

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE

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James Henry Worley (1858-1893)

Barbara J. Dover



Henry Worley Grave Marker at Ridgeway Baptist Church Cemetery
findagrave.com

Many Americans have always enjoyed an alcoholic beverage at the end of a hard day. Knowing this, the United States has found the production of distilled liquor a consistent way to make money to pay its debts even as early as its founding. This started in 1791 with the new country's first tax levied on a domestic product. George Washington squashed the protestations of the Whiskey Rebellion through threat of force in 1794, but Thomas Jefferson repealed this tax in 1802. The tax was revived later to help pay for the War of 1812.

Several decades later during the Civil War, the Commissioner of Internal Revenue was established and a liquor tax was imposed with a license for distillation required. Following the war, poor Southerners saw these taxes as another hardship from Reconstruction. With their money now worthless, folks in the North Georgia mountains as well as other Southerners had to struggle to make ends meet. To feed their families, they farmed their land to grow corn, apples, peaches, and other fruits and vegetables. Coincidentally, the harvest also provided essential ingredients for their families' recipes of moonshine.

It wasn't illegal to have a registered still, but not paying taxes on the revenue from the sold product was. However, these Scots-Irish moonshiners saw this as a liquid legacy of their heritage. Not only had they been producing their liquor for generations, it became a primary source of income for their families, and they couldn't afford to lose any part of that income for taxes. As a result, these farmer-moonshiners resisted taxation and became "wanted" by government agents or "revenuers."

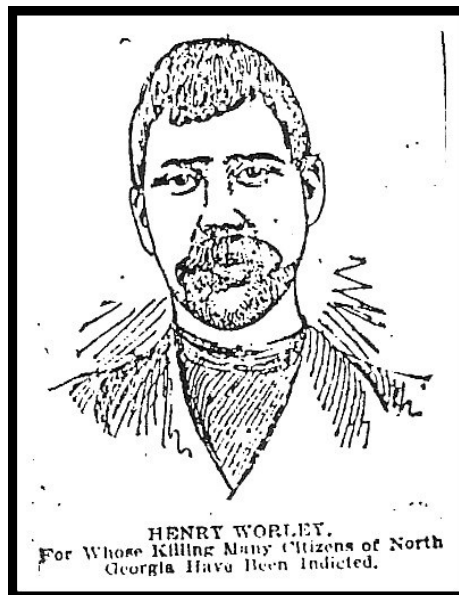


**James Henry Worley
(1858-1893)
-continued-**

During Reconstruction, vigilante groups were formed for various purposes of protection. The whitecapper gangs were some of those groups. The groups originated in Indiana around 1837 as secret societies to enforce community standards, appropriate behavior, and traditional rights. They were groups that threatened others with violence for reasons justified by the groups, be it race, immorality, spousal abuse, or informing revenueurs of the whereabouts of stills and their owners. They often wreaked their vengeance at night, much like night riders or the Ku Klux Klan.

In North Georgia, counties had their own not-so-secret societies for protection of their moonshine businesses. In Murray County the whitecappers were known as the Distillers Union. In Gilmer County they were the Working Men's Friend and Protective Organization. They swore a blood oath, knowing that a betrayal of that oath would result in death. Not only did they defend their fellow members, but to deter others who might be thinking of informing the revenueurs, they committed atrocities including the destruction of personal property. They even went as far as killing those who threatened their way of life.

Henry Worley was one of these farmer-moonshiners and members of the Distillers Union. Until he wasn't.



*Henry Worley Court Sketch
findagrave.com*



**James Henry Worley
(1858-1893)
-continued-**

THROUGH THE HEART

**A Citizen of Murray County Is Shot
by the White Caps.**

CONDEMNED BY THEM AS A TRAITOR

He Was Said to Have Revealed Some Secrets of the Organization—It Was the Second Attempt.

Another crime more daring in plot and bolder in execution than any other in a long series of desperate deeds now stains the gruesome records of the whitecaps.

Thursday morning, while peacefully plowing in his field, Henry Worley, a citizen of Murray county, was fired upon from ambush and instantly killed. The murder is the climax to an old feud between Worley and a gang of desperadoes, and shows the reckless spirit of their doings.

The magnitude of the whitecap organization in the mountainous regions of north Georgia defies credulity. From recent developments it appears that every hill and vale in that part of the country is swarming with desperadoes. The Gordon County Grangers, according to the statement of one of their members, number seven hundred strong. Just across the line, the Murray county boys hold forth. These two gangs make up the organization, and both of them do business according to the same rules and regulations. The clans and sub-clans pay proper allegiance to the officers of the main branch, and are governed by them with iron-bound laws. Their ceremonies are as mysterious as the night. Upon being initiated into this brotherhood, each member is forced to take a Bible oath that he will always stick up to the gang and whenever the call comes, respond immediately. Death is named as the penalty for divulging any of the secrets of the order.

