

Sept. 4th, 2017

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Legacy

THE BUTLER FAMILY



Robbie Underwood, Editor and Publisher

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Legacy is published by and for the Oliver Springs Historical Society. We welcome submissions, both in text articles and pictures, current and upcoming events, “in memoriam”, reminiscences, etc..

The editor and staff of Legacy reserve the right to edit submissions for length and content, as well as to determine general interest and suitability of content for print.

For questions regarding “Legacy”, or to submit material, email:

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What do you know about the Butler Family? Chances are you know quite a bit about one branch or the other, you most likely went to school with several... shucks, you are likely related to them, either directly or through marriage (as in my case). I will tell you one thing, though, and of that you can be sure: one cannot accurately and adequately tell the history of Oliver Springs without tipping the hat to this good family.



Robbie Underwood

I want to first say that the study of the Butler family is a never ending study. There are so many branches that exist here in 2017, and many if not most people with any history or time in this area are related to or connected to them in some way.

I actually have Butler relatives, although my family didn't come down from West Virginia until 1924. My late Uncle Frank Underwood was married to Glenna Butler for quite a few years and had two sons to that union, and those are my cousins Frank Jr. and George Alan Underwood, who survive today, as does Glenna who has remarried and lives in Oak Ridge.

The Butler family could rightfully stake a claim of being true founding fathers of our town and area, having settled in the area along Poplar Creek shortly after 1800, and have been represented by numerous descendants and inter-marriage with a host of other pioneers to the area.



Young Fred Butler shows off his marksmanship while standing in front of the old frame Oliver Springs School. The school was brand new when seen as the backdrop in this photograph, having been begun in 1894 and being completed in time for the school year of 1895-96.

There are several stories that intrigue me regarding the Butler family, and many mysteries. For instance, I admit to being intrigued by the story of Mary Jane Butler Oliver, daughter of revolutionary war soldier Thomas A. Butler Sr., who became the wife of Richard Oliver, with whom she had several children in rapid succession.

Richard Oliver was for a time the postmaster of the settlement, and when a letter

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Robbie Underwood

was addressed to someone in this area, they would address it to Mr. or Miss so and so, care of Oliver's. That, in case you didn't know, that is how Oliver Springs ultimately got its name. A little known fact: the post office and the man for whom it was named first were established not in what is now Oliver Springs, but down in the country around Poplar Creek near what is now Blair Road and Dyllis, which is where Richard Oliver and his new bride Mary Jane Butler first lived. It was at that location when in 1826 the John Quincy Adams administration appointed Richard Oliver as the first postmaster. What we now consider as Oliver Springs was not known as such for many years; Oliver's was originally down on Poplar Creek, and in fact, more people than not called the settlement extending out and around the natural gap in the Cumberland range Winters Gap in the early days, after Major Moses Winters, revolutionary war hero and the other early settler of the area.

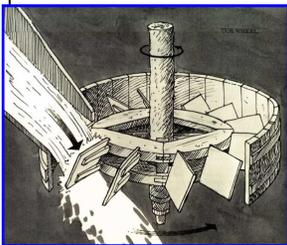
Richard Oliver and Mary Jane Butler Oliver built a fabulous 35 room inn and residence out just across from what is now the Norwood Middle School, and they were the earliest ones to really capitalize on the commercial lure of the medicinal springs that flowed at various elevations up the side of Walden Ridge where the gap cuts through the mountain. The Oliver Inn was built in 1830-31 on a tract of land that measured several hundred acres in what is now the Norwood area of Oliver Springs. The Post Office that had earlier existed down on Poplar Creek was now situated in this elegant brick structure. People sending correspondence to area citizens would address it to the recipient located at "Oliver's". Just north of the Oliver Estate were the fabled mineral springs of Indian legend. Stories are told of Richard Oliver carrying guests of the inn via horse and buggy down to the springs, apparently recognizing the draw of the reputed healing power of the various mineral waters that emanated from the rock strata at several elevations up the side of Walden Ridge. The Inn was also the hub of a plantation that took advantage of the fertile Poplar Creek floodplain. Slaves were utilized in the operations of this farm. Richard Oliver's wife Mary Jane Butler Oliver would have been central to the operation and management of this Inn.



Mary Jane Butler Oliver would have seemed to have the world by the tail: wealthy, mother and wife, socialite, innkeeper.... hundreds of servants... but then for reasons totally unknown to me, took her own life by hanging on February 7th of 1836.

What were the reasons? I wish someone would tell me. Was it postpartum depression? Trouble in her marriage? There is so much about depression that we don't understand even today, and in 1836 there were often no remedies for a young lady. So, there is a great mystery for me that I have no good answer to. I confess to remaining intrigued by this lovely yet tragic figure from our past.

There is the story of John W. Butler, son of Thomas A. Butler Sr., who married Nancy Crowe, and bought 130 acres down on what we

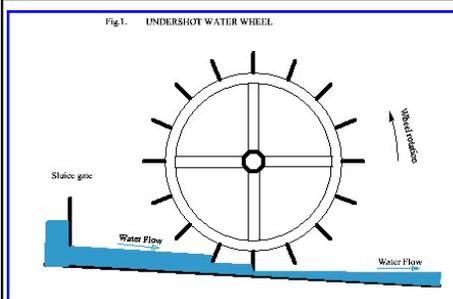


Tub mill illustration. It is possible to utilize this type of wheel with a relatively small gradient difference between reservoir and wheel.



Overshot Wheel. This kind of mill requires a significant amount of fall to be practical, as the water must enter the wheel at the top. The Butler Mill was most likely not this classic design, as there is not enough fall between the mill pond site and the wheel.

