THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

(1795 to 1810)

* * * * * *

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, Wilkes County prepared to meet the challenges of a new century. The first three decades of colonization had been somewhat sporadic, yet contained the formative elements necessary for a distinctive and permanent settlement. In the next several decades, Washington continued a growth which percentage-wise was greater than the increase in county population. Much of the land in the county during this period gradually began to be organized under the centralized ownership of a few powerful individuals. The plantation era was approaching, but had not yet reached full fruition.

In 1793, Eli Whitney, a Connecticut man visiting General Nathanael Greene near Savannah, received a patent for his cotton gin. This particular invention, although never a financial success for Whitney, was a tremendously important and revolutionary addition to the agricultural progress of the South. Whitney's ability to produce the cotton gins could not match their popularity and he fell prey to imitators and violators of his patent. Whitney was thus frequently engaged in lawsuits, more often than not being decided against him. Despite his own problems, Whitney's machine was an immense success.

Whitney, at some time on his Georgia excursion, visited Talbot's farm about one mile east of Smyrna Church. The Talbot family was of English descent, having in the early part of the eighteenth century come to Maryland. Matthew Talbot, the immigrant, married Anne Williston and moved to Amelia County, Virginia. They were the parents of four sons, Charles and James who both died during the Revolutionary War, Matthew II, and John. The two surviving sons removed to Wilkes County. Matthew Talbot II married Hale Day of Campbell County, Virginia, and they had seven children. She died in 1785, at about the time Matthew was preparing to make his journey southward. He stopped for a short time in eastern Tennessee before he finally settled several miles east of Washington, in Wilkes County. He had married again, but from this marriage there were no children. All of his sons by his previous marriage, other than the two youngest, served in the Revolution. Matthew III was at the capture of Augusta and Thomas was wounded during the war. John Talbot, the other son of Matthew I, was active in political affairs in his native Virginia, serving a number of years in the House of Burgesses. After his arrival in Wilkes County, he continued this interest representing the area in the Georgia legislature. This John Talbot, an avowed Episcopalian, donated the land on which the Presbyterians built Smyrna Church and served this denomination as Ruling Elder. John Talbot owned some fifty thousand acres in Wilkes County and it was to his home, "Mount Pleasant," that Eli Whitney made his visit. One of the purposes of Whitney's stay was to hold classes of scholastic instruction for Talbot's five children. One of them, Matthew, was a State Senator in Georgia for twenty years and a candidate for Governor though he died during the campaign in 1827. Whitney also used this respite for working further on his inventions and on the Talbot farm in a small out-building continued his perfection of the cotton gin. In Wilkes as elsewhere Whitney had problems of persons copying his invention

and for several years following 1800, was involved in lawsuits with Andrew Ruddle, a Washington merchant, over technicalities evolving from sale of the machine.

Francis Smith was an extensive landowner in Wilkes County from the 1780's until his death in 1812. He was born at "Piscatawney," the family seat in Essex County, Virginia, about 1749, a descendant of Nicholas Smith of London who immigrated to Virginia some time before 1710. Francis Smith was the son of Colonel Francis Smith, a cavalry officer and member of the House of Burgesses. The Wilkes settler married Lucy Wilkinson in Virginia. They had seven children, all but three of whom moved westward from Wilkes County. Francis left no issue and Ebenezer Smith remained in Wilkes. William Wilkinson Smith married Judith, the daughter of Jesse Heard, and established residence in Wilkes. John Smith (who wrote the letter "T" after his name as a matter of distinction) settled in Missouri where he became a large landowner. He was a noted duellist and was said to have killed at least twelve men in various encounters. Another son Reuben moved to Washington County, Missouri. A daughter, Ann Adams Smith, married first in 1797, Governor Peter Early of Georgia and second in 1821, Rev. Adiel Sherwood, author of Gazetteer of Georgia. Brigadier General Thomas Adams Smith was another son of Francis and Lucy Wilkinson Smith. He was a hero of the War of 1812, and a distinguished citizen of the state of Missouri. Fort Smith, Arkansas, was named in his honor.