*The Atlanta Constitution
April 21, 1894*

Gave the Gang Away.

And thus it was that Morley was murdered.

At one time he was the very head and front of the whitecaps of Murray county. Whenever the rod of chastisement was to be administered, or severer punishment inflicted upon any offending inhabitant of these regions, Worley was always the man to direct the movement. But fate played against him, and for various causes his popularity waned. As leader of the Murray county boys he was pushed aside, and his reckless daring ceased to inspire them any longer.

It was for this reason that he turned his back on the gang and refused to participate in their work.

Several weeks ago Worley was summoned to appear before the grand jury at Ellijay and testify against one of the whitecaps who was on trial before it. His testimony was damaging; at least it was considered so by the whitecaps, for he received from them a letter giving him fair notice to evacuate immediately. This he refused to do and in reply threatened to come to Atlanta and give to Governor Northern the names of one hundred men connected with the organization.

Hanged to a Limb.

This was not in accordance with the doings of the whitecaps, and they swore vengeance. Last week at the dead hour of night Worley was ruthlessly dragged from his house by a determined band and marched out to the woods.

He was given a formal trial and the sentence of death passed upon him as a traitor. A hemp rope did the rest, and his dangling body was swung up in the moonlight.

The gang dispersed at once, leaving Worley in his uncomfortable position. In some mysterious way he was cut down and revived.

But the whitecaps meant sure death and were not to be outwitted. A volley from ambush did the work Thursday. Worley fell shot through the heart.

The news of this last deed reached Atlanta yesterday, and coming so soon on the heels of the other crimes of the past week, committed by the same organization, it has made Marshal Dunlap and his deputies more determined than ever to bring the offenders to speedy justice.

Twelve of the Gordon county gang will come up in the United States court Monday. The case promises to be one of the biggest tried in the federal court for years, and the large courtroom will be packed with witnesses.

The following whitecaps are now under arrest: John King, Newton McIntyre, John Abbott, Rufus Williams, Benjamin Goodnight, Lawson Perkins, Lon Powers and Harvey Barratt.

BARRETT AND BARRATT



The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley and Ridgeway Baptist Church

Clayton H. Ramsey

This article was researched and written by Clayton H. Ramsey, a free-lance writer. It was published in Georgia Backroads magazine, and he has given GCGSI permission to reprint it in our newsletter. (Reprinted from Georgia Backroads, 18(3), Clayton H. Ramsey, "The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley," pp. 18-22, Autumn 2019, with permission from Clayton H. Ramsey.)



The nineteenth-century congregants of Ridgeway Baptist Church in Gilmer County were likely unaware of the origin of the ancient tradition of burial *ad sanctos*. Literally “towards the holy,” it reflected the belief that the closer one was buried to a sacred place or the tomb of a martyr, the more likely one would have access to the saint’s virtue and her intercession on Judgment Day. It was essentially righteousness by proximity. But even though these faithful Baptists might not have known the source of the practice, they still buried their dead near the log church where they had worshipped since 1865.

In their cemetery, bristling with markers, at least one grave holds the remains of a man most in need of the sanctification of hallowed ground. When Henry Worley sat on the sweaty haunches of a borrowed mule one dark night in April 1894, a noose



The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley and Ridgeway Baptist Church

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around his neck and his wrists cinched behind his back, he was certainly not thinking anything theological. But he was in desperate need of salvation.

James Henry Worley was born in 1858 in Gilmer County, the eighth of eleven children born to Henry Hezekiah and Elmarie Mirah Teague Worley. The oldest was born in North Carolina; all others were delivered in Georgia, in the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River Basin, where they had lived since 1850. He was also a half-sibling to eleven other children his father had with his second wife, Louisa Elizabeth Parham Worley.

When he turned 21, the younger Henry married Eliza M. Tankersley, and they had three children, two living past infancy. At some point he moved his family to nearby Murray County, in northwest Georgia in the foothills of the Appalachians. There he scabbled together a modest existence by farming and, like many of his neighbors, running a moonshine still.

Americans have always loved their spirits. President George Washington ran a distillery at Mount Vernon, and most colonists were quick to defend their rights to brew and drink. Problems emerged when the young federal government faced vast debts as a result of the War of Independence and chose to meet the shortfall with a tax on distilled liquor in 1791, the first levied by the government on a domestic product. The Whiskey Rebellion was the popular response and was only suppressed by threat of force by Washington in 1794. Jefferson's Democratic-Republican administration repealed the tax in 1802, but it was revived as a reliable source of revenue to pay for the War of 1812.