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Undershot Wheel Illustration. This type, along with the tub wheel, can be utilized when there is not a tremendous difference in elevation between the mill pond and the wheel.. It can even be utilized in the absence of a mill pond if there is enough reliable stream flow. Practically speaking, though, a mill pond was very desirable as it could retain water in times when the mill was not running: at night, etc. The downside of this kind of wheel is if debris, limbs, trash, etc., get lodged in the sluice gate, It creates a situation where the gate must be freed.

now call the Old Harriman Highway, that included a grist mill that was previously owned by the Reuben and Elizabeth Butler Williams heirs. John operated the mill that this road is named after from 1838 until 1879 when he was found in his millpond at the dam, either dead from a heart attack or accidental drowning. There were a lot of ways to drown yourself working around a mill dam and pond. If a log or limb or critter or trash got lodged in the intake of the mill, there were only two ways to fix it, and that was to drain the pond if you could, or go in and dislodge it.

That created all kinds of hazards in itself... you could get caught up in the debris, or just as bad, you could get sucked into the wheel or tub intake. Knowing where the mill was, it was most likely either what they called a tub mill or an undershot wheel where the water runs underneath the wheel.. as opposed to the classic overshot mill that most folks think of when they think of a water powered gristmill.

The site of the old mill is pretty much gone now...but it's just down from my house and property where I live today. I think he drowned, but that's probably, as a writer, my literary mind taking license. At any rate, after John's accidental death, his son Thomas Butler ran the mill until close to the time of his death in 1917.

Speaking of gristmills, we don't think much about in this modern age, but there was a time when they were crucial to the development of a town or community. Raising corn or grain was one thing: preserving it in forms that could be utilized throughout the harsh winter months until the next harvest was problematic.

For the early farmers, the only practical way of preserving grain or corn was dried, harvested and stored in corn cribs, and then stripped from the cobs and taken to the mill to be ground into flour and corn meal. For someone who could successfully operate a gristmill that was reliable, and that ground the meal finely and uniformly... that person did well.

So much was involved in the operation of a mill.. dressing the wheel had to be done every so often, and had to be done in a way so that the grain could go in, be ground to a uniform texture, and exit the mill. If you did it wrong, you wound up with a grinding wheel that would either spit out poorly ground bits and chunks, or it would just sit and grind the meal into talcum powder and never really exit the wheel.

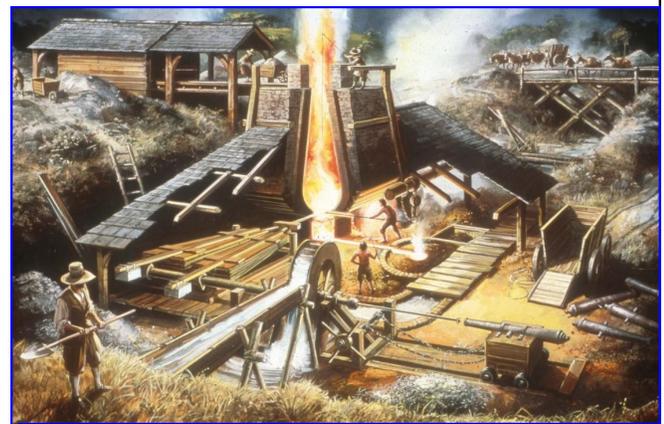
The fact that the Butler Mill operated successfully for so many years, through wartime and peace, testifies to the supreme skill of John and his son Thomas.

By the way, while we are talking about mills, we can't forget that Thomas A. Butler Sr. had earlier built his own gristmill out on Poplar Creek near where the Highway 61 and 62 meet as you go toward Oak Ridge. Not only did Thomas Sr. have a gristmill there, but he also had a water powered sawmill AND iron forge there at the same location.

According to Historian Snyder Roberts, this iron smelting forge was so important to the early development of the area that the state legislature passed a law enabling the granting of an additional 2,600 acres to Thomas Butler on the condition that the iron works be kept in operation.

This operation was apparently a large operation for many years in the early to mid part of the 1800s. So the Butlers were skilled builders, engineers, and millwrights.

Getting back to John W. Butler, we know about several of his children other than Thomas who ran the mill after his father's death. For instance, we know about John's son James K. Butler, who continued in his



Early 18th century Iron Smelting operation. Note the use of the water wheel for operating the bellows or any mechanical force needed to run the forge.

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father's prosperous footsteps.

J.K., as he tends to be called, built, first, the brick home that was quickly to become known as "Rose Terrace" at the back of Keebler's Store. The Rose Terrace was built with handmade brick, and was and continues to be a proud landmark. Butler later sold this house to W.S. Geers and wife Martha Wiley Geers. J.K. Butler then built the house that became his homeplace for the remainder of his life, and which after his death was sold to undertaker Bill Sharp and is now known as Sharp Funeral Home. J.K. Butler was a coal mine owner and operator, built a huge mine commissary on Roane Street just down the street from his home that stood for many years. J.K. Butler owned extensive land and mineral holdings.

I got an email the other day from the great grandson of J.K. Butler, who was asking about information regarding his family. I sent him some pictures of his kinfolks, and he sent me this photograph of Mae Butler Warren, his grandmother. I already had pictures of her, but I had no name attached to her face. I just knew she was a Butler.

An interesting note.... J.K. Butler had a sister, Elizabeth Butler, who married W.W. Ross, who had come here from Athens, Tennessee. They had two girls, Mallie, who died as a young girl, and Edith, who survived into old age. The Ross home was built up on Back Street, and later became known as the Mead house; however, it was the Ross family who built it and lived for several years there.



Class trip to Smoky Mountains. From left, Polly Duggins, Madeline Denton, J.K. Butler granddaughter, Ben Whedbee, and Beulah Mae "Boots" Warren, another J.K. Butler granddaughter. I find the "Boots" nickname intriguing, having read it in Snyder Roberts voluminous research, and also having heard it from Jerome Brock, nephew of Beulah Mae Butler.

