

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE

The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.

December, 2023

Volume 11, Issue 4

Memories of Holidays Past

Publisher's Note: In October of 2023, it was announced that the December 2023 edition of the GCGSI newsletter would provide an opportunity for members to submit stories, photographs, and even links to video-recordings to share in a feature titled "Memories of Holidays Past." Subsequent emails were sent requesting these precious memories. Thank you so much to Rebecca Amerson; Erin Brandy; Rebecca Burrell; Brittani M via Laurel Brenda Cochran; Gladys Dotson Spivey; and Janice Dover Watson for allowing us to publish these stories. Our hope is that everyone continues to make precious memories during all your future holidays.

Random Act of Kindness

*Brittani M.
Submitted by Laurel Brenda Cochran*

I was about 10 and my family was really struggling financially.

It was a few days before Christmas and a stranger rang the doorbell and handed my dad a wrapped box.

We all sat at the table and my parents opened it to find an envelope full of cash, as well as gift cards for myself and my three siblings.

My parents asked all around to try to find out who did it, but to this day we don't know.

It's touching to know people do things like this, not for praise but out of the goodness of their hearts.



See Memories of Holidays Past, page 2.



Memories of Holidays Past
-continued-

I'll Be Home for Christmas

Rebecca Amerson



My grandfather Lawrence Patrick, pictured here in the center, was in the Ardennes Forest in Belgium with the Golden Lions of the 106th Army Infantry Division, Christmas 1944, in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II.

The battle started early in the morning of December 16. On December 29th, the Associated Press released a statement that the 106th had been wiped out. My mother and grandmother heard that announced on the radio and began to wait. It would be much later in January before they would receive a letter from my grandfather in Belgium - best Christmas present ever! Thankfully he made it home when few did and is pictured with my grandmother on the mantle of my childhood home.

Heroic Story of 106th
Infantry Released

WITH THE 106TH DIVISION IN BELGIUM, Jan. 21 — (AP) —It was a "quiet sector" they handed the 106th infantry division, fresh to the front and rarin' to go, on Dec. 11.

The quiet ended in a shattering eruption of fire and steel five days later; in another two days two

regiments and supporting artillery and armor of the Golden Lion division were wiped out.

In those two days the men of the two regiments were engulfed by the overwhelming weight of Field Marshal Von Rundstedt's breakthrough spearhead. They went down fighting.

Only a handful came back from the 422nd regiment and the 423rd. This little group—less than 300 — pitched in and helped the remain-

ing regiment, the 424th, to make gallant delaying stands before and behind St. Vith.

Up to now, censorship has forbidden transmission of these details.

(Secretary Stimson announced Thursday that the 106th suffered 8,663 casualties in the German offensive, including 416 killed and 1,246 wounded. He said most of the division's 7,001 missing men are presumed to be prisoners).

Altoona Tribune (Altoona, Pennsylvania)
23 Jan 1945 newspapers.com

Christmas 1955, Savannah, GA

Rebecca Holt Amerson, age 3

Photo on mantel: My maternal grandparents, Adelyne Crowe and Lawrence Patrick





Memories of Holidays Past
-continued-

Meowy Christmas

Erin Brandy

I remember one unusual Christmas when I was 8 years old. My family had moved from south Florida to Alabama sometime before the start of the school year. I don't know if we chose not to bring any Christmas tree ornaments with us or just couldn't afford to buy them. Regardless, we wound up in our new location with nothing to put on our Christmas tree that year.

My mom was very creative AND a lover of cats. You may wonder what the connection is, so wonder no further. Armed with lots of potentially empty cat food cans, a can opener, tin snips, string, glue, wrapping paper, and other odds and ends, my mom, my sister, and I created ornaments out of the tops and bottoms of the cat food cans.

Some lids had the outside edges snipped and curved to make sunbursts. Some lids were cut into strips and spiraled to make icicles. Others were decorated with wrapping paper. We used an awl and hammer to punch a hole in each piece through which to run a length of string to hang the ornament on the tree. Perhaps the most unique, and just a tad creepy, was the one that had a really old teddy bear's eye glued to it.

My sister still has some of the ornaments, even the one with the teddy bear eye! Is it any wonder that I can still remember this very unique Christmas 56 years later?





Memories of Holidays Past
-continued-

We Are Family

Rebecca Burrell

My most precious holiday memories are when all of my family is together.



Photos (clockwise from top left:) Tim and Greg Burrell at Christmas; My children, grandchildren, and me; Hales cousins at Pawpaw's and Granny's house: Tim, Derek, Karla, Greg, Sonya, and Laura; Christmas at the Hales' house in the late '90's.



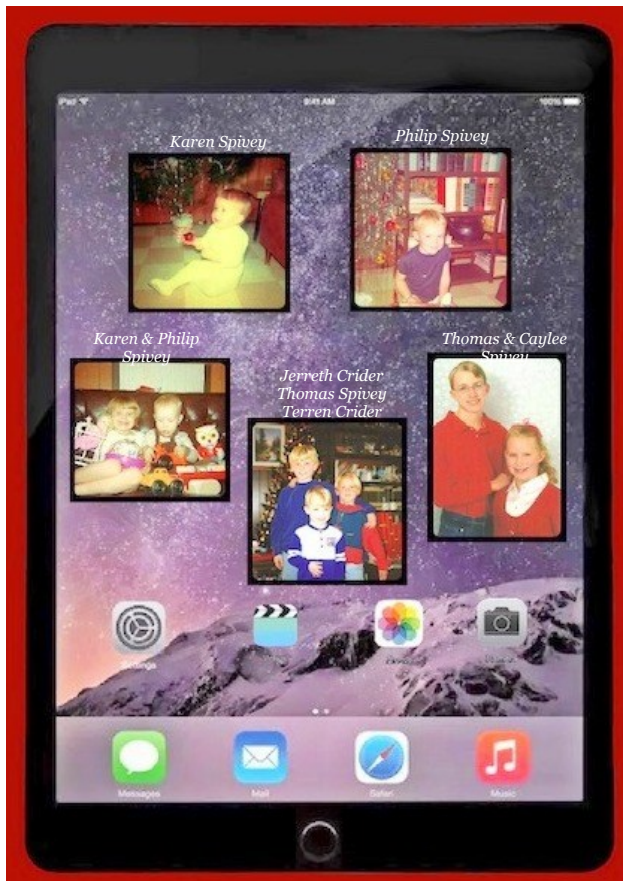


Memories of Holidays Past

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Christmas: From Rag Doll to iPad

Gladys Dotson Spivey



*The Children and Grands
Photo Collage: Barbara J. Dover*

When I was a child growing up, my Christmas gifts were a rag doll Mom made and an orange and a stick of peppermint candy in my stocking. I don't remember us having a Christmas tree at home, but Pa Miller always put up a tree for us at his house. I remember one year he had even cut a holly tree and decorated it.