The establishment of the office of Commissioner of Internal Revenue during the Civil War likewise led to the imposition of a tax on liquor and the requirement of a license for its distillation. This, too, was to pay for the cost of conflict, in what was becoming an American tradition.

In the ruins of an economy cratered by the War, poor Southern whites could hardly see taxation and regulation as anything other than another burden of Reconstruction. With a blasted infrastructure and a shattered monetary system, mostly rural Southerners did what they did best; they grew corn, apples, peaches, and other fermentable crops. And many used what was not sold at market to make moonshine.

To operate a registered still was not against the law. But refusing to pay taxes was. There were many who either by principle or poverty refused to pay the government for the liquor they had produced for generations to provide for their families. It was not only another assured income stream for the impoverished; it was a cherished way of life, part of the legacy of the Scots-Irish immigrants who had found their way to the



The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley and Ridgeway Baptist Church

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colonies years before.

Worley was one of those farmer-moonshiners, doing his best to scratch out a living in the mountains of north Georgia. Whether by necessity or choice, he found himself on the wrong side of the law, a target of government agents, or “revenueurs.”

Of course, he was not alone in what amounted to his criminality. There were plenty of others like him in the area, and they formed groups to protect each other from the law. As they fought for the right to run stills and support their families by those means, they considered themselves to be on the frontlines in the battle for their economic and social wellbeing against officials who seemed to be against both as they upheld federal statutes.

The struggle between moonshiners and revenueurs, beginning in the 1870s, was a fight for self-sufficiency, for local control, for personal financial stability, and for individual liberty. On the other side, it was a fight to uphold the law, to enforce the policies of the government, to collect legal revenue, and to maintain order. To the federal agents, the moonshiners were outlaws. To men like Worley, they were freedom fighters.

Much of the vigilantism in the mountains in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was in the form of “whitecap” gangs, secret societies of “night riders” that were modeled on the old Ku Klux Klan. In Murray County the night riders were known as the Distillers Union. In Gilmer County they were the Working Men’s Friend and Protective Organization. They stood against the intrusion of the government, especially as it related to moonshining, and for what they considered a strong moral code.

As part of the initiation into these groups, men swore a blood oath, with the understanding that betrayal meant death. They promised to provide alibis for members caught in violation of the law and swore, if participating in a case against a fellow member, to work for their acquittal. They chased off informers, burned barns and houses to emphasize their message, and beat and killed witnesses.

In addition to serving as a fraternity of moonshiners that shielded each other from any threat to their illicit business, they also ironically considered themselves the protectors of the community’s moral order, disciplining those they considered deviant. “If any man in the community misbehaves in any way we will take him out and whip him. If he is not satisfied with that we will put him to a limb,” their oath stipulated.¹

These were the men Worley protected and those who protected him. It was a safe and insular existence until he was indicted in Gilmer County for whipping a man named Hood Nailer for reasons now unknown.



The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley and Ridgeway Baptist Church
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Worley escaped conviction by fleeing to Texas. In the Lone Star State he must have had something of an epiphany. Perhaps he fell under the spell of a temperance league while on the lam or had a genuine pang of conscience and saw his life from a new moral perspective. Perhaps he felt himself betrayed by the men sworn to defend him or was disillusioned by their tactics. More likely, he fell from favor and was frustrated that he was no longer in a position of power in the group, losing his sense of allegiance as a result.²

Regardless of the motive, he chose to return to Georgia and, in an effort to escape prosecution and imprisonment and seek retribution against the gang, he did what he swore he never would: he turned informant. He broke the blood oath by spilling secrets of the society.

“I’m tired of being hunted over the country for what this ku klux gang is doing,” the *Atlanta Constitution* reported him saying. “I am going back to Judge Gober’s court and tell on every last d — n member of this crowd.”

When he returned to Gilmer County in March of 1894, Worley revealed the location of several stills. Then, when called before a commissioner named Hamilton in Dalton, he threatened the whitecaps publicly and promised to reveal the location of every still he saw, vowing to turn state’s evidence when called to superior court against the organization. Warned to leave the area, he told Deputy Marshal William Duncan he would personally deliver a list of 100 moonshiners to Governor William J. Northen in Atlanta. His betrayal was complete and unapologetic.