One day I got an email from a lady who was raised in upstate California, by the name of Toni Ray, asking about Oliver Springs, and telling me that she was the granddaughter of an Edith Ross. It seems that Edith had passed away some years earlier, and now Edith's daughter, who was Toni Ray's mother, was getting up in years, and they were thinking about having to move her out of the old home place there in rural California and into a more suitable living arrangement.

On the big covered porch of this farmhouse in dryland California was an old trunk that had belonged to Edith since before anyone could remember. They decided to dig into grandma Edith's stuff and take a look. Inside they found all these wonderful pictures from well before the turn of the century Oliver Springs, documents, etc. There were Butler pics, and just a treasure trove of stuff related to the Ross family, the Butler family, and Oliver Springs in general.

Edith and her mother Elizabeth Butler Ross owned and operated a millinery shop in Oliver Springs during the time of the Grand Hotel that existed here at the turn of the century. They would create and sell ornate and stylish hats, scarves, and all the "foo foo" accompaniments of the late 19th century socialite. They had a booming

business.



James K. Butler home, later sold to Bill Sharp and remodeled into Sharp Funeral Home



Rose Terrace



The beautiful Mae Butler Warren, daughter of J.K. Butler.

Photo supplied by Jerome Brock, grandson of Mae Butler Warren.

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Edith Ross

I became smitten with young Edith.. here was not only a young woman, but a whole family, that had almost vanished from the historical landscape of our town. After her father W.W. Ross died, Edith married and moved to dryland California where she became a wife and mother , marrying Hugh Burum, originally from Wheat, Tennessee, who had moved to California and had become a wheat farmer. She came back to Oliver Springs only a few times. Her mother Elizabeth joined her out in California, staying until her death when she was shipped by railroad car back to Oliver Springs.

Anyway, and out of nowhere, Toni Ray decides to go through Grandma's steamer trunk, finds all the Oliver Springs references, and begins a web search. Ultimately finding me on the historical society website I managed for years. One thing led to another, and before I knew it, I was receiving glorious packages from Toni Ray.

This is not exactly Butler stuff, but peripheral to it, since Elizabeth Butler Ross was born a Butler. It seems that W.W. Ross became a bit known for keeping a liberal quantity of snakebite remedy on hand. You and I might call it corn liquor, but in polite society in those days, it was cough syrup, or snakebite remedy, or some such. Most everybody had enough on hand to ward off any army of rattlesnakes or copperheads that might storm the gates of the town. But anyway, it seems that on one occasion, W.W. Ross got to preventing snakebite one evening, and it seems he might have gotten a bit overprotected, and decided to climb up in one of his apple trees up on the side if the hill. After he climbed a ways up, he realized he was hopelessly stuck, with no way down. He took stock of his predicament, and apparently thought that he was doomed to die up in that tree, so he starts singing hymns at the top of his lungs... old standards such as "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder". It is told that his singing caught the attention of his neighbor, erstwhile mayor Jack Queener, who came up with a ladder and was able to help him down.



Edith Ross and friend Floince in front of the Butler Commissary. The commissary sat diagonally across from the Butler residence, the house that is now Sharp Funeral Home. J.K. Butler and family owned and operated substantial coal mine holdings for many years, and of course the commissary served the needs of the miners in their employ.

Toni Ray sent me was young Edith and her mother Elizabeth Butler Ross at his grave-side in 1902.



I went out to the cemetery and found his grave, and took a picture from roughly the same vantage point....

I live just over the way from the Oliver Springs Cemetery, and when the leaves are down, I can see over to where W.W. And Elizabeth are buried.. they are good neighbors, never bother me....

I marvel when I think that not only the photographs, but especially the Ross/Butler members were almost lost to the ages. Thank God for Toni Ray who cared enough about Grandma Edith and her legacy to reach out and try to connect with her hometown.

By the way, Toni Ray and her sister are planning to come to Oliver Springs in the middle of September. I am buzz-



Young Nancy Elizabeth Butler. She would later marry W.W. Ross



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ing with anticipation, and hope that many of you amateur historians can meet up with them!

When I think of compelling Butler tales, I am instantly in remembrance of Easter Butler Braden. Granddaughter of Thomas Butler, Sr., Easter was born in 1856 to the union of James Polk Butler and Maleta Wright. James Polk Butler and family eventually bought a farm near the site of the former Jake Butcher estate across the Clinch River from the present day Oak Ridge Marina. This would ultimately play into a great tragedy that would befall the Butler family in May of 1919.

Easter Braden married Samuel Braden and began to raise a family that would ultimately be blessed with six children. The Braden children would collectively wind up taking a shine to the offspring of the Lockett family, with no fewer than four marriages between the scions of the two families. The Locketts of Oliver Springs can trace their roots right through the middle of these two families. The

seeming peace of the Easter Butler/Sam Braden union was upset by the onset of the Spanish/American War, with Sam going off to serve flag and country.

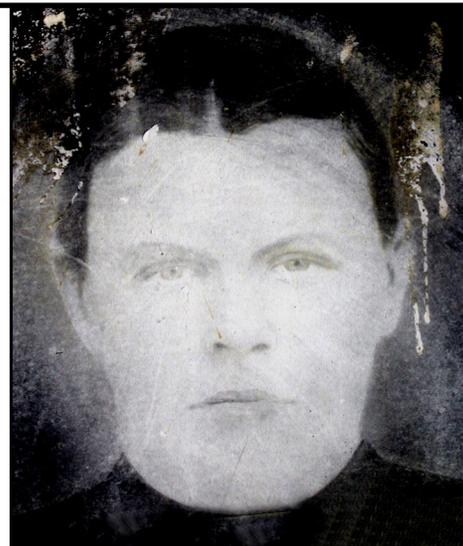
Upon returning, Sam Braden became known around Oliver Springs as a colorful character known by all. Snyder Roberts wrote humorous anecdotal stories about Sam Braden's antics in his "Oliver Springs and Its History" series. He and Easter had a long and eventful marriage that endured through the hardships and joys of parenting and grandparenting until a fateful day in 1919. Easter had ridden on a train with her older sister Rhoda, disembarking around Elza, which is on the far east end of what was later to become Oak Ridge. They proceeded along the tracks heading across the railroad bridge toward the old home place of their parents at Kirkstall (the site of the erstwhile mansion of the late banking magnate Jake Butcher). By accounts I have read and heard, I believe that they were on or near the trestle seen at right when they were struck by an oncoming train. They were knocked from the tracks and killed instantly. This calamity had profound effects on both families and extended kin for years to come. My dear friend Wanda Lockett Brown told me this story years ago and it was plainly a sad story after all these years as she related it to me.

