a Columbus Public Library card. It is also available at all Columbus Public Library branches to patrons on site.

The America’s Newspapers subscription at CSU Libraries is available to CSU faculty, students and staff through their CSU CougarNet accounts. Others may use the database on site at either of the two CSU Libraries, Main and Music.

Out-of-town researchers may be able to locate libraries in their areas that subscribe to NewsBank and/or America’s Newspapers, and, thus, gain access to modern-day Columbus newspapers online.

Those without access to the above-named databases can go to the website for *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* cited above, which offers free searches of its archive. Researchers can retrieve citations for articles at no charge. However, to obtain a copy of an article there is a charge of \$2.95. Of course, once an article citation is obtained, the researcher can consult microfilm (if it is available) or submit an Interlibrary Loan through his/her own library (if the microfilm copy is not available).

Microfilm Copies

CSU’s Main Library has microfilm copies for the following Columbus newspaper titles:

Columbus Enquirer: 1832-1841, 1855-1873, 1876-1937, 1970-1987

Democrat: 1830 - 1832

Columbus Sentinel: 1838-1841

Columbus Times: 1841-1851, 1864-1865

Daily Sun: 1856-1873

Columbus Daily Times: 1858-1865

Columbus Ledger: 1936-1987

Columbus Ledger-Enquirer: 1988-Present

The Columbus Public Library Genealogy and Local History Room has, in addition to most of the titles cited above, the following Columbus newspapers on microfilm:

Columbus Times, 1841-1879

Southern Sentinel, 1850-1852

Weekly Sun, 1859-1873

Columbus Ledger, 1897-1988

Columbus News Record, 1937-1938

Columbus Free Press, 1940-1941

The University of Georgia also has microfilm copies of Columbus newspapers as part of its Georgia Newspaper Project, available at www.libs.uga.edu/gnp/. The Georgia Newspaper Project has microfilmed over 2500 Georgia newspaper titles, including one for each of Georgia's 159 counties. While large in scope, unfortunately, it is not a comprehensive list. Included in their microfilm holdings is a list of all the Columbus newspapers they have microfilmed. Also, the University of Georgia does not loan microfilm; it is available for purchase. The university does not accept requests for photocopies of articles either. It does, however, provide a list of researchers who will copy articles for a fee. Information on this service is posted on the Georgia Newspaper Project web site.

There are many other Columbus newspapers, most of which had limited runs. To list those in this article would prove tedious; perhaps a discussion of these titles could be covered in another *Muscogiana* article.

Print Copies

The CSU Archives is the major repository for print copies of Columbus newspapers dating from 1838 to 1953. While Archives staff members encourage researchers to first consult the microfilm copy, they will pull bound volumes when circumstances warrant. The print editions of the newspapers are very fragile – particularly those published after 1870, when pulpwood was introduced

into the papermaking process. Unfortunately, because of the size and condition of the print volumes, photocopying is usually impossible.

Newspaper Abstracts/Indexes (listed chronologically by date of publication)

- Martin, John H. *Columbus, Geo., from Its Selection as a "Trading Town" in 1827 to Its Partial Destruction by Wilson's Raid in 1865* Columbus, GA: T. Gilbert, 1874-1875. Two volumes in one. The Martin book is available in many libraries. However, it is not indexed. A separate index was published in 1988: Davidson, Alvie L. and Dianne Hatcher Davidson. *Index to Columbus, Georgia 1827-1985: Author, John H. Martin*. Lakeland, FL: The Authors, 1988. Another index, which is available at the CSU Archives and the Columbus Public Library Genealogy and Local History Room, was published in 1937: *Index to the History of Columbus by Mr. John H. Martin*. Compiled by members of the Button Gwinnett Chapter DAR under the direction of Miss Jessie Snyder. Typescript, 1937. The Martin book is also available online. A searchable Adobe PDF version is available at www.latinamericanstudies.org/book/Columbus.pdf. This web site was created by Dr. Antonio Rafael de la Cova, December 15, 1997. It is also online at Ancestry.com at search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=24398.
- Wright, Buster W. *Abstracts of Deaths Reported in the Columbus (Georgia) Enquirer 1832 – 1852*. Columbus, GA: the Author, 1980. Available at the Columbus Public Library Genealogy and Local History Room.
- Wright, Buster W. *Abstracts of Marriages Reported in the Columbus (Georgia) Enquirer 1832 – 1852*. Columbus, GA: the Author, 1980. Available at the Columbus Public Library Genealogy and Local History Room.
- Wright, Buster W. *Burials and Deaths Reported in the Columbus (Georgia) Enquirer 1832 – 1872*. Columbus, GA: the Author, 1984. Available at the Columbus Public Library Genealogy and Local History Room.

- Kilbourne, Elizabeth Evans and Tad Evans. *Columbus Georgia Newspaper Clippings (Columbus Enquirer)*. Savannah: the Authors, 1997—. Currently at 9 volumes, covering 1832-1858. Available at the Columbus Public Library Genealogy and Local History Room and the CSU Archives.
- Olds, Daniel B. *Columbus, Georgia Newspapers Obituary Project, 1872-1918*. 2005. Available at muscogeegenealogy.com/obits/search.php
- *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer Obituary Database 1998-2005*. Compiled by staff members at the Columbus Public Library's Genealogy and Local History Room. Available at www.thecolumbuslibrary.org/ResearchResources/genealogy/genealogydatabase.php. Use drop-down menu to select this database.

Notable Genealogical and Historical Collections in West Central Georgia and East Alabama

Compiled by

Callie B. McGinnis

While the majority of present-day genealogists rely heavily upon online resources (Ancestry.com, etc.), most will admit there are many resources important to their research that are not on the Internet. In libraries and archives scattered across the globe there are still miles and miles of bookshelves and row upon row of microfilm cabinets filled with valuable genealogical research data.

There are two ways the genealogical researcher can use libraries and archives. First, the researcher can contact any libraries and/or historical archives in the locale where his/her ancestor lived. These repositories could include any public, university or special libraries as well as any archival collections. One can easily locate public libraries by visiting online directories such as LibWeb at http://lists.webjunction.org/libweb/Public_main.html. LibWeb also maintains an academic directory at http://lists.webjunction.org/libweb/Academic_main.html and a special library list at <http://lists.ebjunction.org/libweb/usa-special.html>. Archival repositories are listed on a site maintained by the University of Idaho at <http://www.uiweb.uidaho.edu/specialcollections/Other.Repositories.html>.

