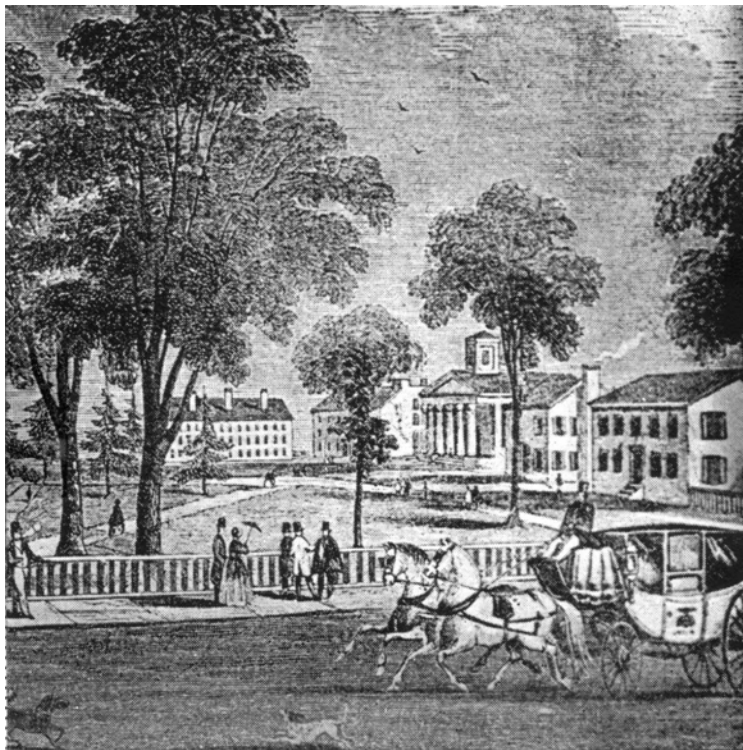


Athens Historian

Volume 11

Fall 2006



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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ATHENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Excerpted from a history by
Susan Frances Barrow Tate.

On October 11, 1959, at an informal organizational meeting the Athens Historical Society was born. This meeting was held in the Athens Regional Library, then located on the corner of Hancock and College Avenues. The founders of the Society were Sarah Maret, Director of the Athens Regional Library; John E. Talmadge, Professor of English, University of Georgia; Porter Kellam, Director of the University of Georgia Libraries; Kenneth Coleman, Professor of History, University of Georgia; Richard N. Fickett III; Marion West Marshall; Harry Hodgson, Sr.; John W. Bonner, Special Collections Librarian, University of Georgia Library; Susan Frances Barrow Tate, Library Assistant, University of Georgia Library; Lucy Clark and Robert E. Gibson. Temporary committees were formed to plan a general organization meeting to be held October 29, 1959. At this meeting, held in the auditorium of the Chamber of Commerce building, a constitution was approved, aims and/or purposes of the society were formulated, and committees were appointed.

The purposes and aims of the Athens Historical Society expressed in the current constitution are:

1. To discover, collect and preserve all materials, especially original and source materials, pertaining to the history of or in any manner illustrative of Athens, Clarke County, adjacent counties, and related areas.
2. To disseminate this knowledge for the enlightenment of our citizenry through preparing, editing and publishing historical materials, descriptive and illustrative of Athens and related areas through programs or historical papers.
3. To promote historical research.
4. To promote preservation and perpetuation of historic sites and places.
5. To bring together those interested in the history of these areas.
6. To promote and stimulate public interest in and appreciation of the history of Athens and related areas and to develop in every way an understanding of their historic past.
7. Notwithstanding any provision of these articles, this organization shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.

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Revolutionary War Patriot Graves in Clarke and Oconee Counties

By Dana Anderson

The Georgia counties of Clarke and Oconee are rich in Revolutionary War associations, despite the fact that during the years of the war the area was territory belonging to the Creek and Cherokee Native Americans and hence saw no military action. The boundary line of the Georgia colony ran through Cherokee Corner in Oglethorpe County, only about nine miles southeast of the Clarke County line on U.S. Highway 78. The closest military action took place in Wilkes County at the Battle of Kettle Creek in the Georgia backwoods.

After the war, however, many Revolutionary veterans were attracted to this area by Georgia's offer of free land to Revolutionary soldiers and the plan to establish the University of Georgia. The *Georgia Digest of Laws* (1784) identified the area that would become Clarke County, between the Little River (north fork of the Oconee River) and the Apalachee River (south fork) as a "reserved fork." This land was given to veterans of the Continental army, sailors, and medical corps officers, thus providing clues to the Revolutionary service of the earliest settlers and also explaining their diverse origins. The veterans, whose lives were intimately associated with the Revolutionary War, enriched the communities of their new neighbors who later paid tribute to their lives and service as expressed in thoughtful and thankful obituaries.

Throughout the years since the deaths of these early American patriots there have been numerous attempts to document their graves, although unfortunately accuracy has often been difficult to attain. *Georgia Revolutionary Soldiers' Graves*, a noteworthy two-volume, county-by-county compilation of the 3,421 Revolutionary War patriots who lived and died in Georgia, was published in 1993 by the Georgia Society Sons of the American Revolution (SAR). A monumental amount of work went into gathering the service histories and biographies of these Georgians and the corresponding references. The editors, H. Ross Arnold, Jr., and H. Clifton Burnham, created a user-friendly reference book for those interested in pursuing local Georgia history in

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the period starting just after the close of the war in 1783. In 2005, a revised second edition of the book was published under the new title *Georgia Revolutionary Soldiers and Sailors, Patriots and Pioneers* and included updated information and additional listings.

Documenting Patriotic Service

State and local records for this period are acutely important given that federal records are extremely scarce, primarily due to the burning of Washington, D.C., in the War of 1812. Although Congress did authorize pensions for Revolutionary veterans, very few of those serving or their widows actually received any compensation, for a variety of reasons. Most often, eligible veterans for whatever reason chose not to apply for a pension. Those who did apply were often rejected, lacking official discharge papers or other proofs such as marriage records. Hence, a centralized source of military service does not exist for this period as it does for later American military engagements. Often the states recognized Revolutionary service with either land grants, land bounties, or by preferential draws in land lotteries, thereby providing documentation of veteran status not found elsewhere.

It is important to note here that the word “patriot” is not used interchangeably with the words “soldier” or “military service.” Both the SAR and its female counterpart, the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), use the term more broadly in defining an ancestor whose Revolutionary War activities qualify a descendant for membership in the respective lineage societies. For example, the DAR defines a patriot as “a man or woman who, with unfailing loyalty to the cause of American Independence, served as a sailor, or as a soldier, or civil officer in one of the several Colonies or States, or in the United Colonies or States, or as a recognized patriot, or rendered material aid thereto....” Thus, patriots may never have done military service, but served as a juror or sheriff or provided beef or blankets to the army, for example. Although the SAR book is well researched, the reader should consider the list a guide to, but not a primary source for, the Revolutionary era activities of a given individual.

The first edition of this book provides a starting point from which to locate the existence of Revolutionary period graves either known or thought to be in Clarke and Oconee counties. The Athens-based Elijah Clarke Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, is, as are all DAR chapters, under a Congressional mandate that

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began about 1896 to locate, mark, and report to Congress all graves of Revolutionary soldiers discovered within their geographical purview. Founded in 1901, the Elijah Clarke Chapter, with its affiliated children's group, Count D'Estaing Society, National Society Children of the American Revolution (CAR), has been fulfilling this mandate locally for over 100 years. The Elijah Clarke Chapter meeting records (privately held manuscripts) are extant from the date of organization of the chapter and provide a source for commemorative activities, specifically the patriot grave markings. The information provided, however, is extremely sketchy, and it is obvious in a reading of the minutes that the nature of the ceremonies, the degree of scholarly research, and the amount of physical labor involved in grave site preparation varied over the decades. Contemporary commemorative markers placed by the DAR are held to strict scholarly guidelines, but it should not be assumed that such was the case decades ago.

Government Grave Markers

Many of the gravesites have markers obtained from Veterans Affairs (VA) that may have been placed by relatives and not by the local DAR or SAR. Thus, the corroborating documentation of service for these patriots is not available. The VA tombstone program was begun in 1928 and provides tombstones for those veterans who lack private headstones, starting with the American Revolution. An index of veterans with VA markers is online at <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov>.

Like the DAR, the Athens chapter of the SAR has been active in the identification and commemoration of these historic sites. While the proceedings and minutes of these societies are private manuscripts, their activities regarding grave identification are available to the public in two ways. The SAR has available for sale a compact disk entitled *SAR Patriot Index, Edition III* (Progeny Software, Inc., 2002.) that includes not only their own list of members' patriot ancestors, but also 800 tombstone photos as well. The DAR sends a yearly report of its activities to the U. S. Congress, which is then published in the *Acts of Congress*. These records are available at the University of Georgia Library Government Records section on microfilm.

It is also important to note that the *DAR Index* is not a comprehensive encyclopedia of American Revolutionary patriots; it is simply a compilation of ancestors from its own membership applications and hence provides only a small subset of those involved in the war effort.

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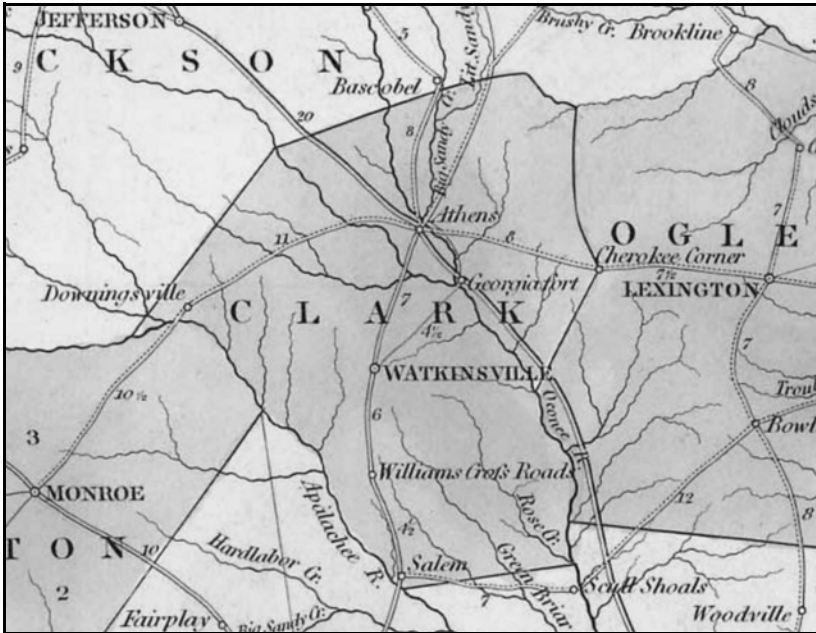
The *DAR Index* is now in its third edition, with both additions of newly validated patriots and the removal of some previous patriots whose lineage or service has been found to be erroneous or incomplete. Researchers should be cautioned to utilize only the 2003 Millennium Edition at this time, eschewing earlier ones.

The records of the activities of these lineage societies have provided corroborative, but often not definitive, information about the location and condition of the known graves. For further research a comparison of the data from the SAR Patriots book with information from cemetery reference books for Clarke and Oconee County is useful. The information cannot be perfectly cross-referenced, since there are soldiers who appear in the SAR book with references, but who are not mentioned in the cemetery books - and vice versa. Since many of the oldest graves, especially those on private land, were not documented before the Civil War, it is not surprising that these graves would not be recorded in the cemetery database. Also, on occasion, a person whose life span indicates a likely participation in the war activities may be mentioned in the cemetery book in an identified grave, but with no reference given in the SAR book. This phenomenon can be partly explained by the reference sources utilized by the SAR Patriots book. The authors thoroughly examined *Georgia's Roster of the Revolution*, *Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia*, *Gone to Georgia*, *Georgia Citizens and Soldiers of the American Revolution*, and *Information on Some Georgia Pioneers*. Also examined were the Georgia land lotteries of 1807 and 1827 and the federal pensions for Revolutionary veterans. Those missing Revolutionary veterans who appear to have lived and died locally for the most part did not have early Georgia roots or did not apply for lottery land or pensions as a veteran, and hence do not appear in the SAR book.

