

# HISTORY OF WORTH COUNTY



MRS. LILLIE (MARTIN) GRUBBS, (MRS.  
CLIFFORD) HISTORIAN

HISTORY  
OF  
WORTH COUNTY  
GEORGIA



FOR THE  
FIRST EIGHTY YEARS  
1854—1934



BY  
MRS. LILLIE MARTIN GRUBBS (MRS. CLIFFORD)  
OFFICIAL COUNTY HISTORIAN

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## DEDICATED

to the memory of the pioneer settlers who braved the perils, endured the hardships of frontier life, cleared the fields, built homes and organized this great old "State" of Worth.

The humblest one of them deserves an honored place on the pages of this history.

We, who enjoy all the safety and comforts they prepared for us, want the world to know that we revere them.

"He, who takes no pride in the achievement of his glorious yesterdays, will have nothing of which to be proud in his barren tomorrows."

*"If we had lived in covered wagon days,  
And "trekked" interminable miles on miles  
Through storm and cold, or under burning rays  
Of desert suns, would we have met with smiles,  
And heads held high, and eyes alight with hope,  
The hardships and the dangers that arose  
On every hand—with spirits brave to cope  
With each new menace, and to conquer foes  
That threatened progress, like those pioneers,  
Our ancestors?"*



## P R E F A C E

The data assembled herein was begun in 1924 by the Barnard Trail Chapter, D. A. R., in compliance with a request of the National organization of the Daughters of the American Revolution, that each chapter of the D. A. R. compile the historical facts of its respective county.

The work of searching for and compiling the history of Worth County was begun under the direction of Mrs. M. Luther Lawson while she was regent of the Barnard Trail Chapter. At various times this material compiled by the history committee, consisting of Mrs. Lillie (Martin) Grubbs (Mrs. C.) and Miss Mary Mangham, as co-chairman, with the following members: Mrs. Rowena J. Ford, Mrs. Ella (Roper) Coram, and the Regent: was given as a program for chapter meetings.

In 1929, when the resolution of representative John Boykin, of Lincoln County, was passed by the Legislature that the superior court judges of Georgia appoint some one or more to compile the histories of the counties of Georgia, "That all Georgia be on exhibition," on the celebration of the 200th birthday of Georgia, February 12, 1933, the Barnard Trail Chapter, with no other motive than that of a patriotic desire to make what contribution they could to this movement, through their committee, the regent, Mrs. R. A. Holmes, Mrs. Lillie (Martin) Grubbs, and Mrs. Ella (Roper) Coram, went before the grand jury and offered to continue this work, or to give the one receiving the appointment, the material they had secured as a nucleus with which to begin the work.

The Barnard Trail Chapter was appointed by the Judge of the Superior Court of the Tifton Circuit, Hon. R. Eve, through the recommendation of the Worth County grand jury.

Some facts compiled here have been secured from the department of the state archives and history of Georgia, furnished free of charge by Miss Ruth Blair, state historian. The chapter is also especially indebted to Mr. Clifford Grubbs for the use of bound files of the Worth County Local from 1903 to 1916, while he was its editor.

Much is copied, by permission, from John L. Herring's

“Saturday Night Sketches,” which depict the early life of Worth County. Many facts have been secured from Lucian Lamar Knight’s “Georgia and Georgians.”

Valuable as sources of material have been old magazines and newspaper clippings in scrap books. Much has been copied from “Historical Reminiscences” in the Albany Herald by Joseph Shelton Davis, the real historian of this section.

Copies of courthouse records, old church records, old Bible records, tradition—mouth to mouth history by old citizens—have been resorted to.

The chapter is under many obligations to our late senator, William J. Harris, for the roster of Worth County World War veterans, and to Hon. William Henderson, late Pension Commissioner, for a roster of the Confederate Veterans of Worth County.

In the use of this material credit is not always given to the writer, nor do we tell the source from which it is secured. The committee is making no claim for recognition as writers, but have only undertaken to compile the facts as obtained from the various sources, and we beg to offer our apologies for the omission or failure to mention any one in these records who should justly be mentioned. We have done our best to secure all the information pertaining to the old families and citizens who have shared in the upbuilding of Worth County, and we know there is much left out, but it has been impossible for us to secure all the information. For this reason we recommend and beg that a Worth County Historical Association be created, and members and officers be elected by a mass meeting of the citizenry of Worth, that the work of preserving the history of the county may go on, and that a second volume of the history be published in which nothing may be omitted that is worth while.

This volume is made possible by the material aid of former Governor Chase S. Osborn, of Michigan.



## A TRIBUTE TO MRS. C. GRUBBS

*As we finish the compilation of our County History, one character stands out conspicuously as the one without whom this task could never have been accomplished. We refer to Mrs. Lillie Martin (Mrs. C.) Grubbs, the efficient chairman of our History committee, a teacher of history, and a tireless searcher for historical data. She fairly breathes history.*

*Beginning a number of years ago, with several volumes of the Worth County Local as a nucleus, she gradually added to her store of information, never too tired or too hurried to go in search of some old person who was supposed to possess valuable knowledge of the era that was slipping away from us. Her wisdom has been abundantly proven by the fact that these pioneers have passed on with but few exceptions.*

*Now, we wish to publicly give "honor to whom honor is due," and beg Mrs. Grubbs to accept this slight tribute with our deep appreciation of her tireless efforts in this labor of love; for she has given ample proof of the affection she has for the county of her adoption*

BARNARD TRAIL CHAPTER.