Secondly, in addition to visiting libraries and archives in one's ancestral home town, genealogical researchers will want to avail themselves of any local or regional repositories in their own locale. This is especially true for larger genealogical collections that have materials related to broad geographic areas.

Below is a list of notable genealogical and historical collections in west central Georgia and east Alabama that may be of interest to genealogists. While most of these collections focus on the history

and genealogy specific to their locale, some have a broader collection scope. The following repositories are good for general genealogical research:

- The Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library's Genealogical Collection
- The Columbus Public Library's Genealogy and History Department
- The Washington Public Library's Genealogy Department in Macon
- The Alabama Department of Archives and History
- The Georgia Department of Archives and History
- The Southeast Branch of the National Archives

Also, there are two collections in the list that focus on special areas of interest. The Auburn Avenue Research Library caters to African-American historical research, while the Ellen Payne Odom Library in Moultrie has a major Scottish focus.

The list below includes the address, phone number and hours for each repository, as well as its web address. Many times, the web site will include a link to the collection's catalog, which may allow the researcher to see the holdings. However, it is important to remember that not all repositories have their collections cataloged online; a visit to the collection is therefore preferable.

Hopefully this list will be helpful in directing local genealogists to regional resources that may aid them in their research. Admittedly, this is not a comprehensive list. Most public libraries and many academic libraries in Georgia and Alabama have local history collections. The researcher with ancestors in towns not included on this list will want to locate the local libraries to insure that nothing is overlooked.

Atlanta, GA

Atlanta-Fulton Public Library, Genealogy Collection (5th Floor), 1 Margaret Mitchell Square, Atlanta, GA 30303; Telephone: (404) 730-1896. Hours: Mon. – Thur. 9:00am – 9:00pm, Fri. & Sat. 9:00am – 6:00pm, Sun. 2:00pm – 6:00pm. http://www.af.public.lib.ga.us/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=198

Atlanta History Center, Kenan Research Center, 130 Paces Ferry Road NW, Atlanta, GA 30305-1336; Telephone: (404) 814-4000. Hours: Wed. – Sat. 10:00am – 5:00pm. <http://atlantahistorycenter.com/cms/Kenan+Research+Center/154.html>

Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, 101 Auburn Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30303; Telephone: (404) 730-4001. Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 10:00am – 8:00pm, Fri. & Sat. 10:00am – 6:00pm, Sun. 2:00pm – 6:00pm. http://www.afpls.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=22&Itemid=76

Cobb County Public Library, Georgia Room, 266 Roswell Street, Marietta, GA 30060; Telephone: (770) 528-2333. Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 9:00am – 9:30pm, Fri. & Sat. 9:00am – 6:00pm, Sun. 1:00pm – 5:00pm. <http://library.cobbcat.org/GaRm-1.html>

DeKalb History Center, 101 East Court Square, Decatur, GA 30030; Telephone: (404) 373-1088. Hours: Mon. – Fri. 9:00am – 5:00pm. http://www.dekalbhistory.org/dekalb_history_center_archives_collections.htm

Emory University, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Robert W. Woodruff Library, 540 Asbury Circle, Atlanta, GA 30322; Telephone: (404) 727-6887. Hours during school sessions: Mon. – Sat. 9:00am – 5:30pm. <http://marbl.library.emory.edu/>

Columbus, GA

Columbus Public Library, Genealogy and Local History Department, 3000 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31906; Telephone: (706) 243-2669. Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 10:00am – 8:00pm, Fri. & Sat. 10:00am – 6:00pm, Sun. 1:30pm – 6:00pm. <http://www.thecolumbuslibrary.org/ResearchResources/Genealogy&LocalHistory.htm>

Columbus State University, Archives, Schwob Library (3rd Floor), 4225 University Avenue, Columbus, GA 31907; Telephone: (706) 568-2247. Hours during school sessions: Mon. – Fri. 12:00pm – 5:00pm. <http://archives.colstate.edu/index.php>

LDS Family History Center, 4400 Reese Road, Columbus, GA 31907; Telephone: (706) 563-7216.

Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 10am – 9pm. http://www.familysearch.org/eng/library/fhc/frameset/fhc.asp?PAGE=library_fhc_about.asp

LaGrange, GA

Troup County Archives, 136 Main Street, LaGrange, GA 30241; Telephone: (706) 884-1828. Hours:

Mon. – Fri. 9:00am – 5:00pm; 1st and 3rd Sat. of the month 10am – 4pm. <http://www.trouparchives.org/>

Macon, GA

Washington Memorial Library, Genealogy Department, 1180 Washington Avenue, PO Box 6334,

Macon, GA 31201-1794; Telephone: (478) 744-0821. Hours: Mon. 9:00am – 9:00pm, Tues. – Sat. 9:00am – 6:00pm. <http://www.co.bibb.ga.us/library/GH.htm>

Montgomery, AL

Alabama Department of Archives and History, 624 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36130;

Telephone: (334) 242-4435. Hours: Tues. – Fri. 8:30am – 4:30pm CST. <http://www.archives.state.al.us/>

Morrow, GA (South Atlanta Area)

Georgia Department of Archives and History, 5800 Jonesboro Road, Morrow, GA 30260; Telephone:

(678)364-3700. Hours: Tues. – Sat. 8:30am – 5:00pm. <http://www.sos.ga.gov/archives/>

National Archives Southeast Branch, 5780 Jonesboro Road, Morrow, GA 30260; Telephone:

(770)968-2100. Hours: Tues. – Sat. 8:30am – 5:00pm. <http://www.archives.gov/southeast/>

Moultrie GA

Ellen Payne Odom Genealogical Library, 204 Fifth Street, PO Box 1110, Moultrie, GA 31776;

Telephone: (912) 985-6540. Hours: Mon. – Sat. 8:30am – 5:30pm. [http://www.colquitt.k12.ga.us/public lib/odom_gen.htm](http://www.colquitt.k12.ga.us/public_lib/odom_gen.htm)

