



Gule News

APRIL 1997

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BUDDY SULLIVAN RETURNING

April Meeting Tuesday, April 22
Gule Room, St. Marys Library
General Meeting 7:00 — Executive Session 6:30

T-I-M-B-E-E-R

That was a big word in south Georgia, the livelihood of the majority of coastal residents for many a year!

Buddy will be here to tell us all about it—timbering in general, timbering in particular - rafting of timber - marketing of timber - timbermen - the growth of the timber industry - and the decline of the timber industry!

Buddy Sullivan, a McIntosh County native, is the author of many publications, among them EARLY DAYS OF GEORGIA TIDEWATER, The Story of McIntosh County & Sapelo; MEMORIES OF MCINTOSH; SAPELO: A HISTORY. He is informative, entertaining and more than willing to share his historical knowledge and illustrations with his audience. You will not want to miss this opportunity!

TOUR KINGS BAY NAVAL BASE

FRIDAY, JUNE 6 (Note date change)

More details will follow in May newsletter!!! June 6 will be the next meeting of Gule Historical Society. Visitors will be welcome.

A BIT OF EARLY LOCAL TIMBERING INFORMATION

From CAMDEN'S CHALLENGE we learn that timbering was a part of the county's economic picture as early as 1755 when Donald Mackay petitioned for land on the Great Satilla to adjoin land where he already "had begun to erect a sawmill". Other early sawmills were located at Kings Bay on William Johnstone's property and on that of John King, who leased a portion to Woodford Mabry for Mabry's mill.

In 1802 Archibald Clark bought large tracts along the St. Marys River and built his mill in what is today Chariton County at Spanish Creek, only to find it threatened by the British during the War of 1812. They never made it up the river thanks to William Cone, but that's another story.

It is believed that the first steam sawmill using circular saws was set up at the entrance to Burnt Fort Lake in 1830. This was manned by a group of New Englanders who chose to remain, and whose descendants reside here still.

Two of the largest operations were found at Jim and John Bailey's mills on the Satilla River. These Maine natives moved south before the Civil War and acquired large tracts which were not only used for timbering, but naval stores as well. The now dead town of Bailey's Mill also offered one stop shopping at the company commissary, rice growing and shipping.

In the 1890's a rail line was built from the Okefenokee to Bullhead Bluff on the Satilla to ship lumber and cross ties from Camp Cornelia mill. Other shipping points were found at Satilla Bluff and Ceylon where the Hilton Dodge Lumber Companies operated mills with large settlements of workers at both sites.

This, too, is the period when both major rivers - the St. Marys and the Satilla - were flooded with timber shipments from mills lining both rivers. These were the days when the longleaf pine supply was depleted throughout southeast Georgia and northeast Florida. It is only now that the replanting of these valuable trees has begun.

The Woodbine Timber Company owned by George Brandon and J.S.N. Davis had several mills at various times, including one at Owen's Ferry and another at St. Marys. When Camden timber supplies were depleted, they moved their operation to Killenny in Bryan County.

L.T. McKinnon owned another large timber operation in mid Camden County and was later joined by C.L. McCarthy, Sr. in

both the timber and naval stores operations.

Proctor Timber Company, which began as Proctor Lumber Company, is the only timber company dating to the 1930's that is still doing business. In 1935 Lucius Proctor established a turpentine business at Colesburg and soon expanded into pole, piling and cross tie production. He added a sawmill, and later a planing mill, dry kilns, and treating plant. In 1969, it began dealing exclusively in pulpwood. The company is now operated by Mrs. Proctor.

Timbering is still a big business in Camden County with many families dependent on it for their livelihood, but the bulk of the production goes to nearby pulp and paper mills.

SAMUEL BURNS



One of Camden County's leading timbermen of the mid and late 1800's was Samuel L. Burns, born February 22, 1819. He died in St. Marys May 2, 1888. His tombstone in Oak Grove Cemetery says that he was born in Belfast, Ireland. The 1850 and 1860 census records say Maryland.

He married first Susan Grovenstine, who died September 22, 1858 at the age of thirty-eight. She was born and died in St. Marys. Susan was the daughter of Salzburger descendant Christopher and Elizabeth Travant Grovenstein. Christopher was born in 1773 and died in 1835. His wife was born in 1785 and died December 14, 1866. They are both buried in Oak Grove Cemetery in St. Marys.

In the 1850 census, Mr. Burns is listed with his wife Susan. His occupation is shown as mechanic. In 1860 he is shown a "miller" with no wife, but two young children in his home, ages 3 and 2. In 1870 his two children Jane, age 15, and Samuel, age 13 were living with him. In 1871 he served as mayor of St. Marys.

Several children's markers are in the Burns lot in Oak Grove. The daughter Jennie married Ralph Sandiford, who was in business with Mr. Burns. They have descendants.

By 1880, Mr. Burns his wife Maria and son Samuel, age 24, are in the home. He had married as his second wife Maria O. Bessent (1838-1923). She was the daughter of John Bessant and is buried in the Bessent lot in Oak Grove Cemetery.

The February 23, 1997 issue of the GEORGIA TIMES UNION carried an article about Maria Bessent's scrapbook found in a flea market years before by Robin Cross of Fernandina. The journal was kept on an old Bessent store ledger which was last used in 1854. Then Maria began keeping newspaper clippings and obituaries of interest to her in the book.

The article also tells that Mrs. Cross had learned that Samuel and Maria Burns bought White Oak Plantation (now the Gilman holdings on the St. Marys River) and ran the 2,850 acre rice plantation until his death. She sold the land to E.N. Stone in 1893.

The Burns house still stands on Osborne Street next to Sterling's Grocery store. It is one of the few antebellum houses remaining in the historic district of St. Marys and has been restored by its present owners Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Stucki.

