

# CHILTONIAN

Volume 24, Number 1

January 2004

## QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, 11 January, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library.

All members and other Chilton citizens who are interested in our County's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

## CREDITS:

*Chiltonian* is a quarterly publication of the Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc.  
P. O. Box 644, Clanton, Alabama 35046-0644.  
(A Non-Profit Organization)

## OFFICERS:

President	-	John Glasscock
Vice Pres.	-	Wayne Sewell
Secretary	-	Bill Davenport
Treasurer	-	Colyn Moatts
Historian	-	Dot Cole
Reporter	-	Marie Smith
Programs	-	[ vacant ]

## MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Annual: Individual \$9, Couple \$12, Student \$5  
(Dues payable in January)

Lifetime: \$100

**NOTE:** ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL, THE TWO-DIGIT NUMBER AFTER YOUR NAME INDICATES THE YEAR THROUGH WHICH YOUR DUES ARE PAID. AN "L" INDICATES LIFE MEMBER.

## *Excerpts From Chilton Newspapers, 1877 - 1887*

### **Highlighting Baker, Moatts, and Allied Families**

*(Compiled By Colyn C. Moatts)*

#### LOCAL

Married near Clanton on the 12<sup>th</sup> ... [*inter alia*]  
Alfred Baker and Mary Motes at the residence of the former by J. H. Hannon, Esq.

*Chilton County Courier*, 13 April 1877

*Comments by CCM:* This was Alfred Baker, Sr., and Mary Ann "Polly" Johnson, the widow of Duncan Moatts.

#### LOCAL

Special Notice. The cases upon the criminals docket of circuit court for spring term are set for trial as follows to wit: [*inter alia*]

On Friday April 27,

State vs Alfred Baker, Polly Mots [*sic*]

Defendants and witnesses will all take notice that they must be in attendance on the days above mentioned. All persons who see this notice will confer a favor by notifying their neighbors and persons in their employee who have cases in court and also those who are witnesses.

W. H. Foshee

Deputy Clerk Circuit Court

*Chilton County Courier*, 20 April 1877

*(Continued, next page)*



## THE FIRE FIEND

The dwelling of Mr. Reuben Popwell, one mile east of Clanton, was burned to the ground on last Monday night, and all its contents were destroyed. There was no one on the premises at the time. Mr. Popwell and his family being absent on a visit. It is not known how the fire originated. Some of the citizens of Clanton contributed toward furnishing a new house, and Mr. Popwell will rebuild in the fall.

*The Chilton View*, 1 June 1882

## LOCAL DOTTINGS

A couple of U.S. Deputy Marshals arrested and carried to Montgomery yesterday, Mr. Alfred Baker, Jr., who is charged with cutting and removing timber from government land.

*The Chilton View*, 8 June 1882

Mr. Alfred Baker, Jr., who was arrested and carried to Montgomery by U.S. Marshals last week, charged with cutting and removing government timber, had a hearing before the U.S. Commissioner on Wednesday, and was discharged.

*The Chilton View*, 15 June 1882

Our first bale of cotton was brought to Clanton on last Saturday by Mr. Anderson Baker. It was sold at 13 cents, J. H. Hannon & Co. being the purchasers. It weighed 502 pounds.

*The Chilton View*, 14 September 1882

Clanton organized a military company on last Saturday. The names of 42 members were enrolled. Maj. J. M. Bivings was elected Captain and W. E. Stewart and W. E. Johnston, first and second Lieutenants, respectively.

*The Chilton View*, 5 October 1882

The station on the E.T.V. & G. Railroad in this county, one mile north of Callierville, has been named "Stanton," in honor of Mr. M. Stanton, former Superintendent of the S.R. & D. Railroad. Messrs. Gregory & Coe, of Selma, have a large steam sawmill in operation at this point.

*The Chilton View*, 14 December 1882

## STRAYED OR STOLEN

One sorrel mare, about eight years old, medium size, with white hind feet. She has been missing since the first of April. Five dollars for her delivery to me at Clanton.

T. W. MOATES

*The Chilton View*, 19 April 1883

*Comments by CCM:* This was Thomas William Moatts, youngest son of Duncan & Mary Ann Johnson Moats.

## LOCAL DOTTINGS

Mr. O. R. Bell of Verbena, will remove to Clanton shortly. He has purchased the Alfred Baker place and will farm.

*The Chilton View*, 17 January 1884

NOTES: Anderson Baker, Sr., was elected [*inter alia*] as a Clanton delegate to the County Democratic Convention. At the meeting, he became the party's nominee for Commissioner of Roads and Revenue (1<sup>st</sup> District).

*The Chilton View*, 26 June 1884

Mr. [Alfred? John?] Baker says he is going to be elected by the people of Chilton as their next representative. We hear that Mr. Hall days ditto of himself, and we doubt not that Mr. Barbour also expects to be elected to the same position. So if the three of them are going to be elected to one little office, what a squabble will arise over the spoils when the four dollars per diem comes in sight. It is generally hoped that these three are to be elected to stay at home ONLY, as well as altogether and entirely.

*The Chilton View*, 24 July 1884

NOTES: Anderson Baker, Sr., elected District 1 Commissioner of Roads and Revenue (unopposed).

*The Chilton View*, 6 August 1884

Mr. James Moates died at his residence eight miles east of Clanton on last Tuesday night [*the 9<sup>th</sup> of September*]. He was about seventy-five years of age.

*Comments by CCM:* Evidence suggest that James was the father of Duncan Moats.