Phenix City, AL

Chattahoochee Valley Community College, Learning Resource Center, Genealogy Collection, 2602

College Dr. (off Hwy. 280 South) Phenix City, AL 36869; Telephone: (334)291-4978. Hours during

school sessions: Mon.-Thur. 8:00am – 9:00pm, Fri. 8:00am – 3:45pm, Sat. 10am – 3pm. [http://](http://www.cv.edu/content/view/162/203/)

www.cv.edu/content/view/162/203/

Thomaston, GA

Thomaston-Upson County Archives, P.O. Box 1137, Thomaston, GA 30286-0015; Telephone: (706)

646-2437. Hours: Mon.- Fri. 9:00am – 5:00pm; second Sat. of the month: 9:00am - 1:00pm. [http://](http://www.upsoncountyga.org/tuarch/)

www.upsoncountyga.org/tuarch/

Thomasville, GA

Thomasville Genealogical, History, & Fine Arts Library, 135 North Broad Street, Thomasville, GA

31792; Telephone: (912) 226-9640. Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9:00am - 5:00pm, Sat. 9:00am - 4:00pm.

<http://home.rose.net/~glibrary/>

Valley, AL

Chambers County Library, Cobb Memorial Library Archives, 3419 20th Avenue, Valley, AL 36854;

Telephone: (334) 768-2161. Hours: Mon. & Tues. 10:00-am - 7:00pm , Wed.- Fri. 10:00am -

6:00pm, Sat.10:00am - 2:00pm (All hours are EST; in summer, library closes at 6:00pm on all

weekdays). <http://www.chamberscountylibrary.org/archives.htm>

Vidalia, GA

Ladson Genealogical Library, 125 Church Street, Vidalia GA 30474; Telephone: (912) 537-8186.

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9:00am - 5:00pm; closed 1:00pm - 2:00pm for lunch. <http://www.ohoopee>

[library.org/locations/ladson-genealogical-library](http://www.ohoopee.library.org/locations/ladson-genealogical-library)

Truman Thomas: The First Person Interred at Linwood Cemetery

by

F. Clason Kyle

The following address was delivered at Linwood Cemetery at the annual meeting of the Historic Linwood Foundation on May 3, 2010.

In the year of 1828, the world was paying little or no notice to backwoods activity amongst the virgin forests of west Georgia. Czar Nicholas I of Russia was in the third year of his nearly thirty-year reign; the American Temperance Society was two years old; artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti was born and artist Gilbert Stuart died; Andrew Jackson defeated John Q. Adams for the presidency of the United States; Frederic Chopin was eighteen-years-old and had begun composing his famous piano etudes; and the first state owned railroad, the Philadelphia and Columbia, was authorized on March 24, as Jacob Truman Hogue Thomas neared his death in those west Georgia wilds.

Columbus – the brainchild of the thirty-third governor of Georgia, the Honorable John Forsyth, and his band of merry legislators – has been a Mecca for international travelers since it was an embryo town.

Proof of the first sightseers, British naval Captain Basil Hall, his wife, daughter and her nanny, came about after they had bounced, swayed and bumped their carriage all the way from Savannah to Columbus, eventually making their way through Creek country towards Montgomery. Hall recorded their arduous journey in his *Travels in North America*, published in Edinburgh in 1829.

Hall had with him a Camera Lucida¹ and took the first visuals – really tracings – of the emerging town, the town that Forsyth had ordered built at the fall line of the Chattahoochee. He

¹ A camera lucida is "an instrument in which rays of light are reflected by a prism to produce on a sheet of paper an image, from which a drawing can be made." See *The New Oxford American Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), s.v. "Camera lucida."

envisioned its water power as an energy source for industry. The river itself would carry those future products down to Apalachicola Bay, out to the Gulf of Mexico, and hence to the world.

On March 31, 1828, Hall records that he and his intrepid trio reached the Creek Agency and then "made an expedition to a very curious place." That curious place, of course, was Columbus, although at the time of the Hall's visit it did not have an official name.

Captain Hall goes on to describe the site as being at the lower end of a long series of rapids, over which "this great river dashes for some miles in a very picturesque manner." This five-mile square was to be completely surveyed, marked out in streets on paper, numbered, lettered and then advertised for sale over the whole "Union" ("union" being the word Hall used to describe the United States of America).

A gentleman, one of the assembled inhabitants, escorted the Hall's to the principal street down a four-foot-wide lane, with small stakes driven in at intervals, to a middle point, where the guide exclaimed, "Here you are in the centre of the city!" And this street was to be sixty yards wide and one league in length! The travelers were able to observe similar cuts into the forest, branching off at right angles, indicated only by a few stakes planted by the surveyors.

SURVEYORS. Ah, that word. Perhaps we are getting close to the reason that we are here this lovely afternoon.

Before we do, Hall goes on to mention, "One of the commissioners, from the State of Georgia, who had the management of this extraordinary experiment in colonization, assured Hall that there were upwards of nine hundred inhabitants already collected together, though it was expected that four months must still elapse before the lot sale could take place, or the city have any legal existence!" My great-great-grandfather, Dr. Edwin Lewis De Graffenreid (on my mother's side of the family), was one of those original five city commissioners appointed by Governor Forsyth to lay out the city – probably the very commissioner to whom the Hall's were listening. Basil doesn't give him a name, but his wife Margaret does in a book she wrote about their adventures. She said they had a letter of introduction to him. AND THAT GENTLEMAN, MY KINSMAN, IS BURIED RIGHT OVER THERE,

IN THAT NOT VERY WELL MAINTAINED CEMETERY LOT, ALONG WITH HIS WIFE, the former Patsy Kirkland of Hillsboro, North Carolina.

The Hall party reached the no-name place on March 31, 1828. Jacob Hogue Truman Thomas had died the week before, on March 24, "after a painful illness of 28 days." This quote – "after a painful illness of 28 days" – comes from the notes taken on the survey of the reservation at the Coweta Falls on the Chattahoochee and also of the town of Columbus. The survey commenced on January 30, 1828, and was signed by E. L. Thomas, surveyor, who had been appointed by the Commissioners.