As I grew older, one Christmas Dad and Mom gave me a little yellow tea set and a doll with a porcelain face. Over the years there were other dolls and clothes.

When I got old enough to go to work, I would save my money throughout the year and I would buy myself what I wanted for Christmas along with gifts for the family.

My Christmas traditions changed a lot when my children were born. We always put up the Christmas tree two weeks before Christmas and had other decorations around the house. We always tried to give them the toys they wanted for Christmas.

Christmas really changed for me when the grands came along. The tree would go up two weeks before Christmas with lights strung around the house.

Now that the children and grands are married and have families of their own, my Christmas has changed again. No big Christmas tree or lights, just a little Charlie Brown tree; and our Christmas dinner is spaghetti and salad with several desserts.

Now all the gifts are hi-tech gadgets. For my 85th Christmas, my family gave me an iPad.

Even though the gifts and types of celebrations have changed throughout the years, what has remained are the loving memories of family.



Memories of Holidays Past
-continued-

Dover Family Christmas Memories

Story by Janice Dover Watson
Photos from Dover Family Collections

My first family consisted of H.G., (Hank) and Wanda Dover, our parents, and four “stairstep” daughters. We first three, Janice, Barbara, and Joyce, were two years apart, then Lynne, Joyce’s Irish twin, was born a week less than a year later. When Lynne was twelve years old, our brother David came along. (Daddy finally got his boy!) We lived and grew up in Ellijay in what John Cougar Mellencamp described in his 1982 song, a “little pink house,” which was located about three miles south of Ellijay on a hill in a country setting.

Our family’s Christmas season when I was a child in the early 1960’s centered around our family and church, which was then Watkins Memorial United Methodist Church. Daddy was in the choir, as were we two older girls, and we were all part of the annual Christmas Cantata. Daddy had a beautiful voice but was a quiet man who pretty much only sang out in a booming confident voice at home. I can still hear “Good King Wenceslas” and “We Three Kings” in my memory as I write this. I think he loved singing the word “Wenceslas!”



*1959 Watkins Memorial United Methodist Church Choir
Hansel Gordon Dover -top row, far right*



*Hansel Gordon Dover
Handcrafting a Yard-sourced Holiday Wreath*

Our Christmas decorations were mostly homemade, or hand-crafted as they would be called today. Daddy would cut small limbs from the holly trees and boxwoods around the house and make beautiful wreaths for the doors, and then he would place on the mantle fresh swags of berried greenery along with our little knee-hugger elves. In the early years we would traipse with Daddy across our property, or that of our Grandma Effie’s which adjoined ours, to cut down a pine or cedar for our Christmas tree. They never looked quite like those in magazines, but we loved them still.

We would decorate the once live tree with our glass balls, bells, and sometimes popcorn and cranberry garlands. The end of the tree decoration was always silver tinsel



Memories of Holidays Past

-continued-

Dover Family Christmas Memories

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“icicles” thrown upon by us giddy children. Most of the time we got them on the tree, but a few of them always made it into each other’s hair. Our stockings were red felt with rick-rack or lacy trim hand-made by Mama. She also made most of our clothing, often including matching pajamas for Christmas. She was an excellent seamstress who passed her skill along to her children, yes, even our brother!



Wanda, Janice, Lynne, Barbara, Kitty, & Joyce

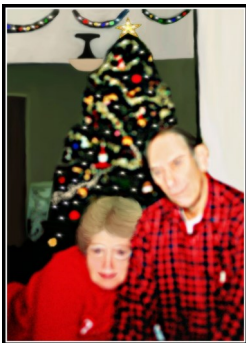
Music was always part of our Christmas season celebration. Barbara and I both played piano and we’d sometimes gather around to sing carols. Later of course there were albums or cassettes to accompany us, or we sang simply a cappella.

My more specific memories are of our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day traditions when we were just the four girls and Mama and Daddy, since David came along when I was 17. By the time David contributed to our traditions, I was in college or married and moved away from home.

*Daddy, Barbara, Janice, Lynne, Kitty, & Joyce
Watching television on
Christmas Eve*



On Christmas Eve, our family would usually watch some television after supper, and invariably beg for popcorn and hot chocolate. Our popcorn was popped in oil in a Revere ware pot, and hot chocolate was made in another pot with Hershey’s cocoa powder, sugar, and whole milk. This was way before microwaved popcorn and instant hot chocolate. The warm milk in the hot chocolate would partly calm us to get us ready for an early bedtime, and partly give us a sugar rush to feed our excitement. Although I must say the sugar’s powers far outweighed the warm milk’s powers on Christmas Eve.



Wanda and Hank Dover

At some point on Christmas Eve, Daddy would read the story of the first Christmas and convey the feeling of awe and importance of why we were celebrating this season – the birth of Jesus. Eventually we would try to go to bed early, and the four of us sisters would pile into the two twin beds in my and Barbara’s bedroom.

As the bossy oldest sister, I felt like it was my duty to try to calm



Memories of Holidays Past

-continued-

Dover Family Christmas Memories

-continued-

my younger sisters so that Santa could come. I would tell them that Santa wouldn't come unless they were asleep, while keeping them awake listening for reindeer bells and hooves on the roof.

At some point we would hear rustling sounds from the living room and we would know it was Santa. Of course, we would "play possum" as if we were asleep for some time after the rustling ended.