### A RESOLUTION

At the regular meeting of the Barnard Trail Chapter, Dec. 12th, 1933, a motion was made and carried that Mrs. Lillie Martin Grubbs (Mrs. Clifford), Chapter Historian, and Chairman of Worth County History, as appointed by Judge Raleigh Eve, Superior Court Judge of Tifton Circuit, be given permission to publish and copyright the Worth County History,

Regent, Mrs. Helen Alford Mann,  
Rec. Sec., Mrs. Lallie Ford Camp.

A TRIBUTE  
TO  
MISS MARY MANGHAM AND MISS ALICE TIPTON

BY CHAIRMAN

*These two characters have given their lives for Sylvester. They are teachers in McPhaul Institute. They are leaders in church work, club work, and every kind of patriotic work that needs to be done for Sylvester. Their patriotism was intensified in the compilation of Worth's History. Miss Mangham having moved here in early childhood with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby Mangham, and Miss Tipton, a native of the county, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. G. Tipton, made them invaluable in knowing where to find facts.*

*For some years before the Resolution of Boykin that each county compile its history, Miss Mangham was made co-chairman of history with Mrs. Lillie Martin Grubbs by the Barnard Trail Chapter, D. A. R., and they had worked jointly on this history for some years previous to that Resolution.*

*Miss Mangham is a close student with cultured tastes. She patiently masters details, she considers nothing petty or insignificant, and realizes the importance of small things. Her motto is "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well." Nothing escapes her eye on a printed page. She was for several years a teacher of English in McPhaul Institute, being accustomed to criticise and for this reason and many others, her work is incalculable for good in this compilation. If Miss Mangham passed on an article the chairman felt that it was ready for the publisher.*

*Miss Tipton is not a D. A. R. and was not obligated to do this work, but her intense patriotism and love of this county and for these people among whom she has lived all her life, and for the children she teaches, and has taught, she worked with her whole heart to help gather the things worth while saving for posterity, with no thought of remuneration or even mention in this work. Miss Tipton's motto is, "Not for myself but for others."*

*No one can measure the far reaching influence of earnest, patriotic, highly refined, Christian workers, such as these two mean to a community.*

## RESOLUTION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Whereas, the founding of the colony of Georgia by General James Edward Oglethorpe occurred in 1733 and the two hundredth anniversary of that venturesome, political and philanthropic event will occur in 1933 and should be marked in some way proper to its historic character, so as to perpetuate for our posterity and the records of the State and Nation the facts of the evolution and progress of the commonwealth that became a constituent State of the Federal republic of the United States; and

Whereas, no provision has been made by the State Government to celebrate and memorialize the momentous establishment of the colony and subsequent sovereign State; and

Whereas, there is not in existence today a comprehensive and contemporaneous history of the State, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the General Assembly of Georgia, both houses thereof concurring herein, that the Judges of the Superior Courts of the State are hereby earnestly requested to give in charge to the grand jury of each county in their several circuits, at the next term of the court herein, the urgent consent of some competent person in their county to prepare between now and February 12th, 1933, being Georgia Day, as nearly a complete history of the formation, development and progress of said county from its creation up to that date, together with accounts of such persons, families and public events as have given character and fame to the county, the State and the Nation. And that said county histories be deposited on Georgia Day in 1933 in the State's Department of Archives and History, there to be preserved for the information of future citizens of the State and prospective biographers and historians, and this action is recommended to the judges, grand juries and the people of all the counties of the State, for early procedure because delay will leave action in this behalf too short a time for the necessary research and accumulation of data to make the county histories as full and accurate as they should be for full historic value.

Resolved, Further, that the Governor of the State is respectfully requested to transmit an officially certified copy of these resolutions to each of the judges of the Superior Courts of the State.

W. Cecil Neill, Pres. of the Senate,  
D. F. McClatchey,  
Richard B. Russell, Jr., Speaker of the House,  
E. B. Moore, Clerk of the House.

Approved: L. G. Hardman, Governor.  
This 23 day of August, 1929.

## HISTORIAN

The presiding Judge having read for the information of the Grand Jury a resolution of the General Assembly, urging the appointment of a historian in each of the counties of this State to compile and file a history of each county, and being impressed with the importance of this work, we hereby give the same our unanimous endorsement and approval, and urge upon all other counties in the State the necessity for acting favorably in the premises in the carrying out of the suggestions made, and we hereby designate and appoint as County Historian "Barnard Trail Chapter" of the D. A. R. of Worth County, Georgia.

Should the designation of an organization as county historian not meet with the approval of the State authorities in charge of the general work of compilation, we hereby designate Mrs. Clifford Grubbs, Mrs. R. A. Holmes and Mrs. P. A. Coram, all of Sylvester, Ga., as such historians.

In connection with this matter, we desire to here and now express our utmost confidence in the ability and patriotism of the various members of Barnard Trail Chapter and the three individuals herein named. It is our judgment that the work will be earnestly undertaken, efficiently carried on, and finished by the time specified in the resolution of the General Assembly.

We recommend that these presentments be published in the Sylvester Local.

A. H. Pinson, Foreman,  
E. J. Alford, Secretary.

The foregoing General Presentments having been read and presented in open Court, the same are hereby approved and ordered filed and spread upon the Minutes of the Court.

The recommendations and appointments therein contained are hereby confirmed.

As County Historian, Barnard Trail Chapter of the D. A. R., of Worth County, Georgia, and should the designation of the said Organization as County Historian not meet with the approval of the authorities of the State, Mrs. Clifford Grubbs, Mrs. R. A. Holmes and Mrs. P. A. Coram, all of Sylvester, Georgia, are hereby designated and appointed.

This Nov. 6th., 1929.