E. L. Thomas was, of course, none other than Edward Lloyd Thomas, surveyor and minister. As a Methodist minister, Thomas lived out his later years in Oxford, Georgia, the site that the Georgia Methodist Conference had specified for the establishment of Emory College (not the other Emory founded by Ignatius Few, another early Columbus commissioner). Thomas's 1836 plan for Oxford differs from that of 1828 Columbus in that the streets are not right angles to each other. In Oxford, they converge on the college campus. Also, the Oxford streets still retain the names of prominent bishops of Thomas's time. Except for a few, Columbus's street names have all been changed – in the original so-called gridiron pattern city – to numbers and avenues (the latter being a term that Hall did not use – to him they were all streets).

Born in Maryland in 1785, grandson of a surveyor and nephew of another, Edward Lloyd Thomas accomplished a number of important surveys before arriving at the west bank of the Chattahoochee in 1827. In 1802, Georgia gave up its western lands, which once stretched all the way to the Mississippi River, in order to birth Alabama and Mississippi. Hence, there arose the pressing need to establish the borderline between Georgia and Alabama, a matter of much contention to say the least. And in order to say the least: the straight line that you see on your road map is the one Thomas ran in 1826, but Alabama didn't give up being contentious until 1840.

On January 30, 1828, Thomas noted that Jacob T.H. Thomas had been presented to the commissioners as "Chain Bearer." The chain bearer was a significant part of the survey, and his honesty was expected. The fact that a nineteen-year-old had been entrusted with the task was quite

a compliment to Truman's creditability and reliability. A heavy metal chain like the one Truman would be handling was composed of one hundred links, and since they were probably using the seventeenth century mathematician/minister Edmond Gunter's system, each link would have measured 6.6 feet in length. Truman was paid two dollars a day.

Truman was more than likely a student at the University of Georgia (Franklin College) and a member of the Demosthenian Society. He had most likely taken an academic sabbatical to work for his father. He was also a member of the Franklin Blues, which was composed entirely of students. Like others, he joined the unit to satisfy state militia requirements.

According to E.L. Thomas's diary of February 21, 1828, the steamboat *Steubenville* had chugged up the Chattahoochee to the site of Columbus, becoming the first such vessel to do so. And a week later, Thomas had recorded that two of his workers, young Truman and Sydney Turner, had taken very ill due to the severe cold and rain. William Hogue became sick the next day.

Then follows a day-to-day record of Truman's illness, with the occasional glimmer of hope for him with such notations as, "a little better, a little on the mend, mending a little." On March 17, father Thomas writes that Truman is "very ill" and William Hogue is sent to get Truman's mother, who was probably in Athens. For nine days, "my suffering son continued to sink and decline under the power of the disease and at half past five o'clock in the evening, precisely one hour after the arrival of his mother, (Truman) departed this life after a painful illness of 28 days." The date was March 26, 1828.

During Truman's illness, the duties of surveyor had been fulfilled by General Elias Beall, the third of the first five commissioners. The remaining two were Phillip H. Alston and James Hallam. On May 4, Thomas recorded that both William Hogue, who no doubt was a cousin, and General Beall became ill. There is no mention of their demise, however.

Thus this promising youth, the oldest of three sons, (the other two being Henry Philip Thomas and Lovick Pierce Thomas) was interred in what is now Linwood, probably close to where we are gathered, as this is considered the "old part" of the cemetery. Thus, Truman became the first person to be buried here.

It's quite possible that the British visitors who walked about the embryo city of Columbus in late March 1828 brushed shoulders with Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar, who would issue the first edition of the *Columbus Enquirer* on May 29. Afterwards, Lamar would venture forth to Texas, where he became the second President of the Republic of Texas, following in the stirrups of Sam Houston. Directly behind me is a memorial granite plinth dedicated and erected by Lamar to his wife Tabitha. Its west-side inscription reads: "her death has left him no other happiness than the remembrances of her virtues."

Ritch Family Cemetery and *Find a Grave*

by

Linda Farmer Ames

Genealogists of all levels, beginner through advanced, use every available resource to locate information on family members, searching high and low for birth dates, marriage dates, death/burial dates, and places of residence. Of course, nearly everyone with a television and/or a computer must know about Ancestry.com, along with several other ancestor-related research programs.

Another resource, which is growing by leaps and bounds, is *Find A Grave* (located at www.findagrave.com). It is free to sign up. All you need is a decent computer and time to research. It has allowed me to utilize several of my hobbies, including travel, photography, and genealogy. Over the past two years, I have traveled to several states, including Alabama, Missouri, Iowa and South Dakota (my birthplace), have visited nearly 8,000 memorials, and have taken almost 6,000 photographs – all of which have been posted to *Find A Grave*.

One of my short trips took me to the Ritch Family Cemetery (see Figure 1), located on the Fort Benning reservation. It was one of the fifty-plus family or small church cemeteries absorbed into the reservation when it became a military camp/federal installation. Most of these cemeteries lie in Muscogee and Chattahoochee Counties in Georgia and Russell County in Alabama.

The Ritch Family Cemetery is located at the intersection of Moore Road and Beaumont Trail; it is also known as Fort Benning Cemetery No. 38 (see Figure 2) on the Fort Benning Reservation Cemetery Map. Access to this and other cemeteries requires permission from the Fort Benning Transportation Officer and accompaniment by an official to that location. The folks are always pleasant and helpful. I photographed the twenty-one gravesites there and the information below comes from that location. Because they were a local family from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, I also followed up at Genealogy Bank, locating as many obituaries or news articles about the Ritch's of Upatoi (Upatoi), Georgia.

1. Mary M. "Molly" Ritch (August 6, 1837 – December 12, 1914)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane *Gilmore* Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Tombstone Inscription: *As a star that is lost When the daylight is given, She hath faded away To shine brightly in Heaven*

"Miss M.M. Ritch Dead at Upatoie"

Miss Molly M. Ritch, aged 64 years, died at her residence in Upatoie yesterday evening at 4 o'clock after a short illness with severe disability.

The departed has lived in Muscogee county most of her life and has a wide circle of friends. Mis Ritch was a devoted member of the Missionary Baptist Church. She is survived by three brothers, T.J., J.F., and J.M. Ritch, and one sister Miss Sarah W. Ritch, all of Upatoie.