But our excitement soon took over and "playing possum" wouldn't last for very long before we would slip quietly into the living room to see what Santa had left. This was usually somewhere around 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. In our house, Santa gifts were never wrapped, so we would figure out what gifts were for whom, if they were shared between two or more sisters (like the time Joyce and Lynne received one bike to share,) and play for a while. We would eventually get loud and wake our parents or, being so excited, we would run and wake them to share our bounty. Our weary parents would indulge us for a while and then hustle us back to bed, leaving our stockings for later that morning.

When we finally got up for good on Christmas morning, we would open our few wrapped gifts from each other and go through our stockings. We usually found an orange, some pecans, and a pretty apple of course, since this is apple country, with perhaps a Bob's big peppermint stick and Hershey's chocolate or other candy bar.

Our busy Mama would then make a late breakfast, often milk sausage gravy with home-made biscuits, still one of my favorite breakfasts.

We would then have a lazy day playing with our new gifts and family. These days sure are different from Christmas celebrations in the later 20th and into the 21st centuries, but the love and happiness shared with family is a constant thread woven through every year.



*The Dovers, circa 1974
Hank, Wanda, Janice, Barbara,
David, Lynne, & Joyce*

This story was reprinted
with permission from the
December 2020 edition of
Mountain Heritage.



The President's Post

John Davis

As this year draws to a close, I want to reflect on some of the memorable events of our Gilmer County Genealogical Society. As it has been a challenging year for my personal health, I want to thank our board members for taking up the slack. They have done a yeoman's job of creating a quality organization.



We continue to discuss new approaches to our programs and we need your input. Please feel free to share your ideas and recommendations with any board member. The dynamics of our community and world are changing, and we need to respond to those changes if we are to grow.

This year we have had wonderful speakers, well-planned events, our latest book went into a second printing, and recently we created a Christmas tree for the Gilmer County Library's Festival of Trees that combines fun with genealogy. Yes, genealogy is fun!

We are looking forward to a wonderful 2024, beginning with a workshop on January 13. The workshop, *Researching Your Lineage and Heritage*, will provide tools for researching your family tree using resources in the Gilmer County Library's Family Research Room, and then using that family tree in applications for membership in lineage organizations such as First Families of Gilmer County.

In the meantime I hope that each of you enjoyed a great Thanksgiving, and we hope that you will join us at our Holiday Luncheon on December 16.



Fourth Quarter Highlights 2023

**September GCGSI Monthly Meeting
September 16, 2023
2:00 p.m.
Gilmer County Library**

***The Gates Family in Gilmer County*
Speaker: Anita Davis Summers**

GCGSI met on the afternoon of Saturday, September 16, in the Gilmer County Library with speaker Anita Davis Summers presenting the program *The Gates Family in Gilmer County*. This program, a popular request from earlier this year, was an interesting and informative presentation of a prominent family from the west side of the county. Ms. Summers shared her family tree, tracing lines and connections back to the earlier settlers of Gilmer County, including photographs of and stories about the members of the Gates family.



Photos (Clockwise from top left: 1) Anita Davis Summers, retired director of Sequoyah Regional Library System. 2) Three Generations of the Gates family in Gilmer County: Alice Gates Davis, left; Anita Davis Summers, center; Abby Summers. 3) Andy and Tamer Gates on the family farm. 4) Attendees of the GCGSI September meeting.



Photos: Rebecca Burrell,
Brenda Cochran, and
Barbara J. Dover

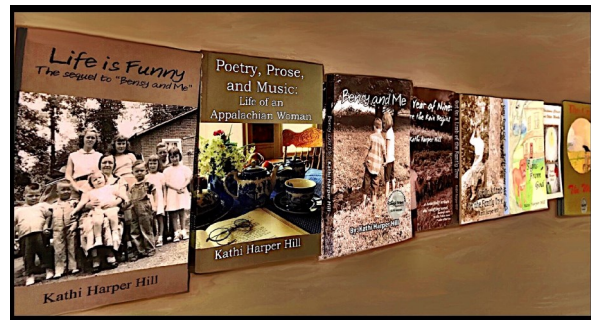


Fourth Quarter Highlights 2023
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October GCGSI Monthly Meeting
October 21, 2023
2:00 p.m.
Gilmer County Library

Life is Funny
Speaker: Kathi Harper Hill

Local author Kathi Harper Hill recently returned for another presentation at the October GCGSI monthly meeting in the Gilmer County Library. In her program *Life Is Funny*, the First Families member shared her family history and explained how her life in Gilmer County and her Appalachian heritage has influenced her writing. She summarized all of her works and entertained members with her readings of excerpts from several books. She had her books, including her latest ***Life Is Funny***, a sequel to a previous novel ***Bensy and Me***, available for purchase after the meeting. Her books are available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



Photos (Clockwise from top left): 1) The entire Hill family contributes to the books of Ms. Hill. Daughter Anna Kate (left) models for book covers and handles book sales. Husband David (center) illustrates the books. Kathi provides the stories and words. 2) The complete oeuvre of the author. 3) GCGSI and First Families members Shirley Hill Wells (left,) Patricia Hyatt Henson (center,) and Kathi Harper Hill. 4) The many faces of author Kathi Harper Hill as she shares how her family history and Appalachian heritage influences her writing, summarizes each of her works, and reads excerpts from her books.





Fourth Quarter Highlights 2023
-continued-

**Christmas Tree Designing for
Gilmer County Library's
Festival of Trees
November 15, 2023
11:00 a.m.**

***Theme: The Teddy Bear's Family Tree
Tree Designers and Assistants:
Neva Kelaher, Brenda Cochran, Trish Henson, Joy
Childress, Ed Caruso, and John Davis***

The Gilmer County Library's Holiday Open House and Winter Extravaganza will take place on Monday, December 11 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Come to see the Festival of Trees, especially GCGSI's tree in the Family Research Room. There will also be special appearances from Santa, The Grinch, and The Mountain View Elementary School Choir.