R. Eve,  
Judge Superior Court, Tifton Judicial Circuit.

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## CHAPTER I

### WORTH COUNTY

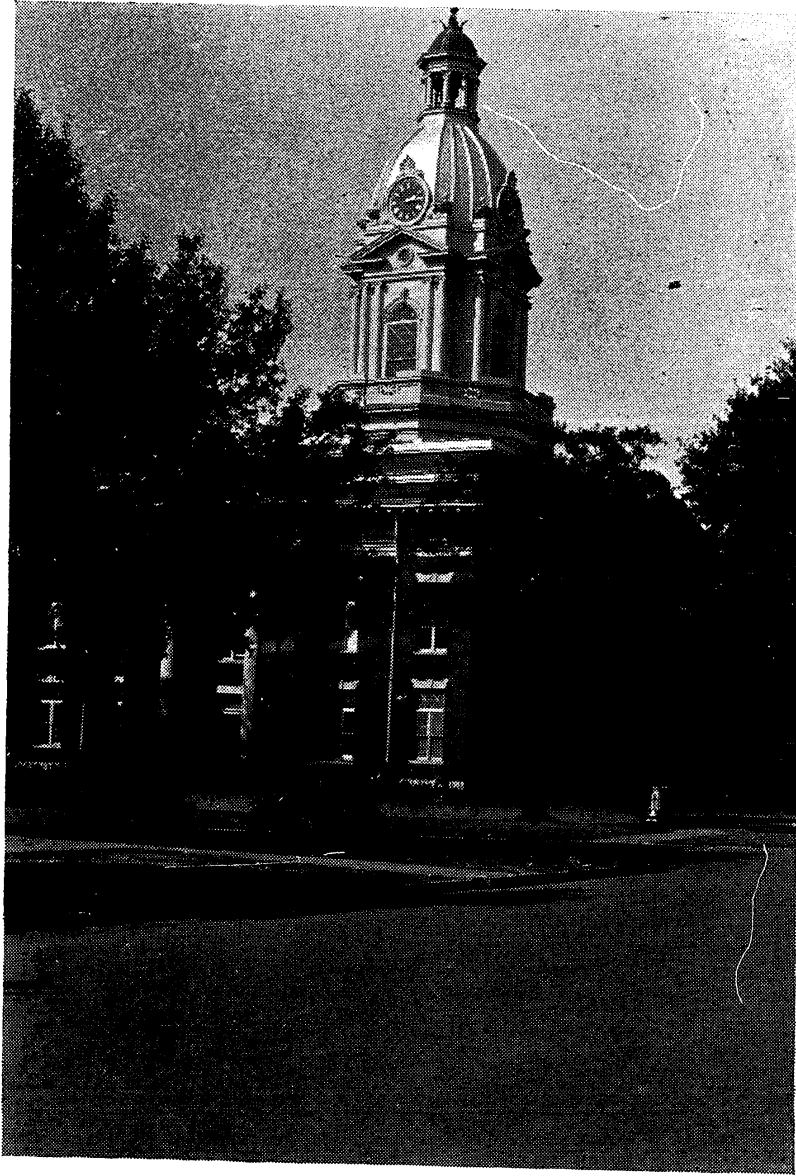
*How Indian Land Cessions by which this Territory, of which Worth is a part, was Secured by the Whites, and the Counties from which Worth was carved.*

---

During the War of 1812, Great Britain, through her emissaries among the Creek Indians, aroused the hostility of the Indians against the whites near the boundaries of the Indian lands.

The attack on Ft. Mims, North of Mobile on the Alabama River, where three hundred whites were massacred, caused the government to send the militia of Tennessee under command of Andrew Jackson, and Georgia Militia under command of Gen. John Floyd, to march against them. Five battles were fought. The Indians were defeated and a treaty was made in which they ceded the land of central and southern Alabama and the land of Southern Georgia, known as the Tallahassee Country, south of a line running across Georgia west to east to the Altamaha River, this line crossing what is now Worth a little above Isabella. This cession was made into two large counties, Early and Irwin. The lower part of Worth was cut from Irwin.

In 1821 Georgia obtained the land between the Ocmulgee and the Flint Rivers from the line of the land cession of 1814 north to the Chattahoochee River north of Atlanta. From this, Dooly county was made in 1821. The Upper Creeks objected to this treaty, but the Lower Creeks, led by their chief, General Wm. McIntosh, a half-breed, agreed to sell this land to Georgia for \$5,000,000 and an equal acreage west of the Mississippi River. This was arranged and signed at Indian Springs, Ga., Feb., 1825, between Georgia Creek Indians and Government Agents. On account of this, General Wm. McIntosh was killed by the Alabama Creek Indians. From this grant of land Dooly County was made. On its Southern border was Irwin County.



WORTH COUNTY COURT HOUSE—SYLVESTER

From the two large counties, Irwin on the South and Dooly on the North, Worth was carved by Act of Legislature on Dec. 20th, 1853. But the county was not laid out according to enactment until Feb. 1st, 1854.

Worth County was named for Major General Wm. James Worth, a distinguished soldier of the Mexican War, and a son-in-law of General Zachary Taylor.

The overtures of surrender from the authorities of the City of Mexico were made to General Worth on Sept. 13th, 1848. At the time of his death he was in command of the Department of Texas.

Major Wm. A. Harris, the leader of the movement to organize the new county of Worth, fought under Gen. Worth in the Mexican War. He named the County in honor of his great commander.

Below are Georgia laws creating Worth County obtained from the Archives of History of the State of Georgia.

### Georgia Laws That Affect Worth County

An act to lay out and organize a new County from the Counties of Dooly and Irwin, and to attach the same to a Judicial and Congressional District; and provide for the location of a County Site in such new County.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted—That from and after the first day of February next, 1854, a new county shall be laid out and organized from the Counties of Dooly and Irwin, to be included within the following limits, to wit: beginning at the southeast corner of the thirteenth district of Dooly County, running a due west course on the district line, to the southwest corner of said district; thence in a northwest direction, to the nearest south prong or fork of (Swift) Creek; thence down the run of (Swift) Creek, to its mouth or junction with Flint River.