The funeral services were held ___ the ___ at 11 o'clock taking place at the late residence. The interment was in the family burying ground at Upatoie. (*Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, December 14, 1914)

2. Nancy A. Ritch (September 13, 1839 – July 1, 1909)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane *Gilmore* Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Inscription: *Sister, thou has from us flown To the regions far above. We to thee erect this stone Consecrated by our love.*

Obituary: "Miss Nancy Ritch Died at Upatoie

The Funeral Took Place at the Family Burial Ground Yesterday Afternoon"

News reached the city yesterday morning of the death of Miss Nancy Ritch, which occurred at 12:10 o'clock Thursday night at her home at Upatoie, Ga. Death came after an illness of two years and was not altogether unexpected, although none the less saddening to her relatives and friends. The deceased was about 50 years of age.

Miss Ritch is survived by two sisters, Miss Sarah Wylie Ritch and Miss Mollie Ritch, and three brothers, Mr. J.F. Ritch, of Upatoie, and Messrs J.H. and T.J. Ritch, of Columbus.

Miss Ritch was a woman of beautiful character and was beloved by a large circle of friends.

The funeral took place yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock, interment being at the family burial ground at Upatoie. The service was conducted by the Rev. Mr. Cline. (*Columbus Daily Enquirer*, July 3, 1909)

3. Jessie Clyde Moore (August 20, 1889 – January 15, 1910)

Inscription: *Hopes once bright are now departed.*

"Mr. Jesse Moore Died on Tuesday Pneumonia was Cause of Death of Young Man Recently Married"

Mr. Jesse C. Moore, aged 20 years, died at his residence, 1614 First avenue Tuesday afternoon at 5 o'clock after an illness of but four days of pneumonia.

Mr. Moore had been a resident of the city about seven months, coming here from Upatoie, and during that time had made many friends who held him in high esteem. He was a young man of exemplary habits and his death was a sad blow to his family and friends.

About a month ago Mr. Moore was married to Miss Mattie Andrews, of Commonwealth, and the young wife is grief-stricken over the death of her husband.

Besides his young wife Mr. Moore is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Moore, of Upatoie and one brother, Mr. F. M. Moore, of this city.

His remains will be carried to Upatoie at 1 p.m., Wednesday where funeral and interment will take place. (*Columbus Daily Enquirer*, January 26, 1910)

"Mr. Jesse Moore Buried at Upatoie"

The remains of Mr. Jesse C. Moore, the young man who died Tuesday afternoon after four days of pneumonia, were carried to Upatoie Wednesday afternoon where the funeral and interment took place.

The following acted as pallbearers in Columbus: Messrs. R. Hendrix, Will Harvey, C.J. Williams, Ellis Ray, J. Rhodes and H. Shannon. (*Columbus Daily Enquirer*, January 25, 1910)

4. Edward Gilmore Ritch (1864 – May 21, 1899, Upatoi, Muscogee County, Georgia)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane *Gilmore* Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Tombstone Inscription (see Figure 3): *We miss thee from our home, Eddie. We miss thee from thy place. A shadow o're our lives is cast. We miss the sunshine of thy face. We miss thy kind and willing hand, Thy fond and earnest care. Our home is dark without thee. We miss thee everywhere.*

"Obituary: Farmer Commits Suicide"

Columbus GA., May 22 (1899) - Mr. Ed G. Ritch, a prominent citizen of Muscogee county, was brought to the city yesterday morning and placed in the city hospital for treatment, suffering from a pistol shot wound in the head inflicted by his own hand at his home near Upatoie, about 3 o'clock Sunday morning... (*Macon Weekly Telegraph*, May 23, 1899)

"The Sad Suicide of Edward G. Ritch, a Farmer, of Upatoi – Brooding Over Long Illness and Burning of his Barn Brought About His Condition, Died at the City Hospital"

Columbus, GA 23 May 1899 - Mr. Edward G. Ritch, of Upatoie, died yesterday morning at the city hospital, his death being the result of his own rash act a few hours before. At a late hour Saturday night, Mr. Ritch fired a bullet into his brain and in spite of all that could be done to save him, he soon passed away.

Mr. Ritch was one of the best known and most popular planters of eastern Muscogee County. He lived with his brother, Mr. John Ritch, and was a man who was generally respected in the community. The announcement of his tragic death created general sorrow. The news was a great surprise to his friends....

Mr. Ritch had been in bad health for the past eight or ten months. He was a sufferer from Bright's disease and the consciousness that he could never entirely recover from the affliction seemed to prey upon him. About two weeks ago his barn was burned by an incendiary, and ever since that his mind has been somewhat disordered. Mr. Ritch was a very peaceable disposed, quiet, unoffending man, and one who enjoyed the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. He did not know that he had an enemy in the world, and no one was greater surprised than himself at the act of the incendiary. Between brooding over his illness and the loss of his barn, and the consciousness that he had an enemy who would do such a deed,

Mr. Ritch's reason became somewhat impaired....

Mr. Ritch is survived by three brothers and five sisters. He was well known throughout Muscogee county and was generally regarded as a clever, upright man. His brother, John F. Ritch, with whom he lived, was particularly fond of him, and his death was indeed a sad blow to him. Mr. Ritch was 35 years of age and was unmarried. The remains were carried yesterday afternoon to Upatoie for burial. (*Columbus Daily Enquirer*, May 23, 1899)

5. Julia Belle Ritch (February 14, 1873 – December 9, 1893, Muscogee County, Georgia)

Parents: Thomas Jefferson Ritch (1840 - 1921) and Julia Amanda Harris Ritch (1845 - 1923)
Grandparents: Emanuel and Sarah Jane Gilmore Ritch and Gray and Nancy Fuller Harris.

Tombstone Inscription: *Though lonely the garden of life may seem, Reft of the rose by the Father's hand, Yet meeting again after life's short dream On the beautiful shore we'll understand.*

Author's note: The headstone is unmarked by name or dates; the foot stone with initials "JBR" are behind it and I believe this to be Julia Ritch's grave.