As expected, the response was dramatic. He had turned against his fellow whitecappers, and his confession was an affront to his family and community. While admittedly no saint, his actions against the code of the mountains prompted the worst slander. They claimed he killed his first wife and beat his second, that he was a scamp, a moral degenerate. The *Atlanta Constitution* recorded the rejection of his neighbors, his wife, and his brother. Even his own mother “refused to acknowledge him as her son, saying that in her veins there was not a drop of blood that did not resent the mention of his name, since he had been guilty of perfidy and treason to his comrades.”³

Bound by oath, his whitecap brothers retaliated. On the night of April 7, 1894, they converged on his home. Finding him absent, they returned a week later.

Fearing intruders, Worley had been barring his door, which his second wife, Addie Independence Clonts, quite possibly opened for the vigilantes that night. Worley was manhandled, dragged from his bedroom, and tied to a mule. At least thirty masked (“whitecapped”) men on horseback led him by torchlight into the darkness.

When they passed his mother’s house, they asked if she wanted to see him one last time.



The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley and Ridgeway Baptist Church

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“I don’t want to see him,” she reportedly shouted. “I never want to lay eyes on a traitor. Take him along.” Such was the strength of moonshiners’ honor over the bond of blood and even maternal affection.

The grim entourage passed in silence through the woods, stars spangling the sky and torchlight glancing off the trees, the sounds of the forest and the clop of hooves the only noises. They took him to a place called Bloodtown, a convergence of two roads in the backwoods of south Murray County, four miles from his house. Here they picked a white oak tree with a sturdy limb at the right height. With Worley’s hands tied behind him and a rope around his neck, they tossed the other end over the branch as he sat on the mule that had carried him to the clearing.

Writer Samuel Johnson once waggishly commented of executions, “Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.”⁴ When it is an immediate reality, as it was for Worley, who can imagine his sharpened thoughts? Perhaps it was of his two wives. His children. The men who surrounded him. The events that led to his moment of doom. What he did right, what wrong. Perhaps it was the compression and dilation of time, the hopeful dream of the condemned, like Peyton Farquhar had in Ambrose Bierce’s story, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge.”

Maybe it was none of these distractions. In all likelihood, it was one thing alone that focused his thoughts: a plan to disrupt the inevitability of him dangling from the end of a rope in a matter of seconds. By all accounts he deserved to be there. He vigorously disagreed.

At this point, reports of the events are conflicting. One says the rope was tied off, the mule given a kick, and as Worley went swinging the men rode off, believing their job completed. His hands loosened by the fall, he reportedly wrapped his legs around the trunk to keep from strangling, pulled a knife from his pocket and cut himself down.⁵ Another account said that before the rope was fixed, an accomplice slipped him a knife that he used to free himself and disappear into the woods.⁶ A third account said another gang of whitecaps appeared while Worley was strung up, freeing him.⁷ Whatever the actual details, Worley somehow survived the lynching and escaped.

Remarkably, he returned home instead of fleeing the country, grateful for his life. He resumed activities as though nothing had happened in the nighttime woods. He must have known he was *persona non grata in extremis*. He must have realized that the whitecapers would not rest until their judgment on him was enacted successfully. He must have understood that there was no place for him in a family that had so resolutely rejected



The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley and Ridgeway Baptist Church
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him and in a community that had so decidedly expelled him. The record is silent on how he could have been accepted back after the attempted hanging.

On April 19, twelve days after the first posse came for him, Worley was plowing in his cornfield, as he did every spring. On this bright morning, however, the night riders returned to finish the job.

According to newspaper reports, after spending the night near Worley's farm, a group of whitecappers approached him in his field, claiming to be hunters.⁸ "Have you seen any wild turkey this morning?" one of them asked. "We are on a little hunting expedition and expect to kill something before we go back." It was a tissue-thin ruse that must have chilled Worley.

He denied seeing any game, surely knowing he was the prey. The men supposedly left, spoke with a neighbor in his field, and waited for that man to approach Worley and ascertain whether he was armed. When assured that he wasn't, the assassins returned and leveled their rifles at him. One account placed his daughter, Kemmie, with him in the field. To spare her the inevitable violence, he sent her to fetch a bolt for his plow.

"Damn you!" Worley screamed. "If you will only give me a chance, I'll whip the last one of you. If you kill me, you will kill the bravest man in this county." The papers had him defiant to the end.

And the end came quickly. The whitecappers blasted Worley, sending his untended mule charging through the furrows, dragging the bouncing plow. Worley was dead before his daughter reached the house. It was a brutal end to a rough life.

