

# *Jackson County Historical Society News*

VOLUME NINETEEN, NUMBER ONE

NOVEMBER 2011



*Oconee Baptist Church, the first church established in Jackson County in 1788*

The Jackson County Historical Society will meet in the fellowship hall at Oconee Baptist Church, 4554 Highway 82N, Commerce, GA 30529 on Sunday, November 13, 2:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served and Shirley Wilson will present a program on the history of the church.

*directions: from Jefferson follow GA-15 / Sycamore St towards Commerce, bear left onto GA-82 N, travel (4.5 miles). The last intersection is Barber Rd. The church will be on the right.*

*Jackson County Historical Society*

*P.O. Box 1234, Commerce, Georgia 30529*

*(706) 207-6889*

## ATTENTION RESEARCHERS!

The Historical Society's collection of books, files and research materials are housed in the Heritage Room of the Commerce Public Library. The Commerce Library will begin an expansion in March 2012 and many research materials will be packed away. This could be for a period of 8 months to a year. A smaller collection of books and research material will be kept available. The library will continue to be open and have internet access to genealogy web sites. If you need to view the complete collection, try to do your research before February 2012. As the date draws near, we can provide additional information. For information call Tina: 706-207-6889

### JCHS Officers 2011-2012

President: Shirley Wilson  
Vice-President: Marie Parks  
Recording Secretary: Boniface McDaniel  
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Mary Lynn Bell

Newsletter Editor: Tina Harris

Back newsletter issues can be obtained for \$3.00 each plus postage.

Dues can be mailed to:

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

Individual -\$15, Family -\$25, LIFE members -\$100

## Next Meeting schedule

February 19 - 2:30 p.m. Thomas Colquitt Hardman House tour in Commerce. Ricky Fitzpatrick will explain how he transferred his grandfather, Bill Gillespie's cassette recordings on the "History of Commerce" to CD.

### Oconee Baptist Church History

*Prepared in 1986 for the 202 anniversary of the church.*

In June, 1784, Jordan Clark, Jacob Bankston and John Harris (a nephew of Nancy Hart), three Baptist men, pitched their tents on the banks of Etoho (North Oconee River) at a place called Tumbling Shoals (Yamacutah) in Jackson County.

In 1787, the settlement had grown to 40 people. In 1788, the people felt a need for a place to worship and they erected a log house at what is now known as Hurricane Shoals.

In 1801, they moved the church to Flat Shoals, two miles upriver from Hurricane Shoals. The church stayed until 1852 when it was moved to its present location.

*excerpt from Historical Notes on Jackson County by Frary Elrod*

There seems to be no doubt that the first church organized in the county was of the Baptist denomination. The first settlers had been in the wilderness of what is now Jackson County for three years when they were joined by forty more pioneers. Feeling a need for spiritual guidance and having a medical missionary, Dr. Henry Therrauld, with them, plans were made to organize a church. A church building of logs was erected in 1788 at what is now Hurricane Shoals. This first church was called Etoho—the Indian name for the river which flowed nearby. Dr. Therrauld became the first minister in Jackson County as well as the first physician and school teacher. He was killed in an Indian battle, about two miles upriver from Hurricane Shoals in 1801.

The location of this first church has been changed twice since it was organized. Shortly after the death of Dr. Therrauld, the church was moved about two miles down stream to Flat Shoals. This was done to get farther away from the Indian Camp. In 1852 the church was moved again to where the church now stands on Jefferson Maysville road in the Dry Pond community.

*excerpt from Forest News - 1875*

### **Letter from Harrisburg District**

Captain A. T. Bennett, a farmer second to none...The saw mill of Brooks and Co...On Little Curry's Creek the large merchant Mills of Mr. Micager Williamson. Merchant mills of the Drs. Long and J. G. McLester and connect with the former a saw mill and gin, and the latter a saw mill and wool factory.

Close by is the mineral spring of Mr. F. H. Legg.

The Hurricane Shoals Mill connected with a first class circular saw and cotton gin. Just below this, Matthews Mills and a little farther east Jackson Mills situated on Turkey Creek.

There are five shoals – Hurricane, Tumbling, Thornton, Flat Hay, and McLesters, all situated on the North Oconee and offering the finest water power.

A tannery of the Randolphs, now Mr. F. S. Smith's, also a circular saw and gin. Next is the shoe shop of E. C. Nunn.