Mrs. Anderson Baker, Sr. died on the 10<sup>th</sup> inst., after a protracted illness. She was the wife of county commissioner Baker. The family has the sympathies of our entire community.

*Comments by CCM:* This was Anderson's second wife, Mary Ann Love, buried at Walnut Creek.

Mr. Anderson Baker is building a church for the Protestant Methodists at Walnut Creek. Mr. E. H. Parrish is assisting in the work. Mr. Baker is the sole contributor to this good work, with one or two exceptions of parties who have contributed small amounts.

*The Chilton View*, 11 September 1884

### THE PROTRACTED MEETING

A protracted meeting at Walnut Creek Protestant Methodist Church closed on Sunday night last with 12 accessions to the church membership, making 49 new members that have been added to this church during the past year. Rev. T. A. Gibson has charge of this church and of four other churches of the same denomination in this county. There have been 101 accessions to the five churches during the past year that he has been in charge.

*The Chilton View*, 16 October 1884

### COUNTY FINANCES

County Commissioner Anderson Baker was in to see us Tuesday. He has recently moved to his place five miles east of Cooper's Station. He reports the farming prospects of his neighborhood very good. He thinks his beat will vote whiskey out by a two-thirds majority and says the VIEW is getting some "cussing" among the whiskeyites, but has everybody else on its side.

*The Chilton View*, 11 February 1886

### COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Mr. Oliver Mullins has been appointed as county commissioner for the district made vacant by the resignation of Anderson Baker. The court decided that each commissioner should act as supervisor of bridge work in his district.

*The Chilton View*, 13 May 1886

### LOCAL DOTTINGS

We had a pleasant call Monday from Mr. G. W. Adair of Verbena, and one of the Justices of Beat Five. Before Chilton County was formed, Mr. Adair owned the land upon which Clanton is now located, and he sold it to Alfred Baker, Sr., for \$650.

*The Chilton View*, 30 September 1886

### STABBED

Mr. Alfred Baker, Sr., was stabbed in the back on Saturday by Dr. Sam Johnson. Mr. Baker was sitting on a bench in front of the farmer's store engaged in conversation when Dr. Johnson, who was intoxicated, came upon him unawares and stabbed him in the left shoulder with a new 4-inch-blade pocket knife. As we do not desire to create prejudice and as the penalty of the law will no doubt be fully meted out in the case, we forbear further comment. Dr. Johnson had a hearing before Judge Callen and was admitted to bail in the sum of \$500 which was promptly given, and the case will come up at the next term of the circuit court. Mr. Baker's wound, though not dangerous, was quite serious, though he is now improving, and we hope soon to see him out again.

*The Chilton View*, 31 March 1887

### CHANCERY COURT

[*inter alia*]

Anderson Baker vs. Emma A. Baker. Divorce for complainant.

*Comment by CCM:* Emma A. Mints Moatts was the widow of Billy Moatts, the oldest son of Duncan and Mary Ann Johnson Moatts. Emma was Anderson's third wife.

*The Chilton View*, 14 April 1887

### [MISSING HEADING]

The following are the State cases disposed of at the recent term of the circuit court:

STATE vs.

[*inter alia*]

Sam Johnson. Assault to murder. Guilty of assault and battery with a weapon and fined \$200.

*The Chilton View*, 15 September 1887



## LOCAL DOTTINGS

Mr. Alfred Baker is having a nice residence erected on his lot near the cemetery and when finished will move his family into it. He has rented out his place one mile east of town.

*The Chilton View*, 3 November 1887

The new residence of Mr. Alfred Baker, near the cemetery, will soon be finished. He intends building another residence in West Clanton when this one is completed.

*The Chilton View*, 24 November 1887

## MORTGAGE SALE

Under and by virtue of a mortgage executed by Osman R. Bell and his wife Lena Bell to Mary A. Baker, on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1884, and duly recorded in the office of the Judge of Probate of Chilton county, Alabama, in Vol. 10 of deeds, on page 237, the undersigned will proceed to sell at the courthouse door in Clanton, Alabama, between the legal hours of sale, at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, on Thursday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1887, the following described property to wit: [a town lot in the SW ¼ of SE ¼, sec 36, T22, R14].

MARY A. BAKER  
Wm. A. Collier, Att'y.  
Clanton, Ala., Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1887.

*The Chilton View*, 8 December 1887

Chilton County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 644  
Clanton, AL 35046-0644

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Value Plus

*Old Schools of Chilton County Alabama*

By Lorene LeCroy

\$15.00 + \$3 S&H

~

*Baker/Chilton County Marriages,*

1870 - 1893

\$22.50 + \$3 S&H

~

*The Heritage of Chilton County*

\$59.40 + \$5 S&H

~

*Thorsby: Writings & Memoirs*

Of Mrs. Grover Bice

\$20.00 + \$3 S&H

Mail Check Or Money order

To

Chilton County Historical Society

P. O. Box 644

Clanton, AL 35046-0644





# ***The Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc.***

Post Office Box 644  
Clanton, Alabama 35046

The Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc. invites you to join.

Meetings are held at 2 p.m. on second Sunday of January, April, July, and October  
at Clanton Public Library.

Dues are payable in January.

Student - \$5.00, Individual - \$9.00, Couples - \$12.00, Lifetime - \$100.00

Projects completed in past years:

Cemetery Census Books

Old Schools of Chilton County by Lorene LeCroy

Baker/Chilton Marriages

Contribution of articles in Heritage of Chilton County book

Other contributed books

Moving smoke house from old Maplesville to Peach Park donated by Lorene  
LeCroy Family

-----  
Please remit to:

C.C.H.S. & A., Inc.