I realize that this article has barely touched the hem of the garment regarding the Butler family. There exist many branches, many descendants... This is just a tiny piece of the story. The Butler family is collectively a proud and beneficial part of our history and they remain interwoven into the fabric of the tapestry that is Oliver Springs, our loveliest little town....

I want to encourage you to help the Oliver Springs Historical Society to preserve and enlarge the Butler history. If you have pictures, please share them with us. If you do not have facilities to scan im-

ages, bring them to me at our new archive home housed in the Oliver Springs Museum and Archives. I will see that they get placed in the archives where they can be a testimony for countless years to come, and together you and I will help to ensure that the legacy of the Butler family will not be lost to the ages.

We have now moved into the Archives wing of our new museum down in town, just down from the Oliver Springs High School. We are busily archiving just as fast as we can make it happen. I invite you to come down and see the museum and Archives!



Easter Butler Braden— Killed by a train near Elza

BRADEN, Mrs. Samuel.

Freight Train Claims Two Victims. Two Oliver Springs Sisters Instantly Killed Monday Morning Near Elza. Mrs. Samuel BRADEN, wife of the justice of the peace of Oliver Springs, and Mrs. James ENGLAND, also of that place, were instantly killed Monday morning when they were struck by a freight engine on the Louisville and Nashville road. The ladies took train early to visit their sister, who is ill at Kirkstall and alighted at Elza and started walking along the track it is said, toward Kirkstall. It is thought that they heard the

freight approaching and thinking they were stepping from the track stepped in front of the approaching train. Trainmen are said to have stated that when they saw them on the track it was too late to stop before reaching them. The train was stopped immediately and the bodies of the women picked up and taken on a special to Oliver Springs where the funeral and interment occurred. Both of the ladies were highly esteemed and the community is shocked over the fatal accident. Mrs. ENGLAND is survived by her husband and two children and Mrs. BRADEN by her husband and a large family of small children. Both were said to be about 45 or 50 years of age. The Rockwood Times, Rockwood, TN, Thursday, 15 May 1919, Vol. 39, No. 20.



Sam Braden, Spanish American War Veteran and Patriot



Railroad Bridge near Elza/Kirkstall. It was at or near this bridge where Easter Butler Braden and her sister Rhoda Butler England were struck and killed by a train operated by the L&N Railroad.

BUTLER FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS



Lovely picture of the J.K. Butler family and kin. Taken probably around 1920-22, it shows several of J.K. and Laura Walker Butler's family, as well as his sister Elizabeth Butler Ross and his niece Edith Ross Burum. Edith is second lady from right. I think the lady third from left in white dress is Beulah Butler Denton, with husband George Denton in front of her. I believe the lady fifth from left holding the young baby is Mae Butler Warren. No doubt the Warren and Denton children are in this photograph. This photo was taken across from First Baptist Church, in front of what is now the Van Hook residence.



Butler family picture. I have studied this photo at great length, and I believe the lady seated holding the man's hand is Mae Butler, and the man is ostensibly Walter Warren, who was to become Mae's husband. Young Edith Ross is at center surrounded by her cousins. At rear, I believe Aunt Fine Butler may be seen at left, Fred Butler at center, and Beulah Butler at right. I am certain of Edith's identity, but the others are tentative and I am subject to correction.



I love this photograph. James K. Butler is shown at top left. Just below him is John R. Richards, of the legendary Richards Brothers who were instrumental in building the fabulous Oliver Springs Hotel. I believe second from left at top can be see Edith Ross, daughter of J. K. Butler's sister Elizabeth and her husband W.W. Ross. I believe the young lady at right is Mamie Richards Sienknecht, daughter of John and Hannah Richards. The other two young ladies are probably the other two daughters of John and Hannah, Annie and Rachel, but I am not certain of this. I believe the lady at right on the ground is Hannah Richards, and the lady perched near the ladder is thought to be Elizabeth Butler Ross. The location is Balance Rock on Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga.

(as a humorous aside, this spot seems to have been a favorite for local Presbyterians, as I have several photographs related to our antiquity, and they are mostly all of area Presbyterians, as were the Richards families and children.. It should be noted, however, that J.K. Butler and his family were Baptists. J.K. Butler was a huge underwriter and moving force behind the leveling off of the notorious Pine Hill, and the construction of the First Baptist Church of which he was a longtime deacon and faithful member.



The photograph above was humorously labeled "The Swells", a sometimes disdainful term used to describe upper crust society. It shows Butler family members having target practice out to the left of the school-house.

Fighting For Freedom - Moses Naff (Knaff)

By Julia Daniel

The Mayme Carmichael Organization, Inc. is proud to have a Civil War Trail Marker located at the Carmichael Park in Oliver Springs, TN. The Civil War Marker honors the African American men who fought in the U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery in the United States Army. Before the war ended in 1865, some 200,000 African Americans had enlisted in services to fight for freedom. Early in 1864, Union Gen. Davis Tillson, Chief of Artillery of the Department of Ohio and in charge of the defense of Knoxville, Loudon, and Kingston, raised the 1st U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery in Knoxville. Moses Naff (Naph, Knaff), born about 1815 from Anderson County enlisted in Knoxville on June 5 in Company H. In his forties and described as a farmer, Naff was born in Tennessee and both of his parents are listed as born in Virginia. Naff survived the war and settled in Anderson County, where several of his descendants continue to live today.



