

Jackson County Historical Society News

VOLUME ELEVEN, NUMBER FOUR

AUGUST 2004



Photograph taken on December 17, 1897, Jefferson, Georgia. Hanging of Grady Reynolds and Bud Brooks for the murder of M. C. Hunt. They were tried and convicted of murder in August, in the first degree, and sentenced by Judge Hutchins to hang, The decree of the court was executed in private, and the murder of M. C. Hunt avenged by the law.

Jackson County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1234, Commerce, Georgia 30529

(706) 335-5946

Newsletter

The Jackson County Historical Society News is published quarterly and mailed before the next meeting. Back issues can be obtained for \$2.50 each plus postage. Past newsletters can be viewed online at: rootsweb.com/~gajackso/

Queries

Send queries to be published before the next deadline, September 15, 2004. Send requests for information to the address below with a stamped, self addressed envelope.

Dues increase for 2004–2005 year

Costs for publishing have caused an increase in dues. The dues year runs from July to July. Checks can be mailed to:

Jackson County Historical Society
P. O. Box 1234, Commerce, GA 30529:

Individual –\$15
Family –\$20
LIFE member –\$100

JCHS Officers 2003-2004

President:	Tina Harris
Vice-President:	Jerry Mealor
Recording Secretary:	Nora Tolbert
Corresponding Secretary:	Boniface McDaniel
Treasurer:	Tommy Benton
Directors:	James Mathis Thad Richey Caroldene McEver

Past Presidents:	Joyce Ethridge Ann A. Jarrett Richard Chambers Jean H. Booth Betty Ann Mathis James Mathis Ralph Freeman Carol Tanner Marie Parks
------------------	---

Newsletter Editors:	Tina Harris Jean Booth
---------------------	---------------------------

Connections

Human, Whitehead, Wade, Burford, Stewart, Martin, Evans, Brown, Carleton: Lanelle Martin Romines, P. O. Box 427, McDonald, TN 37353, (423) 614-7155

Query

Is any one working on HOLLAND line from Jackson County, GA? Edward McHugh, 1837 Abercrombie Rd, Honea Path, SC 29654 (864) 369-1114, ranched@aol.com

Editor's notes

Historical Society member Jerry Brooks, of Norcross, GA, passed away this month. He was known for his genealogy work on many of Jackson County's families. Lyle Sharp of Pueblo, CO, also passed away this month. Joyce Ethridge, founder of the Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm has passed this year.

Obituaries

August 30, 1889, excerpt form the Jackson Herald

Mrs. Catherine Tolbert departed this life July 4, 1889, in the full assurance of a life of joy and peace.

Sister Tolbert was born 1831, married to T. O. Tolbert in 1848, was converted to Christ and joined Baptist church in 1862 at Cabin Creek.

She was the mother of 12 Children—seven boys and five girls—all but one of whom are living to feel and mourn the loss of a dear mother; 35 grandchildren and one great-grand child.

September 13, 1889, excerpt form the Jackson Herald

Mr. Tom Benton died at his home September 1. He was 87 years old, and one of our best citizens.

May 9, 1902, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

Mr. F. W. Dowdy died Sunday morning, after a long illness, and was buried at the home burial ground.

June 16, 1906, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

Amid the closing shadows of November 14, 1905, the pure and gentle spirit of Mrs. Mary Stapler Wills was wafted to an eternal home with God.

Her children, her grandchildren, her neighbors and her friends, who delighted to gather around her in the old home, will hear her loving voice on earth no more.

She was born December 20, 1830, was married to A. J. Wills in 1852. She joined the Baptist church at Cabin Creek about forty-five years ago.

She was an example worthy of imitation, as a wife, mother, and Christian and lived her religion daily...

June 1, 1905, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

Mrs. Julia C. Potts died at the age of 81 years, at her home, in Harrisburg district last Monday, and was buried last Tuesday at Bethany, Rev. H. F. Branham conducting the funeral obsequies. She was the mother of Messrs. W. M. Potts, A. W. Potts, Mrs. Julia Bryant, and Mrs. Tom Murray. She was a Gathright, and a sister of Mrs. Wilkins Haynie, W. M. Gathright and Orrie Morgan. She was a good woman, and lived a consistent Christian life. She was a member of Bethany church. She was kind-hearted, and good to the poor.