P.O. Box 644

Clanton, AL 35046

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Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_



# CHILTONIAN

Volume 24, Number 2

April 2004

## QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will not hold a quarterly meeting this month, due to the second Sunday coinciding with Easter.

All members and other Chilton citizens who are interested in our County's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend the next quarterly meeting on 11 July 2004.

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## More Excerpts From Chilton Newspapers, 1887 – 1894

(Compiled By Colyn C. Moatts)

### LOCAL DOTTINGS

Mr. [Alfred] Baker's new residence near the cemetery is a monument to that locality. The painters are about through with it and Mr. Baker will move in at once. He is having another dwelling erected in the rear of the Baptist Church and on the lot adjoining Mr. Gartman's place. We presume it will be for rent.

*The Chilton View*, 8 December 1887

Mrs. Judge Chilton, widow of the distinguished statesman and jurist in honor of whom our county was named, has removed from Montgomery to Clanton, and will occupy the Haden residence. In behalf of our people the VIEW extends her a most cordial welcome.

*The Chilton View*, 8 March 1888

### NOTICE

All persons are hereby warned not to fish in my mill pond, known as Baker's mill pond.

T. W. MOTES

*The Chilton View*, 12 April 1888

Comments by CCM: Thomas William Moatts (spelling used in the Tom Moatts family Bible). The milldam was located where the southbound I-65 bridge crosses Walnut Creek. In the 1950s, highway construction workers discovered portions of the timbers while drilling core samples for the I-65 bridge piers and abutments.



## SHERIFF's SALE

To satisfy a fi. fa. [previous court ruling] in my hands, issued from the circuit court of Chilton county, against Sam Johnson and in favor of Alfred Baker, I will proceed to sell on the fourth Monday in August, 1888, at the courthouse door of Chilton county, between the legal hours of sale, the following described property of said Sam Johnson, et als., to-wit: All of Block Ten (10) except lot one (1), lots number eleven (11) twelve (12) thirteen (13) and fourteen (14) in Block Twelve (12). Lots number one (1) two (2) three (3) five (5) six (6) and seven (7) in Block Eleven (11), lots nine (9) ten (10) eleven (11) and sixteen (16) in Block Nine (9), all lying and being situated east of the line of railway of the South and North Alabama Railroad company in the town of Clanton in said county of Chilton and State of Alabama.

J. T. SMITHERMAN  
Sheriff Chilton Co.

*The Chilton View*, 23 August 1888

*Comments by CCM:* In the next issue (30 August 1888), additional lands were added to the sale by Sheriff Lee Hays. It appears that Johnson's attorney (in re the assault charge reported in last quarter's newsletter) was able to strike a pre-trial deal with Baker's attorney for a large sum of money, in exchange for Johnson's guilty plea to a lesser charge and no jail time. Clearly, the sum of money "damages" to be provided to Baker was a lot more cash than Johnson had on hand, forcing the sale of quite a bit of his real estate.

## LOCAL DOTTINGS

On Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> inst., a niece of Mrs. J. M. Thacker, who is visiting the latter at her home near this place came near losing her life by her clothing catching on fire; and but for the timely action of Mr. [James] Thacker she would have doubtless been burned to death. While standing before the fire her skirts became ignited and almost in an instant the blaze shot upward two or three feet. Mr. Thacker, who was sitting near at the time grabbed her and endeavored to smother the flames with his hands, partially succeeded in doing so, though burning his hands terribly in the attempt. Being near the bed he reached out and pulled the quilts and blankets off and quickly wrapped them around the young lady and smothered the flames. Fortunately the young lady was not badly burned. Mr. Thacker is now carrying his left hand in a sling and his right one is badly burned and blistered though he is able to use it. His presence of mind and prompt action is to be

commended, and saved the young lady's life, beyond question.

*The Chilton View*, 17 January 1889

*Comments by CCM:* James M. Thacker was the son of William L. & Catherine Thacker. His wife, Susan Balsora Cherry, was the daughter of James & Rutha Cherry.

## OLD PEOPLE IN CHILTON

Rev. W. A. Wells will be 80 in July. He was born in Georgia in the year 1809, and moved to this state in the year 1819. His wife is 75 years old. They have been married sixty years. Mr. Wells is a Protestant preacher, and has charge of four churches in different parts of the county. He travels to each of his appointments on horseback. He don't [sic] look to be more than 60 years old.

*The Chilton View*, 11 April 1889

## LOCAL LACONICS

Amos Baker accidentally shot himself on Christmas eve. The ball was a thirty-two caliber and entered the side of his leg just below the knee, coming out near the foot. He is getting about on crutches.

*The Chilton View*, 8 January 1890

*Comments by CCM:* Amos Baker was the first son of Alfred Baker, Sr., and Mary Ann "Polly" Johnson Moatts.

Mr. Thos. Motes has purchased the Pritchett rice mill and will be prepared to clean your rice for you this fall at Baker's mill, two miles east of town.

*The Chilton View*, 17 April 1890

[Death notice for Thomas Moatts (he died on 14 June 1890); however, the page is badly deteriorated and write-up can't be reconstructed.]

*The Chilton View*, 19 June 1890

## DEATH OF MRS. MIMS

Mrs. Lettie Mims, better known as Grandma Mims, died at the residence of Mr. W. C. Headley, near Clanton on the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst., at the advanced age of 93 years. She leaves a large number of relatives in this county to mourn her loss.

*The Chilton View*, 26 June 1890

*Comments by CCM:* Luticia "Lettie" Mims, wife of Abraham C. Mims.