Julia Daniel

In the 1870 U.S. Federal Census of District 9, Anderson, Tennessee, Moses Naph (Naff) was married to Diley and children listed were: Hannah, Harriet, Barbra, King, William, Robert, Charles, Elizar (Eliza) F., and Lucinda. Elizar was believed to have been Walter Griffin's mother.

Several of the Knaff Family have been listed as coal miners, railroad workers, as well as farmers in the early days of Winter Gap now Oliver Springs. In the Little Leaf Baptist Church 100th Anniversary Book, dated May 1990, land was purchased for the third site of Little Leaf Baptist Church and William, John, David, and Joseph Richards sold the land to J.K. P. Naff, trustee of the church. In 1910, some of the charter members of the church listed were Fannie Knaff, James Knaff, Jane Knaff, and Liza Knaff. In 1922, a church group was organized under the title of "Literary Society" and Robert Knaff was listed as one of the officers. Debates were held with the following topics: which is most useful, horses or cow? Which is most benefit to a home, dish rag or broom? Is fire more destructive than water? Is whiskey more destructive than war? In 1954, Barbara Knaff was listed as president of the Young Women's Auxiliary (YWA). The Knaff Family has been very instrumental in the church music department thru Aurora, Robert Shirrell, Dezoria, Jane Ann and Calvin L. Knaff. Several of the family members have served as deacons and trustees of the church. Currently, Calvin L. Knaff serves as the Chairman of the Trustee Board. Calvin is married to Phyllis. At least eight generations have attended Little Leaf Baptist Missionary Church and continue to praise and sing to the glory of God.



Phyllis Murphy Knaff married Calvin November 27, 2004

Happy Birthday Ms. Clara!!

Clara Curd Hall Hughes was born in Oliver Springs, Tennessee on September 28, 1920, to the union of the late Fred Douglas Curd and Lucy Jones Curd. In the 97 years since that blessed day, she has continued to bless and delight her friends and family. It is one of my highest honors that she calls me friend, and I love her dearly! Ms. Clara is a faithful member of Little Leaf Baptist Church, where she serves as a deaconess, having been baptized in the creek at Tuppertown in 1938. I have observed her devotion to principles of Christian love time and time again, witnessing her dedication in feeding the prisoners on our work detail at the Archives. They would inquire when Ms. Clara was going to be bringing her big washtub sized bowl of banana pudding. They loved it so!

So, in this issue of the "Legacy" I do hereby proclaim you, dear lady, as a cherished and treasured friend and kindred spirit to the Oliver Springs Historical Society, and want to wish you a most blessed birthday!

Proverbs 31 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.



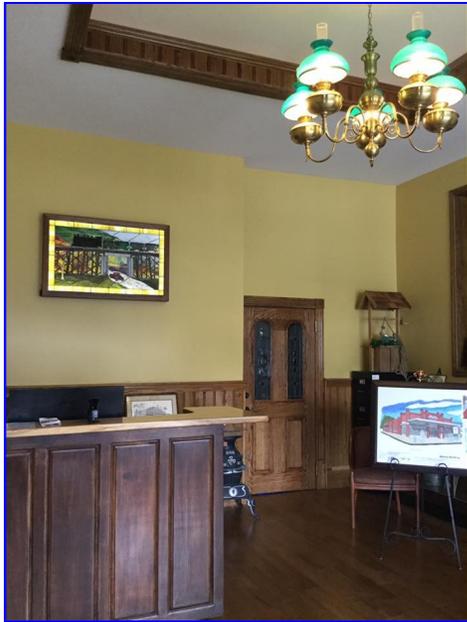
Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Robbie

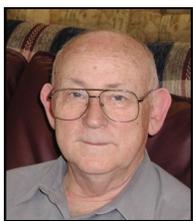
Roberts/Harvey Archives Now Open!

Never let it be said that our Ladies of the Society are anything less than champions! If you need proof, I invite you to drop by the brand new Roberts/Harvey Archives located in the front of our newly restored Museum and Archives Building at the corner of Winters Gap Avenue and Kingston Avenue. For those of us who labored so long and hard, the front half of the building has blossomed into a beautiful showplace and work



center for the Oliver Springs Historical Society.

I could easily weep tears at the memory of our dear Mr. Sonny Harvey, who was brought by his son Buster down to the Archives not long before he left us. I remember speaking to him as I showed him the sign proclaiming “Roberts/Harvey Archives”, showing him all the handwork that had been done to that room as we labored alongside the shortline crew from the Regional Corrections Facility in Petros. I remember looking into his face as we went from detail to detail, showing him the woodwork that was all made either in my shop or onsite as the prisoners helped me run the machinery I had brought down onsite for two and a half years. My heart was always to craft a room that would be



befitting such noble champions of our town and history as were Mr. Snyder Roberts and Mr. C.S. Harvey Jr.. Every piece of trim, rosettes, crown, and oak tongue and groove wainscot was milled out by us expressly for this room. I tip my hat to the Shortline crew, many of which were as noble in the pursuit of excellence for the project as any of the Society members.

Thanks to generous help from Teresa Freels and Ashley Calhoun in securing lockable filing cabinets for the Archives, we have been steadily bringing picture books, documents, original vintage prints and photographs, court transcripts, etc., down to the file safes. Seen above are several of my personal picture books that I am in the process of donating to the Archives. Many of them were taken from materials generously shared by Mr. Harvey, who told me early on, “If I’ve got it, you can have access to it”. There, my friends, is the spirit of Mr. Harvey shown to me, and I will do no less. The notebooks seen above are but a drop in the bucket. We are adding more almost daily. Our goal is to have a Town Archives that will be the pride of Oliver Springs and the envy of many others.