By the turn of the century there were several gins in the Wilkes area and thus the preservation and expansion of cotton production was insured. The section including Wilkes County proved highly adequate for the planting of cotton and soon much of the diversified crop development had been given over to the more profitable crop. Indigo lost out quickly in the shuffle while tobacco also suffered major setbacks. The loss of the tobacco market caused the town of Lisbon to rather rapidly dwindle and caused the eventual abandonment of Petersburg. Corn remained, but as a staple crop, not for commercial or export purposes. The same was true of other marketable vegetables. Cotton was gradually becoming king and, especially in Wilkes, the transition was obvious. Agricultural production in Wilkes was far above that of the remainder of Georgia and, in this respect, Wilkes set the trends which the other areas of the state would take a decade or two later. Contrary to the usual realization that rapid change would occur predominately in a more destitute area which could offer no alternative, the Wilkes planters were, to a large degree, not the poor dirt farmers of other sections, but rather self-sufficient and ambitious. It was therefore this desire for more material gains that prompted their rapid adherence to the newly-manageable money crop.

During this time the county had decreased even more in size with the creation in 1796 of Lincoln County from the eastern portion of Wilkes, ending the Wilkes boundary along the Savannah River. In 1802 a section of land between the Ogeechee and the headwaters of Little River was partitioned to Greene County. Even with the smaller size, Wilkes continued its growth and the markets at Augusta were often crowded with citizens of Wilkes who brought their products for sale.

The question of slavery in Wilkes had been faced with only token opposition in the earliest years of the county and now with the agricultural advances and the seeming necessity of the system even the slightest argument was seldom heard. The number of slaves increased abundantly while the number of whites was becoming less. Between 1790 and 1810, the total number of persons in slavery dropped from 7268 to 7248, but the significant figure was that the free population had decreased from 24,000 to 7603. Of course, this time period also comprised the era in which all, or part of, five other counties were created from the original Wilkes. From this observation it may be seen that slavery was on the increase.

Daniel Grant and his son Thomas, as mentioned previously, were pioneers in the development of Methodism in the state. The Grants were also leaders, although almost alone, in their efforts toward emancipation of slaves. In Daniel Grant's will of July 4,

WILKES IN 1797

1793, he stated

> whereas I am possessed of a small number of slaves, and being fully convinced that perpetual slavery is most unjust and contrary to the natural rights of all mankind, and wishing to release to the best of my power the oppressed, until some future laws can be made in their favor.

Much of the Grants' interests in freedom for the slaves came from the influence of Bishop Asbury, the herald of Methodism who frequently visited the Wilkes area and was a close friend of the Grant family. Daniel Grant had come into Wilkes from Virginia prior to 1780, with his son Thomas. His wife, the former Elizabeth Tate, had died in 1763. Thomas Grant was wed to Frances Owen and after settling in Wilkes, the family began a successful mercantile venture. The Grants became rather wealthy from their business, but were of a philanthropic nature and aided many of the needy in the county as well as advancing religious causes. After Daniel Grant's death, Thomas continued as a progressive businessman and was an outstanding asset to Georgia Methodism.

Slave trading became a lucrative business for the very industrious and often unscrupulous merchant. Louis Prudhomme, one of the French immigrants from Santo Domingo, was a productive importer of slaves. A surprisingly large number of his purchases were of native Africans to be used as slaves rather than Negroes who had been in America for several generations. This technique, although availing more profit for Prudhomme, caused no little amount of problems for the new owners. The Africans were more independent than those who had been raised in slavery and thus their desire to be resigned to this fate much less obligatory. The laws prohibiting the importation of slaves after 1808, and severely limiting the slave trade caused Wilkes citizens to concern themselves with maintaining an adequate supply of Negroes. The planters were thus somewhat bound to accept the prospects which Prudhomme brought, even though the Africans were much less manageable. Some of the Negroes were descended from tribal nobility in their native lands, making the bondage doubly degrading to a primitive, yet human, ego. Slavery was not hindered, however, and the institution thrived with the expanded agricultural economy.