Sec. 2. That the new county described in the first Section of this Act, shall be called and known by the name of Worth, and shall be attached to the Macon Judicial District, and the second Congressional District, and to the First Brigade of the Eighth Division of Georgia Militia.

Sec. 4. Justices of Inferior Court to select and purchase tract of land for location of the county site.

The above Act was approved Dec. 20, 1853. Acts 1853-'54, pp. 308-309.

Sec. 2. That for the better defining and ascertaining the limits and boundary of the county of Worth, said boundary shall be as follows, to wit:

To begin at the southeast corner of the thirteenth district of Dooly County, running a due west course on the direct line, to the southwest corner of said district, thence in a northwest direction to the nearest south prong or fork of Swift Creek, in originally Dooly County; thence down the run of Swift Creek to its mouth, or junction with the Flint

River, thence down Flint River to where it crosses the south line of originally Dooly County, thence east on said line, to the northwest corner, of the seventh District of originally Irwin County; thence down on the county line between originally Irwin County and originally Baker, now Dougherty County, except where said line has been otherwise altered by law, to the southwest corner of the said Seventh district; thence in an easterly direction, on the south line of the seventh and sixth districts of originally Irwin County, to the Little River; thence up Little River, except where the same has been otherwise altered by law, changing the residence of George W. M. Young, to the northeast corner of the thirteenth district of Dooly County, the starting point.

Sec. 3.

Approved February 7th, 1854. Acts 1853-'54, p. 310.

Sec. 2. The county line between Thomas and Worth Counties be so changed as to include lot of land number Seven in the Eighth District of originally Irwin, now Thomas County, so as to transfer the residence of Jordan Hancock from the county of Thomas to the county of Worth.

Approved Jan. 14th, 1854. Acts 1853-'54, p. 314.

Whereas: Great injury is done to the citizens of the counties of Worth, Richmond, Clinch, Berrien and Bryan, arising from firing the woods, running stock wild, and often destroying whole herds, by persons who are non-residents, hunting deer and other species of game therein, for remedy whereof:

Sec. 1. Be it therefore enacted, etc., That from and after the first day of March, eighteen hundred and fifty-six, it shall not be lawful for any non-resident of the counties of Worth, Richmond, Clinch, Berrien and Bryan to camp out and hunt deer or any other species of game within the limits of said counties.

Sec. 2. That any person who may violate the provisions of the first section of this act, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor—and upon proof and conviction of said offense, shall be fined for the first offense the sum of fifty dollars, and for the commission of every subsequent violation, shall be fined the sum of one hundred dollars, or imprisoned at the discretion of the court, and half of said fine shall be paid to any person, who may inform and furnish proof to convict any person of a violation of the first section of this act.

Sec. 3. That the provisions of this act shall not apply to any non-resident, who may be lodging with, and piloted, or accompanied by any citizen of the counties of Worth, Richmond, Clinch, Berrien, and Bryan in hunting deer or any other kind of game.

Approved March 4th, 1856, Acts 1855-'56, pp. 411-412.

An act to alter and amend an act to make permanent the county line between the counties of Dooly and Worth, and also between the counties of Irwin and Dooly, and to change the line between the counties of Worth and Dougherty.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted, etc., That from and after the passage of this act the county line dividing the county of Dooly and Worth shall commence at the mouth of Swift creek and run to the center of the channel of said Swift Creek up the south prong of said Swift Creek to lot of land number one hundred and thirty-six in the fourteenth district of originally Dooly, and the line of said county so to run as to include said lot of land in the county of Dooly, also lot of land number one hundred and fifty-three, in the fourteenth district of originally Dooly, and thence to run up the center of said prong of Swift Creek, or rather the prong of said creek, which rises upon lot of land two hundred and seventy in the thirteenth district of Dooly county in time of survey to its head, known as the Goff Spring, thence to run in a southeasterly direction to the head of the hollow or prong of the Little River which makes up upon

lot of land two hundred and seventy in the thirteenth district of originally Dooly, thence to run down the center of said hollow to the head of the branch or prong of Little River, and thence down the center of said stream to where it crosses the boundary line of originally Irwin and Dooly, and that place, or spot, to be known as one corner of Dooly County.

Approved March 5th, 1856. Acts 1855-'56, p. 133.

An act to authorize the Ordinary of Worth County to assess and levy a tax, as soon as he deems proper, and proceed to collect the same.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted, etc., That the above tax be used alone for the purpose of paying jail fees, now due, or which may become due; and it shall be his duty, and he is hereby empowered to compel the County Treasurer to keep on hand a sufficient fund to settle off all jail fees, as they arise in and against said county.

Sec. 2. That the said Ordinary of Worth County is further authorized to levy a tax sufficient to pay up all indebtedness of said county, and that he proceed to do so as soon as he can.

Approved March 2, 1874. Acts 1874, p. 328.

An act to create a Board of Commissioners of Roads and Revenues for the county of Worth, to define their powers, duties, and for other purposes.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted, That there shall be established in the county of Worth, in this State, a Board of Commissioners of Roads and Revenues.

Sec. 2. Eight Commissioners, one from each militia district. Four-year term.

Sec. 3. Elected by the Grand Jury.

Sections 4 to 16.

Approved September 19th, 1881. Acts 1880-1881, pp. 535-538.

An act to abolish the office of county commissioners of Worth County, and for other purposes.

Sec. 1. Office abolished.