One other factor complicates the search for the historic gravesites. In both editions, but particularly in the later one, patriots are grouped under the county with which their name has the largest number of paper references. Researchers, however, must take into consideration the history of county borders and land records. Many of the Revolutionary veterans are identified as receiving land in the lotteries as residents of a specific county, but if they later moved, they would need to be followed out of that county to their new home and eventual burial site. Thus, the assumption that a patriot listed under Clarke or Oconee County actually lived out his life here has to be verified in every instance with land, probate, or pension records.

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Of course, the fact that Oconee County did not exist as a separate county until 1875 makes locating the graves even more difficult. Land records or pension records have sometimes helped identify the “old home place” if they provide geographical landmarks that can still be reconciled. Original records of old Jackson County are also conflated with those of Clarke and Oconee, as are Oglethorpe’s and Greene’s.



Clarke County in 1839 - Oconee County was created from the western portion in 1875. From *The American Atlas* by David H. Burr, cited on the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government website www.cviog.uga.edu/Projects/gainfo/histcountymaps/clarke1839map.htm

Beginning the Search

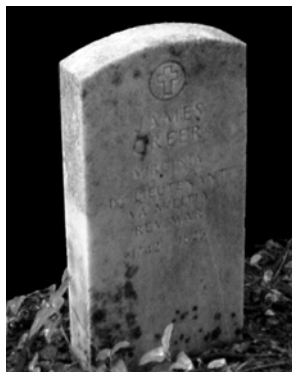
My initial attempts to visit and photograph the gravesites of Clarke and Oconee Revolutionary War patriots began in the spring of 2005 when the Elijah Clarke Chapter, NSDAR, was contacted by a descendant of the patriot James Greer and asked to photograph his gravesite in Oconee County. James Greer drew land in the 1827 Georgia Land Lottery as a Revolutionary veteran; he was noted at the time to be living in Clarke County. Whatever Greer did with this land, he evidently did not occupy it himself, as his remains are buried on what is known historically as the “Old Greer Plantation.”

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This site is located just off Georgia Hwy. 53 on the section north of the intersection with U.S. Hwy. 78 about ¼ mile before the Barrow County line (GPS mark N 33°55.097, W 83°36.550). From U.S. Hwy. 78, Osborne Road is the third road on the left. To locate the gravesite, turn right on the first dirt road and continue to a trailer on the left and a grass clearing opposite. The grave marker is just inside the wooded area at the back edge of the clearing, close to, but not on, the actual gravesite, as permission could not be obtained from the landowners. Residents remark that there is also a larger cemetery site further into the woods with unmarked graves or marked with fieldstones. The burial site is marked by a VA granite marker, ordered and placed by the Elijah Clarke DAR on 5 Dec 1970.

James Greer was born 15 Jan 1742 in Baltimore County, Maryland, and married Ann Haynes Lowe (widow of Travis Lowe) on 18 April 1767. He served as a 1st lieutenant in the Bedford County, Virginia, militia where his service is recorded 24 Sept 1781. His death occurred between 13 June and 5 Sept 1825 in Clarke County, Georgia. He is included in the *DAR Patriot Index*.

The research on James Greer generated further interest in Oconee County. Members from the DAR and CAR photographed and took a GPS reading at several Oconee gravesites. A number of Revolutionary patriots



James Greer, 1742-1825

are buried on the cemetery grounds of Mars Hill Baptist Church on Mars Hill Road in Oconee County. This land was originally in old Jackson County (formed 1796), then in Clarke beginning in 1801. Mars Hill Church is one of the oldest established churches in Georgia, founded July 1799, not far from its present-day location. The group includes William Daniell, John Stroud, Stephen Crow, and possibly Moses Hopkins. These graves have been variously marked.

Stephen Crow was born 28 Feb 1750 in North Carolina. He gave service in that state and was a winner in the 1827 Georgia Land Lottery, where he was identified as a Revolutionary veteran. He married Margaret Stroud and died 8 Aug 1830 in old Clarke County. His grave was marked by a descendant in 1941, but was not reported to the local DAR or to Congress. The gravesite was dedicated by the Elijah Clarke Chapter in June 1968.

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William Daniell, whose house survives and is owned by Oconee County, is buried near the front of the cemetery. Daniell gave service in Wilmington, North Carolina, before moving to Clarke County, Georgia. A native North Carolinian, he married twice: Rachel Howe about 1761 and Mary Melton on 11 June 1787. He died 5 Sept 1840, and his grave was marked by DAR ceremony on 19 Sept 1937.

John Stroud was born in 1732 in Amwell, New Jersey. His service in North Carolina is documented in the *State Records of North Carolina*, Vol. XV, p.749; Vol. XVI, p.1152, as being in the 1st Regiment under Major John Ashe. He married Sarah Connally in 1756 and died in Clarke County sometime between 1 Jan 1805 and the following January. His grave was marked by the DAR in 1923. The GPS marking for the cemetery is N 33° 54.509 W 88° 29.295.

Moses Hopkins is commemorated by a memorial stone placed by his descendants. Moses was the son of Lambeth and Priscilla Hopkins. Lambeth moved from North Carolina to Wilkes County, Georgia, during the Revolutionary years and is thought to have served with the Georgia militia with Capt. Carr in the Rangers of Wilkes County. He received bounty land for his military service in old Washington County in the vicinity of the Oconee River and Briar Creek. Lambeth Hopkins is listed in the SAR book as being in Clarke County, but when he died in 1798, his land was actually part of Jackson County. Lambeth left a will, probated in 1798 in Jackson County, naming Moses as his heir. A year afterwards, the widow Hopkins was one of the founding members of the Mars Hill Church, and Moses joined by a confession of faith in September 1803. He was born in 1760 and possibly served in the Talbot County, Maryland, militia; he took a loyalty oath in Maryland in 1778. Moses died 6 Jan 1810, but his burial is not recorded at the church.

More Oconee Gravesites

Other patriots' gravesites are scattered throughout the rest of Oconee County. On the east side, near the Clarke/Oconee/Oglethorpe line on Old Barnett Shoals Road, is the grave of John Barnett (7 June 1762-10 Mar 1814). The road is a spur of Old Barnett Shoals, the second street on the right after the Oconee River. Barnett served in the Georgia militia under Gen. Elijah Clarke and also in South Carolina under Gen. Francis Marion. His tombstone is a VA marker that was dedicated by the DAR in 1941.

The graves of David Elder, Philip Tigner, and John Nunnally are also in Oconee County. Although there is a well-known Elder Cemetery

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on Hwy. 15 south of Watkinsville with a monument to David Elder, this is not his actual burial site. The David Elder Cemetery is located on land owned by John English at 2421 Elder Bridge Road, which turns off Hwy. 15 about 4 miles south of Watkinsville. The cemetery is down a dirt driveway in a pasture about .2 of a mile into the woods. There is a modern signpost identifying the cemetery. David Elder is buried in the stone enclosure in the back closest to the pasture. There is a grave marker stating his Revolutionary War service but no dates. At the base someone has erroneously inscribed, "He was the first Elder to come to Georgia." Elder (7 Jan 1760-4 Aug 1853), a native Virginian, did his Revolutionary service in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. He married three times: Polly Reed, Mollie Phillips, and Elizabeth Allen, resulting in many Elder descendants still living locally. DAR marked his grave sometime between 1932 and 1937, and his VA tombstone is still visible in the woods.



Philip Tigner, d. 1819

Near the David Elder Cemetery is the gravesite of Philip Tigner. Down Elder Mill Road, Beechnut Lane is a small paved street that turns off to the right before the Elder Covered Bridge. The grave of Philip Tigner is located on a small rise in the woods behind a horse paddock opposite 1061 Beechnut Lane, on what was once the Tigner estate, now owned by the Koffman family. Tigner's grave is marked with a VA marker and located at GPS N33°48.414 E83°21.902. Tigner reputedly served in the Virginia troops and was also captain of the 5th Com-

pany, 2nd Battalion of the Georgia troops; he is not, however, in the *DAR Patriot Index*. This simply means that no descendant has ever applied for DAR membership using his service.

Near Bishop, on the Old Bishop Road leading to Watkinsville, is the Nunnally Cemetery at GPS Mark N33°49.948 W83°25.445. The cemetery is visible on the north side of the road and is surrounded by a modern chain link fence with a gate on the right side. John Nunnally (12 Feb 1758 – 10 June 1825) was a major brigadier inspector in Powhatan, Virginia, of the Virginia Continental Line, and his widow, Sukey Burton Nunnally, received a federal pension for his services (W5432). His grave has a DAR plaque that was placed in 1986 by the Sunbury DAR chapter of Winder, Georgia.

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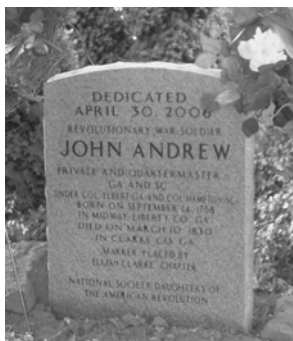
William Willoughby is another Oconee patriot who was added to the new edition of the SAR book and is also in the *DAR Index*. Willoughby did military service beginning in 1777 in Virginia as a private under Capt. John Mosby. He moved to Georgia and did additional service in the 2nd Georgia Battalion under Capt. Jacob Wimpey and was taken prisoner by the British in the Siege of Savannah. He received a federal pension (M805 Roll:876 Image:142 File:S36396) in 1819 as a Clarke County resident, and his widow Sarah received his pension in 1831 (M805 Roll:876 Image:152 File:W18345). Willoughby owned considerable land in the southern part of Oconee County in the area around and including Antioch Christian Church on Antioch Church Road, off Hwy. 15 South near the Greene County line. Willoughby (24 Sept 1759 – before 2 Nov 1829) was originally thought to be buried in a Willoughby cemetery off Hwy. 15, but research by local descendants has proved that some of his children and grandchildren are the oldest burials there. Recent research by the Willoughby Family Association has the grave in the Antioch Church Cemetery, as there are two unmarked graves thought to be William and his wife. A VA tombstone has been prepared, ordered by the Willoughby descendants organization, and placement is expected in 2007.

William Scott Branch (1765-1839) is listed under Clarke County in the SAR Patriot book. His grave is known to be located in Oconee County in the William S. Branch family cemetery and is noted in the Oconee County cemetery book on page 91. The gravesite is located 1.9 miles south of Bishop at the end of a cedar-lined gravel driveway at 3883 Hwy. 441S in Bishop on land owned by the Brinson family, who are Branch descendants (GPS: N33°47.464;W83°25.734). The graves are on a hilltop behind the old homestead. The cemetery was recently rediscovered by the Georgia Department of Transportation as it considered a new path for the extension of the US Hwy. 441 Bypass going south into Morgan County. Branch was a native of Chesterfield County, Virginia, and served in the Virginia Continental Line. In the 1827 Georgia Land Lottery he is identified as a Revolutionary soldier and as a Greene County resident. Greene and Clarke have had border changes over time, and Branch's residence was near this zone, explaining the discrepancy in his listing.

The Rev. John Andrew, also listed under Clarke County, recently had his gravesite marked with a VA tombstone, a DAR marker, and an informational plaque in a formal ceremony conducted by the Elijah

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Clarke Chapter on 30 April 2006. John Andrew (14 Sept 1758-10 March 1830) had many trades, but was most noteworthy as the first native-born (Sunbury, Georgia) ordained Methodist minister. He



traveled the circuit through northeast Georgia, concluding his service at the Mt. Zion Church, on US Hwy. 441S, 1.2 miles south of Bishop. The gravesite, surrounded by three other graves, is at the front of the Michael property at 4141 Hwy. 441S (Bishop) and is accessed through a gate near the entrance to the dirt driveway. The grave stands in a clump of boxwoods and trees about 50 yards to the west side of the highway, easily visible from the road. Reverend Andrew's service included the Georgia

Continental Battalion under Gen. Samuel Elbert and later as a quartermaster and adjutant in the South Carolina Light Dragoons under Col. Henry Hampton and Gen. Thomas Sumter (sometimes spelled Sumpster). He fought at the battles of Briar Creek and Fishing Creek. He is listed in the *DAR Patriot Index*.