## LOCAL LACONICS

Mr. Alfred Baker, who has been in feeble health for sometime, is able to get to town again.

*The Chilton View*, 26 June 1890

Mr. Alfred Baker, Sr., will leave shortly on a visit to relatives in Arkansas whom he has not seen for forty-five years, and he expects to be absent some months. We wish him a pleasant visit.

*The Chilton View*, 13 November 1890

We are sorry to learn Mrs. E. F. Chilton will return to her old home, Montgomery, the first of December. Mrs. Chilton is beloved by all who know her in our community. [*She died two months later.*]

*The Chilton View*, 27 November 1890

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Baker left Monday morning on visit to relatives in Slatonville, Ark., and expect to be absent some months.

*The Chilton View*, 4 December 1890

Mr. and Mrs. Baker have returned from their trip to Arkansas.

*The Chilton View*, 8 January 1891

Mr. Anderson Baker whose farm is near Verbena, sent the VIEW the first cotton blossoms. They were received last Wednesday just as our last week's edition was worked off. He sent about eight or ten blooms showing that they were plentiful on his place.

*The Chilton View*, 25 June 1891

Mr. Alfred Baker, Sr., spent the holidays with his relatives in this vicinity. He is now established on a farm near Cameron, Indian Territory, where he will make his future home. [*Note lack of reference to Mrs. Baker.*]

*The Chilton View*, 31 December 1891

Comments by CCM: This coincides with an old family story that Alfred went to live in Indian Territory after divorcing his second wife, "Polly" Moatts. Other variations of this story include a tale of Alfred going to Arkansas first, in order to rescue his son (Amos) from hanging, and then traveling on to the Territory to "lay low" for a while.

## LOCAL BREVITIES

Mr. W. S. Baker, of Clanton, died on last Saturday night [Sep 3] and was interred in the [Clanton] cemetery Sunday evening. He died of typhoid fever.

*The Chilton View*, 8 September 1892

Comments by CCM: William S. Baker (born ca. 1855) was a son of Alfred Baker, Sr., and Rebecca Ann Mims Baker.

Amos Baker and his family are on a visit to relatives in this vicinity. Amos says his father expects to return from Indian Territory soon and will remain here. While they like the wild west as a farming country, they found it difficulty [*sic*] to give up old associations.

*The Chilton View*, 17 November 1892

Mr. Alfred Baker, who moved from this place to Indian Territory about a year ago has returned and will reside here permanently. [*Still no mention of Mrs. Baker.*]

*The Chilton View*, 1 December 1892

Clanton is indebted to Mr. Alfred Baker for the preservation of her forest growth of oaks. When the town was laid off and built it was he who impressed upon the early inhabitants the importance of leaving these trees standing for the shade and imbelishment [*sic*] they would afford the future city.

*The Chilton View*, 4 May 1893

It is with regret that we chronicle the death of Mrs. W. H. [Henry] Dupree. She died Monday morning, Sept 18<sup>th</sup>, at 7 o'clock, and was buried Tuesday at Walnut Creek Church. Sympathy is extended to the bereaved family.

*The Chilton View*, 21 September 1893

Comments by CCM: This was Charlotte Baker (born ca. 1867), a daughter of Alfred Baker and Rebecca Ann Mims. The "Banner" issue of this date indicated she died of typhoid fever and her husband was sick with the same disease. Henry and Charlotte were married on 3/16/1881.

## TOWN ITEMS

Mr. John W. Baker has made 2220 gallons of molasses this season working one mill. The children



in his neighborhood will be amply provided with long sweetening this winter.

*The Banner*, 23 November 1893

Married today, at the home of the bride's parents Mr. Louis Easterling to Miss Mahala Baker. Rev. A. C. Wells officiating.

*The Banner*, 7 December 1893

Married Thursday evening at the residence of the bride's parents Miss Ida Sharbutt to Mr. A. T. Baker.

*The Banner*, 16 June 1894

### NOTICE

The Chilton View was sold at public auction, on Wednesday last, under a mortgage foreclosure. It was knocked down at the low figure of \$228.

*The Banner*, 30 August 1894

## Value Plus

*Old Schools of Chilton County Alabama*

By Lorene LeCroy  
\$15.00 + \$3 S&H  
~

*Baker/Chilton County Marriages,*

1870 - 1893  
\$22.50 + \$3 S&H  
~

*The Heritage of Chilton County*

\$59.40 + \$5 S&H  
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*Thorsby: Writings & Memoirs*

*Of Mrs. Grover Bice*  
\$20.00 + \$3 S&H

Mail Check Or Money order

To

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## *Even More Excerpts From Chilton Newspapers, 1894 - 1897*

(Compiled By Colyn C. Moatts)

### WALNUT CREEK WHISPERINGS

Mr. Burl McKullers was the welcome guest of James Thompson last week. He also found some attraction at Grover Lockhart's.

Farmers are through gathering 5-cent cotton and are very busy sowing oats.

Mr. James Baker has ginned nearly 300 bales of cotton this fall, which speaks well for the cotton crop in our community.

Prof. R. M. McKee has a flourishing school of about seventy-five pupils. We congratulate the professor for his faithful efforts and his wonderful success in improving the education and morals of his school.

We are in sympathy with the Widow Moatts, the lady who joined fences with Bud Maddox, who has, for some unknown cause, torn his fence from the widow's, which leaves her entire farm exposed to the stock of the community. [signed] V. J. G.

*The Banner*, 20 December 1894

Comments by CCM: "V.J.G." was, almost certainly, Vincent Jones Gragg, Jr., the son of V. J. Gragg, Sr., and Emily Baker. Gragg, Jr., was a member at Walnut Creek and would have been 18 years old at the time of the writing.