But it was also a harbinger of the end of the vigilante groups in the area. In June, a Murray County farmer named Will A. Roper testified against two moonshiners. As a result, he was shot and tossed in an old copper pit. He hovered there, between life and death, for five days until he was rescued and nursed back to health, at which point his testimony secured the convictions of his attackers. The court decision was considered "the most valuable verdict ever rendered in this district."⁹ If this trial was the turning point in the destruction of the whitecaps in the area, then the legal action over Worley's death was surely the sensational penultimate stage.

Between the fall of 1894 and the spring of 1895, the federal attorney secured indictments against 34 men in the hanging of Henry Worley, including Judge John L. Edmonson, a wealthy jurist and a public proponent of moonshining whose father had been one of the first settlers in the county, and Tom Wright, an ex-U.S. deputy marshal. Six of the seven original counts were thrown out, prompting a delay in the trials while more unassailable indictments were drawn up. (The hanging and the shooting



The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley and Ridgeway Baptist Church
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were considered separate cases and the final indictments can be found in *United States v. James McCutchen* [1894] and *United States v. Tobe Smith* [1894], respectively.)

With the resumption of the prosecution, the decision was made to try two men, blacksmith John Quarles Sr. and farmer David Butler. The evidence against them was the strongest, prosecutors believed, so theirs would be a test case for the others.

At the heart of the strategy of defense attorney Colonel W.C. Glenn was to demonstrate that the case did not belong in federal court but rather in local courts that were presumably more open to influence by well-placed whitecaps. According to the statute on which the indictment was based, a charge of conspiracy “to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate” anyone who was exercising his constitutional rights, in this case Worley’s right to testify against the illegal distillers, would have landed the case within federal jurisdiction.¹⁰ Therefore, defense argued that Worley was hung, not for reporting moonshiners, which was well within his rights as a citizen of the United States, but for being “a brute of a man,” a condition they hoped would not only bump the case out of the federal system but also elevate the role of the whitecaps as defenders of traditional morality. The defense claimed he was a heavy drinker, a wife beater, a murderer, and an oath breaker. It was hard to know where reality ended and legal strategy began.

The prosecution vehemently argued that Worley had been attacked solely because he was an informant against powerful moonshiners and not because of his character flaws. After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that federal courts did indeed have jurisdiction to try the whitecap cases, Quarles and Butler were found guilty and were sentenced to five years in the federal penitentiary in Columbus, Ohio. The judge reportedly reduced their sentences as an act of mercy because of their poverty and the size of their families. Quarles had fourteen children, and Butler had eight.¹¹

Four men — Anse (Anderson) Black, John Carnes, Sam Peeples, and Chris Mitchell — pleaded guilty to conspiracy in the attempted hanging and were sentenced to two years in jail and \$500 fines. After an initial denial of clemency in May of 1896, all four were pardoned by President Grover Cleveland and returned to their homes in September after two years in confinement.¹²

Of the eight men charged in the murder, only four were convicted in federal court, each sentenced to ten years hard labor.¹³ The Department of Justice did not support prosecution of the others in either case, and charges were dropped among those who had been indicted but not tried. The whitecaps had been all but eradicated by the spring of 1895, and the uncertainty of outcome and the expense of bringing the several dozen others to trial contributed to the decision. The effect was the same. The vigilantes’ power in the community, at least in this form, was broken.

**The Hanging and Shooting of Henry Worley and Ridgeway Baptist Church***-continued-*

James Henry Worley was buried the day after his murder in the graveyard at Ridgeway Baptist Church. Personal sanctity was evidently not a requirement for admission. Some no doubt hoped for peace, both theirs and his, in his eternal rest, while others must have quietly celebrated his passing. There were probably not many who mourned his loss. But the arms of the church received him.

He lies beside his first wife and infant daughter, both of whom predeceased him, and all three graves are at the crest of a hillock overlooking the log church, a pavilion with a long cement table for dinner on the grounds, and a red brick structure across the road, built by the Ridgeway congregation in 1982 for services.

In addition to the Worleys, the cemetery is filled with the graves of Quarleses, likely related to one of the men convicted and sentenced in the attempted murder. In fact, Worley's daughter, Kimmie, is buried a few feet from her parents, next to her husband, Henry Breckeridge Quarles. It was an astounding resolution to a spectacular drama, as they all lie forever in the church's care, recipients of an unfathomable grace.

Clayton H. Ramsey is a freelance writer and former president of the Atlanta Writers Club. He lives in Decatur.