*Pictured (L to R): Joy Childress, Brenda Cochran,
Neva Kelaher, Trish Henson*



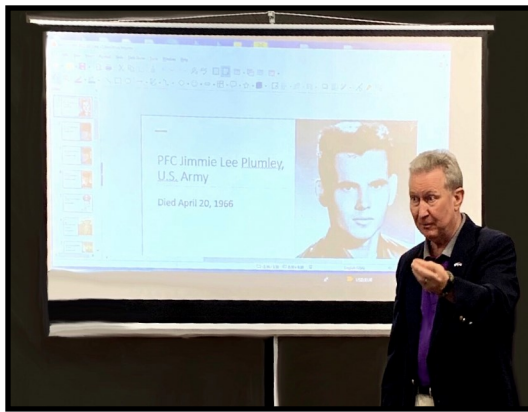


Fourth Quarter Highlights 2023
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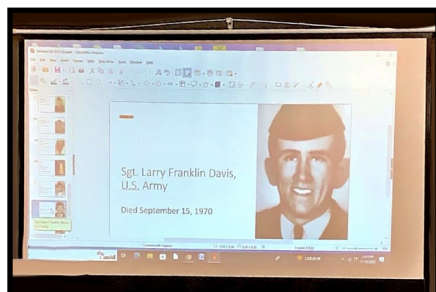
November GCGSI Monthly Meeting
November 18, 2023
2:00 p.m.
Gilmer County Library

Some Gave All
Speaker: Mark Millican

The Gilmer County Genealogical Society held its November monthly meeting on Saturday, November 18, 2023, with the election of 2024 officers followed by a special program to honor veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice. The speaker, author Mark Millican, shared how his personal background in the military and writing resulted in the publication of the book **Some Gave All: Profiles of the Men from Gilmer, Murray, and Whitfield Counties of Northwest Georgia Who Died in the Vietnam War**. Mr. Millican read excerpts from the book including the backgrounds of these American heroes as well as tributes and remembrances of them from their families and friends.



*Photos (clockwise from top left): 1) A tribute to a veteran who gave the ultimate sacrifice. 2) Mark and Teresa Millican. 3) Thank you for your service, Sgt. Larry Franklin Davis, U.S. Army. 4) Mark Millican shares his background and reads excerpts from **Some Gave All: Profiles of the Men from Gilmer, Murray, and Whitfield Counties of Northwest Georgia Who Died in the Vietnam War**.*



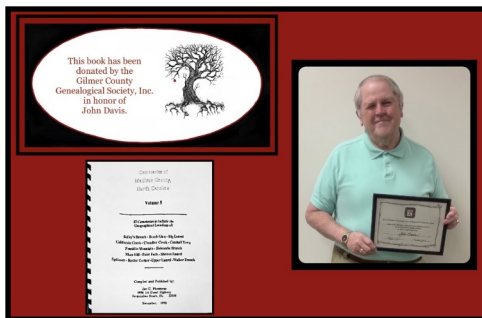


Fourth Quarter Highlights 2023
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**Special Presentations from
October and November Meetings
Gilmer County Library
2:00 p.m.**

At the October and November GCGSI meetings, special presentations were made to our members. In October, GCGSI President John Davis and Recording Secretary Patricia Hyatt Henson were awarded with certificates to thank them for their years of service and support to the organization as well as the donation of books in their honor to the Gilmer County Library. These books are in the Family Research Room and provide research information about Gilmer County's early settlers who moved from North Carolina.

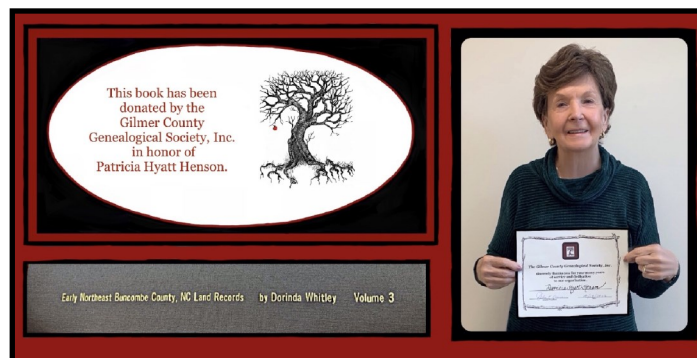
In November, GCGSI member Donna M. Jenkins was awarded with First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia membership for tracing her lineage back to Hezekiah Cochran. She received a certificate and pin to commemorate her membership in this lineage organization.



*GCGSI President John Davis with Certificate of Thanks for years of service and support to GCGSI and donation of **Cemeteries of Madison County, North Carolina, Volume 5** to the Gilmer County Library in his honor.*



GCGSI President John Davis awards Donna M. Jenkins with membership in First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia. Her ancestor from the 1840 Gilmer County Census is Hezekiah Cochran.



*GCGSI Recording Secretary Patricia Hyatt Henson with Certificate of Thanks for years of service and support to GCGSI and donation of **Early Northeast Buncombe County, NC Land Records, Volume 3** to the Gilmer County Library in her honor.*



The Teddy Bear's Family Tree: GCGSI Holiday Luncheon & Installation of 2024 Officers



In keeping with the theme for the GCGSI tree in the Gilmer County Library's annual Festival of Trees, GCGSI's Holiday Luncheon and Installation of Officers will share *The Teddy Bear's Family Tree* theme for our membership and its families, for the young and young-at-heart. The event will be held in the lower level of the Gilmer County Library on Saturday, December 16, from 12:00 noon until 2:00 p.m.

This gathering is an opportunity for us to celebrate our love for family, history, genealogy and each other during the holiday season. Protein, beverages, and paper goods will be provided by GCGSI, and all are asked to bring your favorite side dishes and desserts to share. Please RSVP to gilmergenealogy@gmail.com with the names and number of folks in your family who will be attending. Let us join together again and enjoy this time of fellowship.

Membership Dues Reminder

GCGSI is a non-profit all-volunteer organization whose aim is to promote and preserve family history. Our goal is to have all necessary tools available in the Gilmer County Library's Family Research Center to help you in your search. We invite you to join us in our effort to attain our goal by renewing your membership for calendar year 2024. And feel free to invite friends and family members to join GCGSI.