### WALNUT CREEK WHISPERINGS

The local writer of Walnut Creek was mistaken when he said Prof. P. M. McKee had seventy-five regular students, I think it should have been twenty-five.



An entertainment was given at the residence of Mr. T. I. Teel last week; everyone seemed to enjoy the occasion.

Mr. Ben Teel has moved into his lately completed residence on his farm.

Mr. Johnnie Thompson has returned from a pleasant visit to Coosa, and reports he spent a jolly Xmas.

Mr. Abner Thecher and wife are visiting relatives and friends at Walnut Creek.

Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Marcus, of Elmore, are visiting relatives and friends at Walnut Creek.

Prof. B. T. Callaway has proved to be an energetic teacher and has given thorough satisfaction to this community since he has been teaching at the Walnut Creek academy.

May the BANNER ever survive.

[signed] PUELLA

As I noticed in last week's BANNER that V.J.G. stated Professor Mard McKee had seventy-five students, I want to say that Professor Terpin Callaway has a fine school at Walnut Creek. He has taught the best school we have had in ten years, and has from 30 to 35 scholars. Now, I would like to have Prof. Hicks come and count these two schools, I think he would find a sad mistake in V.J.G.'s count.

As to V.J.G.'s regret at my tearing down my fence from the widow Moatt's [sic] place, all intelligent people at Walnut Creek know what for—others don't know.

[signed] J. G. Maddox

*The Banner*, 3 January 1895

### WALNUT CREEK WHISPERINGS

Mrs. Ben Teel, who has been quite ill for some time is somewhat convalescent.

Mr. and Mrs. Busby's six months old baby was buried at Walnut Creek Cemetery last Monday, we extend our sympathy to the bereaved parents.

[signed] CIVIS

*The Banner*, 17 January 1895

### TOWN ITEMS

Mr. James W. Baker and Miss Eliza Mims were happily married [?]day, Rev. R. M. Honeycutt performing the ceremony.

*The Banner*, 31 January 1895

### WALNUT CREEK WHISPERINGS

On Tuesday, while the children of Widow Robinson were burning brush, the clothing of one of them, a little girl about five years old, caught fire and the poor child received such injuries that she died within a few hours. She was laid to rest in Walnut Creek cemetery on Wednesday. Mrs. Robinson has the sympathy of all in this bereavement.

*The Banner*, 7 March 1895

### LOCAL BREVITIES

We welcome to Chilton county Rev. Mr. [E. M.] Bell, who comes as pastor of Walnut Creek and other Methodist Protestant Churches in this county. We made an attempt to attend preaching at Walnut Creek Church last Sunday, but got in too late.

*The Chilton View*, 14 March 1895

### WALNUT CREEK

We have been requested to publish the facts in the case of Motes vs. Maddox tried at the last term of our circuit court.

This was an action brought against Mr. Maddox, by Mrs. Motes claiming \$1060, as damages for the overflowing of lands belonging to Mrs. Motes by water from the mill of Mr. Maddox. Upon the trial of the case it appeared that the deed carrying the mill property to Mr. Maddox gave him the right to back water over the land, the subject of the lawsuit, and a verdict was consequently rendered in his favor.

*The Banner*, 13 June 1895

*Comments by CCM:* From this and previous news articles, it appears that Rebecca Moatts sold "Baker's Mill" [see last quarter's Chiltonian] to "Bud" Maddox, after the untimely death of her husband, Thomas Moatts. The previously cited "fence removal" incident apparently was the first step in backing the water over the adjacent land. The Moatts farm was located (in part) where the Scottsdale Subdivision currently is located. Interestingly, the original Baker County courthouse at Grantville was located across the road from the Tom Moatts homeplace, which was within the current limits of Scottsdale, just west of I-65.

### LOCAL BREVITIES

By request Judge Honeycutt preached on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July to the descendants of Mr. John Baker. One hundred and thirteen of whom were present.

*The Chilton View*, 11 July 1895



## LOCAL BREVITIES

It is gratifying to know that the protracted meeting [revival] at Walnut Creek did much towards reuniting the members of that community. We hope those good people will all be able to forget and forgive and henceforth be neighbors indeed.

*The Chilton View*, 22 August 1895

*Comment by CCM:* Sounds like the Moattses and Maddoxes resolved their differences.

Prof. Clay Jones has secured a school at Walnut Creek and will begin next Monday.

*The Chilton View*, 17 October 1895

## WALNUT CREEK GOSSIP

The people of this vicinity have decided to come together on the school question and the indications are that we will have a successful school.

Rev. E. M. Bell preached his farewell sermon, at Walnut Creek, last Sunday.

The farmers here report a good crop. They are gathering double the amount of corn and potatoes they did last year.

O'possum hunting is much in vogue in this section of the county.

[signed] Peavine

*The Chilton View*, 24 October 1895

*Comment by CCM:* Based on the 14 March article, above, Rev. Bell was at Walnut Creek only six months.

## TOWN ITEMS

What might have been a fatal accident happened at Mr. John Motes place near Jemison on Monday. Young Duren, a boy about six years old, got possession of a loaded pistol and while playing with it it went off shooting him through the left hand and ploughing up his left breast

*The Banner*, 16 January 1896

Mr. J. J. Mims and Miss Minnie Baker were happily married last Thursday evening at the residence of Mr. James A. Baker, Judge Honeycutt officiating.