August 4, 1910, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

Mrs. L. E. Potts, wife of Mr. A. W. Potts, departed this life May 11th, 1910. She was born April 30th 1851. She joined the Baptist church early in life, at Cabin Creek, under Rev. W. R. Goss' administration, in the year 1868, during which time she lived a consecrated life. she was loved by all who knew her. She was the friend of all. Her kindly ministrations in sickness and distress, answering her neighbors and friends, will long be remembered. She was unselfish. Her motives were pure, and she ever exhibited the grace and virtue of a noble Christian life. For many years she was the strong helpmate of her husband. She leaves an aged husband, six sons and two daughters, to mourn her death, together with a host of friends..

January 5, 1911, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

Mrs. Aleana Desdemona Hood Benton was born January 25, 1837. Was married to Stephen Guptin Benton, December 22, 1853. Joined the Baptist church at Black's Creek during the protracted meeting in August 1870, under the preaching of the late Rev. W. R. Goss. She lived a consistent member during her whole life, always defending the right, and condemning the wrong.

Several years ago she became afflicted with an incurable disease, and for the past, four years she has been an invalid, most of the time confined to her room, and for the past year bed ridden.

In early life, God, in His all-wise providence, saw fit to take her husband from her in June, 1862, and left her

alone in the world with two little children, the elder, Albert M. Benton, who was only 7 years of age, and an infant, Mrs. J. T. Coile.

The struggle was long and hard, it being in the time of the cruel war between the States, but she never faltered, but pressed right on, looking to Him for help who never refuses. Her whole ambition and sole desire was to raise her children to do right. She would spend hours at a time around the humble hearthstone, talking to her only son, pointing out to him the danger of keeping bad company. She would admonish him to beware of strong drink, and beg him never to touch it. She would picture the horrible crimes that were committed in the gambling dens, and beg him never to play cards—not even for “past time.” Her advice to him always was, “when you can't be in good company, come home and stay with your mother.”

May 11, 1913, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

On Tuesday, the 22nd instant, at the home of her son, Sheriff S. C. Potts, in Winder, occurred the death of Mrs. Eveline Potts. For several years, Mrs. Potts had been in declining health, and her passing away was no surprise to her family and friends.

Mrs. Potts was a daughter of Gen. David M. Burns, one of the most prominent citizens of Jackson county in ante-bellum days. The old Burns homestead, now owned by the Shackelford brothers, and known by many as the Uncle Sam Hodge place, still stands by the banks of Parks Creek, near Hoods Mill, on the North Oconee River. It was here she was reared. The late Dr. J. M. Burns and Mr. J. H. Burns were her brothers.

In early life she was married to Mr. J. M. Potts, better known as Mack, who was a leading farmer and politician in his time. He died in 1879. Mr. John M. Wilhite now lives at the Potts homestead. To Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Potts were born two sons, W. C. and S. C. Potts; the former for several years was in business in Atlanta, but a few years ago moved to Texas; the latter is the present sheriff of Jackson county.

Mrs. Potts, from her earliest womanhood, was prominently identified with the Presbyterian congregation at old Harrisburg camp ground, now Thyatira, and was a woman of the deepest piety, given to hospitality, charitable and thoughtful, and a blessing and benediction to her family. She was 85 years old.

Her remains were laid to rest at Thyatira cemetery Wednesday afternoon, the services being conducted by Rev. R. N. Abraham.

November 27, 1913, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

One of Jackson county's oldest citizens, Mr. T. J. Stapler, passed away at his home in Newtown district on Monday, and was buried, Wednesday at the family burial ground at the Murry old homestead.

The funeral obsequies were held at the home and conducted by Rev. H. E. Hardman, after which the body was interred by the Masons.

Squire Stapler, as everybody called him, was nearly 87 years old. For nearly fifty years he served the people of Newtown district as justice of the peace.

He leaves five sons, W. J. of Alabama; T. T., A. H. and C. O. of Jackson county, and Dr. Joe of Greensboro; and two daughters, Mrs. J. F. Coleman and Mrs. S. A. Coleman; both of whose husbands departed this life several years ago. Mrs. Stapler has been dead for several years.

January 1914, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

On Wednesday morning, Mr. W. M. Potts, whose home is between Bethany and Nicholson, on route 5, arose early and went to the lot to feed his stock. Feeling badly, he returned to the house and shortly afterwards fell over and expired.