It’s a-happenin’..... I hope you are as excited as I am!



Here I am, bursting with pride in front of the state of the art computer, ultra high resolution monitor, and high capacity photo printer that the Ladies of the Historical Society purchased for the Roberts/Harvey Archives with funds from the Ladies’ Day Luncheon that they so brilliantly hosted. The ladies of the Society are true heroes of the Society!



Carolyn Kelly

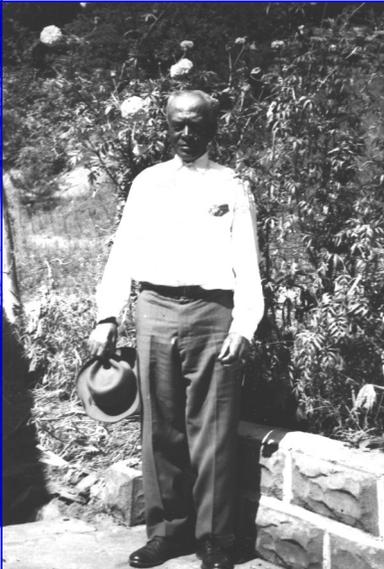
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The Penitentiary Chair

This is another one of my historical stories I would like to tell you about.

In the 1800's, Mr. JJ Williams and family lived across the street from the current Britain Building in downtown Oliver Springs. Mr. Williams was a big, big man and rode a big Red Horse. He ran a livery stable and would pick up merchandise that came on the train and deliver it to Coalfield, Tennessee and the different places it was supposed to go.

In the little community called Elverton, about 1894-1900, there was a murder of a black man who left a little boy named Tom Gilbreath, Jr. I'm not sure how Mr. Williams got Tom, maybe his mother couldn't take care of him. Tom told me Mrs. Williams kept him with her at the house, helping her, she had a box he stood on to wash the dishes. When he was older, Mr. Williams had him work with him doing the deliveries, taking care of the horses and such.



An elderly man told me this once, where the High School is now, was once just a big pasture field. He said, several man were gathered there one day and one of them jumped on Tom and cut him bad.

Someone ran and told Mr. Williams about the attack. Mr. Williams came riding down the road on his big Red Horse, he saw the man who had cut Tom, he first took his gun and shot him off the fence, killing him and nothing was ever done about it.

I suppose it was after Mr. Williams died that my Grandfather Abston took Tom in. From the picture that were taken at the time, he looked like a teenager. He had a Trunk and Chair. Tom lived at the Garage and with our family until my Grandmother Abston died and the Garage was sold. Tom then went to work at the, Oak Ridge Hospital and finally purchased a house on Strutt Street. He still had his Trunk and Chair.

One night someone was knocking hard on our door so James got up and went to see what it was about. He was told that Tom's house was on fire so, we immediately went to see what had happened. I shall never forget it. The little fellow was setting in his Chair with his Trunk beside him. He looked so pitiful.

Mother and Daddy fixed him a place to stay at the house. He continued to work and thanks to the Hopper family, Clayton Lyle family, his Church and others, they built him a house.

When he died, Mr. Lyle asked me if I wanted anything Tom had. I Said, "His Chair". I took the chair and refinished it and had a new cane bottom put in and it now sits in my bedroom.

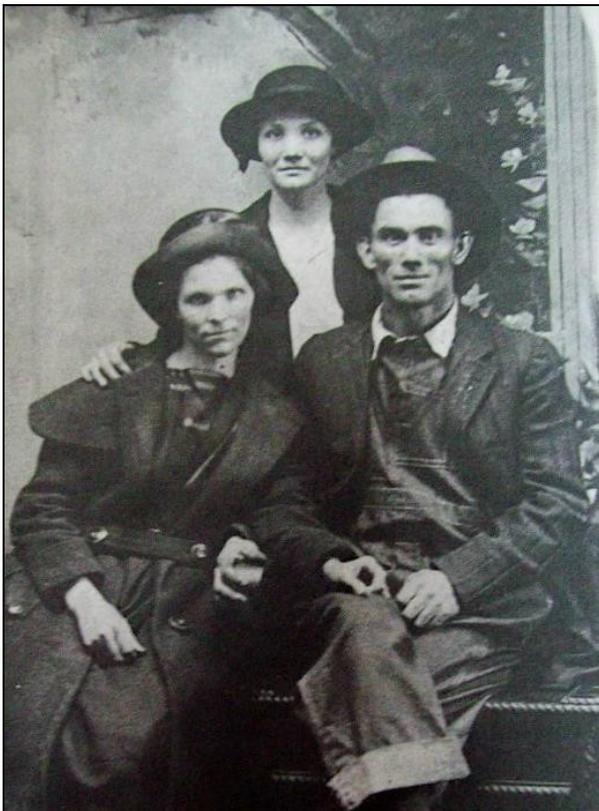
While reading a magazine at a Doctor's Office, I came upon a story about a Penitentiary Chair. It was exactly like mine! I thought since it came from Mr. Williams, he probably had it special made. I often wonder how it has lasted so long, it has no nails, screws, nothing. If one day my family doesn't want it, I have told them to donate it to the Historical Society. It is a piece of history, The Penitentiary Chair!



Miners Memorial Wall



Here are a few photos borrowed from our friend Patricia Cox showing the beautifully and tastefully done Miners Memorial Wall at the foot of Windrock Mountain. At right is Carl Lively, who worked for 28 years mining the coal. Below is the pump that replicates the community pump that existed at the site for many years. Thanks, Trish, for the beautiful photos and descriptions!