6. Martha E. Ritch (September 13, 1846 – November 11, 1902)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane *Gilmore* Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Mortuary Notice: Death at Upatoie – Miss Martha Ritch Died Suddenly Tuesday Night

Miss Martha Ritch, aged 55 years, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Ritch, died rather suddenly at eight o'clock Tuesday night, at her home two miles south of Upatoie, Ga. Besides her parents, she is survived by three brothers, Messrs. F.J., J.H. and J.F. Ritch, and four sisters. She was a member of the Baptist church. The funeral occurred at three o'clock yesterday afternoon from the family residence, the interment being at the family burying grounds near Upatoie. (*Columbus Daily Enquirer*, November 13, 1902)

7. John Frost Ritch (October 21, 1854 – March 7, 1915, Upatoi, Muscogee County, Georgia)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane Gilmore Ritch (1816 - 1891)

"John F. Ritch Dies at Upatoie"

John F. Ritch (see Figure 4), one of the most prominent and successful planters of Muscogee county passed away at his home near Upatoie Sunday morning after an illness of about two weeks. The deceased was about 87 years old and was well known throughout the county. He was born and raised in the county and was held in high esteem by all who knew him

The deceased is survived by his wife and one son, J.F. Ritch, Jr., besides two brothers, T.J. Ritch and J.H. Ritch, all of whom have the deepest sympathy of their many friends.

The funeral services took place this morning from the late residence and the interment was in the family burying grounds, near Upatoie, Ga. (*Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, March 8, 1915)

8. Emanuel Ritch (July 27, 1814 – January 31, 1884)

Inscription on gravestone: *Born NC; son of David Ritch; husband of Sarah Jane Gilmore*

Spouse: Sarah Jane Gilmore Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Children:

Susan J Ritch (____ - 1895)

Mary M Ritch (1837 - 1914)

Nancy A Ritch (1839 - 1909)

Sarah Wylie Ritch (1844 - 1914)
Martha E Ritch (1846 - 1902)
James Heard Ritch (1848 - 1918)
Missouri A Ritch (1849 - 1905)
John Frost Ritch (1854 - 1915)
Edward Gilmore Ritch (1864 - 1899)

9. John L. Akin (February 8, 1898 – March 28, 1899)

Note: John was the son of one of two Akin brothers who married two Ritch sisters.

10. Sarah Wylie Ritch (August 4, 1844 – December 25, 1914)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane Gilmore Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Tombstone Inscription (see Figure 5): *Here is one who is sleeping in faith and love, With hope that is treasured in Heaven above.*

11. Grover Cleveland Ritch (August 1, 1885 – May 27, 1887)

Inscription on gravestone: *We love thee, oh we love thee, But angels love thee more, And they have sweetly called thee To that bright and happy shore.*

Parents: Thomas Jefferson Ritch (1840 - 1921) and Julia Amanda Harris Ritch (1845 - 1923)

Author's Note: Although this stone is unmarked by name or dates, the foot stone with initials "GCR" are behind it and I therefore believe this to be Grover C. Ritch's gravestone.

12. Missouri A. Ritch (1849 – February 12, 1905, Muscogee County Georgia)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane Gilmore Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Inscription: *A precious one from us is gone. A voice we loved is stilled. A place is vacant from our home, Which never can be filled.*

13. Sarah Jane Gilmore Ritch (December 11, 1816 – April 12, 1891)

Born in Washintong County, Georgia (see Fig. 6)

Died in Muscogee County, Georgia

Spouse: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884)

Children:

Susan J Ritch (____ - 1895)

Mary M Ritch (1837 - 1914)

Nancy A Ritch (1839 - 1909)

Sarah Wylie Ritch (1844 - 1914)

Martha E Ritch (1846 - 1902)

James Heard Ritch (1848 - 1918)

Missouri A Ritch (1849 - 1905)

John Frost Ritch (1854 - 1915)
Edward Gilmore Ritch (1864 - 1899)

14. Leila M. Akin (May 9, 1875 – July 12, 1899)

Tombstone Inscription: Inscription difficult to decipher in full.

Note: Daughter of one of two Akin brothers who married two Ritch sisters.

15. Sarah Ann Johnson Ritch (November 11, 1844 – May 9, 1924)

Spouse: James Heard Ritch (1848 - 1918)

Tombstone Inscription: *Daughter of Samuel and Keziah Motley Johnson*

16. Susan J. Ritch (Unknown – February 6, 1895)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane Gilmore Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Inscription: *One precious to our heart has gone, The voice we loved is stilled, The place made vacant in our home, Can never more be filled. Our Father in His wisdom called The boon His love hath given And though on earth the body lies The soul is safe in Heaven.*

17. James Heard Ritch (August 13, 1848 – January 6, 1918)

Parents: Emanuel Ritch (1814 - 1884) and Sarah Jane Gilmore Ritch (1816 - 1891)

Spouse: Sarah Ann Johnson Ritch (1844 - 1924)

18. There were also four unmarked gravesites

A little more about *Find A Grave*. Founder Jim Tipton indicates at the website

(<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=listFags#10>) that:

1. "*Find A Grave* is a resource for finding the final resting place of family, friends, and 'famous' individuals. With millions of names and photos, it is an invaluable tool for the genealogist and family history buff. Find A Grave memorials can contain rich content including photos, biographies and dates. Visitors can leave 'virtual flowers' on the memorials they visit, completing the online cemetery experience.
2. "*Find A Grave's* primary purpose is a graves registration website.
3. "*Find A Grave's* secondary purpose is a memorialization/remembrance site.

4. "Find A Grave's tertiary purpose is a genealogical resource.
5. "If a listing or contribution corresponds with only the primary purpose, it has fulfilled its part of Find A Grave's mission and is not required to correspond with the secondary and tertiary purposes. Fulfilling the other two is welcomed, encouraged and deeply appreciated, but as far as Find A Grave's purpose goes, a memorial page isn't lacking if it does not.
6. "Find A Grave has grown to be a wonderful and valuable resource for genealogy and genealogists, but that is adjunct to its main purpose."