Unknown Oconee Gravesites

Several men remain listed under the Oconee County section of the SAR book whose gravesites are unknown: Anderson Fambrough, Coldrup (changed from Colquitt in the earlier edition) Freeman, William Manley, and David and John Thurmond. Only one member of this group has a gravesite reference in the book. David Thurmond has no dates associated with his name, but he is supposed to be buried in the "Old Cemetery, near Bishop, GA." A search with a local expert has failed to discover any Revolutionary era cemetery within a short radius of Bishop. Land records indicate that the Thurmonds owned much land in southern Oconee County, along the Greene County line. The SAR book cites the fact that both Thurmonds received bounty land for their military service. The Oconee cemetery book describes a Thurman Cemetery containing the grave of Harris Thurman, the son of David Thurmond (Thurman), on Old Wire Bridge Road on property formerly known as the "Old Jim Downs Place." Further research may confirm the location of the homestead as the most likely burial spot.

A Fambrough Cemetery exists off U.S. Hwy. 15 near the Greene County line, but no record exists of Anderson Fambrough's gravesite,

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as the earliest burial is 1854. According to the SAR book, Fambrough died in November of 1815, having received bounty land in Georgia, but for what service remains obscure.

Likewise, Colquitt Freeman, a miller by trade, received a federal pension (Series: M805 Roll: 338 Image:152 File: S37941) in 1818 for many years of service in the Virginia Continental Army under Captain Winston and Captain Parker. On Freeman Creek Road, located in the southern part of Oconee County near Farmington, is the Freeman Creek Baptist Church with a cemetery that contains at least one documented Revolutionary era grave for James Sloan (1744 – 1808), according to the Oconee County cemetery book. Sloan applied for a pension in Clarke County and was noted as dying there 28 Feb 1837.

Of the five, William Manley is the only man recognized in the *DAR Patriot Index*. Information therein concurs with a Watkinsville or Oconee burial site for Manley (21 Nov 1761 – 1824). Manley was a Cecil County, Maryland, native, who did service in the Maryland Continental Line under Capt. Price. Additional research will be needed to identify land holdings and probate records of these men to locate the missing data.

As the search goes on, other men's names have come to light as possible additions to the Oconee patriot list. James Sloan, for example, would have been the right age to have Revolutionary War service. The Oconee cemetery book also lists Edward Paine, who died in Watkinsville in 1812 at the age of 73. William Clarke, whose home was built in 1804 on the Old Watson Springs Road in Oconee County and which still stands occupied, is another possible veteran. Clarke (27 July 1764-17 Jan 1849) was probably a Virginia native who came to Georgia via North Carolina. He married twice in Georgia and was active in local political affairs, serving as a state representative for 16 years, then as a state senator and district judge. He is thought to have had patriotic service, and further research is being conducted by his descendants. His tombstone and grave, located on land currently owned by a timber company, are documented in the Oconee cemetery book.

Clarke County Gravesites

Clarke County hosts an equal number of Revolutionary gravesites and probably has an even greater number of unknown ones. Of the over 60 patriots identified in the SAR book, only eight have known gravesites. Those identified include James Barrow, James Espey,

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William Herring, Hiram Howard, David Wood Meriwether, Philip Ryan, Reuben Ransome, and the Rev. Hope Hull.

The Old City Cemetery, also called the Jackson Street Cemetery, is located between the Lamar Dodd School of Art and Baldwin Hall on South Jackson Street on the University of Georgia campus. It is the oldest city cemetery in Athens, and in it rest the remains of James Espey (7 Dec 1759-12 Nov 1834) and possibly others. Mr. Espey was memorialized in the Athens newspaper of the time, the *Southern*



A hand-etched stone marks the grave of James Espey in the Old City Cemetery on Jackson Street.

Banner, on 15 Nov 1834 as a hero of the Battle of Kings Mountain, South Carolina. He moved to Oglethorpe County and finally to Clarke, where he was given a funeral with military honors. He served in the Georgia legislature representing Oglethorpe and drew in the 1832 Georgia Land Lottery. He also received a federal military pension (M805 Roll:307 Image:239 File:S31668). His headstone is still legible near the center front third of the cemetery. He is not listed in the *DAR Patriot Index*.

Nearby, in the Oconee Hill Cemetery off of East Campus Road lie two more patriots: James Barrow and the Rev. Hope Hull. James Barrow (31 Jan 1757-20 Jan 1828) is the patriarch of the Barrow clan still surviving in Clarke County today. Originally from North Carolina, he served in the Continental Line under Colonels Johnston and Sumner and later in Georgia and South Carolina. During his term of military service he was in the battles of Valley Forge, Brandywine, and Germantown. The Barrow plot is not far from the entrance of the cemetery. The main road curves sharply right, then left towards a granite sign on the right shoulder shaped like the state of Georgia. To the right of the sign, the ground drops away into a valley, and the Barrow plot (Lot 36) is located some 25 yards down a flight of steps.

Reverend Hope Hull was born in Maryland on 13 March 1763. Originally trained to be a carpenter, he served in the Maryland troops, afterwards turning to the religious life. He became a famous Georgia son, well known as the leading evangelist for the newly established denomination of Methodism in the southern states. As he grew too old to ride the circuit, he settled in Athens and established a permanent

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preaching post. He was one of the first trustees of the University of Georgia. He died in Athens on 4 Oct 1818. The Hull plot (Lots 7 & 8) is found past the carved Georgia sign. Within 50 feet past the sign, a straight gravel spur lane is visible as the main paved road curves to the right. Down the gravel lane, the plots are just past a set of stairs to the right, approximately 100 feet from the main road.

The remaining Clarke gravesites are scattered around the county. On the far eastern edge, in the town of Winterville, lies the grave of Hiram Howard (c. 1760-Aug 1821). His will was probated in Clarke County on 6 Aug 1821. Howard was a North Carolinian, doing service in that state and later joining the Georgia Continental Line under Col. John Stewart. The SAR book describes the gravesite as the Howard Cemetery, Parr's District, near Shoal Creek. Today the grave can be seen on Suddeth Street, off Main Street in Winterville. Near the dead end of Suddeth Street, the grave is visible directly on the right shoulder of the road by a lovely shade tree. The DAR celebrated the grave marking in October 1925. Interestingly, the *DAR Index* doesn't credit Howard with military service, but it does indicate that his widow or heirs were in the 1827 Georgia Land Lottery.

On the far north side of the county, within the perimeter fence of the Sandy Creek Park (off U. S. Hwy. 441N) owned by Clarke County, is the Ryan-Nance Cemetery. At least 35 graves are located here, with that of Philip Ryan being the oldest. The cemetery is enclosed in a fence in a wooded area to the right (west) and back side of the parking lot. Ryan has a VA tombstone, and the DAR recognized his grave in 1931; he is not, however, in the *DAR Patriot Index*. Ryan, born circa 1755, was probably a Virginian as he took the Oath of Allegiance in Henry County, Virginia, on 30 August 1777. Later he purportedly served in Georgia as well, since his wife, Obedience, drew land in the 1825 Georgia Land Lottery as a Jackson County resident and widow of a Revolutionary soldier.

In the western part of the county, off U.S. Hwy. 78 West, just past its juncture with Loop 10, the grave of David Meriwether can be located in the Holiday Estates subdivision, in close proximity to Georgia Square Mall. The actual gravesite is located



David Meriwether 1754-1822

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in the backyard of the house at 405 Cherokee Ridge Road within a stone wall. Called the Meriwether Cemetery, it is obviously *not* in Oconee County as indicated in the SAR book. Meriwether was born in 1754 near Charlottesville, Virginia, where he rose to the rank of either lieutenant or captain in the Virginia Continental Army and participated in the Siege of Savannah. In Charleston he was taken as a prisoner of war and released and then continued his military service. He received bounty land in Wilkes County, but eventually moved to Clarke where he died 13 Oct 1822. His wife, Frances Wingfield Meriwether (1762-1820), is also buried in the same enclosure. The gravesite was lost for a long time when the farm fell into disrepair, but was rediscovered in the 1970s when housing and commercial development began in the area. The DAR conducted a ceremony on 28 April 1973, unveiling the VA tombstone on his grave; his name is included in the *DAR Index*. Meriwether, for whom Meriwether County, Georgia, is named, is one of Georgia's famous sons, noted for his lengthy political career. He served as Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives (1797-1800), in the U.S. House of Representatives during 1801-02 and 1803-07 (at-large 1801-02, 1803-05, 3rd District 1805-07), and was appointed presidential elector from Georgia in 1816 and 1820.

Off of U.S. Hwy. 78 East towards downtown Athens is the grave of Solomon Edwards (4 Sept 1756-27 Jan 1844). Hailing from Louisa County, Virginia, Solomon saw active duty in the Virginia Continental Line for almost the entire duration of the war. He received bounty land in Georgia and came to Clarke County in 1804, according to his obituary in the *Southern Banner* (8 Feb 1844). The gravesite is slightly inaccessible as it is on the north side of the highway near the traffic light at the Target shopping center. The Clarke County cemetery book gives directions to the site via a route along the Oconee River, beginning at Mitchell Bridge Road. An alternative route is to climb up a steep, paved driveway just west of the Enterprise Car Rental office at 3100 Atlanta Highway. At the top of the driveway is a trailer that backs up to a power company right-of-way along the top of the ridge. Landmarks for orientation are Post #44 Warning Pole and Power Pole #32. The small cemetery is 30-40 feet to the right of the power right-of-way. The SAR conducted a grave marking ceremony at this site and erected a VA monument in 1995. About five other graves are in the cemetery, with only one other marker, but evidence of other grave sinks is visible. DAR has no entry for Edwards in the *DAR Index*.

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The last two identified graves are in the southern section of Clarke County, those of Reuben Ransome and William Herring. Ransome (1754-18 Feb 1833) married first Sally Leeman about 1779 in Bute County, North Carolina, then second Nancy Cox 1818 in Clarke County. In the *DAR Patriot Index* his service is documented in Bute County, North Carolina, in the Minutes of the Committee of Safety, 1775-1776. The SAR book adds that he gave military service there also and consequently drew land in the 1825 Georgia Land Lottery as a Revolutionary veteran residing in Clarke County. His grave was marked by the DAR in 1933, before the current subdivision of Cedar Creek was built in the 1960s. The grave, according to reports of local residents, had an obelisk shaped stone, which has been reported missing since 1969. The actual site is on the property of 150 Horseshoe Circle. The investigation of this site needs to be re-opened while there are still local residents who can recall the small cemetery and the actions of the previous owners of the lot.

About two miles away is the grave of William Herring (c. 1760 - 1 Nov 1812), found on the property of 110 Orchard Circle. Orchard Circle is the last street on the right before the intersection of Whit Davis and Old Lexington Road, where Whit Davis Elementary School is located. Immediately on the right, at 110 Orchard Circle is a small cemetery ("Old Herring" or "Cox") directly in front of the house about 15 feet off the road (GPS: N33°54.399, W083°18.851). A few other graves are around Herring's, whose grave has a VA marker. Who placed the marker remains a mystery. The Clarke County cemetery book gives detailed research and a description of the site, including a comment that the DAR had ordered a VA tombstone to be erected. At the time of the writing in 1994 and again in 1998, no such tombstone was in evidence. However, in 2005 a VA tombstone was in place, but the local DAR chapter was not involved in its placement. Herring is in the *DAR Index*; his grave location, however, would not have been forwarded to DAR headquarters since it was not conducted under their purview. Herring's will was probated in Clarke County, although he did live some time in Oglethorpe. His service record is not recorded by SAR, and DAR archives simply report that he was a private in the infantry, most likely in Virginia. That a VA tombstone was actually issued means that the paperwork was sent to Department of Veterans Affairs, who reviewed the application for accuracy and approved the claim of the supporting documents before releasing it for installation.