Sources:

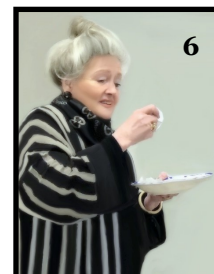
1. *Atlanta Journal* (Atlanta, GA), April 27, 1894, 1. Quoted in William F. Holmes, "Moonshining and Collective Violence: Georgia, 1889–1895,"
2. *The Journal of American History*, 67(3), Dec. 1980, 596.2. "Through the Heart," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), April 21, 1894, 8.
3. "Reign of the Kuklux in North Georgia," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), Jan. 13, 1895, 4.
4. James Boswell, "Friday, 19 September 1777," *Life of Johnson*, R.W. Chapman, ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1980), 849.
5. "Reign," 4.
6. George Gordon Ward, *The Annals of Upper Georgia Centered in Gilmer County* (Carrollton, GA: Thomasson Printing & Office Equipment Co., 1965), 644.
7. "How Worley Was Killed," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA) April 24, 1894, 3.
8. James McCutcheon's confession (AC Feb. 15, 1895) and neighbor Bradley Thornton's statement (AC April 24, 1894) provide two different versions of the events of Apr. 19, 1894. The narrative of January 13, 1895, is a third, arguably more accurate, account.
9. Holmes, "Moonshining," 605.
10. "The Jury Still Out," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), April 13, 1895, 9.
11. "Evidence All In," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), April 12, 1895, 9.
12. "Back from Columbus, Ohio," *North Georgia Citizen* (Dalton, Georgia), September 24, 1896, 6. Carnes is mistakenly called "Stern." Cf. NGC Feb. 21, 1895.



First Quarter Highlights 2024



The annual GCGSI Holiday Luncheon was held on Saturday, December 16, 2023. Members and their guests enjoyed a delicious meal; celebrated longtime member Gladys Spivey's birthday; presentations were made; the 2024 Board was installed; and door prizes were given. Thank you to Co-Event Chairpersons Neva Kelaher and Brenda Cochran for planning this time of fun and fellowship.



Photos (Clockwise from Top Left, L to R)

1. Everett Womack, Linda Womack, Karen Crider, Charlotte Davis, Levi Haire, T. W. Davis, Willard Jones, Margaret Farist, Linda Wolfe, Gladys Spivey

2. Rebecca Burrell and Buffett

3. Gladys Spivey Birthday Surprise

4. Desserts

5. Levi Haire

6. Neva Kelaher

7. Willard Jones, Mary Jones, T. W. Davis

8. John Davis, Rebecca Amerson

9. Lydia Bassetti, Erin Brandy, Patricia Henson



Photos: Lydia Bassetti, Rebecca Burrell, Brenda Cochran, Lynne Dover Lawson, and Barbara J. Dover



First Quarter Highlights 2024
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Installation of 2024 GCGSI Officers and Committees' Chairpersons

The Holiday Luncheon on Saturday, December 16, 2023 also included several awards' presentations and the Installation of 2024 GCGSI Officers and Committee's Chairpersons. Dr. Mary O. Jones officiated the installations' rose ceremony with the roses a beautiful symbol of the growth of the society's purpose and mission with the officers and committees' chairpersons nurturing that growth for the membership throughout the coming year.

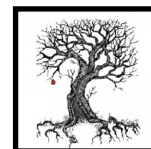


**2024 GCGSI Officers
and
Committees' Chairpersons**



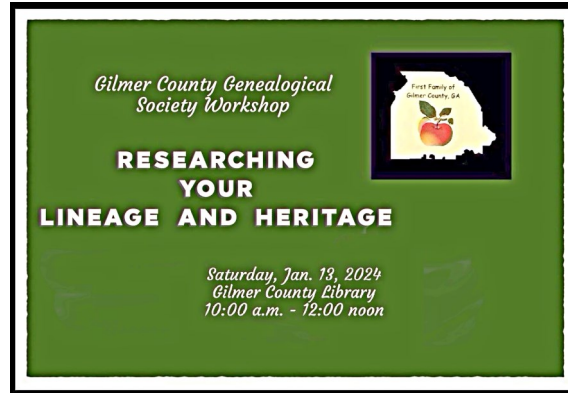
GCGSI Board (L to R)

- John Davis, President*
- Barbara J. Dover, Vice-President and Publications, Publicity, & Program Committees' Chairperson*
- Rebecca Burrell, Corresponding Secretary & Historian*
- Anita Summers, Recording Secretary*
- Susan Noles, Treasurer & Membership Committee Chairperson*
- Patricia Hyatt, First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia Committee Co-Chairperson*
- Linda Womack, Events Committee Chairperson*
(Not pictured-Eurilla Hyatt, First Families of Gilmer County Georgia Committee Co-Chairperson





First Quarter Highlights 2024 -continued-



John Davis, President of GCGSI, facilitated a free workshop at the Gilmer County Library on Saturday, January 13, 2024, for beginning and long-time researchers to trace their ancestry and learn the requirements for applying and becoming a member of First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia. Other GCGSI members were available to assist researchers and familiarize them with genealogical research resources available at the library. A roomful of people were present and several have already submitted approved applications to become First Families members.