Sec. 2. That all unfinished business now pending before said boards of county commissioners shall be transferred to the court of Ordinary of said county to be disposed of by said court, and that all the records and papers of said board of county commissioners be returned to said court of Ordinary to be filed and kept in said office.

Approved December 20, 1884. Acts 1884-'85, pp. 424-425.

An Act to order an election to determine if the sale of intoxicating liquors, malt drinks or intoxicating spirits of any kind shall be prohibited in the county of Worth, State of Georgia.

Sec. 1. Election to be held to determine whether liquors may be sold.

Sec. 2. That in the election to be held as prescribed in the foregoing section, tickets shall be voted having on them the words "Prohibition," or "No Prohibition," and if there be a majority of said votes in favor of "Prohibition," then the Ordinary shall issue his order forbidding the sale of any intoxicating drinks within the limits of said county, until changed by law.

Approved September 29th, 1881. Acts 1880-1881, p. 633.

An Act to amend an Act entitled an Act to order an election to determine if the sale of intoxicating liquors, malt drinks, or intoxicating spirits of any kind shall be prohibited in the county of Worth, State of Georgia, by adding a fifth section to said Act prescribing a penalty for the violation of the same.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted, That said Act be amended by adding a fifth section to said Act as follows, to wit: Any person violating said Act shall be held and considered guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon convic-

tion thereof shall be punished as prescribed in Section Forty-three hundred and ten (4310) of the Code of 1882.

Approved December 12, 1882. Acts 1882-'83, p. 564.

### Tift County

An Act to lay out and organize a new county from the counties of Berrien, Irwin and Worth, to define the boundaries thereof, prescribed for the election of officers therein, to fix a name therefor, and for other purposes.

Approved August 17, 1905. (Georgia Laws, 1905, p. 60).

### Turner County

An Act to lay off and organize a new county out of portions of Irwin, Wilcox, Dooly and Worth, and for other purposes in connection therewith.

Approved August 18, 1905. (Georgia Laws, 1905, p. 63).

### Laws Pertaining to Worth County

Animals, where slaughtered, 1910.  
 Bradshaw school district, incorporated, 1905.  
 Commissioners, board of, established, 1904.  
 County court abolished, 1904.  
 County site changed from Isabella to Sylvester, 1904.  
 Doles school district created, 1903.  
 Fillyaw's school district established, 1903.  
 Union school district incorporated, 1905.  
 Sylvester City court established in 1916.  
 Treasurer's salary fixed, 1916.  
 Election of officers, date changed, 1918.  
 Sylvester, City court law amended, 1918.  
 Sylvester, city of, new charter, 1919.  
 Sylvester, amendments to city charter, 1920.  
 Sylvester, public schools abolished, 1921.  
 Sylvester, territorial limits extended, 1921.  
 Treasurer's office abolished, 1923.  
 Sylvester city territorial limits extended, 1922.  
 Sylvester city territorial limits extended, 1923.  
 Sylvester, cemetery and bond issue, 1927.  
 Fur-bearing animals, closed season for capture, etc., 1929.

Created by Act of Dec. 20, 1853; named for General William J. Worth; County seat, Sylvester; area, 651 square miles; length, north and south, 34 miles; width, east and west, 19 miles; Congressional district, 2nd; Senatorial district, 10th; Judicial Circuit, Tifton. Population, 1930 census, 21,094; persons to square mile, 32.4; Negro population, 9,575; registration, 1930, 4,241; taxable wealth, 1930, \$4,232,855; tax rate, County purposes, 1930, 16.5m; bonded debt, Jan. 1, 1931, County wide roads, bridges, \$335,000.

Elevations above sea level of different points across the central part of the County from west to east, are as follows:



Willingham, 319 feet; Isabella, 370 feet; Sylvester, 370 feet; Poulan, 345 feet; Sumner, 373 feet.

Normal annual rainfall, 49.54 inches. Heaviest in summer months when needed for growing crops. Precipitation is least during harvest time and cotton-picking season.

Abundance of sunshine, but never oppressively hot, climate equable and pleasant, giving an average frost-free season of 231 days, and a normal length of safe growing season of 200 days. Hardy vegetables can be grown throughout the winter with only slight protection. Average date of latest killing frost March 22nd. Earliest average killing frost Nov. 8. Staple crops are not endangered by severe freezes.

## CHAPTER II

### INDIANS

#### SPANISH BACKGROUND OF WORTH COUNTY HISTORY

##### De Soto's March

“Originally the fair domain embracing what we know today as Georgia, formed a part of the Spaniards' Land of Flowers. It was by the name of Florida that all this region of country for more than a hundred years was first known to Europeans. In 1540, nearly two centuries before Georgia received her charter from the Crown of England, the renowned adventurer, Hernando De Soto, with his six hundred picked men from the chivalry of Spain, as far as authentic records go, were the first Europeans to set foot on Georgia soil.” His itinerary shows almost positive proof that he passed through Worth county. He crossed the Ochlochonee River coming north from Tallahassee, and in two more days he came to an Indian village, Capachique, on March 9th, 1540. He then marched for 21 days and came to a town, Toalli, in Irwin County. This would make him pass diagonally across Worth County. Ochlochonee River has its source in Worth county, near the village of Gordy. His itinerary may be found on page 23 of Knight's “Georgia and Georgians.”

De Soto found the Apalachee nation in Western Florida and central South Georgia. The country of the Apalachees may be seen on old maps in Bulletin 73 of “Creek Indians and their Neighbors,” which gives positive proof that Worth County was in the Apalachee country; also accounts of the Apalachee nation asking for missionaries. The need of missionaries to begin converting the Apalachees is frequently dwelt upon in Spanish documents written between 1607 and 1633, but not until the latter date did work begin. Friars were sent forth; churches and convents were built, and De Soto's Chronieler, Renjal, writes of them, that they were the bravest of men, having great courage and boldness. They gave him much trouble in passing through.