In conclusion, cemeteries are very valuable research sources. While many of Muscogee County cemeteries have been documented, there remain so many more people – loved ones, friends, strangers – who need to be memorialized. One of my favorite "thank you's" for photographing a gravesite came from a lady in Pennsylvania who emailed me the following: "I can only say 'Thank you,' but my heart says so much more! My mother is 81 and suffers from Alzheimer's - she has mentioned more than once that she would like to visit her parents' and sister's graves again before she dies. I'm unable to grant her that wish, but now I can show her these photos. Maybe it will bring her some satisfaction. Thank you!" (Name withheld)



Fig. 1. Ritch Family Cemetery
(Courtesy of Linda Farmer Ames)



Fig. 2. Fort Benning Cemetery No. 38
(Courtesy of Linda Farmer Ames)



Fig. 3. Grave of Edward Gilmore Ritch
(Courtesy of Linda Farmer Ames)



Fig. 4. Grave of John F. Ritch
(Courtesy of Linda Farmer Ames)



Fig. 5. Grave of Sarah W. Ritch
(Courtesy of Linda Farmer Ames)



Fig. 6. Grave of Sarah Jane Ritch
(Courtesy of Linda Farmer Ames)

Primary Sources: Schley Creek War Letters

by

Dr. John Ellisor

The following letters pertain to border hostilities between Georgians and Lower Creek Indians living across the Chattahoochee in Alabama. These Indians had lost their lands to speculators, many of them residents of Columbus, and faced starvation in the exceptionally cold winter of 1835-1836. Thus these Creeks crossed back into Georgia, where they had previously lived, and foraged for food and supplies more intensively than usual. This placed them at odds with the Georgia settlers and hostilities ensued. The full-blown Second Creek War erupted a few months later in May 1836.

Both these letters were taken from Hays, Louise Frederick, ed., "Creek Indian Letters," part 4, 1830-39. This body of collected documents is housed in the Georgia State Archives in Morrow, Georgia. Page numbers appear at the end of each letter below.

Letter #1

Columbus Janry 31st 1836

His Excellency William Schley

Sir:

This community [Columbus] is still agitated and scarcely a night has passed since my arrival here without an alarm when the women and children in the outskirts of the town invariably rush in great confusion to the center of it for protection. These alarms have of course been groundless as no immediate danger has yet presented itself to the city.

I saw and conversed this morning with Mr. Isaac Mitchell, a gentleman of high standing and unbounded veracity, who came yesterday evening from the Oswitchee bend, the place where the Indians are assembled opposite Bryan's ferry. He says that between three and five hundred are

embodied there and that they are all armed and appear to be waiting an attack from the people of Georgia, that this hostile army is principally from the Hitchitee and Chehaw towns with only a portion of the Euchees, that they are the same individuals who have been in the habit of making predatory incursions into our territory [Georgia] for the last five or six years and that they have been excited to hostilities from the fact that our citizens have lately resisted their marauding parties by firing upon them on various occasions killing some and wounding others.

Mr. Mitchell states that having been at his plantation, which is in the bend, the whole of the last week, he became toward the last of it, concerned for his safety and was induced on that account to pay a visit to the principal chief of the Hitchitees [Neah Emathla?]. He could obtain no satisfaction from the chief except an assurance that he Mr. Mitchell and his property was in safety. Mr. Mitchell says that these Indians are disposed to permit the people on the Alabama side to remain in security and to commit depredations in Georgia because they are apprised of the fact that no civil process from Georgia can reach them at their homes and that when they have once passed the river [back into Alabama] they are in safety.

From all I have been able to learn from Mr. Mitchell and from other sources I am decidedly impressed with the belief that Indians will not fight any force which we may assemble on this side of the river [Georgia] that if such force is marched on the other side they will unquestionably give them battle, should they not consider themselves greatly outnumbered. In the latter event, they will disperse and retreat to the swamps, and return again to their old habits with still greater hostility and boldness so soon as the troops shall be disbanded.

I remain with respect and Your Excellency's Obt. Servant,

S. Armstrong Bailey

Major Genl. 9th Division [Georgia Militia]

(pages 1253-54)

Letter #2

February the 1st 1836

Gov. W. M. Schley

Dear Sir:

I spent Friday and Saturday last in Columbus and took some pains to ascertain the circumstances connected with the Indian disturbances that has taken place below Columbus. So far as I have been able to ascertain the circumstances are these. The Indians have for some time been in the habit of plundering largely our citizens in the counties of Stewart, Randolph, Early, etc., and a portion of the citizens are resolved not to bare it any longer and hence they kill every Indian they find on the Georgia side of the river perhaps without reflecting on the consequences that attend it. The Indians' character is well known on the subject: they will have revenge and it too often falls on the head of the innocent white man; they will have life for life if it was to exterminate the whole nation. It is true it is provoking to our citizens to have their property plundered from them without having the power to redress their injuries. It is impossible for the Indians to be reached by the civil authorities [thus] the citizens are not able to take them without killing them and in that case the white men's blood must atone for it.

Unless something be done by your Excellency this state of things must continue. [I] beg leave to suggest the propriety of establishing a small force, say two companies of light horse for the first months and one company for the next or balance of time some thirty or forty miles up and down the river [and to] make prisoners of all Indians that may be found on this side of the river and turn them over to the civil authorities for punishment. This would give peace and satisfaction to our citizens. If this method is adopted I am decidedly of the opinion that the Indians would not cross the river at all and the consequences would be that there would be no more murders committed on either side. By preventing them from crossing the river for two or three months, they would get out of the habit and would naturally turn their attention some other way. So far as I can ascertain the greater portion of the Indians wish to be at peace. There are a few Indians who cannot be controlled by the balance, who do the mischief.

The militia in this section of the state is very badly organized, indeed it has been impossible to organize them properly. There has been but little military spirit in this quarter. Lately, however, there seems to be a military spirit getting up in this section of the state and its is to be hoped in a short time that we will be well organized.

With sentiments of high esteem I remain yours,

[General] Henry H. Lowe

(pages 1255-57)

"Chattahoochee County"
from
Georgia Historical and Industrial
by the
Department of Agriculture

Transcribed by Gary S. Sprayberry

Georgia Historical and Industrial was published in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1901 by the Franklin Printing and Publishing Company. This excerpt provides detailed information about agricultural and industrial production, services, demographics, and tax and property statistics in Chattahoochee County. It also includes a brief description of Cusseta, the county seat. The original is located in the Columbus State University Archives.