*The Banner*, 6 February 1896

Mr. Alfred Baker, one of the oldest citizens of our county, died last Sunday [9 February 1896] and was interred in the cemetery at Clanton on Monday. A number of our citizens paid their last tribute of respect to the deceased gentleman.

*The Banner*, 13 February 1896

Married last night at the residence of Mr. Reuben Popwell, father of the bride, Mr. Butler Lowe and Miss Eva L. Popwell, Squire Dake performing the ceremony. After the wedding a large number of friends participated in a jovial time. THE BANNER wishes the young couple much happiness and prosperity.

*The Banner*, 12 March 1896

The first cotton bloom this season was brought into our office last Saturday from the plantation of Mr. Anderson Baker, Sr., three miles east of Verbena.

*The Banner*, 11 June 1896

Marriage licenses have been granted this week by the Probate Judge to the following persons: [inter alia]

Mr. E. C. Baker and Miss Alice Miller

*The Banner*, 9 July 1896

*Comments by CCM:* Elijah Cary Baker was the second son of Alfred Baker, Sr., and Mary Ann "Polly" Johnson Moatts. No notice of his marriage to Alice Miller was found in Chilton County, leaving the possibility that they were married in Jefferson County, the place where Cary later established his businesses and he and Alice raised their children.

Marriage licenses have been granted this week by the Probate Judge to the following persons: [inter alia]

Mr. Elijah Moats and Miss Rhoda Mims

*The Banner*, 1 April 1897

## CIRCUIT COURT

The following cases were tried: [inter alia] James Thacker, using abusive language. This case is on trial as we go to press.

*Mid-Ala. Daily News*, 17 May 1897



As we went to press yesterday evening the case of James Thacker charged with using abusive language was being heard; the result was a fine of \$25; defendant confessed judgment.

*Mid-Ala. Daily News*, 18 May 1897

*Comment by CCM:* Unable to determine whether this was the father or the son, but most likely the son.

### TOWN ITEMS

On last Thursday our hearts were made sad indeed to witness the death of Mrs. Susie P. Dunlap wife of Mr. Tem Dunlap of Ehrman's mill, and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Thacker. Mrs. Dunlap was born May 29, 1870, and died June 17, 1897. On Monday morning, the 14<sup>th</sup>, the death angel came and took her little babe, Rosa, born May 7, 1897, to dwell with Jesus.

*The Banner*, 24 June 1897

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# CHILTONIAN

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Volume 24, Number 4

October 2004

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## QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library.

All members and other Chilton citizens who are interested in our County's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

## Searching For "Jinsey"

By Colyn C. Moatts

One of my great-great-grandmothers, Jannet Catherine "Jinsey" McCaslin Mitchell, is buried *somewhere* in present-day Chilton County. And, even though there's a marker and slab that tell us her earthly remains are located in the Clanton Cemetery, I learned some years ago that grave markers don't always reflect the truth.

Before delving into this burial mystery, please allow me to give you a little background on Jinsey and her husband, Andrew Jackson Mitchell.

Jinsey (whose nickname apparently is derived from her first name plus her middle initial—Jan C... Jansy... Jinsey) was born 16 July 1825 in Chester County, South Carolina, the daughter of Henry and Sarah McCaslin. Henry and his family are recorded in the 1850 Tallapoosa County census. According to that census, Henry was born in North Carolina in 1794, and Sarah was born in Virginia in 1791.

Tallapoosa County records further indicate that Jinsey married Andrew Jackson Mitchell on 14 July 1852. Andrew was born in 1826, also in South Carolina; however, research has not yet revealed his parents.

Andrew and Jinsey next appear in the Randolph County census of 1860. The entries list Andrew, a mechanic, age 34; Jinsey, age 35; their children Mary C[atherine], age 8; William H[enry], age 6; Thomas W, age 4; and, Elias C[alumus], age 2. All the children were born in Alabama, and, as we learn from later data, Jinsey was pregnant at the time of the census, with Christopher Columbus Mitchell who was born on 14 January 1861.

## CREDITS:

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(A Non-Profit Organization)

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The Alabama Department of Archives and History has little information on Andrew's military service. On 30 January 1862, at Daviston, Alabama, Andrew (then age 36) enlisted as a Private in Captain John Thompson's Independent Company of Alabama Mounted Volunteers. When the unit was mustered into the 1<sup>st</sup> Alabama Cavalry on 5 February 1862 at Cusseta, Alabama, it was designated Company "H" of Beall's Battalion. According to Captain M. M. Copeland, the mustering officer, Andrew received an "amount allowed for horse \$175.00, and \$20.00 for horse equipment."

The State records also include a short memo from the U. S. War Department Adjutant General's Office, dated 3 August 1926, which is very discouraging regarding the availability of records at the National Archives. Apparently in response to a query from the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Brigadier General Lutz Wahl reported Andrew "...on muster roll for Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> to Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1862, is shown present (only roll on which borne); subsequent rolls cover, in part, the period from May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863, to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1864, but the name A. J. Mitchell has not been found thereon. No later record has been found."

One document from the National Archives Compiled Record of Andrew's service under the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry designation indicates that his name appears on a register of claims of deceased officers and soldiers from Alabama that were filed for settlement in the Office of the Confederate States Auditor. The claim was filed on 29 December 1863 by his widow, but it is unclear whether this record refers to our particular A. J. Mitchell.

With this as background, we can resume the search for Jinsey. We know that Jinsey died in Chilton County on 20 March 1876, and the previously referenced marker and slab were placed in the Clanton Cemetery some time after that.