There are three churches in the district – Oconee Baptist with Rev. A. J. Kelly, Union Grove Methodist with the Rev. Mr. Tarpley, and Thyatira Presbyterian with the "Man of God" Rev. Groves H. Cartledge.

A school on Park's Creek at Merk Academy, the efficient and accomplished teacher, J. H. McCarty, and 45 to 50 pupil.

### **Melancholy and Fatal Accident**

**Mr. Thomas J. Morrison** crushed by the 24 foot mill wheel at the tannery of Messrs. Randolph. He was born in the county, in his 72nd year, exemplary member of the Baptist church, buried in the family burying ground near McLester's Factory 2 1/2 miles from Jefferson. Funeral will be preached on first Sunday in August at Oconee by Rev. A. J. Kelley. Prayers at burial by Mr. Jacob Elrod.

*Excerpt from the Forest News, December 4, 1875*

Death of **Uncle Billy Wilson** at his residence 1 1/2 miles northeast of Hurricane Shoals. quite old.

*Excerpt from the Forest News, January 26, 1877*

The saw mill of Mr. [Shelor] at Hurricane Shoals burned - supposed to be the work of an incendiary.

*excerpt from Forest News, November 26, 1878*

Married at the residence of the bride's mother by Rev. A. J. Kelly; **Mr. A. T. Nunn** and **Miss Fannie Evans**.

*excerpt from Forest News, December 12, 1879*

**Mr. W. S. McCarty** has accepted the position of Principal of the Homer Academy for the coming year

*excerpt from Forest News, August 13, 1880*

The dam at Hurricane Shoals has been in use over 70 years.

*excerpt from Forest News, July 23, 1880*

Tribute of respect for **Martha C. Barnett**, daughter of P. F. and Elizabeth Nunn, died 26 June 1880, leaving a husband and 4 small children. Born in Madison County in 1840 and was married to J. G. Barnett in 1866. Member of the Baptist Church for 20 years.

*excerpt from Forest News, August 13, 1880*

Marriage by Rev. E. S. V. Briant, 8th of August, at residence of F. H. Henry; **Mr. G. W. Erwin** and **Miss M. F. Garrison**, all of Jackson County.

*excerpt from Forest News, October 29, 1880*

Married on the 21st instance by Rev. A. J. Kelly, at the residence of Rev. J. F. Catlett, **Mr. C. A. O. Brock** and **Miss M. F. Catlett**.

Married 22 October by W. P. Boggs; **Mr. William H. Wilhite** and **Miss Mattie Espy**.

*excerpt from Forest News, November 5, 1880*

### **Fair Warning**

This is to certify that Oconee Baptist Church, of Jackson County, Georgia have been badly imposed upon by the so-called Minority and their friends, by trying to violently possess the church house. All persons are hereby notified not to go back into said church house any more without leave of the proper authority of said church. Any and all persons violating this publication will be punished to the fullest extremity of the law. D. C. Roberts

*Church Prosecuting Committee*

*excerpt from Forest News, November 19, 1880*

Death of **Mrs. Araminta Berry**, sister of J. G. McLester, which occurred at the McLester mansion November 12 near the Factory in this county. The deceased was one of the most truly pious ladies the writer has ever had the good fortune to know. She was about 78, a consecrated member of the Baptist church. Her remains were buried in the old family cemetery beyond the Oconee River.

*excerpt from the Forest News, December 17, 1880*

**Mrs. Julia Griffeth** died at the residence of Mr. David Gilland, near Hurricane Shoals, on the 14th instant, and was buried at Oconee Church on the following day.

*excerpt from the Forest News, July 1, 1881*

The first building occupied by the Oconee Baptist Church is now on Mr. Mal Dunson's place in this county and is used as a barn.

*excerpt from the Jackson Herald, December 16, 1892*

### **A Sad Accident**

One of the saddest things that ever occurred in this county happened last Friday night, near Oconee church, at the residence of **Mr. J. G. Dunnahoo**. That misfortune was the killing instantly of Mr. J. G. Dunnahoo.

Jack Dunnahoo and Adolphus Martin were brothers-in-law and the best of friends. For years they have been associates together in business, and the fortunes of one were the fortunes of the other, and vice versa. Their relations have always been of the most intimate kind. So closely were they related that when you would hear ones name called, by a linking of thoughts, it would suggest the other.