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Further Research

The remaining patriots listed for Clarke County provide a rich source for further historical investigation. These could be buried in Clarke or Oconee County.

Ezekial Akridge (c. 1760-3 July 1843)	George Herndon (d. 1815)
Philip Allen (1759-c. 1830)	Isaac Hill (10 Feb 1761-15 Aug 1833)
John Armstrong (1729-1805)	Uriah Humphries (d. 1816)
Jacob Bankston (c. 1733-1802)	Robert Laird (1742-16 March 1834)
John Bankston (c. 11 June 1754-25 Sept 1823)	James Lassiter (1759-20 April 1828)
Mial Barnett (c. 1760-1819)	Burwell Lee (1750-15 March 1839)
Moses Beard (22 Apr 1759-9 Feb 1833)	Isaac Mathews (c.1743-1814)
Edward Bowling (25 Aug 1744-post 1835)	John McDonald (21 June 1764-25 Feb 1848)
George Braswell (d. 1821)	John L. Oliver (12 Jan 1762-1845)
Jones Broach (d. 1809)	Benjamin Parr (1 Sept 1760-22 Dec 1842)
James Brown (25 Aug 1763-post 1833)	Peter Randolph (1754-31-Oct 1812)
Theophilus Burke (1761-1808)	John Sawyer (1748-1810)
Dudley Carey (1756-1808)	Hill Smith (1761-1 Dec 1838)
Robert Carter (1758-post 1835)	John Smith (1 June 1750-18 July 1838)
Henry Castleberry (d. 1807)	William Smith (22 April 1754-post 1833)
George Clifton (1761-11 June 1840)	Charles Stewart (c. 1758-1809)
Daniel Connor (d. 30 Aug 1837)	Isaac Stewart (1746-1819)
Stephen Daniell (1745-c. 1820)	James Stewart (c.1760-1807)
Richard Dicken (11 Dec 1753-16 Dec 1833)	John Stewart, Sr. (c.1738-8 May 1786)
Abraham Durham (c. 1755-1826)	John Thompson (25 July 1764-27 May 1849)
Jacob Early (c. 1742-1794)	Alexander Walden (15 Nov 1748 – post 1834)
John Espey (7 Dec 1759-post 1840)	Oliver Wallace (d. 1803)
Francis Farrar (8 April 1764-post 1835)	Joseph White
Robert Fullwood (1763-1822)	Edward Wills (1755-1820)
Charles Garner (1756- post 1827)	James Wilson (d.1834)
Edward Hagin (1755-1805)	
William Harris (1760-1814)	
Rev. John Harvey (1746-15 June 1823)	

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These names are found in the Clarke County records, as most of these men, if not all, named Clarke County as their place of residence at various times between 1800 and 1850 when receiving land grants, applying for federal pensions, or qualifying for entry into various Georgia land lotteries. The federal pensions are a particularly rich source of information. Research has already shown that James Lassiter, for example, drew a federal pension (W4259), and when his widow applied for continuance, she cited his death in Henry County, Georgia. Likewise, Alexander Walden qualified for his federal pension in 1834 as a resident of Newton County.

In some cases, the pensions verify Clarke County as the death site, opening up the avenue of land record research for a possible grave location. Isaac Hill's widow applied for a pension on 19 Aug 1845 as a resident of Watkinsville, Georgia, stating that he died in Clarke County, so further research on him should continue on land in that area. Daniel Connor's pension (M805 Roll:212 Image:349 File:R2228) mentioned his death date and gave Clarke County as his residence. Burwell Lee qualified for a pension (M805 Roll:420 Image:74 File:W9119/ BLWT276674-160-55) in 1832, and his widow got a continuance in 1835, stating his death date as 1832 and place as Clarke County. Robert Laird's pension (M805 Roll: 513 Image: 218 File: S32369) deposed that he moved his residence to Clarke County shortly after the Revolution and lived there continuously. His will was probated in Clarke after 1836. George Clifton died in Clarke County as attested by the widow's deposition in her 1855 application for the continuance of his pension (M805 Roll: 195 Image: 387 File: W10632/ BLWT1794-100/BLWT61-60-55).

Other entries are less secure. The pension of Richard Dicken (M805 Roll:268 Image:514 File:W4179) states that Dicken applied 23 Oct 1832 from Clarke County at age 80 and that his widow applied for her benefits on 13 Feb 1839. Given his advanced age, it is unlikely, but not impossible, that he moved out of Clarke County in the intervening seven years. Moses Beard received a pension (M805 Roll:67 Image: 482 File:W5818) in Clarke County, but his widow claimed her pension as a resident of Madison County in 1838.

Verifying the Research

Confirming that a patriot lived out his life in Clarke or Oconee is often as simple as checking the probate records. It is probably true that in the majority of the probate cases men whose wills were probated in

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the county actually died there, too, although other sources should be checked for validation. Theophilus Burke's will was probated in Clarke County, as were those of Henry Castleberry, Uriah Humphries, Abraham Durham, Robert Fullwood, and Jones Broach.

The land lotteries provide clues to the migration of some Clarke County patriots that will redirect the search for their gravesites. Charles Garner, who drew in the 1827 Georgia Land Lottery, was lucky to win land in Coweta County, where he moved the same year. He had been approved for his pension six years earlier in Clarke County (M805 Roll: 349 Image:348 File: S37950).

If only the fieldstones could speak, the remains of Robert Fullwood (1763-1822) might be found in the Jackson Street Cemetery. His wife Jane's tombstone there gives her death year as 1849, age 73 years. Robert Fullwood's estate was probated in 1822, Jane's in 1849, both in Clarke County.

Another early burial in this cemetery is Winifred Aycock Lane, wife of veteran Jesse Lane. She died 16 Dec 1794 according to the family Bible, and was buried here before Athens even became a town. Jesse Lane is an example of a Revolutionary veteran who lived in this area for some time and owned property here, but died elsewhere. According to research by descendants, he was born 12 June 1733 in Halifax County, North Carolina, and died in 28 Oct 1806 in southern Illinois where he had gone to visit twin daughters who married into the Kirkpatrick family. His estate was probated in Clarke County, but his actual burial site, whether in Illinois or Clarke County, Georgia, is not known.

Are there other patriots unheralded whose names should be added to the commemorative list of those whose lives ended in this area? A few tantalizing possibilities have come to light. A George Wilson (b. 1 July 1750) is listed in the *DAR Index* as dying in Clarke County in 1849, having served as an ensign in the Maryland troops. His federal pension (M805 Roll: 877 Image:367 File:S32076), issued in 1832, was approved in Walton County, Georgia.

Barton Hamilton (c. 1760-1829) moved from South Carolina to Georgia near the end of his life, died in Clarke County, and his will was probated here. Why Hamilton moved to Georgia at such an advanced age is not known. Undocumented sources state that he was a native of Barnwell, South Carolina (Pendleton District), and fought in the South Carolina troops at the Battle of Camden, but he never appears to have requested a pension for this service. There is a Barker (variously

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transcribed as Barton) Hamilton, identified as a Revolutionary soldier from Clarke County and listed as a winner in the 1827 Georgia Land Lottery, who is probably the same man. His will indicates that the land in Lee County, which was reportedly awarded posthumously, was to be sold for the support of his family. He is listed in the 1820 census in Pendleton, South Carolina, so presumably moved to Clarke between that time and 1825. His name was first encountered in the book on Clarke County cemeteries under the Freeman-Daniel-Huff Cemetery entry (p. 215), where his widow is described as having purchased land near the site before her death in 1849. The cemetery is located on the far western edge of Clarke County, off Cleveland Road. Hamilton is not recognized in the *DAR Index*.

Documenting Burial Sites

The identification and marking of Revolutionary War patriot graves has always depended solely on their descendants' interest and action; there has never been a government initiative to do so. Descendants have carried out these tasks through privately purchased tombstones, the headstone provisions of VA, or more recently through the lineage societies. In fact, no gravesite can be marked without the permission of the patriot's descendants and the current owner of the property. As a result, there is no comprehensive, authoritative listing of Revolutionary War gravesites, and many remain unmarked throughout the United States.

For individuals interested in marking a grave, an excellent resource on cemetery regulations and historic preservation in Georgia is Christine Van Voorhies' book, *Grave Intentions: A comprehensive guide to preserving historic cemeteries*. Applications to request a tombstone marker are available at the local office of Veterans Affairs in Athens. Also, requests for assistance can be made through contact with the local chapters of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and National Society Sons of the American Revolution via their national websites: www.dar.org and www.sar.org.

Preserving the Heritage

Although Athens has been careful to preserve its historic legacy, constant and active interest and research must continue its protection. The Jackson Street Cemetery, for example, was surveyed by the DAR in 1932-33, and at that time the stones were copied and earlier surveys expanded. The land was also cleared, and broken markers repaired at

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the chapter's expense. When the cemetery was surveyed again in 1960, more than half of the stones identified in 1932 were missing, and yet more were reported missing in a 1966 survey. Perhaps the graves of the Revolutionary patriots can be reconstructed and commemorated from archival information, but certainly, at the very least, the community can make a commitment to preserve the graves surveyed in 2005 in gratitude for the patriots' part in establishing the legacy of American freedom.

A grave is a time capsule of an individual life; a cemetery, that of a community. A tombstone stands as a permanent tribute to the individual's place in history. We need to be vigilant in the preservation of existing graves and proactive in the search for information on unmarked ones, lest we forget the ordinary citizens who became our founding patriots.

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The History of Newspapers in Athens

By Don Nelson

In the Beginning

In 1800, Georgia had five newspapers, according to Louis Griffith and John Talmadge in their book, *Georgia Journalism 1763-1950*. Two were published in Savannah, two in Augusta, and one in Louisville. Newspapers in towns like Athens during the early decades of the 19th century and even through Reconstruction were published weekly and usually comprised four large broadsheet pages, probably 15 to 16 inches wide and 30 inches high. Local news was rare, as editors assumed residents in the community knew the community happenings well before the paper could be published. The pages were filled with the written word, with no images. Their contents consisted of legal advertising, official notices, poetry, correspondent missives, and stories from other papers. In Athens, Augusta merchants provided some advertising, and locally bartering represented much of the method of payment, particularly by farmers.

Clarke County was created in 1801 out of what was then Jackson County, and the city of Athens was chartered in 1806. There were several thousand inhabitants, including slaves. Ernie Hynds tells us in his *Antebellum Athens and Clarke County, Georgia* that 1,108 people filed tax returns on property that included 1,699 slaves in 1805. In 1807, a year after Athens was incorporated, John Espey transported by wagon a press and type from Philadelphia, at the behest of Presbyterian minister Rev. John Hodge, who had come to Athens from Philadelphia. Accompanying Espey in the wagon was a printer named Alexander McDonnell, who teamed up with Hodge and started a weekly publication of “religious and literary value” called *The Athens Gazette*.¹ With Hodge serving as editor, the two men published this weekly for about a year before Hodge’s health forced him to abandon the project.

McDonnell, who then partnered with Elias Harris, either leased or purchased Hodge’s printing assets and began the *Georgia Express* on March 14, 1808. A subscription for the *Express* cost \$3 a year, and

¹ Hull, *Annals of Athens, Georgia, 1801-1901*, pp. 80, 84

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advertising rates were 52.5 cents a square inch. In 1809 McDonnell and Harris changed the name to the *Foreign Correspondent and Georgia Express* in the interest of giving readers more international information. One of the most interesting names of journalists to surface in researching this history was Xenophon Gaines, who replaced Harris and worked at the *Express* from 1811 to 1813. In 1812, the *Express* introduced its first woodcut in an advertisement for a battle between an Asiatic Tiger and a “ferocious Georgia Bulldog.” But the use of images remained limited in Athens newspapers until after the Civil War.