Mr. Potts, who was familiarly known as "Bud" Potts, was 69 years of age. He fought in the war between the States, and was one of Jackson county's excellent and substantial citizens. His home was one of hospitality and hundreds of friends will mourn his death.

He will be buried today at Bethany.

He leaves a wife, who is a sister of Mr. S. W. Jackson and six children. Messrs. Allen, Glenn, and Luther Potts, Mrs. I. I. Davis of Commerce, Mrs. W. W. Dickson of Jefferson, Mrs. Tom Hood of Athens, and Mrs. J. A. Thurman. One son, Jewett, preceded him to the grave.

November 3, 1921, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

At the home of her son, Mr. Glenn Potts, in Commerce, on Friday night, occurred the death of Mrs. Martha Sue Jackson Potts, one of Jackson county's most prominent and beloved ladies.

It will be remembered that during the latter part of September, Mrs. Potts was severely bitten, on the hand by a mad dog, which she encountered in her back yard. She went immediately to Commerce, and for twenty one days was given the Pasteur treatment to counteract the poison. She was improving splendidly, and returned to her home on Route 5, when her hand and arm began t

swell and pain. She again consulted her physician, but grew worse rapidly, and just 31 days after she was bitten, she succumbed to the horrible disease of hydrophobia.

Mrs. Potts was 75 years of age. She was the widow of the late Mr. W. M. Potts, to whom she was married fifty-one years ago, and who preceded her to the grave seven years. She was a sister of Mr. W. S. Jackson, and of the late Mrs. Ermin Park and Mrs. W. T. Thurmond. She was born and reared in Jackson county, and had been a member of Cabin Creek Baptist Church since she was 14 years of age. Her body was laid to rest on Saturday afternoon in the cemetery at Bethany, Rev. Collins of Commerce conducting the services. The pall bearers were her sons and sons-in-laws; and the large concourse of sorrowing loved ones and friends were an evidence of the esteem in which she was held.

She is survived by four daughters and three sons, Mrs. I. I. Davis and C. G. Potts of Commerce, Mrs. S. T. Hood of Athens, Mrs. J. A. Thurmond, Mrs. W. W. Dickson, A. B. Potts and G. L. Potts of Jefferson.

Cabin Creek Church

Founded in 1796, the same year Jackson county was formed from Franklin county. The church is a 1799 charter member of the Serepta Association and is the only charter member in Jackson county making it the oldest Baptist church in the county. Earliest records were destroyed by fire. Records now in the State Archives date as early as 1829. Thomas Stapler served as clerk for 25 years, from 1836 to 1861, F. W. M. Dowdy served for 25 years from 1864 to 1890 and E. L. Hunt served for over 35 years.

At the 140th anniversary held in 1936, Mrs. F. W. M. Dowdy was present and honored as the oldest living member of the church. She was 95 years old and lived to be 100 years and two months; dying in March 1941. She was survived by her eight children; Frank D., W. Edgar, Mrs. Effie Grimes, Mrs. E. E. Martin, Mamie Daniel, Mrs. Lonnie Massey and Mrs. C. O. Brock.



1895 photograph of the Potts House on Cabin Creek Road ; Left to right: George Luther, Grandpa William Moses “Bud” and Woots Ermine Potts, Verne Davis, Bertha Potts Davis, Hubert Davis, Columbus Glenn and Al Potts. Ed Gathright in the background.

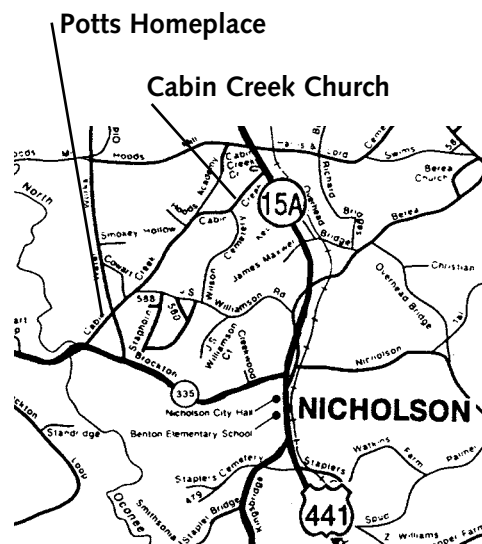
The Jackson County Historical Society will meet at Cabin Creek Church, on August 1, 2004 at 2:30 p.m. Jerry Mealor will present the program on the church's history, followed by a ramble to the Potts homeplace at 2534 Cabin Creek Road. Owner Gaye Stowe will provide a tour of the homeplace.