Last Friday evening Mr. Martin and his son were passing by Mr. Dunnahoo's and it was getting late, and Mr. Dunnahoo insisted that they should stay all night with him. Finally they consented, and Mr. Martin and son unhitched their mule and, together with Mr. Dunnahoo, started in the house. Just as they were preparing to go in Mr. Martin's boy said: "Pa, we had better get those tricks out of the buggy." Mr. Dunnahoo then asked what they had, and, on being told it was a pistol and some other little things, said they had better be carried in. So Mr. Martin took the pistol out of the buggy and dropped it in his inside coat pocket, and all went in the house together.

er. They all ate supper together and then chatted awhile around the happy fireside. Mr. Dunnahoo's family and Mr. Martin and son all spent the evening together pleasantly. Presently all retired but Messrs. Martin and Dunnahoo. Then Mr. Dunnahoo spoke and said, "Dolphus, if we don't mind we will sit up too late." Mr. Martin then said he always smoked before retiring. He then took out his pipe and leaned over to put a coal of fire on it. Just as he did so the pistol dropped out of his pocket, struck on the hammer and fired. Mr. Martin then said, "Jack, that was a mighty dangerous thing, wasn't it?" Mr. Dunnahoo did not answer. Mr. Martin looked and saw his eyes walled and blood trickling down his breast. This completely dumfounded Mr. Martin. He did not know what to say. By this time the family was up and had rushed around the fire place. They looked and found that the ball had penetrated Mr. Dunnahoo's breast just above the heart and produced instant death. He never moved nor spoke a word after he was shot, but sat in the chair for more than an hour in precisely the attitude he was in when the ball struck him. The alarm was given and the neighbors came in.

Coroner Worsham was sent for and held an inquest over the dead man's body, and the jury rendered the verdict that he came to his death by an accidental shot. On Sunday, he was buried at Oconee cemetery, where was gathered one of the largest crowds that ever attended any burial at that place.

Jack Dunnahoo leaves a wife and several little children to mourn his loss. He had as big a heart as any man in Jackson County. That was one trouble with him—he was too good hearted. He was one of the most accommodating and obliging neighbors that ever lived. The whole community shed tears of sorrow at the loss of such a man.

*excerpt from the Jackson Herald, November 3, 1893*

**Mr. Sam Bailey**, son of Mr. S.E. Bailey, died in a hospital in Birmingham, Ala., last week and was brought home and buried at Oconee burial ground last Sunday. Sam Bailey was a boy of undaunted courage. While nothing but a mere boy he left home to seek his fortune among strangers of another part of the country. He worked for awhile at Scale Works in this State, subsequently going to Harrimann, Tenn., where he was engaged by the rolling mills. He went from thence to Birmingham, where he took sick and died. On hearing of his sickness,

Mr. S. E. Bailey left at once for Birmingham, but before he reached there the angel of death had called his son away from earth. Sam Bailey had as many friends as any young man in Jackson county.

*excerpt from the Jackson Herald, January 31, 1907*

**Mr. W. G. B. Waddell** died in Gainesville last Monday, and was buried at Oconee church Wednesday. He was never a healthy man, but recently he had been in exceedingly ill health. He had been confined to his bed a portion of the time for several months. For many years he was a resident of Jackson county. He was married in this county. All his children, 18 in number, were born in this county. He united with the Baptist church at Academy, and remained a consistent member until the day of his death. He had his faults, but he also had his redeeming traits. He was loyal to his friends, and would do anything in his power to render them a service.

**Mrs. Susie Waddell Barrett**, wife of G. C. Barrett, died at her home near here Wednesday morning. She had been very ill for about three weeks and death was expected for several days. She was the youngest daughter of Mr. F. Waddell. Her burial occurred at Oconee, Rev. B. H. Trammell conducting the services.

*excerpt from the Jackson Herald, April 30, 1908*

**Mr. Henry H. Brock** died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. E. D. Whelchel, of Redstone, Wednesday last week. He had been feeble for more than two years, but death was unexpected. He was eating his dinner, when he complained of a peculiar feeling. His wife assisted him to lie down, and just as he pillowed his head, he died as one who fell asleep.

He was buried in Oconee church cemetery Thursday. His six grandsons, Reubin, Fred, Luther, Ernest and Hubert Brock, and Kelly Elrod, were the pall bearers. His funeral was preached by Rev. J. J. Kimsey. Mr. Brock leaves six children to mourn his death. They are Mrs. J. H. Strickland, Messrs. A. H. Neal, W. S. and E. S. Brock, and Mrs. E. D. Whelchel.

He was 86 years old and was one of Jackson county's oldest and best citizens.

He was a member of Oconee church, and had been for a period of fifty years prior to his death. He was a consecrated Christian, and a man in whom the people had implicit faith.