At some point the *Foreign Correspondent* was dropped from the *Express* title, and in 1814 the paper’s name was changed to the *Georgia Gazette* at which time Harris left, and McDonnell convinced Hodge to return. In some form or another, the *Express* or the *Gazette* continued through the 1820s, though several history books suggest that no paper of consequence existed, citing that courts had legal ads sent to other county newspapers, primarily the newspaper in Milledgeville, at that time the capital of Georgia.

Newsprint was often difficult to obtain, and at times during the 1820s the *Gazette* was printed as a half sheet, five columns by 15 inches. One historical book refers to the editor, a Samuel Wright Minor, and his family as living and printing the paper in one room. At times the publication consisted of only one sheet of paper, 12 by 14 inches.²

In 1827 O.P. Shaw introduced the *Athenian*, by most historical accounts Athens’ first recognized genuine newspaper. The *Athenian* offered its readers a modern look, which included the switch from the old English letter sometimes used for “s” that looked like an “f” with no cross bar – called a “long S” – to the letter “s” we are accustomed to today. The paper used a format of five columns on each page of a four-page weekly paper. Shaw, as publisher and editor, provided regular opinions on social and political matters and even weighed in on an issue that dominates today’s headlines – drinking – which he wrote about in 1829.

In 1832, after a five-year stint, O.P. Shaw sold the *Athenian* to Albon Chase, who had joined the management of the *Athenian*, and to Chase’s partner, Alfred M. Nisbet. Chase and Nisbet changed the name of the weekly to the *Southern Banner*, and thus was launched Athens’ longest running newspaper. The early *Banner* was a six-column, four-

² Hull, *Annals*, p. 81

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page paper. Historian James Reap noted in his book *Athens, A Pictorial History* that the *Southern Banner* earned considerable wealth following the financial panic of 1837 when several papers from surrounding counties folded and legal advertising was funneled to the Athens paper. Throughout its early history and much of its entire life the *Banner* saw a number of ownership changes. Hopkins Holsey purchased the paper from Chase and Nisbet in 1846, followed by James A. Sledge in 1853, then A.S. Atkinson in 1866.

Antebellum Period

Despite all the changes in ownership, the *Southern Banner* was an influential political force in Athens over the next few years, prompting the start of another weekly paper, the *Southern Whig*, in 1833 by James W. Jones. The *Southern Whig* became the *Southern Herald* in September 1850 under the ownership of Terrell M. Lampkin and H. J. Adams. It then was renamed the *Southern Watchman* in 1854 and was owned and edited by John H. Christy.

During the decades leading up to the Civil War, the two main Athens newspapers found their voices, the *Banner* under the editorship of James A. Sledge, who came on board in 1853, and the *Watchman* under the guidance of John Christy, who had been with the *Whig*. These two competing newspapers would be combined in 1882 to form the *Athens Banner-Watchman* under G.H. Yancey, H.L. Cranford, and T.W. Gantt.

The two newspapers were similar in many ways. They carried legal ads, business advertising, news from surrounding counties, exchanges from newspapers in other counties, accounts of local events from the editors' own personal experiences, letters, births, deaths, poetry, and agricultural news. The editors traveled to Milledgeville to cover the legislature and went around northeast Georgia to cover the court circuit. Often readers would find personal thanks from the editors to people who had brought them hams, vegetables, fruit, and other commodities.

Unlike modern papers, the *Watchman* and the *Banner* provided totally accurate weather reports. There were no forecasts, just stories reporting significant occurrences such as the first frosts or snows or droughts. The newspapers were published on the day the mail was delivered and thus remained hostage to the postal service for many decades. This dependency was particularly troublesome during the war years.

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In 1860, new typesetting technology and redesign gave the papers an improved appearance. The *Banner* was notable for a format of eight columns to the page. The *Watchman* has been recognized by historians as being a more interesting paper, but the *Banner* typically carried more local news.

Though historical accounts can be confusing, it is clear that the *Banner*'s editors, influenced by the Cobb brothers, Howell and Thomas, favored states rights and secession from the Union. The *Watchman*'s fiesty editor, John Christy, reportedly held abolitionist views, though that is hard to pin down in historical accounts. Early on, the *Watchman* did urge compromise and maintaining the Union, though once the handwriting was on the wall Christy supported the South.

The two papers continued publishing during the war, sometimes with limited editions because of the scarcity of paper, ink, and help, and both lent strong editorial support to the South. In the issue following the excitement of the capture of Stoneman's Raiders near Athens, *Banner* editor Sledge inserted this note to his subscribers:

*Our readers will pardon all deficiencies in this issue as all hands are in companies for local defense, and it is with difficulty we publish the newspaper at all.*³



³ *Southern Banner*, 3 Aug 1864, p. 2

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Financial times were hard, and the editors frequently urged readers to plant more crops during the war to help feed the troops and after the war to help the community as a whole.

Post War Years and

Once the Civil War ended, and began with the military occupation of the state, the *Banner* and *Watchman*, like other Southern newspapers, reluctantly adopted conciliatory approaches to the New South. They urged readers to take the amnesty oath and rejoin the Union, but also denounced federal policies they deemed unjust to Southern citizens.

During the 1870s and 1880s, advertising began picking up, especially because of the growth of northern companies seeking business with the South. The *Watchman* was certainly favored by residents in the community in 1872, as the paper boasted a circulation of 2,000 compared to the *Banner's* 400.

A new paper, the *Athens Weekly Chronicle*, owned by Joe O'Farrell, began publication in 1877. It became known as the *Athens Chronicle* in 1885 and was published by Harry H. Phinizy, then by Ellison Stone and John Christy as a daily entitled *Athens Evening Chronicle* until it was merged with the *Athens Banner* in 1889 to become the *Athens Banner and Chronicle*. It was also in the 1870s that the *Banner* attempted daily publication and used names such as the *Athens Georgian*, the *Tri-Weekly Georgian*, and the *Weekly Georgian* for its editions before returning to the name the *Athens Daily Banner* in 1878.

In 1872, two brothers from Elberton, T.L. (Larry) Gantt and T.W. Gantt, came to Athens to take over the *Banner's* direction. The first thing they did was change the name to the *Northeast Georgian*. In *A History of Athens & Clarke County, Georgia*, by Hugh J. Rowe, an explanation is offered for that change: it was to overcome the old paper's reputation. Larry Gantt was an on-again, off-again editor and owner of the *Banner*, associated with the paper for 10 of the next 20 years. He added some acerbic and witty writing as well as more local news, history, poems and fiction. He also included a column of jokes on the front page and took any opportunity to rail against the *Watchman*. Multi-ownership of newspapers made it difficult for any one partner to earn significant income from the endeavor. Larry Gantt points out that after he and two other men bought the *Banner* and the *Watchman*, he never made any money until the other two partners left.

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Then he said he made about \$5,000 to \$7,000 a year. Not bad for the late 1800s.⁴

Gantt and his partners purchased the *Watchman* in 1882 following the death of John Christy, the feisty owner and long-time editor of the *Watchman*. The *Watchman* had also experienced financial difficulties and was up for sale. Thus, the *Banner* became the *Banner-Watchman*. In 1889 the paper was sold to a stockholders group called the Athens Publishing Company. Hugh J. Rowe was the publisher from 1897 until 1921.

From a technological standpoint, the linotype machine, which allowed printers to set entire lines of type in one bar, instead of individual letters, improved the look and the speed with which newspapers could be produced. Techniques for producing photographs and engravings became available, and the use of graphic art began to increase in newspapers, especially after the turn of the century.

Over on the University of Georgia campus, students put together the first issue of the *Red & Black* in 1893. The initial campus weekly was published in a tabloid format. It wasn't until the 1970s that the *Red & Black* switched from a weekly publication to five days a week, and in 1980 the student newspaper took on independent status. President Fred Davison formed a special faculty committee to study the relationship of the newspaper to the university administration, and the committee recommended independence for the student newspaper. The Regents approved the arrangement, and the *Red & Black* is now run by a non-profit corporation. If the corporation is ever dissolved, the *Red & Black* would revert to the university.

The African-American Press in Athens

Following Reconstruction and well into the 20th century, Athens was home to four black owned newspapers. Athens' first African-American newspaper, the *Athens Blade*, was started in 1879 by Col. William Pledger, an attorney and political leader, and William Henry Heard, a teacher and minister who came to Athens fleeing an angry white mob in South Carolina after he won a seat in that state's legislature. The *Blade* offered strong opinions, advertising, and religious and social news.

Michael Thurmond in his book, *A Story Untold*, tells us that the *Blade* spoke out fervently on local politics, even mayoral races, but it

⁴ Rowe, *A History of Athens & Clarke County, Georgia*, p. 96.

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lasted only a year when Pledger decided to move it to Atlanta, and he changed the name to the *Atlanta Defiant*. Pledger returned to Athens several years later, but the paper lasted only another two years.

Three years later, in 1887, the *Athens Clipper* was published by S.B. Davis. A four-page weekly, the *Clipper* had 700 subscribers who were treated to religious news and reports of life in the black community of Athens. The *Clipper* lasted until around 1920.

The *Progressive Era*, another black owned paper, emerged in 1914, but little information is available about this publication. We know of its existence because Monroe Bowers (Pink) Morton, a well-known black businessman, served as its owner and publisher for some time, but I could not find information on when it ceased publishing. That probably occurred around 1920 as well.

A fourth black newspaper, the *Athens Republique*, began in 1919 and lasted for four years for the purpose of improving the religious, educational, and business knowledge of “colored people,” according to Thurmond’s book. Thurmond also mentions the *Athens Republic* of 1920, but no information, other than the note that a black minister published it, is available. After the *Republique*’s demise in 1924, a half-century passed by before another African-American newspaper was published in Athens.

The 20th Century

The *Athens Daily Herald* reportedly got its start in 1912, likely as an offshoot of the *Augusta Herald*, owned by Bowdre Phinizy. Phinizy installed one of his Augusta staffers, Earl Braswell, as editor of the *Athens Herald*. The *Banner-Herald* was created in 1921 or 1922, when Bowdre Phinizy made a deal with the *Banner* owners. Braswell became the editor and remained at the newspaper until 1965.

During the 1950s, most journalists operated using a pencil, a note pad, and a manual typewriter, but with the advent of cold-type or photo-typography and other technological advancements such as tape recorders, the process of news gathering changed rapidly. In 1955, a Gainesville newspaper became the first paper in the area to use cold-type. Though the use of photographs was commonplace with newspapers, the *Banner-Herald*, an afternoon paper, ran few images on its pages and had a reputation as a rather bland newspaper and for all intents and purposes had no real competition.

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Then in 1963 newspaper and radio advertising salesman Claude Williams purchased a local advertising shopper and converted it to a weekly paper he called the *Athens Advertiser*. The *Advertiser* featured lots of photographs and employed the new offset press to produce 12 to 16 pages.

Millard Grimes in his book *The Last Linotype* states that two years later speculation grew that the *Banner-Herald* would be up for sale, a prospect allowed under provisions in the will of the late Bowdre Phinizy, who died in 1960. Phinizy had insisted that the *Banner-Herald* not be sold for five years following his death. Williams was preparing a bid for the *Banner-Herald*, when he was approached by Millard Grimes, who at the time was editor of the *Columbus Ledger*. Grimes wanted to go in with Williams in starting a new daily. Grimes later decided against joining Williams, but Glenn Vaughn, also with the *Ledger*, jumped in. Williams and Vaughn launched the *Athens Daily News* as a morning paper in 1965.

That same year brothers Billy and Charles Morris of Augusta purchased the *Banner-Herald* for \$1.7 million and offered to buy the *Daily News*, but Williams and Vaughn turned the offer down. Earl Braswell, editor of the *Banner-Herald*, was not treated well under the new ownership, according to Grimes' account, and seeing an opportunity, Williams and Vaughn offered Braswell \$50 a week, an office, a secretary, and column space, which he accepted. His esteem in the Athens community offered considerable prestige and good will to the fledgling *Daily News*, which, because it was locally owned, became known as the local paper and soon acquired the status of legal organ, perhaps because Braswell was friends with the sheriff, the clerk of court, and the probate judge. These three offices designated the legal organ.