MEMBERSHIP:

PATRONS: \$50 CORPORATE: \$100 SPONSOR: \$250 BENEFACTOR: \$500
Annual Dues: Single \$10 Family \$15 (all living in same household) \$5 Student

If you are unable to attend an upcoming meeting to renew your membership, please visit our website at www.gcgisi.org for a membership form and mailing information. Thank you for your support!



First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia

Gladys Dotson Spivey, First Families of Gilmer County Chairperson

The First Families program is designed to honor those pioneers who settled in Gilmer County in 1840 or before, and to recognize their descendants upon becoming members of this program. We encourage anyone who is directly descended from early settlers whose names appear on the 1840 or any prior Gilmer County Census to apply. Discovering your Gilmer County roots can be challenging and exciting; and your research can serve as a source of information for generations to come. Applicants are not required to currently reside in Gilmer County. Once approved, members receive a certificate and pin acknowledging this Gilmer County ancestor. Come and join our 243 descendants who are currently members of First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia! For more information, please visit our website at: www.gcgsi.org.



First Families Member Added During the Fourth Quarter of 2023

New Member	Ancestor
Donna L. Jenkins	Hezekiah Cochran

Correction from September 2023 *Mountain Heritage*

The photograph of the Osborn Brothers Store on page 22 of the September edition of ***Mountain Heritage*** was incorrectly identified. The building that was pictured was not the Osborn Brothers store in Roy with proprietors Brown and Jim Osborn as mentioned in Lawrence Stanley's poem *Gilmer Foxhunters*. The store in the photograph was an Osborn Brothers Store but was actually located in Dyke, Georgia, which was the Clear Creek area, and Lester and Jim Osborn were the proprietors. We apologize for the mistake.



*Osborn Brothers Store in Dyke, Georgia
Proprietors: Lester and Jim Osborn*



Researching Your Lineage and Heritage

Written by: Barbara J. Dover, GCGSI Publications Chairperson
Photos: Gladys D. Spivey, GCGSI First Families Chairperson

*Author's Note: This article gives information about researching your family tree and using it to apply for lineage organizations like First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia. If you are interested in learning more, GCGSI President John Davis, will facilitate a workshop, **Researching Your Lineage and Heritage**, on Saturday, January 13, 2024 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon in the Gilmer County Library Family Research Room. Please RSVP to gilmergenealogy@gmail.com if you plan to attend, and email GCGSI to request genealogical research help prior to the workshop. If you attend the workshop, please bring any genealogical research that you have. You are also invited to attend the GCGSI's regular monthly meetings on the third Saturday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the Gilmer County Library.*

Genealogy. Just the word often conjures up the images of fusty pipe-smoking men in wool jackets with patches on the elbows wafting the smell of wet dog, and women with white hair coiled in a bun wearing a cardigan sweater over a calico shirtwaist dress and nylons rolled up to just below the knees. With these sartorial choices, some might imagine these men and women spending countless hours in many courthouses looking at deeds and legal documents, writing numerous letters to “cousins” asking to see their family Bibles, and venturing into cemeteries with rolls of white butcher paper and rubbing wax used to preserve inscriptions and dates.

Time to click the Viewfinder! In all actuality, today's genealogical researchers resemble what they see when they glance at their own mirror. Genealogists today think of their research as an individual historical puzzle that when combining all the pieces, will create a unique image of their past to present. The methods of discovering who preceded them and what these predecessors did include not only the traditional strategies. The use of DNA testing, online databases, published materials, and even more information-gathering resources contribute to putting all the pieces together.

SCHEDULE of the whole number of persons within the divisions allotted to William Bennett											
NAME	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	WHITE	BLACK	INDIAN	CHINA	OTHER	FREE	SLAVES	OTHER
William Bennett	1	1	2	2					2		
John Bennett	1	1	2	2					2		
...

Page from 1840 Gilmer County Census
(from *Faces of Our Ancestors* book)

census data and/or recorded property deeds, and First Families organizations have been formed to honor these ancestors and their descendants who meet the criteria for inclu-



Researching Your Lineage and Heritage -continued-

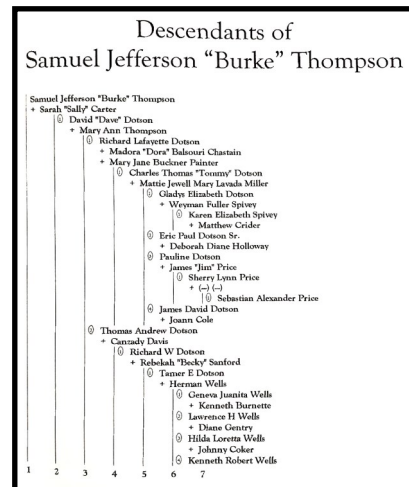
sion. These lineage organizations vary as to their intent and purpose, but most have similar criteria requiring the means of lineage documentation as it relates to the organization.

The First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia was chartered in 2012 by Betty Riddle, Shirley Sluder, and Eurilla Hyatt under the umbrella of The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. As Gilmer County was created by an official Act of Dec. 3, 1832, families who settled in Gilmer County in 1840 or earlier were considered First Families. As a result, qualifications for membership in this organization include proof that the applicant is directly descended from early settlers whose names appear on the 1840 or any prior Gilmer County Census, or from settlers who owned property in Gilmer County in 1840 or earlier. Once the organization began and the application was presented to the public, 78 applications were accepted the first year, with several charter members approved under more than one ancestor.

Some of the names of First Families ancestors that descendants used on their applications that first year are Melchizedeck Charles, Absalom Pence, William Walker, Jonathan Chastain, Josiah Clayton, John Osborn and his sons Newman and Nicholas Robert, Larkin Holt, Benjamin Griffith, Milton Davis, James Kell, Jacob Bearden, William Reed, James Elijah Ellis, John Tucker (also known as Conseenee,) and Samuel Jones, Sr., just to name a few. Many of these families traveled from Buncombe County, North Carolina to settle in North Georgia, and there are close to 360 families on the 1840 Gilmer County Census.