According to James Silva's EARLY REMINISCENCE OF CAMDEN COUNTY, GEORGIA, Mr. Burns came to Camden County with Thomas Vance to build houses for a Mr. Caldwell. They later began the manufacture of Sea Island cotton gins, described as smooth and painted blue, with native red bay used as the hardwood in their construction.

Mr. Burns later went into business with R.D. Fox, and in time Fox and Burns was the big name in Camden County timber business.

Camden County historian I.F. Arrow wrote of the Fox and Burns mills in the 1870's ... they were located on the front end of the city on the St. Marys River and another on North River south of the Pond used as a Log Pen, and they had the new mill on the north side but it was destroyed by fire." They also had several boats used to tow logs to their mills, the FLORA TEMPLE, the SHEPARD, the ATHLETE, the GLADIATOR, and the MASCOT.

HAPPENING IN WOODBINE

The Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has announced the proposed nomination of the Woodbine Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places.

This district dates from the 1880's to 1947 and covers approximately forty acres. It is significant in architectural, commercial, political and transportation areas. It is bounded on the north by 2nd Street, on the west by Parker Avenue, on the south by 8th Street, and the east by Georgia Avenue.

The residential buildings are one and two story buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most are wood-framed, a few built in the late 1930's and mid-1940's are brick. The styles include Queen Anne, Folk Victorian and Craftsman.

The commercial buildings stand along Bedell Avenue (U.S. 17) and are brick, one story, attached structures. The community landmark buildings include the Masonic Lodge (1895), St. Mark's Episcopal Church (1900), First Baptist Church (1934), Woodbine United Methodist Church (1896), Woodbine School (1926) - now the community center, Atkinson Memorial Building (1947), and Camden County Courthouse (1928). The Camden County Courthouse was listed on the National Register in 1980, along with other historical courthouses statewide.

The National Register is the country's official list of historically significant buildings, sites and districts. Being listed provides formal recognition based on national standards and insures that these properties will be considered in planning of state or federally assisted projects.

Listing does not place any obligation on private owners nor restrict private use of the property. It does not lead to public acquisition nor require public access to the property. More than 38,000 district, buildings and sites are listed in the state of Georgia.

Other listings in Camden County include McIntosh Sugarhouse ruins, Orange Hall, St. Marys Historic District, Kingsland Historic District and Cumberland Island Historic District.

FROM THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As part of the ongoing lecture series Dr. F.N. Boney of the University of Georgia will be speaking on "Rebel Georgia: Georgia during the War" on April 17. Catherine Clinton of Harvard will speak on "Sister against Sister: the divided daughters of Fanny Kemble" on April 24. Both lectures are a 7:00 at Hodgson Hall, 501 Whitaker Street, Savannah.

NEW MEMBER'S LETTER

Guale Historical Society member Ruby Wood of 5102 Fountainhead Drive, Brentwood, Tennessee 37027-5816 sends this query: "If anyone has any knowledge of John Owens, born 1830 in Georgia and died 1888 in Nassau County, I would truly appreciate hearing from them and will gladly pay expenses for copies, etc. or accept collect calls at 615-373-0732.

John Owens first married Isabella Pendarvis in 1854 - she died March 1855. In 1859 he married Flora Eliza Sheffield (daughter of John Sheffield, Camden County). In 1860 census they were living in Wayne County. He was teaching school. To them were born three sons, Thomas, John Sheffield and Frank Camden. She died in 1864. In 1865 he married Martha Braddock of Nassau County. To them were born Nora, Spicer B., Benjamin, Linton Lemuel (my grandfather), William D., Milton, Irene and Pearl."

Perhaps some reader has information that will help Mrs. Wood.

MEMBERSHIPS

Dues are ALWAYS due on January 1. If YOU have not renewed, please do so right away. Send to Society treasurer Mildred Walko, 800 Margaret Street, St. Marys, GA 31558. Student \$2, individual \$8, Family \$15.

Those who have joined or renewed in 1997 - (if your name is not included and you have renewed, please check with Mildred. 882-5294)

Amelia Island Historical Society, Carolyn Anderson, Alan & Diann Bailey, Ardis & Wanda Bennett, Jackie Biggane, Bill & Claudia Blankenship, Martha Brandon, George Brown, James & Audrey Bruce, Carlton Bunkley, Joe & Lois Chaney, Bill Davis, Howard Davis Family, Charles & Lassie Davison, Rick Douylliez, Maybelle Gilfillan, Betty Gruver, Fiem & Peggy Hall, Harold & Margaret Heagy, Lonell Hogan, Dot Holstun, P.B. & Anne Howell, James Jamison, Kay Johnson, Carol Jones, Phil & Virginia Jory ('98), Daphene Junk, William & Cecelia Kirk, Sam & Susan Lee, George & Carolyn Long, John & Linda Love, James Lucas, Agnes McArthur, Midge Mathews, Mary Miller, Jean Mizell, Thomas Nesbit, Roy & Iris Norton, Barbara Parrish, Robert & Margaret Patterson, Carol Rowland, Virginia Rowland, Robert Ruchhoft, Frank & Dorie Saffold, Rodney & Linda Sheffield, Jim & Mae Nell Shirley, Charles & Patricia Smith, Bob & Joyce Smith, James & Ann Stacy, Betty Stephens, George & Elaine Sweat, Pat Talley, Charles & Eloise Thompson, Shirley Thompson, Ralph & Claire Toporoff, Debra Vasquez, Maxine Wells, Dottie West, Alex Williams ('98), Edith Willingham, Ruby Wood.

REMINDER — See you at the meeting on Tuesday, April 22, 7:00