The eighteenth century closed on an almost prophetic note as one of its most significant figures died along with it on December 15, 1799. Elijah Clarke, the often confused, courageous, foolhardy, and shrewd revolutionary, passed away. His death signalled the end of an era for Wilkes as the pioneer was being replaced by the less adventurous, more established, farmer or businessman. The aura of the west and the unknown frontier still held their mysteries, yet the pull was not so great for the families of Wilkes. They were finally satisfied with their land and cared no more to endure the hardships of breaking a wilderness.

With a smaller and more concentrated Wilkes, the county seat of Washington continued to grow in importance. By the mid-1790's Washington had become a major stop on the post road and as such was the starting point for the the postal route to Franklin Court House some sixty miles to the north. Washington was noted for its fine assortment of taverns and hotels. The Willis Hotel near the corner of Middle and Liberty Streets served as a meeting place for many people. Occupied by Colonel Francis Willis, the hotel and inn was often a center of political controversy as the two factions in local politics, one led by John Clark and the other by William H. Crawford, engaged in much bitter harassment of each other. One such disturbance occurred in the foyer of the hotel when Peter Lawrence Van Allen, a New Yorker who had moved to Wilkes, challenged Crawford to a duel. The politics of that day were much charged with excitement and occasionally tragedy. To digress a moment as to the cause of their dispute, Clark headed the group known as the Federalists who were comprised primarily of the land speculators, those favoring the Yazoo Bill, and those of low income, or still holding to Carolina loyalty or, at least, anti-Virginian sentiment. Crawford, who with Charles Tait, led the opposition to this

group, being anti-Yazooist and loyalists to the state party structure under James Jackson and W. W. Bibb. The trial of George Cook in the Wilkes Superior Court of May 11, 1802, brought two of the antagonists face-to-face in the courtroom, Van Allen and Tait. Van Allen, the Solicitor General at that time, was defending Cook of the charge that he had misappropriated business funds. Tait served as prosecuting attorney. In the trial Van Allen delivered a host of sarcastic, personally injurious remarks directed to Tait in the presence of the court. In an attempt to counter the attack on his friend, Crawford submitted an argument published in the Augusta Chronicle. Van Allen retaliated and the feud began to become more involved. In late July of 1802, Crawford and Van Allen met near old Fort Charlotte to duel with pistols. Crawford's second shot spelled death for the transplanted New Yorker and on August 7, 1802, there appeared in the Augusta Chronicle:

> DIED. Last Monday, at the house of Col. Thomas Murray, in Lincoln County, Peter L. Van Alen, Esq. of a wound he received in fighting a duel with William H. Crawford, Esq. on Saturday last, in South-Carolina.

This incident only broadened the breach between the two factions and on December 6, 1804, Crawford challenged Clark to a duel following an episode in a political campaign for a judgeship between Tait and Clark's brother-in-law John Griffin. Bitter accusations were thrown from both factions and the challenge ensued. The duel, however, did not take place as a Court of Honor was appointed by Governor Milledge to settle the dispute. This, in actuality, only served to prolong the feud and Clark called for the impeachment of the newly elected Judge Tait. Another battle of words followed, and Clark challenged Crawford to a combat of honor. On December 16, 1806, the two men with Doctors Bibb and Abbott, present in case medical aid was required, met at the High Shoals on the Apalachee River in Indian territory. The duel took place with Crawford receiving a grazed left wrist. Apparently satisfied, Clark nevertheless kept up a relentless attack on the Crawford faction. In 1809, Georgia attempted to curb the problem by passing a stricter state law opposing duelling. These occurrences, however, insured the existence and continued development of the foundations for party politics in Georgia.