The *Banner-Herald* installed a new offset press in 1966, and in 1967 the Morris brothers purchased the *Daily News* for \$443,000 and assumption of its debts. The *Banner-Herald* continued as the afternoon paper, and the *Daily News* remained a morning edition. Eventually Billy Morris gained primary ownership of both Athens papers. The two papers over the years essentially provided the same news, but in different packages. For some time the editorials and opinion columns were different, but eventually even those were merged.

As the only editorial voice in Athens in the 1970s, the *Athens Daily News* and *Banner-Herald* were ripe for competition. Former Vietnam War vet and 1973 graduate of the University of Georgia, Chuck Searcy

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began kicking around the idea for a weekly advertising publication, but his friends, including Pete McCommons, Chatham Murray, and Don Nelson, among a host of other civic activists, all urged him to start a newspaper.

The *Athens Observer* was started in January 1974, and the tabloid-sized, weekly newspaper took on subjects that the dailies in Athens seemed reluctant to touch. The *Observer* also opened its editorial pages to a gamut of opinions, earning it widespread readership. The *Observer* gained a reputation as Georgia's best weekly newspapers and was one of Athens' longest operating papers, lasting nearly 28 years. Searcy, McCommons, Murray, and Nelson sold their interests in the paper in the late 1980s to Millard Grimes, who eventually sold it to Trey Hutchison in 1991. The paper began its decline under Hutchison's ownership, and he sold it to a group of Athens businessmen within a year after he bought it. The *Observer* ceased publication in June 2002, not long after the death of editor Phil Sanderlin.

Local African-Americans were introduced to a new paper, the *Athens Voice*, in 1975. Started by Paine College graduates Fred O. Smith and Michael Thurmond, the paper lasted two years until the two young men's graduate studies occupied their focus. In 1980 Smith attempted to revive the *Voice*, but it lasted only half a year. Rick Dunn and Harold Moon in 1982 launched the *Athens Courier*, another black newspaper, and its life span was three years.

The *Flagpole* was started in 1987 by Jared Bailey, co-owner of the 40 Watt Club. He called the newsprint tabloid magazine the "color-bearer of the Athens music scene." The weekly paper began commentary on local political and social issues as well. The *Flagpole* continues today with Pete McCommons, one of the founders of the *Athens Observer*, as publisher and owner.

The African-American publication, the *Griot Messenger*, appeared on the scene in 1994, published by Jim Rhinehart until 1998 or 1999, as documented by Michael Thurmond in *A Story Untold*. And the *Athens Tribune* was printed sporadically in the mid to late 1990s by Walter Allen, Jr.

In an effort to reduce rising production costs, Athens Newspapers Inc., the holding company for the *Athens Banner-Herald* and the *Athens Daily News*, decided to cease publishing an afternoon paper. The *Daily News* had been the morning newspaper since its purchase by Athens Newspapers. In the changeover the decision was made to retain the name of the *Banner-Herald* with its longtime heritage. In May of 2001,

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the morning *Banner-Herald* was introduced, and the *Daily News* name was discontinued. The *Athens Banner-Herald* officially marks its 175th anniversary in 2007, tracing its history to the first use of the name *Southern Banner* in 1832, but it could be said that there is a connection back to 1807 when the first newspaper in Athens was begun by a Presbyterian minister from Philadelphia and a printing press hauled to Athens in a wagon.

The history of Athens newspapers in Athens is a long and rich story, reflecting the times and the lives of Athenians, who have been fortunate to have so many newspapers as a part of their community life.

Don Nelson, originally from College Park, Georgia, came to Athens in 1969 to attend the University of Georgia. He began his professional journalism career in 1974 when he joined Chuck Searcy, Pete McCommons, and Chatham Murray in founding the *Athens Observer*. He joined the *Athens Banner-Herald* as associate editor in December 1991, and his work there focuses on local business stories. He is responsible for the *Banner-Herald*'s Sunday Business section each week. This article was presented to the AHS meeting on Sunday, May 21, 2006.

Acknowledgments

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The Dedication of the Abraham Baldwin Monument at his Connecticut Birth Site

By Milton Leathers

At home one fall evening in 2004, I listened to a telephone message from a Judge Helander in Connecticut. Earlier that summer, Joel Helander, judge of probate in the old colonial town of Guilford, had sent several letters to Athens, Georgia. He did receive one reply. It was a polite but disappointing one.



Judge Joel E. Helander of Guilford, Connecticut

On his own initiative, Judge Helander had set out a few years before to determine the exact site of the birth of a colonial patriot and early American statesman, Abraham Baldwin. Mr. Helander, as probate judge, had access to all the records of the township of Guilford, stretching back to the settlement's founding by a group of Puritans in 1639. He was also congenial with the administrators of the Regional Water Authority, the 21st-century entity that owns vast acreage (including former Baldwin lands) inland from Guilford. This intact New England village – of some 23,000 souls – sits on the north shore of Long Island Sound about 15 miles east of Yale University in New Haven.

The way the locals up there tell it, Joel Helander accomplished most of his sleuthing over a period of several years – *on his lunch break*. Along with the help of other area historians, of descendants of the Baldwin family who still live in that part of the state, and of water authority experts, the judge was able to determine the spot, within about 200 feet, on which Abraham Baldwin was born. He was ecstatic.

Baldwin was rather famous locally. In 1971, as the population grew, there was a need for two new middle schools in that area, one in Guilford itself and one in what had over the years become North Guilford, Connecticut. The name of an elderly and much beloved lady doctor was bestowed on the in-town school. And in North Guilford the

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board of education named their fine new facility the Abraham Baldwin Middle School.

Appreciative though he was, Joel Helander thought that even this naming did not sufficiently honor a truly great American. The judge had read and studied about Baldwin. He was particularly impressed with the Baldwin biography by University of Georgia history professor Merton Coulter, who was a leading authority on ante-bellum Georgia until his death in 1981. *Abraham Baldwin: Patriot, Educator, and Founding Father* inspired Helander, and within two years the judge knew everything there was to know about Baldwin, he thought.

Now for a suitable monument to this great American: the perfect site was chosen in the beautiful, still rural, rolling hinterland of North Guilford; the local Stony Creek Quarry offered for free a two-ton monolith of local pink granite; the public works department agreed to provide the labor to dig the hole and set the monument; representatives from Yale, Baldwin's school, were alerted, and the planning for a November ceremony was underway. It would take place on Abraham Baldwin's birthday, November 22 – exactly 250 years later.

Judge Helander telephoned or sent letters of invitation to the township's selectmen (their version of commissioners), the politicians (state and U.S.) for their district, the principal of the Abraham Baldwin Middle School, the president of Yale (only a few miles away), the president of the University of Georgia (many miles away), the head of the university's history department, the director of Georgia's Hargrett Library, the director of the Georgia Museum of Art in Athens, along with a few other dignitaries.

Dr. Thomas Dyer, a university historian, wrote back promptly that he was delighted to receive the invitation and wished he could be there. Unfortunately, Tom Dyer had a commitment that very day that could not be changed. Bonita Nichols Ramsey of the Georgia Museum of Art praised the idea, too, but had doubts that the museum could send a representative. Judge Helander seemed so frustrated that Bonnie Ramsey, who knew that I would be interested in the man from Connecticut and this event with Georgia connections, gave him my phone number – which is why I received the plaintive message on my answering machine.

I called the judge back. Over the next few weeks, he and I spoke by phone three or four times. He had an infectious enthusiasm for his Abraham Baldwin project, but he was discouraged about his guest list. Toward the end of our fourth phone conversation, I finally said, "Well,

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if no one else will come up from Athens to your ceremony, I will.” The man was delighted.

Thus it was that I found myself on a November Sunday morning in Connecticut, sitting in a pew halfway back in the towering old white-steepled, clapboard North Guilford Congregational Church, the family church of the first president of the University of Georgia, the Rev. Abraham Baldwin. It was a bit surreal. The service that day was set around the theme of Baldwin and his times. This patriot was the topic of a splendid sermon, delivered by the Rev. John Van Epps, a perfect blend of modern pastor and 18th-century parson. That afternoon, an interested group of church and town people toured the handsome meetinghouse cemetery, where we saw the graves of Ensign Timothy Baldwin, grandfather of Abraham, and Michael Baldwin, father of Abraham. I accepted an invitation to stay at the home of Pat and Ben Bullard. Ben is a Yalie himself, and their wonderful house (books *everywhere*) stands not far from the largest village green in New England. We turned in fairly early for tomorrow’s big day.

Monday morning was a busy one at the Abraham Baldwin Middle School. Every student in the building had competed in a “Baldwin Portrait” contest, and hundreds of likenesses of the early American graced the walls of the school, from the profound to the whimsical and much in between. Judge Helander and his party of visitors attended classes on Baldwin, took pictures with Baldwin students, pointed with admiration to the many likenesses of Baldwin, heard tales of Baldwin, resurrected trivia about Baldwin. I almost expected at lunchtime to eat food leftover from a Baldwin family meal. That morning was all Baldwin, and all delightful.

In the early afternoon, the weather was bracing and the sky only slightly overcast as busloads of us arrived at the bucolic roadside site selected for the new monument. Joining the school children, all the invited politicians were there, a dean from Yale was there, citizens of Guilford and North Guilford were there, First Selectman Charles “Gene” Bishop and two other commissioners were there, along with a multi-generational fife and drum band.

The principal of the Abraham Baldwin Middle School, Ann Snurkowski, began the program. She introduced former First Selectman Carl Balestracci, a real font of ancient Connecticut history. Mr. Balestracci, in turn, introduced the honored guests, followed by the town’s historian, Joel Helander. Joel’s presentation was charming, heartfelt, and informative:

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Abraham Baldwin Monument Dedication

November 22, 2004

Here we stand...in the "Upper End of North Guilford Parish," as once it was called...on a narrow ridge of rich farmland along Great Hill Road...near the base of old Totoket Mountain. Here, 250 years ago exactly to the day, a great American was born November 22, 1754. He was the third child of Lucy and Michael Baldwin, who gave him the name Abraham, a name from the Bible. Abraham Baldwin entered this world right here.

This was Abraham Baldwin's family neighborhood. The Baldwins had lived here since North Guilford was first settled. To the west lived Abraham's Grandfather and Grandmother Baldwin. To the east, on the opposite side of the road, lived Abraham's Aunt Bathsheba and Uncle Joseph Chidsey, and three cousins. To the east, on the same side, lived Abraham's Uncle Benjamin Rossiter and six cousins.

Abraham Baldwin was baptized in the North Guilford Congregational Church, where his family was active. In the nurturing environment of North Guilford, Abraham passed his boyhood. Home, church, and school contributed to his secure and conservative upbringing.

His father moved the family twelve miles away to New Haven in 1768, partly so that young Abraham could attend Yale College, which he entered at fourteen years of age. At the start of the American Revolutionary War in 1775, Baldwin was graduated from Yale, after which he decided to study for the Calvinist ministry. He was licensed to preach. But the young graduate was to choose teaching over preaching. He remained at Yale as a tutor for eight years, lecturing the underclassmen in classical languages and theology. With the war going on, however, Abraham Baldwin felt that he could not remain in the sheltered world of Yale and New Haven.

His patriotism must have stirred him. After all, in declaring their independence from the King of England, American colonists had pledged to each other their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. Baldwin seems to have followed a sense of duty to his new country. He joined the army as a chaplain. He preached to soldiers to instill patriotism, he conducted prayer meetings, and he visited the sick and wounded. Sermons he gave at the hangings of traitors brought him a good deal of notoriety.

Baldwin's Continental brigade was under Gen. George Washington, commander-in-chief of all armed forces. Baldwin became well acquainted with Gen. Washington and other Revolutionary War commanders, and his mind was broadened as he was called on to comment on military and national affairs.