1920-1930 era. This is Windrock Miner Amos Pride and his wife Ollie Patterson Pride in front. The lady in back is Sarah Patterson Pride, 1902-1980, who married Windrock Miner John Frank Pride. Sarah was daughter-in-law to Ollie. Sarah's sisters were Molly, Mammie, Marlana, Carrie, and Lula, her brother was Dallas, and her parents were William and Bertie Patterson.



Do You Remember?

We have been generating a lot of interest online in things historical lately After deciding to post “In the Shadow of the Steeple– The Pine Hill Murders” online in its entirety, we have been pretty much amazed at the thousands of views it has gotten! If you’ve been around here for long, you know the story... a bunch of fellows slipping away for a drink and a friendly card game, tempers flare over a welched bet, a furious volley of shots and the Tolliver Brothers are committed to the ground and to history as the victims shot up on Pine Hill. The sad story has been immortalized in song by bluegrass groups, as well as our own Hometown American Idol star Janelle Arthur.

The movie was shot on location in and around Oliver Springs, with the big gun battle filmed partly in Back Valley toward Coalfield, with the culmination and aftermath filmed up on Ann Street in Oliver Springs. One scene was shot up near Norris, and the saloon scene was filmed partly in Charles Tichy’s old bank building, and partly at a house on Cemetery Road that had been modified on the exterior to look like the exterior of the Aaron Russell Tavern that once sat up on Back Street in Oliver Springs. So many of our Historical Society took part either as actors or as wardrobe designers and procurers. Sadly, some of our actors have gone on... Helen Freels, James Kelly, Luke Brandon... what a delight it was to have them in our project to be remembered by generations to come. Mimi Brock, Charles Tichy, Sheila Hudson, Carolyn Kelly are some of those who were superb in their roles, and who are thankfully still with us.

Shown at right is one of our posters from the big Premiere that we had when the movie opened back in April of 2004. We had two showings on that day in the Oliver Springs High School auditorium that were both sold out, we entered it into the Secret City Film Festival where it won best documentary. What giddy times those were!

Lately there has been a lot of brainstorming and buzz regarding another movie project, possibly one more comprehensive and bigger in scope than The Pine Hill Murders. Just think.. Wouldn’t it be sooo grand to be able to show “The Pony Cash Story” on the big screen in our very own soon to be completed theatre? Think about it... Ex-Civil War Lawman Henry J. “Pony” Cash, shot down in the middle of Main Street in September 1904.... What a story! But there is so much more to the story.. So much more that has not been told...

Could it happen?

In the Shadow of the Steeple - The Pine Hill Murders
Grand Premiere
Saturday, April 3, 2004
7:00 P.M.
Oliver Springs High School
Matches Screening
Saturday, April 3, 2009
2:00 P.M.
Oliver Springs High School

Based on a true story that exploded upon Oliver Springs one hot August day in 1890, here is the compelling account of the brutal and tragic gunfight that has become the stuff of legend! Come witness the gripping saga played out before your eyes!

Screenplay © 2004 by Robbie Underwood
A Robbie Underwood/Clyde Pleimmons Production

Movie Running Time 45 minutes

Tickets \$10.00
Tickets must be purchased in advance and appropriate ticket must be bought and presented for Matinee or Evening Premiere.
(A portion of proceeds benefits the Oliver Springs Historical Society)



Mayme Carmichael Banquet

By Julia Daniel

4th Annual Banquet and Fundraiser

The Mayme Carmichael School Organization, Inc. (MCSO) hosted their 4th Annual Banquet and Fundraiser Saturday, August 19, 2017 at the Double-Tree Hotel in Oak Ridge. The event was full of fun, excitement, live auction, dinner and musical entertainment. This year, Lt. Governor Randy McNally served as the guest speaker and a special presentation was made to MCSO as part of a grant they received from the Tennessee State Museum.



Julia Daniel



Lt. Gov. Randy McNally

With the help of our state and local officials, who are an integral part of our community, we would like to thank everyone who support the banquet! In addition to Lt. Governor Randy McNally and the Town of Oliver Springs, we would like to extend our special thanks to Chairman Ken Yager, Rep. Kent Calfee and Marilyn Calfee, Rep. John Ragan, Rep. Rick Staples, the Tennessee Black Caucus and the Tennessee State Museum for their continued support in assisting MCSO. Because of this partnership, we will preserve the rich culture and heritage of the African American community and display this history in our new museum.

MCSO is a 501 (C)(3) organization dedicated **“to preserving the heritage of the African American community, promoting education, and supporting the development of Carmichael Park.”** If you would like to learn more about the Mayme Carmichael School Organization, Inc., please feel free to contact Julia H. Daniel at [865-789-0846](tel:865-789-0846) or juliadaniel@comcast.net.

Photographs



If you never ate a hot dog from the Crystal Crème, you may not actually be FROM here....



Pine Hill Actors Janice Underwood and a very young Madeline Giles, C. 2004



Taken at the Oliver Springs, Tennessee, Railroad Station - 1929
L to R: Unknown man, baby Anna Lucille Carter, unknown woman, Carrol Wesley Duff, Christine Duff, Anna Lucille Carter - dau of Icalona Buckner and John T. Carter (2nd husband)
Carroll and Christine Duff - children of Icalona Buckner and Charles 'Charlie' B. Duff (1st husband)



How many of you can say you ate a hot dog at Charlie McBee's Café? Legendary back in the day, it is now but a memory...

I was told that you could get hot dogs for 10 cents each or 12 for a dollar.

C.S. Harvey Archives



Lots to see in this picture... in front you can see the ice house, one of two that once served the town. At right can be seen the Masonic Hall with the beautiful Mansard roof that causes one to wonder why on earth it was ever removed. Across the tracks can be seen the Booth Building that was built after the old more elegant one burned in 1937, causing the adjacent Oliver Springs Presbyterian Church to also burn to the ground.