Later in 1663 Georgia was included in the extensive tract granted by Charles I of England to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina. According to a treaty made between England and Spain in 1670 this set 32° 30' north latitude as the boundary between Carolina and Florida. But this did not put an end to the contention over this territory between the English settlers of Carolina and the Spanish in Florida.

The English traders came far into the interior of what is now Georgia, buying of and selling to the Indians along well beaten trails from the mountains to near the Gulf, and on to Charleston through the interior. This the Spanish resented and they plotted to put an end to it by killing out all English traders. A full account of this, which resulted in the destruction of the Apalachee nation and forever settled the dispute, giving this territory of Worth and Southwest Georgia to the English, is found in the chapter on the Thigpen Trail in this volume.

So we see that Georgia's history does not begin with the founding of the colony at Yamacraw Bluff by Oglethorpe. For more than a hundred years the Spaniards had built towns along the islands of the coast and far into the interior along the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers before the coming of Oglethorpe to these shores.

After the Apalachee disaster the Creek Tribes took possession of the territory of Worth, and had been in possession of it for more than 30 years when Oglethorpe came to establish the colony of Georgia.

### CREEK INDIANS

The Indians of Worth County belonged to the large division of Muscogeans. The English named them Creek Indians as they were always located on streams. There were two divisions of them, the Upper and Lower Creeks. The Indians of Worth belonged to the Lower Creeks.

They were classed as Hitchiti, Osochi (oose-oo-che) and Chiaha, called by the traders either Cheraws, Chehaws, or Cheauhaws. Old maps furnished by the Bureau of Ethnology show these tribes located at different places, and notes show them at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, places of location in the State of Georgia as they migrated westward. De Soto tells of a tribe

of Chiaha at what is now Rome, Georgia, among the Upper Creeks.

Hawkins, the Indian Agent in 1799, describes these people as follows:

"The Cheauhau, called by the traders Chehaws is just below, and adjoining the Oose-oo-che, on a flat of good land. Below the town, the river winds round east then west, making a neck of 1000 acres of canebrake, low but fertile. The land back of this is level with fine forest and wiregrass, limestone springs. These people have villages on the waters of the Flint River. There they have fine stocks of cattle, horses and hogs, and they raise corn, rice, and potatoes in great plenty."

The Hitchitees are thought by some authorities to have lived here before the coming of the Muscogees, but they spoke the Muscogee dialect at first account we have of them. They were called the Flint Indians.

These Indians built their villages on the banks of the Flint River and tributaries, but they had many camping grounds over this country as is evidenced by the relics that have been picked up by the citizens of this county. The pupils of McPhaul Institute at Sylvester, directed by Mrs. Clifford Grubbs, teacher, have a collection of more than a thousand pieces. Collectors of Indian relics say some of the finest specimens of Indian workmanship are to be found in this collection.

Near Shingler, on Mr. Roan Houston's place, is the site of one of these villages. There are great rocks with large mortars carved out of them showing this to be a permanent village. The mortars they carried on a hunt were small and could be held in the lap. Old settlers say there were villages at Whidons Mill, at Little Blue Springs, and on a branch back of Mrs. Davis' and back of Mr. Charlie Lee's places a few miles north of Sylvester. The late Mr. George Sumner said he once owned this land and he had found pottery and many relics at these places, at Wavering Pond, Alford's Switch, Indian Cave and around many lime sinks and other places in this county.

Although nearly a hundred years have passed since the Indian left this, his native camping and hunting ground, many of these instruments he carved with such care are found in a perfect state of preservation.

The village of most note is one of the Chiaha Indians, at old Pindar Town on or near the Flint River, called by the Indians

Thronateeska River, in the northwestern part of the county on what is known as the Dr. Ed Hope place, later owned by his son and daughter, John and Mildred Hope, near Oakfield. "At this village one of the earliest treaties was made between the Creek Indians and the State of Georgia, whereby additional lands were secured by the whites. There are numerous local traditions to the effect that Oglethorpe, himself, here made a treaty with the Indians. It later became the leading white settlement of the county."

A writeup of this community will be seen elsewhere.

This territory was claimed by the Spanish, based on De Soto's exploration. The Spanish had missions in this part of Georgia, and a village of considerable importance. Ayaville had a fort and church, with a Spanish friar as teacher of the Indians, before the coming of Oglethorpe to these shores. Ayaville, by a map furnished by the Bureau of Ethnology known as the Mitchell map of 1755, gives most positive proof that it was in the western part of Worth, where the Flint flows from east to west in an almost straight line for about ten miles, the east bend being the location of Ayaville, and that bend is on the Northwest border of Worth County now.

A decisive battle at this village gave this territory to the Creeks, the allies of the English.

The Creek Indians in this section were highly praised by Andrew Jackson for their aid to him in the Seminole War of 1818. He states that they joined him and did most of the fighting, furnishing food and caring for the sick.

With the coming of the white man, the Indians seemed to degenerate. The whiskey he bought of the whites fired his brain and put him on the war path. He came to depend on buying or stealing everything from the white man. This brought about thriftlessness.

Many stories are told by old timers in this county of the depredations of the Indians just before the Creek War. Some of these were published in the Wiregrass Farmer by John B. Pate and some by Joel J. Culpepper and by George Sumner. These citizens are the real historians of this section. What they give, while it is from mouth to mouth tradition, is thoroughly reliable.

The following from J. B. Pate.