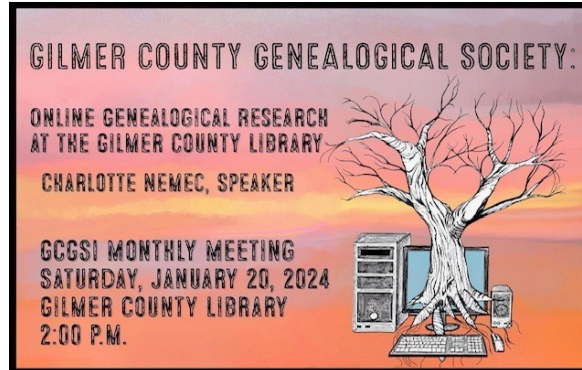


Photos (Clockwise from top, L to R):

1. Julia Lund, Eurilla Hyatt, Mimi Davis Dill, Sally Stenger, Anita Summers, Sherrill Davis
2. Terri Blair, Tammy Patrick, Sherrill Davis, Julia Lund, John Davis, Anita Summers, Sally Stenger
3. Terri Blair, Patricia Henson, John Davis
4. Everett Womack, Susan Noles, Linda Womack
5. Tammy Patrick, Unknown, Julia Lund, Sherrill Davis



First Quarter Highlights 2024
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The annual GCGSI meeting was held on Saturday, January 20, 2024 with Charlotte Nemec, Gilmer County Library's Public Service Specialist, speaking about Online Genealogical Research at the Gilmer County Library. Ms. Nemec explained features of the platforms Ancestry.com Library Edition, Heritage Quest, and FamilySearch.org. She also used her own ancestry to give examples of navigation within each site.

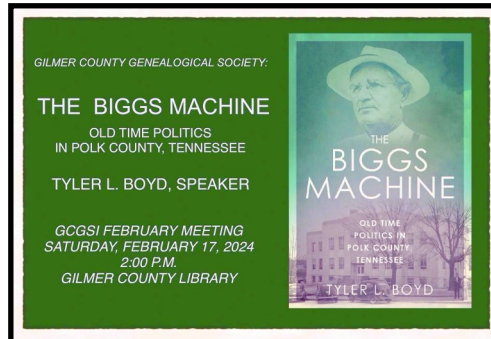


Above Photo: Speaker: Charlotte Nemec; Attendees: 1st Row, L to R, Eurilla Hyatt, Patricia Henson; 2nd Row, L to R, Mary Haus, Doug Piette; 3rd Row, L to R, Susan Noles, John Davis, Anita Summers; 4th Row, L to R: Beverly Ratcliff, Rebecca Amerson, Neva Kelaher, Charlotte Davis, Brenda Cochran, Linda Womack



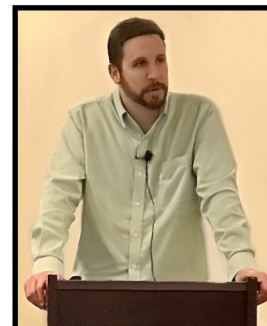


First Quarter Highlights 2024 -continued-



*The February 17, 2024 meeting of GCGSI featured the informative presentation from author and historian Tyler L. Boyd: **The Biggs Machine: Old Time Politics in Polk County Tennessee**. Mr. Boyd spoke about the era of election interference, law enforcement corruption, and police brutality under Sheriff Burch Biggs of Polk County, Tennessee during the first half of the 20th century.*

Mr. Boyd, the McMinn County, Tennessee Archivist and president of the McMinn County Historical Society and Archives, recently penned and published a book of that era based on interviews with citizens' personal experiences and recollections, media research, court documents, and more. He shared detailed information of the murders, graft, ballot tampering, and how Biggs' reign finally ended, much of which may be found in his book of the same title as his presentation. Mr. Boyd spoke that although it is too late for those affected negatively by this and other political machines, many reforms and safeguards have come about as a result in hope that history doesn't repeat itself.





First Quarter Highlights 2024 -continued-

Special Presentations

At the December, January, and February GCGSI meetings, special presentations were made to several of our members. In December, GCGSI Recording Secretary/Historian Rebecca Burrell, Events Committee Co-Chairperson Brenda Cochran, and First Families Committee Chairperson Gladys Spivey 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.