You might ask what are the benefits of First Families of Gilmer County? Can I jump to the front of the line at Cantaberry restaurant? Can I get a discount on a tire rotation at Russell Williams' Ellijay Tires? Not to my knowledge. You do get a greater understanding of your family tree, knowing that some of your ancestors chose Gilmer County to live during a turbulent time in history when the original residents of the Cherokee nation were forced to leave, and then shortly afterwards, these new residents became involved in a War Between the States. You also learn that they lived through hard times just by being at the very beginning of the county and the creation of its different communities, but they were not afraid of the challenge.

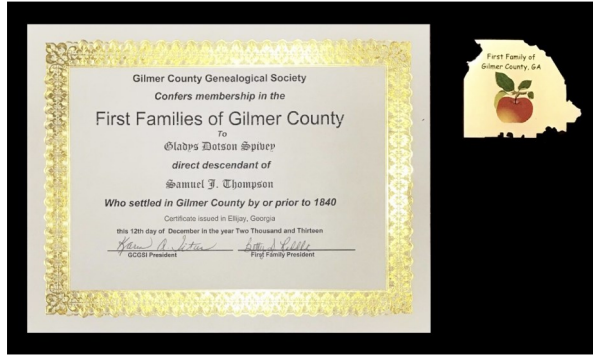
As a member of First Families of Gilmer County, you will meet some cousins that you might know, but might not know that you were cousins, albeit distant, since you share the same ancestor. Many of those pioneer families settled in communities like Turniptown, Tails Creek, Mountaintown, Roy, Tickanetly, and Talona. Travel was



*Gladys Spivey Family Tree
First Families Ancestor:
Samuel J. Thompson
photo from Faces of Our Ancestors*



Researching Your Lineage and Heritage -continued-



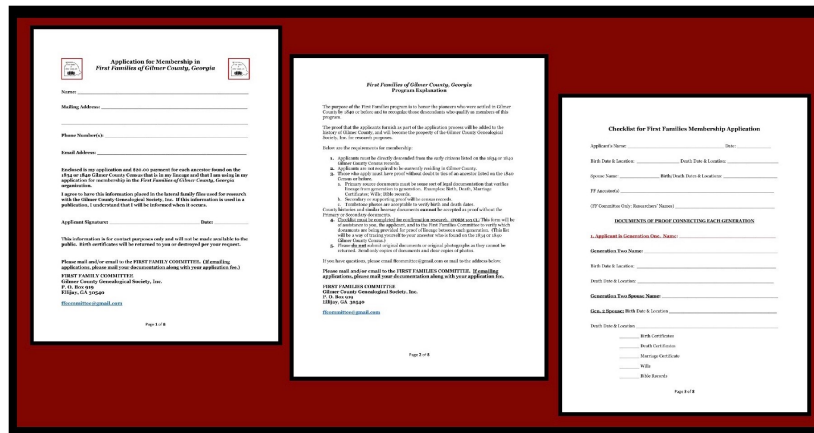
First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia
Member Certificate and Pin

little to none, so people married and pro-created within the community. Not in that way supposedly reputed by hillbillies, but as an example, two sisters from one family might marry two brothers from another family. As a result, if you descended from the sisters' family, you would be related to descendants from the brothers' family. One First Family member quipped that she ended up marrying someone outside of Gilmer County just because... (However, you do not have to be a resident of Gilmer County to qualify as a member of First Families.)

In addition to creating your family tree, learning about your ancestry and your heritage, and meeting new cousins, you are presented with a certificate suitable for framing and a pin acknowledging your membership in the organization.

In order to apply for First Families of Gilmer County, you first need to have researched your ancestry back to 1840 or earlier and then checked the 1832 or 1840 censuses to see if you have an ancestor listed there. (As those censuses only list the male head of household, you need to have all birth, marriage, and death dates and locations for each generation leading back to the name on the census to confirm the lineage.)

After confirming your lineage, print a copy of the application from the First Families tab of the website, www.gcgsci.com, or pick one up at the Gilmer County Library's Family Re-



Pages from First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia Application
www.gcgsci.org



Researching Your Lineage and Heritage

-continued-

search Room. (The 1832 and 1840 Gilmer County censuses are also linked to the website from the First Families tab.) The application includes an explanation as well as the cover page and checklist. You will need to provide copies of both a primary and secondary form of documentation proving the lineage of each generation back to the First Families ancestor. Examples of documentation are listed on the checklist portion of the application.

Next, complete the application, copy the documentation, and submit all with a \$20.00 application fee to the address on the application. (Some of the documents will be returned, but some will not, so do not include originals.) The First Family Committee will process the application and notify you of acceptance or denial. If the application is denied, everything is returned. If accepted, some documentation will be returned and a time and place for the presentation of the certificate and pin will be scheduled. If the presentation cannot be scheduled, the certificate and pin will be mailed to the new member. In addition to becoming a new member of The First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia, two years of membership in The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. will be included.

If you are interested in your family ancestry and heritage, it's never too early to start learning about it by interviewing family members, reading and gathering research, and collecting documentation. There are many genealogical and lineage organizations besides Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. and First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia. If your family is from another location in the U.S., once you have created your family tree, you might find out that your ancestors were the First Families of another county or state. You might find that your ancestors were involved in the Revolutionary or Civil Wars and want to apply for lineage organizations that are based on that. If you can trace your ancestry back to another country or continent, you might find that you are descended from royalty or infamous heads of state. There are lineage organizations for that. Or you might just prefer to keep it quiet.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the GCGSI workshop ***Researching Your Lineage and Heritage*** if you are interested in learning more. GCGSI President John Davis will be the facilitator and it takes place on Saturday, January, 2024, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon in the Gilmer County Library Family Research Room. Please RSVP to gilmergenealogy@gmail.com if you plan to attend. If you attend the workshop, please bring any genealogical research and/or your family tree.