This is the last issue for the 2003–2004 year. Dues can be paid at the meeting or mailed to:

P. O. Box 1234, Commerce, GA 30529.

Dues have increase this year, due to publishing expenses.

Individual: \$15, Family: \$20, LIFE \$100.





...continued from May issue

March 12, 1897, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

Bud Brooks Caught

Bud Brooks, the co-murderer with Grady Reynolds of Mr. M. C. Hunt, has been caught and is now in Jackson County jail. He was arrested at Oakway, S. C. last Friday by J. W. Mason, a private citizen. Mason will receive about four hundred dollars reward.

Brooks made a clean breast of the awful crime, and says he knows he will have to pay the penalty.

Last Friday a telegram was received here, saying that Bud Brooks had been captured, and there was intense interest manifested and much speculation indulged in. As soon as we heard of the capture we remembered the declaration of Colonel C. J. Hunt, who said on leaving Jefferson little more than one week ago. "Boys, help us get Brooks. We must have him if he stays on the face of the earth." and when he spoke any one could tell that he was in dead earnest.

After Grady Reynolds had been landed safely in jail, Colonel C. H. Hunt remained in Georgia in search of Bud Brooks, while Dr. W. T. Hunt returned to S. C.

Before leaving here Dr. Hunt learned that Brooks's paramour lived in Oakway, S. C.; and together with a cousin of his, Dr. Hunt went there very soon after his return to the "Palmetto State." He succeeded in getting some information about Brooks and secured a picture of the hunted man, the same which we present on this page.

Friday was a dark, rainy day, and Brooks stepped into the house of his paramour to warm and get something to eat, and just as he seated himself by the fire, his ears heard the command given by Mason, "Hold up your hands and surrender." Brooks made no resistance at all.

Dr. W. T. Hunt was wired at once and he responded with his presence. He, together with the deputy sheriff of Oconee county, S. C., Mr. Moss, left at once with the prisoner. Arriving at Harmony Grove Saturday on the down train, they were met by Colonel C. J. Hunt, Marshal Jackson and many others. Bob Little immediately had a span of horses hitched to a vehicle and the prisoner was soon on his way to Jefferson.

Out near Apple Valley they were told that five hundred men were in Jefferson waiting for the murderer, whom they intended to lynch. This information excited Brooks to an intense degree, and he began praying, and prayed all the way to Jefferson. Seeing the streets lined with men after arriving here the prisoner became pale as death, almost, and when he reached the jail did not have strength enough to support himself. He was soon ushered into a prison cell upstairs just above Grady Reynolds, and the crowd was kept back from the jail. Inside the prison house he felt more secure from any trail by Judge Lynch. The people, however, expressed no desire to lynch the murderers, but want the law to take its course.

Mr. T. A. McElhannon has been with the prisoner most of the time for three days this week, and in that time completely won the confidence of the great criminal. To Mr. McElhannon Reynolds confessed that Brooks was not present when he (Reynolds) killed M. C. Hunt. He said that he and Hunt had been in some dismal places in hunting that afternoon, and that Hunt became a little suspicious. Hunt, he says, had a gun and three pistols, and he (Reynolds) had no weapon at all, but when a suitable place was reached he knocked Mr. Hunt in the head with a rock. Hunt fell and endeavored to draw a pistol, but Reynolds quickly secured the gun from Hunt

andknocked him in the head twice. He then went for Brooks. The other part of the confession coincides with the statement of Brooks.

Reynolds says he got all the gold and buried it near the scene of the awful tragedy, of which he was the chief actor. To Mr. McElhannon he confessed knowing where the gold was buried; so Wednesday Sheriff Braselton, Deputy Patrick and Mr. McElhannon carried Reynolds to the spot where he said the gold was buried. Reynolds looked up at the big tree, went to its roots, lifted a rock, and pulled up a little sack containing \$355 in gold.

Marshal Scott Jackson has returned from Five Forks, where he recovered two of the dead man's gold watches which Bud Brooks had hidden in a stump, and from the relatives of Brooks he got \$15 in money.