Chattahoochee County

Chattahoochee County was formed from Muscogee and Randolph in 1854, and was named for the river, whose waters wash its western border. It is bounded on the north and northwest by Muscogee county, east by Marion, south by Webster and Stewart, and west by the State of Alabama. It contains 231 square miles and its mean elevation is 375 feet.

Cusseta, the county site, is a small town on a branch of the Georgia and Alabama Railroad, now a part of the great Seaboard Air Lane system. A branch of the Central of Georgia system also traverses the county, bringing its people into close business relations with Columbus, Americus and Albany, the three leading cities of Southwest Georgia. Besides the two railroads the steamboats on the Chattahoochee River afford excellent facilities for freight and travel. The face of the country is level. The soil is entirely cretaceous, a gray, sandy loam with clay subsoil. The average yield to the acre is: corn, 10 bushels; wheat, 10 bushels; oats, 15 bushels; cotton, 500 to 600 pounds; sugar-cane, 14 to 16 pounds of sugar and 150 to 200 gallons of syrup. There are also raised annually about 1,000 pounds of upland rice, 9,166 bushels of cow-peas, 1,485 bushels of peanuts, 250 bushels of

Irish potatoes, 13,235 of sweet potatoes. There are 4,000 apple-trees, 17,126 peach-trees, 6,651 plum-trees. Truck raised above home consumption and sold amounts to \$3,000.

The people are waking to the fact that it costs no more to raise a good cow than a poor one, and are beginning to pay more attention to breed. This is true of all other kinds of stock in the county.

According to the United States census of 1900 the cotton ginned in this county for the season of 1899-1900 was 5,039 bales, all upland.

By the census of 1890 there were 22 sheep with a wool-clip of 250 pounds, 2,629 cattle, 870 milch-cows, 161 working oxen, 3,373 hogs, 16,005 poultry of all kinds, 248 horses and 639 mules.

Among the farm products were 132,855 gallons of milk, 38,875 pounds of butter, 6,082 pounds of honey and 31,028 dozens of eggs.

The manufactories consist of flour and grist-mills, run by water and sawmills run by steam. On the tributaries of the Chattahoochee river there are seven miles (flour and grist), and there are good water-powers on Woolfolk's branch and Oswichee creek. The growth is chiefly piney woods. The timber products are not expensive. Some yellow pine and hardwoods are lumbered, the annual output being worth about \$8,000. There are six sawmills run by steam.

The churches are mostly Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian. The schools belong to the public school system of the State, and number 12 for whites and 15 for negroes, with an average attendance of 268 whites and 441 colored pupils.

Area of Chattahoochee county, 231 square miles, or 147,840 acres.

Population in 1900, 5,790; school fund, \$4,155.95.

By the Comptroller-General's report for 1900 there were: acres of improved land, 188,340; average value per acre of improved land, \$2.28; cotton manufactories, \$1,600; value of city property, \$14,553; money, etc., \$17,959; value of merchandise, \$6,845; iron works, \$400; value of household and kitchen furniture, \$24,280; mining, \$411.00; farm animals, \$65, 832; plantation and mechanical tools, \$14,663; watches, jewelry, etc., \$6,405; value of all other property, \$8,380; real estate, \$366,566; personal estate, \$167,430. Aggregate, \$533,996.

Returns of property by colored taxpayers: number of acres of land, 7,955; value of land, \$14,399; city or town property, \$75,000; merchandise, \$300.00; household and kitchen furniture, \$5,207, farm and other animals, \$10,962; plantation and mechanical tools, \$1,504; value of all other property, \$655.00. Aggregate value of all property, \$34,163.

The tax returns for 1901 show a gain over 1900 of \$27,254 in the value of all property.

The county seat is Cusseta, on the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. The population of the Cusseta militia district in 1900 was 1,078, of which 301 lived in the town.

The population of the whole county (5,790) shows a gain of 888 over that of 1890.

On the Seaboard Air Line to the northwest of Cusseta is the village of Sulphur Springs, noted for its mineral waters.

Population of Chattahoochee county by sex and color, according to the census of 1900: white males, 943; white females, 909; total white, 1,852; colored males, 1,922; colored females, 2,016; total colored, 3,938.

No report of domestic animals in barns or inclosures June 1, 1900.

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The Muscogee Genealogical Society is dedicated to the preservation of the history of the Columbus/Original Muscogee County area and its people, as well as the education of individuals in the techniques of discovering their own heritage.

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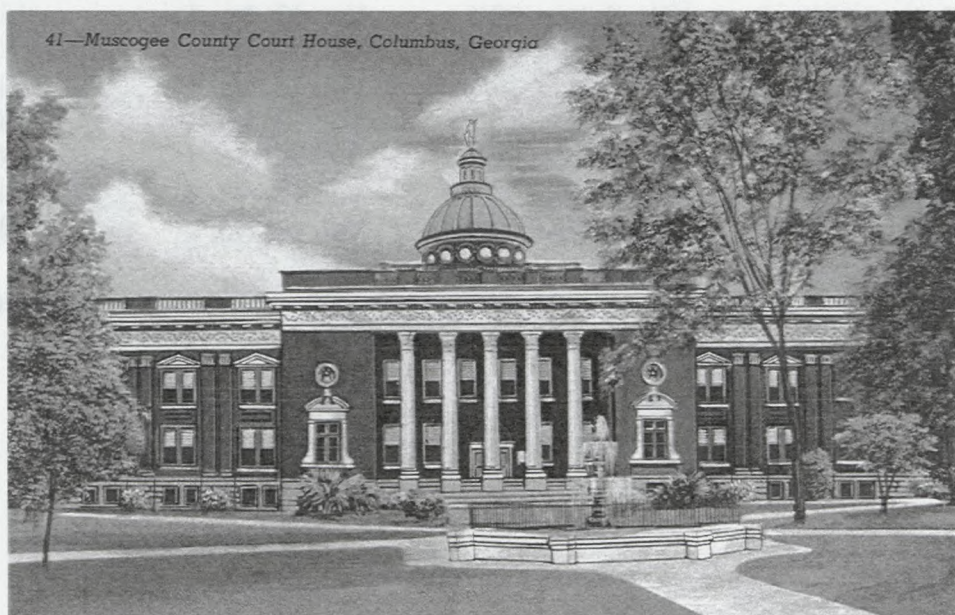
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Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives

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