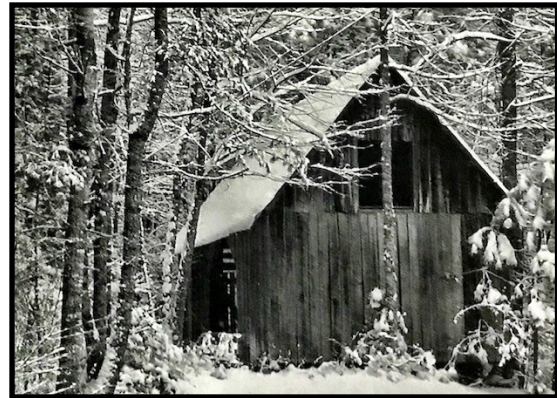


*First Families Member and
First Families Committee Chairperson
Gladys Dotson Spivey
Ancestor: Samuel L. Thompson
Awarding of First Families Certificate
on August 13, 2015*



Faces of Our Ancestors: First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia

In 1986, Georgia was the sixth state to start a First Families Program, and in 2012, under the leadership of Betty Riddle, Eurilla Hyatt, and Shirley Sluder, the First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia was formed under the umbrella of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society. The purpose of the program was to honor the settlers who had been proven through documentation that they were in Gilmer County or had owned land by 1840 or earlier, and to recognize their descendants through their family trees. Descendants were required to apply to become a member of the program and, as in all lineage organizations, were required to provide documentation of a direct family line back to the ancestor proven to be one of the first families of Gilmer County. The first year of the program, 78 applications were approved, with some descendants claiming more than one first family ancestor.



Page 497
Hyatt's Old Barn
Built by Seth Hyatt

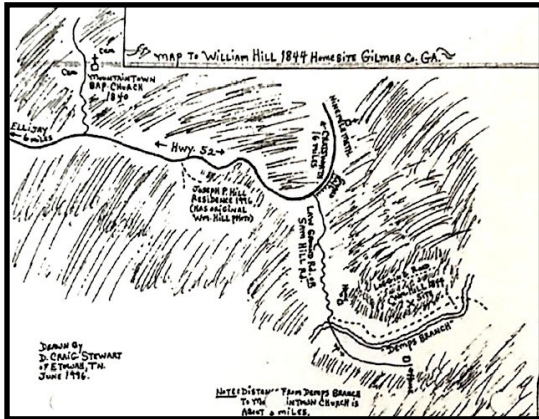


First Families Book Committee:
Back Row (L to R): Brenda Cochran, Co-Editor; Hollyanna White, Editor; John Davis, Financial Advisor.
Front Row (L to R): Gladys Spivey, Co-Editor; Karen Titus, Committee Chairperson

In 2015, with around 110 First Families members, there began a discussion of publishing a book for the ancestors and descendants of Gilmer County's first families. A book committee consisting of Karen Titus, Hollyanna White, Gladys Spivey, Brenda Cochran, and John Davis was formed; and notifications were mailed and posted in 2016 with a request for photos and stories from First Families members. The committee began compiling the information submitted, and deadlines were made and extended in order to include more members' contributions. By the end of 2018, 195 descendants were listed as First Families members.



Faces of Our Ancestors:
First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia
-continued-



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Map to the William F. Hill 1844 Homesite
Drawn by Dennis Craig Stewart

In 2019 the work on the book became more intense with proofreading; compiling; editing; selecting a publisher/printer, completing the formatting of family trees, stories, photos, and documents; proofreading; editing; and finally sending it for printing.

On December 7, 2019, the book ***Faces of Our Ancestors: First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia*** was revealed to the public in a party at the Gilmer County Library. At this soirée, attendees purchased the book, had it signed by the hard-working committee

members, enjoyed refreshments, and shared with one another what they had found while perusing the pages and exclaiming over the quality and amount of work that had gone into its publication.

From the introduction by the book's editor Hollyanna White: "Gilmer's rich history is recorded with documents, photographs, drawings, and stories. Descendants had an important opportunity to write down memories showing specific moments in time to convey how life was and how the world and people in it have changed. The descendants who shared their stories within these pages have left a legacy for future generations."

Over 175 years have passed and much has changed since this county in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains was laid out from the land of the Cherokees in 1832. Those families that were here at that time and arrived within the next eight years carved out their place in history. ***Faces of Our Ancestors: First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia*** carves a memorial to honor the legacy of these families and their descendants.

Osborne, N. L.		
Co.	37 Georgia Infantry.	
F. A. Wilson (Confederate.)		
1st Sergeant - L. M. Sergeant		
CARD NUMBER		
(Confederate)		
01	37	Ga.
N. L. Osborne		
2nd Lt., 37 Regiment Georgia Infantry.*		
Appears on		
Field, Staff and Band Muster Roll		
of the organization named above,		
for		
Jan. 1, Feb., 1864		
Enlisted:		
When	June 13, 1861	
Where	Camp McDonald	
By whom	Capt. Wilson	
Period	3 years in the war	
Last paid:		
By whom	Capt. Sanchez	
To what time	Dec 31, 1863	
Present or absent		
Present		
Remarks:		

Page 428
Nicholas Lafayette "Fate"
Osborn Service Card
1861 - 1864
(fold3.com)



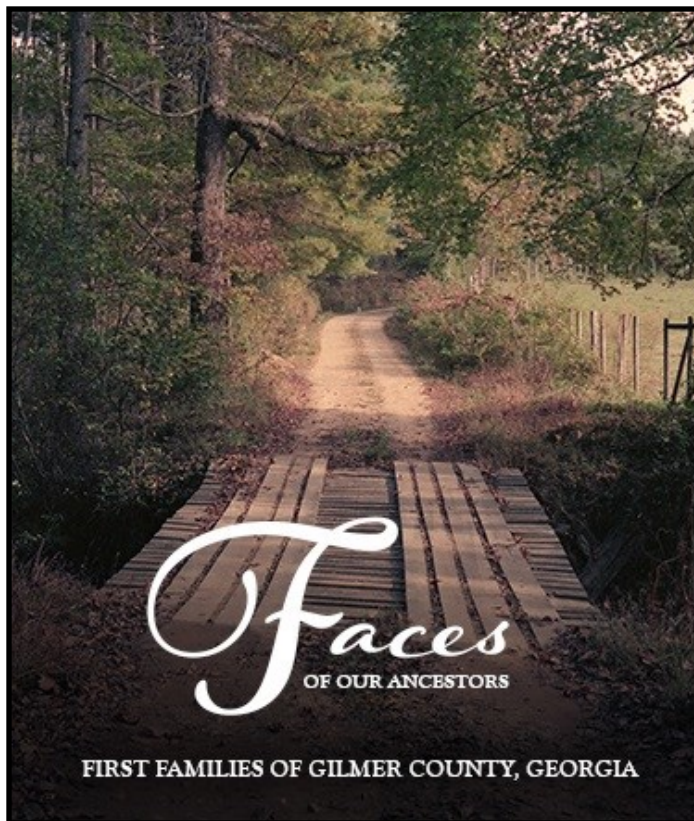
Faces of Our Ancestors: A Christmas Heirloom-