Up on Pine Hill can be seen the then newly built First Baptist Church that took the place of the beautiful frame building that had proven too small for a church that had outgrown it.

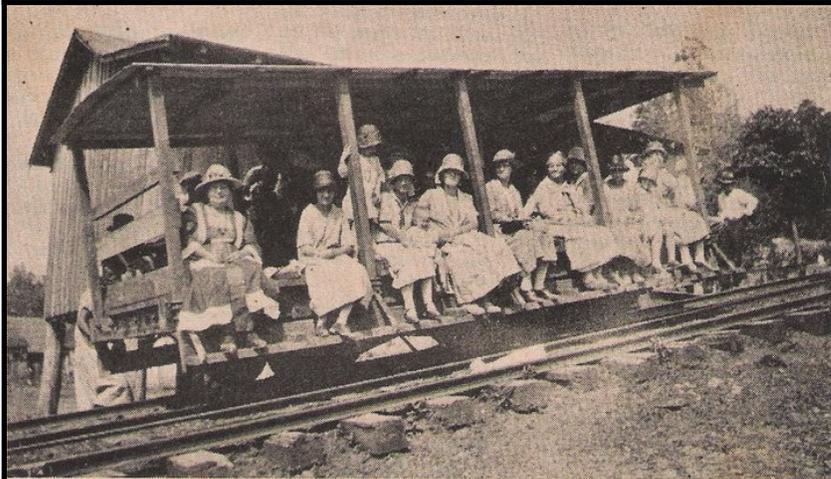


Seated left to right: Harry Pierce, John Littleton, Joe "John" Richards, and William McCart. Standing left to right: Town Marshall, Bill Potter, Frank Long, Hubert Boy, Alexander Bowman, Joseph Richards, and Chauncie Diggs.



Matriarch Ann Richards, wife of Joseph Richards, Sr, pictured in front of the stately and elegant Richards Mansion built around 1892-93. The mansion replaced the original Richards House that had burned in 1892. The Richards Family were not without their detractors, some of whom still viewed them as "Yankee Carpetbaggers" come down to take advantage of a south decimated by a war that spared few and left little for those in Southern states. The truth about the Richards Family was somewhat more benign than that most extreme view. Many viewed them to be cordial and benevolent, certainly much less hawkish than many others who came south after the war.

Pictured alongside Ann Richards is her brother "Uncle Ben" Thomas, an humble man who gained a bit of unwanted notoriety in the infamous "Outhouse" caper where he was inadvertently discovered in the girls' outhouse at the Oliver Springs School by a schoolgirl who innocently happened upon him sitting comfortably in the ladie's loo smoking a cigar. He was admonished by school officials to henceforth use the less tidy Boys' privy.



Up The Windrock Incline—

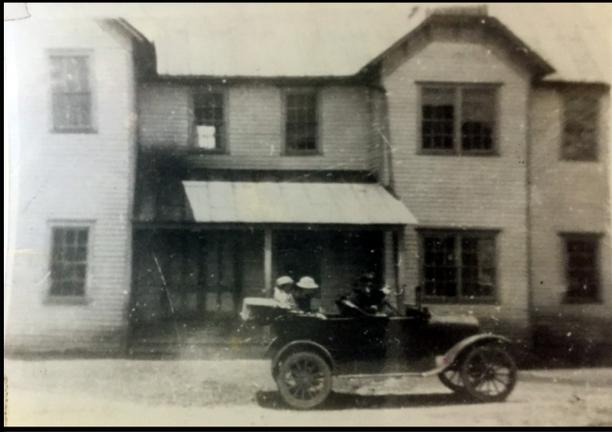
Ladies from Upper Windrock were returning home probably some Sunday afternoon in 1920 on the "man car" the miners rode on work days. At the far left is the wife of the Rev. Bill Fox, who preached then at Windrock.



Old Phone Exchange building on the corner of Winters Gap Avenue and Roane Street. It was being torn down when this photo was taken.

Thanks to Buster Harvey for graciously opening the C.S. Harvey Jr. Archives to us. Buster is a true friend and kindred spirit!

C.S. Harvey Archives



This is a picture of the old frame school building built on land procured from the Butler family. This photo was taken about 1915. The sloped porch roof was legendary for youngsters escaping the wrath of a teacher, enabling them to dive out the upper window and slide to the ground. The proud old structure would last another seven years before being torn down in order to build the “new” brick structure that served our town until it burned in 1949. Principal Edith Barton is seated in the rear of the car.



Back row, L-r: Myrtle Wright, unknown, Blanche Hackworth Summitt, Margaret Cox, Laura Whedbee, Miss Carrie Mitchell. Blanche Smith is sitting in front of Miss Carrie Mitchell.

Front, L-R: Essie Higdon Huddleston, Amy Cross, Esther Duncan Powers, Hazel Allison Pearce, Ann Long, Mary Waller



Ab Mead, Harry Vann Sr., Martin McCubbins



Hotel proprietor Rufe Nighbert shown at the corner of Walker Avenue and Kingston Avenue. Seated alongside him is his lovely wife Lydia Ruffner Nighbert. The horse's name is Jolly. Rufe Nighbert was a successful businessman and community leader. The Nighbert Hotel (seen at left) was a lovely inn that catered to guests disembarking the Southern Train for a stay. The hotel sat where the present Morgan house is on Walker Avenue. Sadly, it burned to the ground in 1912. The Snyder Roberts house later sat on the site where for many years it was home to Mr. Roberts, his wife Pauline, and daughter Patsy. It was ultimately sold to the Morgan family.





Oliver Springs Elementary Faculty, C. ~1935. Front row, L-R: Hannah Coward, Mary Richards, Helen Kesterson. Back, L-R: Ralph Phillips, Blye Ladd, Snyder Roberts, Principal.

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