Baldwin was licensed to practice law in Connecticut in 1783. He had drifted from the ministry. Somehow, he felt a new sense of duty and adventure to start a career in one of young America's newest frontiers. Instead of the dangerous western frontier, he chose the southern frontier. In Georgia, there

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were many opportunities in the emerging nation. Besides, some of Baldwin's Yale friends had moved to Georgia. They must have urged him to join them.

In 1783 Abraham Baldwin opened a law office in Savannah, but he did not remain there long. Georgia desperately needed leadership. He was elected to the Georgia state legislature, which began a lifelong career in government, both state and national. His crowning accomplishment in the state senate was the development of a comprehensive educational system for Georgia. He wrote the charter for what would become the first state university in the country, the University of Georgia, and he served as its first president. In the state legislature, Baldwin became a leader in devising compromises. He had an uncanny ability to deal with a variety of men and a variety of difficult situations. As a son of a blacksmith-farmer, he had a natural ability to deal with the rough men of the Georgia frontier. But as a graduate of one of the nation's finest schools, he also had the ability to deal with the wealthy and cultured settlers of the coast.

One week after his election to the Georgia legislature, Abraham Baldwin was also elected to the temporary congress of the United States, known as the "Confederation Congress." And I know the 5th and 6th grade students of Abraham Baldwin School have been studying this exhaustively. And it's been my pleasure to see just how well versed they are in the affairs of the nation during the American Revolution.

The United States at this time was really "disunited." Imagine, students, the Disunited States of America! The thirteen colonies or states had not been united into one central government. This difficult task fell to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. The people of Georgia wanted Congressman Baldwin to be one of their delegates to the convention.

It took historians over one hundred years to fully understand and appreciate Congressman Baldwin's role in the convention, because Congressman Baldwin, from Guilford, Connecticut, is credited with saving both the convention and the constitution when in crisis.

This crisis did arise through emotional, if not wild, debate and controversy over one issue: representation in the two houses of congress. How would each of the thirteen states be represented? In the lower house or House of Representatives, it was decided that it would be based on population. This meant that the big states with large populations would have more voting power. The small states argued that this would be fair only if the upper house or Senate provided each state equal representation; that is, two senators from every state. The big states did not wish to compromise, and it came to a roll call vote, beginning with Massachusetts and ending with Georgia. The Georgia delegates, including Baldwin, had previously made it clear that they were against equality in the Senate. And they would side with the big states.

When Georgia was called to vote, the voting stood at a 5-5 tie, five of the little states against five of the big states. Georgia's vote would break that tie.

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Congressman Baldwin must have anticipated the outcome. If there was one winner, the convention would likely break up, which would have been a disaster.

At this point a remarkable event took place, an event the effects of which are still being felt to this day. Congressman Baldwin voted against the motion he was in favor of – even against the other Georgia delegate. The result was that the Georgia vote was “killed.” It did not count. The entire voting on the issue was a dead tie.

Time passed – and tempers cooled. By and by a compromise was finally reached, and the United States Constitution was adopted along the lines of compromise. Baldwin’s noble action allowed the states to be united and ushered in the birth of our country’s unique democracy.

Abraham Baldwin passed the rest of his career serving in the new U.S. Congress, first in the House of Representatives and then in the Senate. He served until the day of his death in 1807.

Connecticut rediscovered its hero in 1971 by naming the new Guilford middle school after Senator Baldwin. Look around you at the splendid youth of our community.

And, boys and girls, I want you to look, too. Look at the open field beyond you. I think I see a small boy running. Maybe it’s an apparition -- or maybe not. Is it young Abraham Baldwin? Perhaps he is running to herd the family’s sheep, running to chase a wild turkey, running to the barn for chores, or running to help his father in the blacksmith shop.

I guess my mind is being tricked. But let all of us here today remember where it is we stand and what we see. This scenery has not changed in 250 years. The field is still open. This is a preserve owned by the Regional Water Authority. We hope it will never change. Green pasture rolls up to meet blue sky. And if we go to the crest of the hilltop, we can see the back of Bluff Head, both lonely and majestic. These are the same scenes that Abraham Baldwin knew and must have loved in his boyhood.

Today, 250 years after the birth of a man best described as “a great American,” let us pause and reflect, to commemorate, to appreciate, and to celebrate this anniversary – and the life of North Guilford’s patriot son. Thank you.

Applause, both enthusiastic and appreciative, followed Judge Helander’s presentation as the town historian resumed his seat. Mr. Balestracci was next, and he seemed a bit startled if amused, since he unexpectedly had just been asked to introduce the “historian from the University of Georgia” – me. When I had first seen my new title printed in the program earlier that Monday morning, I promptly phoned Bill Potter, director of the UGA Libraries, asking him if he might deputize me. Bill had said, “Go ahead.” Here are my remarks for the occasion:

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Mr. Balestracci, you are no more surprised than my wife is that I am here. I only made this arrangement on Friday. If I had known how much fun I would have here, I would have insisted on my wife's coming. This is a very hospitable place. Thank you very much.

I do bring you greetings from Athens and the University of Georgia. We are very proud to have the first state-chartered university in the nation. All the schools before that were church-related colleges, and the University of Georgia, to the pleasure of Abraham Baldwin and Thomas Jefferson and Josiah Meigs, was a state university that would be "unshackled by the clerical chains of New England." It didn't actually turn out that way. The chains dropped in New England, and some of the students in Georgia picked up the chains.

I am wearing several hats today. From two of these books that I brought to present as gifts to the Guilford Historical Society (even if they wind up in Joel Helander's private collection, which may be the same thing), I am going to read some quick quotes. I am representing the University, of course. So many ties between Yale University and the University of Georgia, not the least of which is Georgia's bulldog! Before I begin, I shouldn't fail to bring greetings from my father, too, who played for the Georgia Bulldogs in the 1930 Yale bowl. He was a right guard, but he intercepted a pass intended for your halfback Albie Booth and ran for the first touchdown of the game in the Yale bowl. We have films of that game, and when our children were coming up, they watched this lumbering lineman going for a touchdown, and our youngest son Sam asked, "Is that Red running?" (My father had acquired the nickname "Red" Leathers in sports at UGA.) Sam asked, "Is that Red running?" And his older brothers said, "Yes, that's the way Red runs." They had never actually seen Red run, but they had to accept the film as true.

So many connections between Georgia and Yale.... Abraham Baldwin had been urged to come to Georgia by our governor, Lyman Hall, also from Connecticut. And then Baldwin chose Josiah Meigs, his pupil from Yale, to be the second president of the University of Georgia. Dr. Merritt Pound from Athens once quoted President Angell of Yale, who stated: "Abraham Baldwin



As a part of the celebration of UGA's bicentennial, on Jan. 25, 1985, the U.S. Postal Service issued a 7-cent, 1st class postage stamp honoring educator and politician Abraham Baldwin. The stamp was released in first day of issue ceremonies on the campus of the University of Georgia in Athens.

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was the smartest college president in the United States that I ever heard about, because he had the job for sixteen years, he resigned as soon as he hired the first faculty member, and he left before any student arrived on campus!" [story courtesy of Prof. George O. Marshall]

The whole government of the University in Athens was patterned after Yale. When Yale President Bartlett Giamatti came to our university's bicentennial in 1985, Phinzy Spalding, Georgia historian, asked me to walk around old North Campus with Dr. Giamatti and himself. When Bartlett Giamatti saw Old College, the first building at the university, which is patterned after Connecticut Hall at Yale, our visitor just rocked back on his feet. He said the building looked as if it had been picked up by a tornado in New Haven and set down in Athens, Georgia. [Note: This is the same Dr. A. Bartlett Giamatti, of course, who, as a die-hard Boston Red Sox fan, had a dream come true when he was elected Commissioner of Baseball in 1988.]

I certainly want to bring you greetings, too, from my wife, who grew up in Lili'uokalani Congregational Church in Hawaii. When I went to North Guilford Congregational Church on Sunday, the feeling there put me in mind of old Lili'uokalani Church, so far away. I guess I felt a sort of homesickness for that place. My wife's church was founded by Yale missionaries in the 1820s, and I'm sorry Kammy did not get to come to this service with me.

How many other hats do I wear today? Oh, the Baldwin family. Our family has, as far as I know, what we used to say was "our only Yankee ancestor." My wife and I lived for 18 years in my great-great-grandfather's house in Athens. He was a Confederate general, but his daughter married Judge Alexander Erwin, whose mother was from New Haven, Connecticut. She was Catharine Miles Wales, and her father was on the faculty of the divinity school at Yale. When we were children, and we heard that Judge Erwin was half-Yankee, we ran into the parlor of my mother's cousin [Goodloe Erwin] to look at the man's picture. We looked at his ears; we looked at his nose. I don't know what we expected. Anyway, Catharine Miles Wales had a grandmother from Milford. Three of this woman's four grandparents were Baldwins. Her paternal grandmother was Abraham Baldwin's first cousin, her maternal grandfather was Abraham Baldwin's second cousin, and his wife was also a Baldwin from Milford. I once told a relative in Athens, "I'm surprised this lady didn't have three eyeballs!" That's what you people think about the South. But these people came from Milford: your Guilford Baldwins!

Of course, Abraham Baldwin is also credited with coming up with the seal of the University. This is a book (holding up Remembering Athens) that was written by another relative, Susan Frances Barrow Tate, and she has a whole section in here called "A Connecticut Yankee Was the Founder of the University." Here's a picture of Miss Sue Fan receiving the well-deserved Abraham Baldwin Distinguished Citizen Award. Baldwin is credited with coming up with the motto of the University of Georgia, which is "Et Docere et

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Rerum Exquirere Causas,” which means? (turning to the middle schoolers – blank looks on the faces of the students, followed by laughter from the crowd) Now you had some good answers, some very good answers, over at the school! Maybe the best answer I heard at the school this morning came when Joel Helander was trying to demonstrate the close relationship between George Washington and Abraham Baldwin. Joel walked out among the youngsters and asked, “At the Constitutional Convention, who do you think Abraham Baldwin met?” And one of the children said, “You?” I don’t know if you heard that, Joel. Anyway, the Latin motto of the University of Georgia, written by Abraham Baldwin, translates as “Both to teach and to inquire into the causes of things.” A good motto for a university.

My final comment is to quote Pastor Van Epps from his sermon. This is just a wonderfully ethnocentric remark. He called Abraham Baldwin “the greatest man who ever lived in Georgia and probably (only probably) the greatest ever born in North Guilford.” So when I demurred, Pastor Van Epps blushed a little and said, “I guess I shouldn’t say that.” I told him, “Oh, no, I would say it the same way if the situation were reversed.” I think we can all agree on this. This is not the day to deny that Abraham Baldwin was “the greatest man who ever lived in Georgia.” I will go along with that for today. And also, all of you Abraham Baldwin Middle School students, one day you will be alumni and alumnae of the Abraham Baldwin School, and you can think of yourselves the way that Mrs. Sue Fan Barrow Tate thought of herself. She said (quoting from the book), “If we think of Abraham Baldwin as the father of the University (or the Abraham Baldwin Middle School), then all of us alumni and alumnae are his children and are proud to be connected with a truly great school.” Thank you.

Following my talk, a middle school girl gave us some history of “Yankee Doodle,” after which the fife and drum corps played the tune. It is the Connecticut state song. The youngsters then presented their school with a large copy of the famous Howard Chandler Christy painting of the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, in which Baldwin stands resolutely on the left. Next, on the crisp November afternoon in North Guilford, Connecticut, the large, genial crowd shifted to the state highway that runs beside the open fields where we had been gathered, rolling countryside that indeed must have changed hardly at all since Abraham Baldwin ran across it as a youth. Two middle schoolers cut a ribbon and pulled away the deep blue cloth that had been draped over the pink granite marker with its bronze plaque. Pastor Van Epps gave a closing benediction, and the Abraham Baldwin

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monument dedication ceremony was over.

Twenty-first-century Americans, especially citizens of Georgia, Athenians and all who have learned at the University of Georgia, should consider making a pilgrimage to this hallowed site. There, we can, all of us, behold a handsome monument on a rural New England road and be filled with pride for our founding father, Abraham Baldwin. It was a great day for Georgia in Connecticut. My only small disappointment was that my mother's cousin Howard Lamar, former (and southern) president of Yale, was ill and could not attend.