Faces of Our Ancestors: First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia

recognizes the early pioneers who undertook a perilous journey through the wilderness to make Gilmer County their home. This rich history is recorded with over 800 pages of family trees, documents, photos, drawings, and stories. This book is in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., as well as the largest genealogical library in the world, The Family Research Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. It is considered an important historical work.

You will love this highest quality book and will laugh, cry, and want more. The First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia is an organization created by members of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. in order to honor those who were settled in Gilmer County in 1840 or before, and to recognize their direct descendants.

The remaining first edition copies of this heirloom quality book are very limited, so how can I get one before Christmas?



1) Pick up your copy at the Gilmer County Library during the Gilmer County Genealogical Society's Holiday Luncheon on Saturday, December 16, 202e. The luncheon begins at 12 noon, so come early to get your book and meet everyone. The cost is \$80.00 per book, cash or check payable to Gilmer Genealogical Society, Inc. Call **706-280-7460** or email us at **gilmergenealogy@gmail.com** no later than December 14 to reserve a copy to pick up on December 16.

2) Order a copy via U. S. mail. The cost is \$90.00 per book, including shipping, with check payable to Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. Mail order forms are available on our website www.gcgcsi.org.

3) Purchase a copy for from Walls of Books, a bookstore located in East Ellijay, Georgia. The cost is \$90.00 per book.



Back Home

If I had the power to turn back the clock,
Go back to the house at the end of the block—
The house that was **home** when I was a kid,
I know that I'd love it more now than I did.

If I could be back there at my mother's knee,
And hear once again all the things she told me,
I'd listen as I never listened before
For she knew so well just what life had in store.

And all the advice my dad used to give,
His voice I'll remember as long as I live;
But it didn't seem really important then;
What I'd give just to live it all over again.

And what I'd give for the chance I once had,
To do so much more for my mother and dad;
To give them more joy and a little less pain;
A little more sunshine—a little less rain.

But the years roll on and we cannot go back,
Whether we were born in a mansion or in a shack;
But we can start right now—in the hour that's here,
To do something more for the ones we hold dear.

And since time in its flight is traveling so fast;
Let's not spend it regretting that which is past;
But let's make tomorrow a happier day
By doing our good to others **today**.

(Author unknown)



Bulletin Board



Snow-covered Church, c. 1927
Marc Chagall (Russian, 1887-1985)

December 2023

- **Monday, December 11 - Holiday Open House & Festival of Trees**
Gilmer County Library - 5:00-7:00 p.m.
- **Saturday, December 16 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting**
The Teddy Bear's Family Tree: GCGSI Holiday Luncheon & Installation of 2024 Officers
Gilmer County Library - 12:00 noon
Protein, beverages, and paper products provided by GCGSI; bring your favorite side dish and/or dessert to share.
- **Thursday, December 21 - Winter Solstice**
- **Monday, December 25 - Merry Christmas!**

January 2024

- **Monday, January 1 - Happy New Year!**
- **Saturday, January 13 - GCGSI Workshop**
Researching Your Lineage and Heritage
Facilitator: John Davis, GCGSI Past President
Gilmer County Library Family Research Room
10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon
- **Monday, January 16 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

January 2024 (continued)

- **Saturday, January 20 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting**
Online Genealogical Research at the Gilmer County Library
Speaker: Charlotte Nemece
Gilmer County Library Public Services Specialist
Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.

February 2024

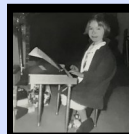
- **Friday, February 2 - Groundhog Day**
- **Wednesday, February 14 - Happy Valentine's Day!**
- **Saturday, February 17 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting**
The Biggs Machine: Old Time Politics in Polk County, Tennessee
Speaker: Tyler Boyd, teacher & author;
Vice President-East Tennessee Historical Society
Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.
- **Monday, February 19 - Presidents' Day**

2023 and 2024 GCGSI Officers and Committee Chairpersons

- 2023 and 2024 President - John Davis
- 2023 and 2024 Vice President and Program, Publication, & Publicity Committees' Chairperson - Barbara J. Dover
- 2023 and 2024 Corresponding Secretary & Historian - Rebecca Burrell
- 2023 Recording Secretary - Patricia Hyatt Henson
- 2024 Recording Secretary - Anita Davis Summers
- 2023 and 2024 Treasurer & Membership Committee Chairperson - Susan Noles
- 2023 First Families of Gilmer County Committee Chairperson - Gladys Spivey
- 2024 First Families of Gilmer County Committee Chairpersons - Eurilla Hyatt and Patricia Hyatt Henson
- 2023 Events Committee Co-Chairpersons - Brenda Cochran & Neva Kelaher
- 2024 Events Committee Chairperson - Linda Womack

In Memoriam

First Families of Gilmer County Member
Mary Ellinora Pankey Jones
January 9, 1928 - November 11, 2023



Mountain Heritage Newsletter
Published by Barbara J. Dover
Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
Vice President and Publications, Publicity,
and Program Committees' Chairperson


The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
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We're online! 
www.gcgsl.org
Contact email: gilmergenealogy@gmail.com

What Is Available Online?

- GCGSI Membership
- First Families Application
- Genealogical Links
- Officers and Chairpersons
- Book Order Forms
- 1834 and 1840 Census
- Contact Information
- GCGSI Newsletters