In January and February, First Families Committee Co-Chairperson Eurilla Hyatt and Former GCGSI President Dr. Mary O. Jones also received certificates of appreciation and the donation of books in their honor.

As many of Gilmer County's first settlers came from Buncombe and Madison Counties in North Carolina, several books from the Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society were recently purchased and donated by The Gilmer County Genealogical Society to the library. They are currently available in the Family Research Room. The books are **Asheville and Buncombe County, Once Upon a Time**; and **Death Certificates Madison County Index: Books 1-20; 21-40; 41-60; 61-77.**



Row 1 (L to R): At the GCGSI Holiday Luncheon on December 16, Barbara J. Dover presented Rebecca Burrell and Brenda Cochran with Certificates of Thanks for their years of service and support to GCGSI and the donations of **Early Northeast Buncombe County, NC Land Records, Volumes 2 and 4**, to the Gilmer County Library in their honor.



Row 2 (L to R): Barbara J. Dover presented Gladys Spivey with a Certificate of Thanks for years of service and support to GCGSI and the donation of **The Evolution of Ellijay, 1921-2021. A Century of Change** to the Gilmer County Library in her honor.



On January 20, 2024, Barbara J. Dover presented Eurilla Hyatt with a Certificate of Thanks for her years of service and support to GCGSI and the donation of the book **Early Northeast Buncombe County, NC Land Records, Volume 1** to the Gilmer County Library in her honor.



Row 3 (L to R): Barbara J. Dover presented Mary O. Jones with a Certificate of Thanks for her years of service and support to GCGSI and donation of the book **Cemeteries of Madison County, North Carolina, Volume 3** to the Gilmer County Library in her honor.



More books recently donated to the library by GCGSI: **Asheville and Buncombe County, Once Upon a Time**; and **Death Certificates Madison County Index: Books 1-20; 21-40; 41-60; 61-77.**





First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia

***Patricia Hyatt Henson and Eurilla Davis Hyatt
First Families of Gilmer County Committee Co-Chairpersons***

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.gcgisi.org.



First Families Members Added During the First Quarter of 2024

New Members	Ancestors
Bobbie Holloway Green	Stephen Holloway
Tammy Patrick	John Addington
Sherrill R. Davis	John Addington
Mary Jo Brown	Sherod James



At the holiday luncheon on December 16, 2023, Margaret Holloway Farist was awarded with First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia membership from Gladys Spivey, First Families Committee Chairperson and Vice President Barbara J. Dover. Ms. Farist proved her lineage to Gilmer County pioneer Stephen Holloway to qualify for membership. She received a certificate and pin to commemorate becoming a member of this lineage organization.

Ms. Farist accepted another First Families certificate and pin from GCGSI President John Davis at the February 17, 2024 GCGSI meeting on behalf of her sister Bobbie Holloway Green. Ms. Green's ancestor for qualification was also pioneer Stephen Holloway.



Bulletin Board

March 2024

- **Sunday, March 10 - Daylight Saving Time Begins**
- **Saturday, March 16 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting**
Civil War Battles and Soldiers of North Georgia
John H. Tolbert, speaker
Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.
- **Sunday, March 17 - St. Patrick's Day**
- **Tuesday, March 19 - First Day of Spring**
- **Sunday, March 31—Happy Easter!**

April 2024

- **Monday, April 1 - April Fool's Day**
- **Sunday April 7 - Saturday April 13 - National Library Week**
- **Tuesday, April 9 - Library Appreciation Luncheon**
Gilmer County Library - 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
- **Saturday, April 20 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting**
The Lineage of Mountaintown's Osborn Family
Dennis C. Stewart, speaker
Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.
- **Monday, April 22 - Earth Day**

May 2024

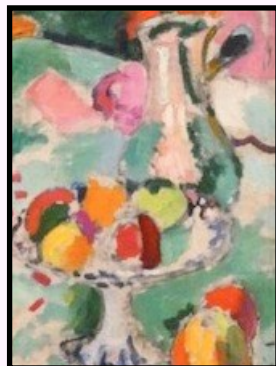
- **Sunday, May 5 - Cinco de Mayo**
- **Sunday, May 12 - Mother's Day**
- **Saturday, May 18 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting with Gilmer County Master Gardener Volunteers**
Cultivating Family Gardens for Generations: Heirloom and Pass-along Plants, and Seed-Saving
Karen Hyde, speaker
Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.



Girl Reading (La Lecture, 1905-1906)
Henri Matisse (French, 1869-1954)

2024 GCGSI Officers and Committee Chairpersons

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




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

The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
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Ellijay, GA 30540



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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