In 1980, my grandmother (Arsula "Sula" Belle Mitchell Thomaston, the daughter of Elias Calumus Mitchell and Mary Elizabeth Black) told me that—according to her father—Jinsey's body was carried to the cemetery in an ox cart; however, the cemetery was "along the road to the Double Bridges, just off Yellow Leaf Road, and she was buried in the left-hand corner by a big rock." So, how did the marker and slab end up in the Clanton Cemetery, more than four miles to the south? Grandmother Sula then shared with me what—at the time—was a little known family secret.

It seems that Andrew and Jinsey's son, William, had left home a couple of years prior to his mother's death and was either unable or uninterested in returning for his mother's funeral. A few years afterward—perhaps in the early 1880s—he returned to Clanton and was "courting" a young woman of that city.

When William told the young lady that his mother had died in Chilton County, she asked, "Where is she buried?" When William truthfully responded that he didn't know, the young lady was singularly unimpressed (to the point of being disgusted).

To remedy the situation and to impress the young lady, William had a handbill printed and distributed around Clanton that offered a reward of \$100 to any person who could precisely identify the location of Jinsey's grave. And this at a time when \$100 was a *lot* of money!

Not surprisingly, the first person to respond to the handbill took William to the Clanton Cemetery, pointed to the first unmarked grave he saw (on the south side of the northernmost access road, under a big oak tree), and said, "There's Jinsey's grave, may I have my \$100, please." Because it suited his purpose, William accepted the man's claim and then had a monument and slab erected over the grave.

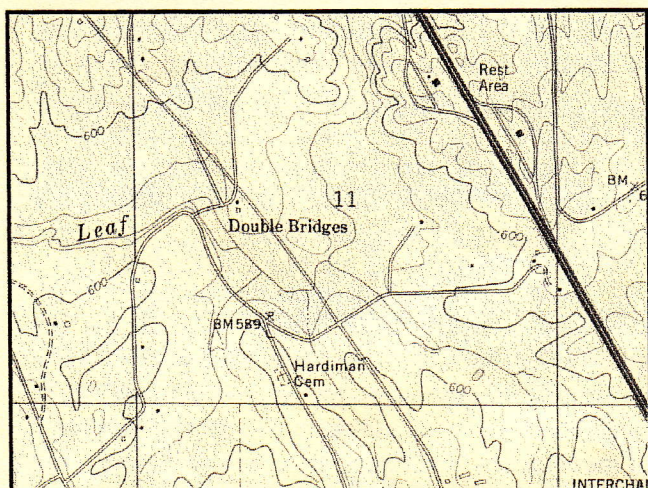
Based on his personal knowledge as well as stories he'd been told as a young boy, William had his mother's *vitae* carved on the upright obelisk and the following carved on the slab: "WIFE OF A. J. MITCHELL, A LIEUTENANT IN THE CIVIL [sic] WAR, BURIED IN CHATTANOOGA, TENN."

This latter information tends to substantiate (from a point in time closer to the events) family verbal history that Andrew won a battlefield commission and correlates quite well with the known geographic history of the 8<sup>th</sup> Confederate Cavalry. The unit operated in southern Tennessee from January of 1863 up until the battle of Chickamauga in September of that year. Of course, Chickamauga is just south of Chattanooga and across the border in Georgia. After the battle, the unit operated in the vicinity of Chattanooga for the remainder of 1863 and early 1864.

To date, research has revealed no confirmation of Andrew's grave site in the Chattanooga area. So, where is Jinsey really buried? In 1980, I had little interest in locating the cemetery "along the road to the Double Bridges," but a recent search through some old maps provided me with a strong clue.



Among the old maps was a 1971 USGS "Jemison East" quad map that had been photo-revised in 1983 from aerial photography taken that same year. See excerpt below.)



*Location of Hardiman Cemetery*

As can be seen on the map, the Hardiman Cemetery is located on the west side of County Road (CR) 427—which branches off Yellow Leaf Road—just south of Double Bridges. The new road to Double Bridges (CR-77 extension), which runs through the word "Double" on the map, was under construction in 1983, and the entire complex of roads in the triangle roughly formed by the words "Leaf," "Double," and "BM 589" is now closed to the public. When the new road was completed and these roads were closed, the actual "Double Bridges" over Yellow Leaf Creek were removed and probably consigned to the wood pile and scrap heap. [NOTE: Hardiman Cemetery is included in the Chilton County Cemetery Census, but no grave marker with the name "Mitchell" was noted at the time of survey.]

According to Grandmother Sula, the cemetery where Jinsey was buried already had been vandalized and abandoned in 1980. On a recent visit to Hardiman Cemetery, my sons and I discovered there is little left of that cemetery—three distinct clusters of broken and overturned headstones, all of which are being reclaimed by the earth and thick brush. The cemetery is in a mowed pasture, but the current farmer refuses to run his Bush-Hog over the site, no doubt out of respect for the dead plus some concern over damaging his equipment. No "big rock" is now visible, and the "left-hand corner" is relative to where one stands in the pasture.

I am convinced that the old Hardiman Cemetery is the burial site of Jinsey McCaslin Mitchell

and, perhaps, other members of the family; however, the previous vandalism and decades-long abandonment make it unlikely we'll ever know the exact location of Jinsey's final resting place.

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## ***"Bessie" Post Office Was Once Located In Mars Hill Community***

*By Madge M. Wilbanks*

[Reprinted from *The Clanton Advertiser*, 28 February 1993]

Located a few miles west of Jemison in northern Chilton County, Mars Hill is a community of about 500 or so people. The church was constituted in 1887 as a Baptist church. As far as it is known, the name Mars Hill came from the Bible. However, according to Lillian Busby (Mrs. A. J./Hall) Leach, not long ago there was a sign on the main road that pointed to "Bessie," and it is remembered by many of the residents that once there was a post office named "Bessie" in the community.