One of the most famous murder trials in Georgia history occurred in Wilkes County with the primary defendant being a woman. Mary "Polly" Nowland Barclay was a very attractive young woman who lived with her husband some seven or eight miles northeast of Washington. She had become involved, however, with another man, Mark Mitchum, and as their infatuation developed, she became even more convinced of the necessity of her husband's removal. After Barclay returned from a trip to the cotton merchants in Augusta, Polly, along with Mitchum and her brother William Nowland, began to organize their efforts in the direction of Barclay's murder. In the fall of 1805, the Barclays were entertaining guests when Barclay heard some noises which seemed to come from his cotton shed. At the urging of his wife, he went to investigate and found two men, Mitchum and Nowland, armed. A report from one of the weapons was heard and when the guests had made their way to the building, Barclay was found mortally wounded. Although still alive at that time, he had been shot in the mouth and died several hours later. He was buried on the side of the old Augusta road near the spot where he fell. For a number of months either the murderer was assumed to be at large or it was whispered that Barclay had committed suicide. Finally between the January and May terms of court in 1806, some evidence was uncovered primarily from the statement of a young boy, Micajah Lane, who lived near the Barclays. A trial was not warranted and on May 6, 1806, an indictment for murder was brought against Polly Barclay, Nowland, and Mitchum. The situation hereafter was confused, but the charges against the two men involved were dropped either due to lack of evidence or bribery of the prosecutor. Polly Barclay was then declared guilty in a hurried, superficial execution of justice.

State VS Polly Barclay and Mark Mitchum, Murder.

JURORS

Joshua Chafin	Thomas Cheivers, Jr.
Jas. Henderson	John Rorey
Jesse McLean	Wm. Kilgore
Bernard Kelley	Thos. Hudspeth
Peter Stovall	John Cratèn
Christopher Binns	Chas. Terrell.

We the jury, find the prisoner at the bar, guilty, but recommend her to mercy.

Charles H. Terrell,
Foreman.

State Vs. Mitchum, Et Al. Murder.
Nol. Prosse entered by leave of Court.
The State V.S. Polly Barclay. Inditted for murder – virdict of guilty.

The prisoner being brought on this day to the bar of the Court and being asked if she had anything to show, why the sentence should not be passed on her, and nothing having been offered, the court proceeded to pronounce the following sentence – that you Polly Barclay, be taken from this bar, to the place from whence you came, there to remain until Friday the thirteenth day of the present month of May, and that on the aforesaid 13th day of May, you are to be taken by the proper officer, to a gallows previously to be erected, in or near the town of Washington, and then and there, on the day aforesaid, between the hours of ten in the forenoon, and two o'clock in the afternoon, you are to be hung by the neck until you are dead, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul.

Thus on Friday the thirteenth of May, 1806, only a week after the verdict had been received, Polly Barclay was hanged from a gallows erected just off Main Street in Washington, the first white woman ever hanged in Georgia.

Business establishments in Washington continued to expand with the area bordered by Market, Broad, Second, and Fourth (Jefferson) Streets serving still as the main business as well as residential district. On the south side of Broad Street, Francis Baldwin in 1802, was proprietor of a distillery which supplied much of the ale for the local taverns. Baldwin had purchased the lot in 1799, from William Graves of "Loyd's Mountain" in Lincoln County. This mountain was later named in honor of the Graves family. The firm of Felix Gilbert and Sons Merchants (after 1801, and Felix Gilbert's death, the sons William G. Gilbert and Felix H. Gilbert went into co-partnership) was a thriving enterprise on the north side of Broad Street near the junction with Middle Street. In 1798, John Hunton sold his recently built three-story house to Benjamin Sims, a merchant of Augusta, for $4000. In 1801, due to forfeiture, Hunton resold the house to Ferdinand Phinizy for the same price. Phinizy, in turn, sold it in 1804, to the Commissioners of the Court House and Jail for $1500. This building thus became the court house in 1804 serving as such until 1817. The large structure faced south toward Market Street and was located centrally in the block bordered east by Jefferson Street and west by Middle Street. Also on Market Street, not far east of the intersection of that street with East Street, was the law office of John Mathews, built in 1797. Louis Prudhomme, in addition to his slave trading, kept a large mercantile establishment on the corner of Middle and