*excerpt from the Jackson Herald, March 21, 1912*

On March 5th, **Mrs. T. C. Barber** breathed her last, after an illness of four months. She had been in bad health for ten years, but not confined to her room. She was born April 21, 1878 and was married to Mr. T. C. Barber July 29, 1900. She was consecrated and united with the Baptist church at the age of fifteen. She was a devoted wife and mother and a kind neighbor. There never was a better woman to the sick than Mrs. Barber. She was ever ready to sacrifice her own pleasure for her neighbors and friends. She had no fear of what we call death. With her it was only a transition going out of this to a happier, fuller life.

Her body was laid to rest in the cemetery at Oconee, where she had long been a member. The funeral services were conducted by Rev. L. A. Henderson. She leaves a husband, two little girls, mother, two sisters, one brother and a host of relatives and friends to mourn her death. To the family, we would say, heed her wise counsel and it will only be a little while till you will meet her on the other shore, where there will be no more separation. May God deal gently with the two little girls and lead them to the beautiful beyond where many loved ones have gone.

*excerpt from the Jackson Herald, June 12, 1919*

Death claimed last Sunday one of Jefferson's oldest and best citizens, **Mr. Frank Waddell**. For several months he has been quite feeble, and his summons from time to eternity last Sunday was not unexpected. He was 84 years old.

Mr. Waddell was born in South Carolina, in 1835; moved to Habersham county in 1866, where he resided until 1873, when he moved to Jackson county, where he has lived until the time of his death.

Three times he was married. Twelve children blessed his marriages, five of whom are dead. The children who survive him are: Mrs. Mima Elrod, Mrs. Neal Smith, and Mr. John W. Waddell, of Wilcox county; Messrs. James F., George E., and R. L. Waddell, of Jackson county; and Mr. J. P. Waddell, of Pulaski county.

His body was interred Monday at 11 o'clock at Oconee cemetery, Rev. W. M. Coile of Winterville conducting the obsequies.

In that great conflict between the States, Mr. Waddell was for three years a gallant soldier. He was buried in his uniform of gray, and several Confederate veterans

honored him by accompanying his remains to their last resting place. He was a consistent member of the baptist church, and had been since young manhood. Each day of his life he so lived that if the summons came to him that day to meet the Great Judge, he was ready for the summons. Time after time he stated to friends that he had no animosity against any one, but loved everyone and that he never feared to meet his Lord.

Mr. Waddell was without education, yet he was a great believer in education, and not only educated his own sons and daughters, but some of his grand children, also. He started in life after the great War of the Sixties without money or property. He was honest, truthful and trustworthy. He was a firm believer in frankness and clean dealings.

Mr. Waddell was a good citizen, and we regretted to see him sick and suffering, but we feel sure that he has entered into that house not made with hands.



Frank Waddell, died June 9, 1919. Tombstone in Oconee Baptist Church cemetery

*excerpt from Oconee Baptist Church minutes*

14th of February 1829–The Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and setting in conference 1st opened for the reception of members and received by experience Rodey McLester–then enquired into the state of the church and found all in here–on Sunday the 15th here by experience Eliza Ann Morrison and Mariah a servant of Joseph McLester. Also read by letter Brother Chester a colored man a servant of Samuel Y. Patton.

18th of July 1829–The Baptist Church of Christ of Oconee met and sitting in conference 1st enquire for grievances that could be brought forward in Gospel order when Brother Stephen Hale laid in charge against himself in that he saw two men fighting one of them being a Brother and after desiring others to part them and they failing to do so being apprehensive that the Brother was biting his opponents ear. Brother Hale struck at the Brother for the purpose of loosing him from his hold but he acknowledged his wrong and was retained in fellowship. Then took up the case of Brother James Hardin he being present owned the charges to be true and confessing his wrongs and manifested a degree of repentance and admonish being given and the church agreed to bear with him.

17th of October 1829–The Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and setting the conference. Then enquired for grievances when Brother Charles Martin of the Beaverdam church laid in against Brother John B. Leak the following charges first that Brother Leak reported that himself and Brother Martin had quarreled–second that he reported that Brother Martin tolled corn with a beegum–third that Brother Martin was a liar going about cheating and frauding his neighbors–after diligently attending to the first the aggrieved Brother failed to substantiate his charge–then took the second and after attending to it by hearing the testimony introduced by the aggrieved Brother he failed to substantiate the charges –then took up the third accusation and there being no evidence introduced the accusation was not authenticated. Brother Haggard produced the letter and it was read and approved.