Other than the post office, there was a sawmill and store run by the Cofers in this community in northwest Chilton County. With the church of Mars Hill being constituted in 1887, the community is over 106 years old. Names of the early settlers in this community include Gentry, Gothard, Langston, Scott, Haywood, Smith, Leach, Thomas, Martin, and Posey just to name a few. A. J. (Hall) Leach was born in 1903 and died in 1987. He had a son, Hanson, and a daughter, Hazel Leach (Mrs. M. P.) Braswell. Hazel Braswell lives in the Leach's old homeplace on County Road 42 west of Jemison about a half-mile from the Mars Hill Baptist Church. Mrs. Price, an early teacher of a one-room school at Mars Hill (or Bessie) Community, boarded with the Leach family. Mrs. Dovie Leach was an early secretary of the church and Mrs. Shannon O. Gothard is current church secretary. The new brick church was built in 1952. Now the congregation is in the second church, an expanded one with a fellowship hall and additional Sunday School rooms. It was built in 1987 and services began in the new Mars Hill Baptist Church. Some early ministers included Marvin Morris, A. W. Nix, Johnny Tillery, and a Reverend Lawley.



The early school house was behind the first church with grades going through the seventh. Some teachers included Thomas Green, Howard Roper, Mrs. Glaves Price, Glenn Sessions. Rena Gothard (Mrs. Velpoe) Mims was born on November 20, 1902, and was an early student at the Mars Hill School. She was the daughter of a family of nine whose parents were Walter and Josephine Watson Gothard. Miss Rena finished the seventh grade in 1922. She says, "My Papa persuaded the teacher to teach me a little into the eighth grade, but after I went a little while, I married and that was the end of my schooling." She remembers teachers Stanley McNeal and Glenn Sessions. Miss Rena married Velpoe Mims and the couple moved about the county since he was a machinist. They went to New England and specifically to New Hampshire and Vermont. Twice they went to the Panama Canal where Velpoe Mims worked on the locks. He died in 1948 the second time they were in the Canal Zone. After her husband's death, Miss Rena returned to the States and worked for Sears, Roebuck & Company until her retirement. Today she lives in a double-wide trailer on part of the original 40 acres of land her mother's father, Tom Watson, gave to each of his eight children (one child died very young).

Although she is as keen as can be, Rena recalls that her sister, who lived to be almost 99, "never forgot a thing." She died in 1990. All of the family of Rena Gothard Mims are gone now except for a sister, Maggie Ervin who lives in Anniston. She is 96. Mrs. Ervin, who is in a nursing home, was taken back to her home recently and Miss Rena went to Anniston to spend the day with the family before they took her sister back to the nursing home. Miss Rena's sister, Lizzie Gothard, who never married and lived to be almost 99, pieced quilts "the last 30 years of her life." Today in 1993, Miss Rena is doing what she calls "lap quilting" on some of the many quilt tops pieced by her sister, Lizzie. Miss Rena admits, "I just wish I knew how many quilts Lizzie quilted. How many quilt tops. She did them for everybody." Besides the quilting, Miss Rena also does crocheting of dowlies and "most anything for which I have a pattern."

Miss Rena remembers that the school was later expanded to a two-room and two-teacher school. "In school we had blackboards and we studied history, English, geography, and spelling as well as arithmetic. I was a good speller. One of the Thomas boys was a good speller but when we had spelling bees, I usually could spell him down." She wore dresses to school made "by Mama... and they were a good ways down below my knees but were not down to the ankles."

"We had few clothes. I would wear a dress one day and Mama would wash it out and dry it and I could wear it the next day." The lunches she took consisted usually of a jelly sandwich or syrup and butter biscuit, "and sometimes Mama made corn fritters that were mighty good." The meat they had on the Gothard farm was mainly "from the hogs that Papa killed during the winter." Rena Gothard walked two miles to school. "We had to cross a creek on a foot log and also had to cross a branch, but the branch was so little you could jump over it." School began "about 8 o'clock in the morning and was out about 3 o'clock."

Miss Rena Gothard started to school in 1909. Other than studying their lessons, one of the big happenings of the day was playing baseball. As she recalls, "There was a playground between the old church and the school and there was a small cemetery and the cemetery was fenced in. I was real gangly and could run real fast. Oscar Langston was a good batter but he couldn't run very well. I was an old, long-legged girl and I loved to run fast. So I ran the bases after Oscar hit the ball. If Oscar could hit the ball into the fence around the little cemetery, that meant that I would make a home run!" The two Langston boys, Oscar and Larry, along with Walker and Aaron Scott, came "at lunch to play ball." She continues, "They were young and not married and were working on the farm so they would break for lunch and come to school to play ball. We had a great time playing ball!"

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**NOTICE TO READERS:** *The Chiltonian* needs contributors. If you have a family story you'd like to share with other members of the Chilton County Historical Society, please send it to us! If you've run into a roadblock in your family research, send us your queries and we'll be pleased to publish as many as possible! If you have a favorite newspaper article from the past, make a copy and send it to us!

If you're concerned that you're not a "polished" writer, be of good cheer! If you request it, our amateur editorial staff will take its best shot at editing your material.

The only restrictions we have on submitted items are the following: the subject of any article or query must have some reasonable connection to Chilton County; nobody's good name or character can be tarnished or attacked; and, we must not violate any copyright laws.

So, dig through those old cedar chests and family data files, and send us something for the next issue! The Society appreciates your help!