So about all the money—\$1,100, and the other property, watches, pistols, etc., has been received.

The dead man's brothers have been notified that the money and watches have been found, and will probably be here soon.



September 24, 1897, excerpt from the Jackson Herald

The Case of Brooks Appealed

People were greatly disappointed when they received the intelligence that Reynolds and Brooks would not be hanged on the day set apart by the court.

Great crowds began to pour into town early, notwithstanding it was known that the execution would be done in private. They came to see the men as they were carried from the jail to the gallows.

Sheriff Braselton received orders Thursday night about 12 o'clock that Colonel Brown had appealed the case of Brooks to the Supreme Court. Then about 9 o'clock Thursday morning he received a respite for Reynolds from the Governor for just four weeks from today.

When he received these notices the sheriff had everything in readiness for the execution. The gallows had been built over near Randolph's gin and enclosed with a plank fence sixteen feet high. The ropes had been adjusted and tested and everything at the gallows was in perfect readiness for the hanging.

New suits of clothes had been purchased for the prisoners, and Brooks had his whiskers shaved off by the expert Yankee barber of this place.

Reynolds did not have his whiskers taken off because his mother requested him to let them remain.

Both spent the day Thursday in devotions, such as scripture reading, singing songs, and earnest appeals to God to forgive them of their transgressions.

Both expressed themselves as being ready to meet God.

The mother and sister of Reynolds spent two days here this week. They were in jail with him most of the time singing and praying. The mother and sister wept and wailed and shouted, and Grady would tell them not to bother about him, as he was ready to go. One time the mother swooned, fell on the floor as if dead. The sister wrung her hands together, and said, "Oh, I just could not stand it if I thought I would not meet Grady in Heaven."

A large number of people congregated on the outside Tuesday, while the mother and sister were on the inside. Grady asked them to sing, "Oh Bear Me Away On Your Snowy Wings," and those on the outside united with those on the inside, and a grand chorus went up to God. There were tears and shouts and song all mingled together. Bud Brooks, in an adjoining cell, would mourn, and cry, and pray, and try to sing a little.

Reynolds said: "...I was a quiet, good citizen till my wife and I had differences, then I began to drink, and led a

bad life, kept wandering off till I got in this. I advise everyone when they get into trouble not try to drown their troubles in whiskey, but carry them to the Lord in prayer. I advise everyone to live right. It is the sad regret of my life that I did not take this advice; if I had I would not have been where I am today.”

Brooks said he ought to have a new trial. “I was a good citizen till I commenced to make and sell whiskey, then I went from bad to worse till I came to this. I hope that all connected with the whiskey business in any way, will quit it and take up something there is some good in, for in whiskey there is nothing but ruin. I don’t believe I would have been under the sentence I am if the truth had been sworn, and I believe I ought to have had a new trial on account of this. I did not do the killing, though I helped to plan it, and got part of the money.”

Grady Reynolds was born August 6, 1862 in Glade district, Hall Co. He never went to school more than 5 or 6 months. Born and raised where Z. Dunnegan now lives.

His father was Balis Reynolds, mother Mary Reynolds, nee Brooks. Married Mattie Gober, daughter of Tom Gober, and three children were born to them: Janie, 11

years, Everett, 9 years, Ernest, 6 years old. They parted in July, 1894. Wife now lives in Jackson Co, near Center. She had never been to see him since the tragedy until last Thursday. All three of the children been to see him. Mother, one sister, three brothers been to see him. He has one brother in New York, who is sick and one sister in Banks county, who is sick.

Addison D. Brooks was born October 18, 1863, and raised in Grove Creek district, Oglethorpe county. Never went to school more than 3 or 4 months. Mr. Joe Stephens, Lexington, Ga, now owns the farm on which he was born. His father’s name, was Addison Brooks, mother’s name, Lucinda Brooks, nee Bray. Married to Lizzie Smith of Madison county, daughter of Columbus Smith. Had no children. Parted in July 1892. Wife has not been to see him. Mother and two sisters and one brother, and his two cousins have been to see him.

Arrangements had been made by the relatives of Reynolds to have his body sent to Gainesville, and would have been put to rest in the family graveyard in Hall county. Relatives of Brooks had arranged for his body to be sent to Five Forks, and it would have been put away at the Kidd burial ground, two miles from Five Forks.

Jackson County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1234 Commerce, Georgia 30529