18th December 1829–The Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and sitting in conference first enquire for references then inquired for grievances and found the church in peace. Brother Haggard laid in a report con-

cerning sister Elizabeth Shipps now Elizabeth Hampton in that she had removed from us and joined the Methodist Society—therefore we appoint sister Elizabeth Langston and Milly Hay to visit her and invite her to attend our next conference and show cause if any she has why she has removed from us. Then open a door for the reception of members and by letter sister Mary Morrison then received by experience George L. Bond. Brother Haggard laid in a report against our black Brother David it being reported that he has had illicit intercourse with a black Female—we therefor appointed Brethren James Langston and F. Haggard to invite him to attend our next conference and answer to this report.

16th of January 1830—The Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and sitting in conference first enquire for references then being two—we take up the first in order of Elizabeth Shipps now Elizabeth Hampton she not being present the church called on the sisters to know if they complied with the directive of the church—they reported that they had and after some the question was put by the moderator whether the church will unfellowship the sister for such conduct when the church say unanimously we have no fellowship for such —she is therefore excluded from the fellowship of the church—then took up the case of the black Brother David he being present. The Brethren appointed to visit him being called on by the church. They state the compliance with the directive of the church then called on the black Brother to answer to these reports the Brother made considerable acknowledgements. But the church getting in possession of further testimony agree to lay over the case until our next conference—then enquires for grievances and found the church in peace. Brother James Langston laid in a report against Brother Jacob Nix in that he has established an account against Brother Tolbert Key—Brother Key drinking the sauce. The church therefore appointed Brethren Langston and Haggard to invite him to attend our next conference and answer to those reports. Brother Stephen Dale applies for a letter of dismission which is granted.

20th of February 1830 —the Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and sitting in conference—first called for references then bring two—took the first in order of our black Brother David he being present, after the case being introduced the question was put to the church by the moderator and the church agrees to bear with him. —Then told the case of Brother Jacob Nix he being pres-

ent gave satisfaction to the church and to the aggrieved Brother then called for grievance and found the church in peace Brother Haggard informed the church that Brother James Harden confessed to him that he had been very drunk and not being present the church appointed A. Smith and Haggard to visit him and invite him to attend our next conference and answer to those reports—then opened a door the reception for members and received by experience Thomas Bennett.—Brother George L. Bond applied for a letter of dismiss which is granted.

20th of March 1830—The Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and sitting in conference first took up the case of Brother James Harden referred from our last meeting the Brethren appointed to visit him being called on they reported that they went to see him and he said he wishes to be excluded he failed to attend the moderator therefore took the vain of the church and they unanimously declare an unfellowship to him for not hearing the church—then enquires for grievance and found the church in peace there opened a door for the reception of members and none came forward.

17th of April 1830—The Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and sitting in conference first enquired for references and found none then enquired for grievances and found the church in peace then opened a door for the reception of members and none came forward. A question was asked by Brother George Haynie (vic) What was this House built for? Was it for the worship of God only, or was it for that and other purposes and if for the worship of God only, was it for the Baptist only or was it for the Baptist and other denominations? It was seconded by Brethren Thomas and Haynie that the church take up the question and move it. The question was put by the moderator (vic) will the church take up the question and answer it and a majority of the church say no.

25th of September 1830 the Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and setting in conference first enquired for references and there was none then enquired for grievances when brother A. Smith laid in a charge against our black Brother David in that he had seen him in a fighting spree therefore the church appointed Brethren J. Kennedy and A. Smith to visit him and invite him to attend our next conference and answer to the above charge then opened a door for the reception of members and none came forward

# Jackson County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1234 Commerce, Georgia 30529



*continued from Oconee Church minutes*

November 26th 1831 The Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and setting in conference first enquired for references and there being none then enquired for grievances and Brother James Langston laid in a report that Sister Mariah is in a family way and the church appointed Sister Borders and Sister McLester to invite her to attend our next conference and answer to the report then opened the door for reception of members and received by conference Elizabeth Bough and Thomas [Bathler] and Sareinna Borders and Eliza Borders.

24th of December 1831 the Baptist Church of Christ at Oconee met and setting in conference first enquired for references and there was one and the church took up the case of our black Sister Mariah and the Sisters appointed to visit her being called on and they stated that the report is true and she was excluded from our fellowship then enquired for grievances and found all in peace then opened the door for the reception of members and none came forward then the church renewed with Brother Thornton for another year.