### Indian Jim Brown

"In Worth County not far from Arabi, Mr. Jim Brown shot at and killed an Indian that was stealing his hog. He buried him, and his grave was known a few years ago. After this he was called Indian Jim Brown. (He was an Uncle of Judge S. S. Story of Sylvester).

In retaliation, the Indians were going to massacre the school teacher and children. The teacher who was a cripple saw them coming, and he told the children to flee for their lives. They escaped, but the teacher was killed. One of the pupils was afterwards the wife of Tom Musselwhite of Penia, who died only a few years ago. I heard the story from his lips in 1902."

### An Indian Skirmish on Swift Creek

"Rev. J. J. Davis told me about a hot Indian skirmish that occurred on Swift Creek, near the Davis pool, as was told to him nearly fifty years ago by "Uncle" Lot Whiddon, who was a member of the party fighting the Indians. Among the number were "Uncle" Sam Story (grandfather of the Ordinary of Worth County, Hon. Sam S. Story) and his son Richard. During the battle Richard Story, who was an expert marksman, would take tree after tree getting nearer and nearer to the Indians who were in ambush.

Uncle Sam Story, seeing the imminent danger of his son, pleaded with him to return to the party. But Richard persisted and finally the Indians were routed.

Richard Story was afterwards drowned in Deep Creek near Amboy, in 1841, while on his way home from old Pindar Town. He was accompanied by his cousin, Joe Pate."

### Willis Family Massacred

(J. B. Pate in The Wiregrass Farmer)

"This story has been told to me by many others, but I tell it as told to me by "Uncle" Jack Collins in 1900.

"Uncle" Jack was but a boy when this occurred, but was 87 years old when he told it to me.

"A man by the name of Benjamin Willis, living a few miles west of where Dakota, Ga. is now located, was away from home working on a water wheel for a grist mill near the Ocmulgee river. One night he had a horrible dream and seemed

to hear the screams of his family nearly forty miles away. He immediately arose and walked all the way home to find that his family had been murdered by Indians. One of the younger daughters grabbed a small child and fled. She was more than half a mile away when her pursuers overtook and slew her. Rev. J. J. Davis quoted Manasseh Henderson as having said that they stamped the child to death in the mud with their feet.

“The murdered family were all buried in the cemetery at Dakota, where their graves may be seen today.”

### Joe Willis

Mr. Joe Willis, who lived three miles below Poulan, was the grandson of Benjamin Willis whose family was massacred by the Indians. There were only three members of his family killed, his wife, daughter and little grand-daughter.

There were other members of his family who were married and away from home at the time and through whom many Worth County citizens are descended. One of his descendants was the late Mrs. Tempy Ann Guyton for whom the village of Tempy was named.

Mr. Joe Willis was the last child of Daniel Willis, to die in 1933, the son of Benjamin Willis.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Willis are the parents of thirteen children.

His sons are Walter Hugh, married Mary Rooks; Harry Albert, married Verda Hill; Franklin Monroe, married Lessie Brooks; William Terry, married Cora Lee Williams; Charles Grady, a soldier in the Hawaiian Islands; Lawrence Edwin, Joseph Howard, and Warren Brantley.

His daughters are Eula, married J. C. Thompson, Annie May, married T. W. Brady; Dora Ethlyn, married Wm. H. Carroll; Lena Ruth, married L. G. Davis.

### Daniel Willis

Daniel Willis, the son of Benjamin Willis, was away from home when the Indians killed his mother, sister, and niece. He married Elizabeth Smith and their children were John, James, Benjamin, Jerry, Daniel Augustine, Joe Willis. Daughters, Martha married Jones; Annie, married Bass; Mary, Nancy, and Tempy died unmarried; Ophelia married McInnis.

His son, Benjamin Willis and wife, had three children, Wm. Arthur Willis, (who lives at his mother's home a few miles below Sylvester), Mrs. Mollie Fowler, Mrs. Sara Roberts.

Daniel Willis was one of the first citizens in the part of the county below the A.C.L. Railroad. The home he lived in is still used as a residence. His son, Joe Willis, owned the place a few miles below Poulan. He owned large herds of cattle that wandered over a wide range of country. Once a year they were rounded up, marked and turned out again.

### Willis Cemetery

Copied from tombstones of Willis Cemetery.

Daniel Willis, born June 27, 1817, died June 18, 1896.

Mrs. Elizabeth (Smith) Willis wife of Daniel Willis, born Oct. 17, 1824. Died Jan. 31, 1885.

Benjamin Willis (son of Daniel Willis) born Sept. 11, 1853. Died Jan. 30, 1885.

Daniel, son of Benjamin Willis and wife, Elizabeth Willis, born Aug. 15, 1878, died July 20, 1897.

Mrs. Mary Smith, wife of David Smith, born May 11, 1815, died Oct. 5, 1886.

Henry J. Willis, born Nov. 22, 1878, died May 31, 1906.

Allen P. Smith born Apr. 8, 1846, died Dec. 8th, 1893.

### Driving the Indians

The following incident, as related by Joel J. Culpepper, took place in Irwin County, but Mr. Culpepper requested that it be published in Worth history, as Alex Hobby has a host of people and friends in this county. Mr. Jack Hobby of Worth is one of his direct descendants.

"Old Uncle Alex Hobby told me about helping to run the Indians from this section in 1836. The Indians had robbed a man's house. They cut his feather beds open and poured the feathers out and took the ticks to put their junk in. There was no trouble in tracking them as the feathers were left on the bushes. They caught up with them about where Brushy Creek enters the Alapaha.

"The Indians had secured about \$308.00 which they put in an old shot bag and tried to throw across the lake, but it caught in a bush and was recovered. A battle was fought on July 13,



1836, on the Alapaha River. Capt. Levi J. Knight commanded the whites numbering 75. All but five of the Indians were killed.