Judge Joel Helander is greatly respected and loved throughout that entire section of the state. He and his friends were very hospitable to me. They appreciated the gifts I brought to them from the Athens Historical Society: *Remembering Athens* and Gary Doster's *Postcard History of Athens, Georgia*. And they appreciated, I think, a Georgian's attendance at the dedication of the monument at Abraham Baldwin's birth site. I hope I represented us well. I may have overstepped slightly during my casual, open-air talk when I brought the listeners greetings from my father (dead those four years, as he was). But Red Leathers, of all people, would have thought that was just fine. It was right for someone to go from Athens up to Guilford. And it was right, I hope he would have thought, what I had to say.



The pink granite monument at Baldwin's birth site, displaying temporary plaque

Directions to the site:

The Baldwin monument is adjacent to 1188 Great Hill Road, North Guilford, Conn. From I-95 at Guilford Center (Exit 58), take Route 77 north. The township of North Guilford begins after this highway crosses over the east-west Route 80. Continue several miles until you have passed Lake Quonnipaug (nearly one mile in length) on your right, then turn left onto Great Hill Road. Proceed through one 90-degree turn to the right. After a second 90-degree turn to the left, continue 1/2 mile to an open hayfield. The granite

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monument with bronze plaque is on the right side of this public highway, within a few feet of the shoulder.

The permanent monument text:

BIRTHPLACE
ABRAHAM BALDWIN 1754 - 1806

IN THIS VICINITY STOOD THE HOUSE OF MICHAEL BALDWIN AND HIS WIFE LUCY DUDLEY, WHERE THEIR SON, ABRAHAM, WAS BORN ON NOVEMBER 22, 1754. "THE UPPER END OF NORTH GUILFORD PARISH" WAS THE EARLY NAME GIVEN TO THIS SECTION OF GUILFORD.

ABRAHAM LIVED THE FIRST FOURTEEN YEARS OF HIS LIFE HERE IN NORTH GUILFORD. HE GRADUATED FROM YALE COLLEGE IN 1772.

AFTER SERVING AS A CHAPLAIN IN THE CONTINENTAL ARMY DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR, BALDWIN MOVED TO GEORGIA. HE FOUNDED THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA AND BECAME ITS FIRST PRESIDENT.

IN 1783, BALDWIN WAS ELECTED TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, AND IN 1787 HE REPRESENTED GEORGIA AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. BALDWIN PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN CONSTRUCTING THE CONNECTICUT COMPROMISE, WHICH GAVE US WHAT IS TODAY OUR UNITED STATES CONGRESS.

BY 1799, BALDWIN WAS ELECTED TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

ERECTED BY THE CITIZENS OF GUILFORD
NOVEMBER 22, 2004

L. Milton Leathers III is a current board member of the Athens Historical Society. A native Athenian, he has published articles on local topics and taught several courses on the history of Athens and has written articles on city and regional topics. He also publishes under the pen name H. L. Erwin. This paper is a follow-up to his Abraham Baldwin talk, which was given at the March 19, 2006, meeting of the Athens Historical Society.

Remembering the Southern Mutual Building

By Upshaw C. Bentley, Jr.

This past summer, August 2006, my law firm moved out of downtown Athens. With this change I have been remembering my longest professional tenure and thinking of the importance of the Southern Mutual Building to the professional life of Athens.

In 1952, my law firm, Milner, Stephens & Bentley, moved into the Southern Mutual Building, after waiting for several years for a vacancy to occur. We remained in the building until 1982, a period of 30 years. This building had been a well-known Athens landmark since its completion in 1907. Built for the Southern Mutual Insurance Company, it was Athens' first skyscraper – a seven story building that was the largest ferro concrete building in the South.

Located at College Avenue and Clayton Street on one of the most prominent corners in downtown Athens, the building had its inception on August 11, 1905, when Billups Phinizy, president of the Southern Mutual Insurance Company, was authorized by the company board to secure information about the cost and style of a new building that



Postcard view of the Southern Mutual Building and downtown about 1910, courtesy of Gary Doster.

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would be suitable for the company's office and then to report to the board.

The board minutes¹ of the Southern Mutual Insurance Company reflect the process of the construction of the building:

June 1, 1906

Mr. Frank C. Shackelford appeared before the Board and submitted propositions looking to a sale or exchange of lot on corner of Clayton Street and College Avenue - to be used as a site for an office building - and on motion of Judge Erwin, the President and Secretary and Director Jas. White were appointed as a Committee to confer with Mr. Shackelford, and report their recommendation to the Board.

June 8, 1906:

The President made a verbal report of the proposition of Mr. Shackelford as to sale or exchange of lot, stating that the Committee appointed at the last meeting recommended that neither of them be accepted - and on motion the Board adopted the recommendation.

January 11, 1907:

Mr. Haralson Bleckley, Architect, appeared before the Board, and reported the bids for proposed Office building, and discussed the possible changes and reductions - and on motion a Committee of three, consisting of President Phinizy and Mess. Hodgson and Bryan, was appointed to investigate the matter and report back to the Board.

January 18, 1907:

The Committee appointed at the last meeting to investigate the cost and probable income of a new Office building, made a report through Director Bryan - without recommendation - and on motion the matter was deferred.

The President submitted an application of Mr. Bleckley, Architect, for payment of amount due for plans and specifications of building, and on motion, the President was authorized to pay him \$2000.00 on account.

¹ Entries from the official minutes of Southern Mutual Company are given verbatim.

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January 25, 1907

On motion it was - Ordered - That a Building Committee is hereby created, consisting of President Phinizy, Secretary Griffith, and Directors Hodgson, John R. White and Bryan, who are hereby authorized to contract for the erection of an Office building, according to the plans and specifications of Mr. Haralson Bleckley, at a cost of not exceeding \$250,000 - said Committee is empowered to represent the company in every respect during the construction of said building, as to the details and completion of same.

February 22, 1907:

The question of selling or removing the present office building, was submitted to the Board by the President, and it was - Ordered - That the President is hereby authorized to purchase the lot of E. D. Sledge, on the corner of College and Hancock Avenues - (115 x 115) - for \$7500.00. - to remove the dwelling not on said lot to the Eastern side of same, at a cost of \$250. and sell it for \$4000. - also to make a contract with Mr. T. J. Nichols for the removal of the building on the corner of College Avenue and Clayton Street, and rebuilding same on the corner of above lot, for the sum of \$4000. - and to have additions made to the building as rebuilt, at a cost of \$1500. - also to make a lease of the restored building and additions to The Athens Street Railway Company for a term of not less than ten (10) years, at a rental of not less than \$1000 per annum, or not more than eight per cent (8%) of the amount expended by this company for such removal and additions - including \$2000 allowed for the building - and not exceeding \$15000 - said Athens Street Railway Company agreeing to purchase said property at the option of this company during said lease, at the actual cost as above.

April 5, 1907:

At the request of the President, the following order was passed, Ordered - That the order of February 22nd authorizing the President to make a contract with T. J. Nichols to remove and rebuild the old office building for the sum of \$4000.00 - be amended so that the President is authorized to use his discretion as to the contractor to be employed, and amount to be paid, but the total cost of the building & ad. is not to exceed \$15,000, as provided for in former order.

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The Building committee was associated with the President, at his request, to act with him in having the old office removed and rebuilt.

From the Fifty-Ninth Annual Report, Tuesday, June 4, 1907:

Since the last annual meeting, the Directors have arranged for the erection of a seven story Office building on the site of the former office of the company - which has been removed to another location - and the work is progressing satisfactorily, with a probability that the company will be able to hold its next annual meeting in the new building.

From the Sixtieth Annual Report, Tuesday, June 2, 1908:

The new Seven story, Fireproof Office building erected by the company during the past year, will be completed and occupied about July 1st, and promises to be a most satisfactory investment.

Nearly all the space in it has been rented, and the prospects are that it will yield at least 6 per cent net on the amount invested, besides affording the company a home that will stand as a monument of its success and an ornament to the city with which it is identified.

From the Sixty-First Annual Report, Tuesday, June 1, 1909:

The new Office building has been completed, and is now paying more than 6% on its cost, and will pay more when fully occupied.

When my law firm moved into the Southern Mutual Building, we joined most of the lawyers, doctors, dentists, insurance agencies, and accountants in Athens. In one location were almost all of the professional people in Athens: a most impressive achievement for one building.

On the street level were the Citizens & Southern National Bank and Edwards Prescription Laboratory. The law firm of Erwin, Nix, Birchmore & Epting; Dr. James L. Pendley, optometrist; Redwine & Company, general insurance; and the offices of the Southern Mutual Insurance Company occupied the second floor.

The third floor held the Progressive Fire & Life Insurance Company; Dr. Loree Florence, physician; Carlisle Cobb, lawyer (later to become a Superior Court judge); Broadus Coile, county attorney; Howard Abney's Insurance Agency; Dr. N.G. Slaughter, dentist; the

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Life Insurance Company of Georgia; Dr. John A. Hunnicutt, Jr., physician; and Your Life Insurance Company.

On the fourth floor were located Carolina Life Insurance Company; Preston Almond, lawyer; Peoples Insurance Agency; Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company; Drs. Guy O. Whelchel & Bolling S. DuBose, Jr., physicians; Seaboard Air Line (SAL) Railroad Company, distribution and freight agent; Home Owners Realty Company; Wingfield & Son Mortgage Loans; Insurers, Inc. (Bubber Scruggs and Bob Argo); James Barrow and John Green, attorneys.

The fifth floor offices had as tenants: Edwin Fortson, attorney; Dr. Harry Talmadge, physician; Dr. L.N. Betts, dentist; Dr. Henry C. Holliday, physician; Hubert Rylee, attorney; Jack Rundell, accountant; Hoyt Nelms' Bookkeeping Service; and Grady Pittard, attorney. And on the sixth floor were located Dr. Lauren Goldsmith, physician; Deupree Hunnicutt, attorney; W. H. Williams, dentist; Jester Insurance Agency; Newton Bowers, dentist; Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company of Tennessee; DuBose & DuBose; Rupert Brown, attorney; McWhorter Cooley, SCPA.

The last floor, the seventh, found Claude Turner, chiropractor; Bradberry Realty Company; John E. Griffin, attorney; Jerkins, Eldridge & Company, CPA; Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company; Dr. Linton Gerdine, physician; Dr. Marion Reed, dentist; Interstate Fire Insurance Company; and my law firm, Milner, Stephens & Bentley.



Upshaw Bentley,
2005

Those of us who had our offices in the Southern Mutual Building and who are still around have many fond memories of our years there. Bubber Scruggs, Terry Wingfield, and I often reminisce about the characters who operated the elevators. As I recall, Marion Foster, Mr. Griffith, and John Henry Foster were several of the elevator operators all under the supervision of Warren Pleger, the superintendent of the building.

We also remember many of the individuals who occupied the building. There were three attorneys of note that I would like to mention: Rupert Brown, Abit Nix, and J. Willie Arnold. They had been practicing law for some years and were considered to be the outstanding members of the bar at that time. Rupert Brown was a sole practitioner who was known

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statewide for his legal ability. Abit Nix was a prominent lawyer and was well known over the state, having run for governor two times, unsuccessfully. J. Willie Arnold handled mostly criminal cases and was widely respected throughout the area. You could write a book about these outstanding lawyers.

This building houses great memories. And as I made yet another move, I remembered many folks and many times and a fine building that has contributed so much to Athens.

Upshaw Bentley is a long-time member of the Athens Historical Society and one of Athens's most prominent attorneys. A former mayor of Athens, he has also served as Clarke County attorney, president of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, president of the Northeast Georgia Boy Scout Council, trustee of the UGA Foundation, trustee of the Georgia Baptist Foundation, chairman of the board of deacons of First Baptist Church of Athens, and co-chairman of the Athens Community Council on Aging. In January of 2006 he was honored by the State Bar of Georgia with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

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