“Uncle Alex Hobby carried his wife to the home of an old man by the name of Young. While she was there her son, James Hobby, was born on the 12th of July, 1836.”

### **The Cows Knew When Indians Were Coming**

By the late Mr. George S. Sumner of Isabella

Mr. Sumner said he had heard his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Sumner, say they always knew when Indians were near, or coming, by the behavior of the cows. The cows would run away from the Indians in almost a stampede.

His parents had often followed the cows into the swamp and spent the night. Once they followed the cows, taking what they could in their arms. When the cows returned they followed them home, finding that Indians had taken what food they found. Mr. Gordon Sumner lived near where Isabella is now located.

### **The Battle of Gay's Hammock**

Facts secured from Joel J. Culpepper, the late Mr. George Sumner of Worth County, and Hon. Bryant T. Castellow of Cuthebrt, Randolph County:

The Creek Indians of this section of Georgia gave so much trouble, that, in 1836, the white settlers were forced to drive them across the Chattahoochee.

These Indians had ceded this territory to the whites in the treaties of 1814, 1821, and 1826. As long as they lived peaceably, they were allowed to remain. However, when they committed one depredation after another, the settlers were compelled to expel them from Georgia.

Captain Erasmus Gay, who was then living near Blue Springs, now Radium Springs, had, it is claimed, raised a company of volunteers and served under Andrew Jackson in the Seminole War in 1818, where he received the rank as Captain.

When the Creek War came on, he again answered the call to arms. He commanded a company of men from Worth and nearby counties. They came upon the Indians at Wavering

Pond, in this county, while they were cooking breakfast. The Indians were surprised and fled in such haste that a baby was left swinging to a limb. This little baby girl was raised in this county as a slave and married a negro.

The Indians fled to a hammock, and here a great battle was fought. Two Indian Squaws were captured. A white man by the name of Luke Jenkins, a brother-in-law of John Ford, was left to guard them as prisoners while the company pursued the rest of the Indians. As the sun began to sink in the west, Jenkins, fearing other Indians might come upon him, killed his prisoners and fled.

This hammock is south of the Atlantic Coast Line railroad, between Sylvester and Willingham. It is now owned by Mr. P. A. Coram, of Sylvester and is called Gay's Hammock in honor of the Captain of the company.

The Indians fled to a cave near Parkerville in this county, called the Indian cave. They finally came out and made a treaty at Gintown, a few miles west of the cave.

Hon. Bryant T. Castellow, for twenty years Solicitor General of Pataula Circuit, (now Congressman from the 3rd District), great grandson of Capt. Erasmus Gay, tells the following story, as he heard it from the lips of his maternal grandmother, Sarah Gay, born in 1829, daughter of Capt. Erasmus Gay:

"I was just a little girl and papa, in command of the soldiers, had gone to fight the Indians. I do not know just how long he had been away, but, to me, it seemed a long time, when, one night, we heard what we thought was the war-whoop of a band of Indians crossing the river near our home. This, of course, frightened us greatly. Our mother ordered the negroes on the place to turn all the horses, cattle and hogs out of the lot and then flee to the woods separately so the Indians could not follow their trail so easily. My mother took her negro woman cook, who had a little daughter about the same age as was I, along with us. We four trudged along as best we could through the woods and swamps for quite awhile. At last, becoming weary, the two women sat on a log to rest, and we two children lay down on the leaves and apparently went to sleep. Presently the negro woman whispered to my mother 'Missus, them Indians will ketch us all if we try to keep these chillun up wid us, so I sez let's leave um here while asleep.' As it happened,

though very tired, I was not asleep, and having heard the suggestion, jumped up and said 'You may leave your child here, but you won't leave me.' It developed, however, that they were not Indians at all who gave that whoop at the river. My father and his men were just celebrating as they crossed on the ferry near home. When he reached the house he realized what alarm they had caused, and, sending the men in every direction, soon had us located and safe back at home."

Mr. Castellow says that his mother told him that an old Indian squaw committed suicide by hanging herself in her grandfather's barn when they were being deported from this part of the country.

Capt. Erasmus Gay moved with his family to what is now Quitman County, died, and is buried there.

It may be of interest to the many friends of Mr. and Mrs. L. O. Freeman, he having been Superintendent of McPhaul Institute in 1906 and 1907, to know that before her marriage she was Emmie Castellow, a great grand-daughter of Captain Erasmus Gay, and sister of Hon. Bryant Castellow.

The treaty at Gintown, following the Battle of Gay's Hammock, was the closing chapter of Indian history in this county.

Thus banished, this once noble race left his native heath, where, from time unknown, he had built his wigwam fires, planted his fields of maize, wooed his mate in the golden moonlight by the winding streams, killed his game in the nearby forest, and held the festival of the green corn dance. He left nothing to mark his passing but the instruments of the chase and battle, a few broken pieces of pottery, and the names of a few streams.

## THE INDIAN'S LAMENT

—1—

*I must leave the Georgia valleys where the laughing waters run.  
I must leave the silent forests. I must find the setting sun.  
No Paleface knows the sorrow that fills the Redman's heart;  
And none shall know my soul-cry when Moccasins depart.*

—2—

*Perhaps, again, my arrow will find the buffalo.  
The Brave may find the warpath; may vanquish hostile foe;  
But I shall still be yearning for lovely Georgia mounds,  
And singing Georgia waters, and Georgia hunting grounds.*

—3—

*The rising sun will call me, and I shall say "Farewell,"  
And journey to the westward. To the westward I must dwell!  
And none who sees me going shall sense my soul's unrest,  
Unless, perhaps, some Paleface who, too, is moving west.*

—CHRISTINE PARK HANKINSON.