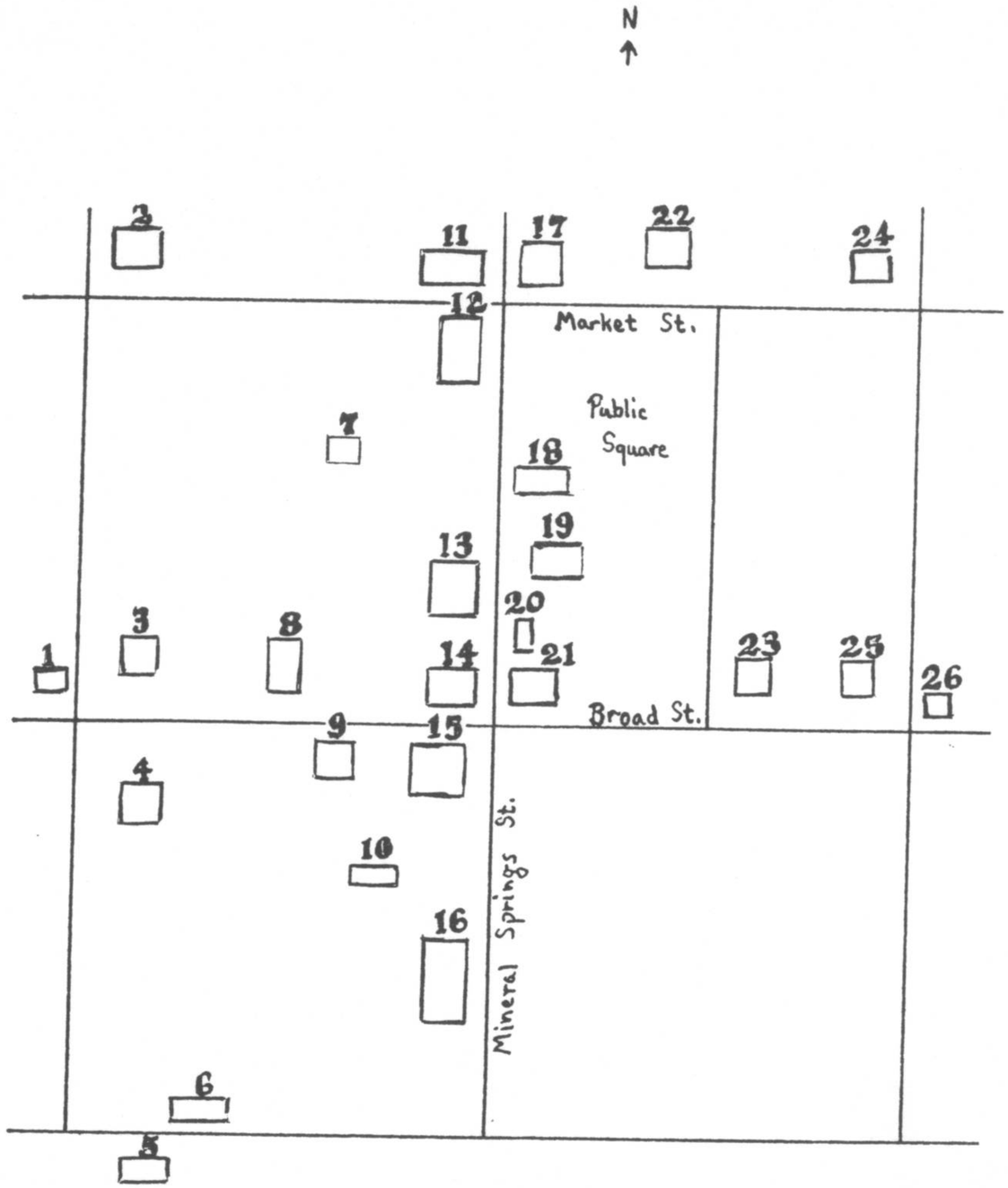
Market Streets. Here he was also highly successful and accumulated a large amount of money from his ventures. In 1809, he sold his business to John Cormick and returned to his native France. Cormick had married Frances Dugas in 1807, and was a well-educated and polished entrepreneur. Frenchmen continued to occupy the west side of Middle Street which by this time had begun to be called Mineral Spring Street. By 1805, Market Street was also known as Court Street and Broad Street had become Main Street. Louis Picquet's general merchandise store was on the corner of Middle and Broad. He was not, however, as successful as other merchants in Washington and was frequently beset by financial difficulties. Maquire and LePrestre maintained their mercantile house which they had opened in 1794. In 1807, the property was acquired by John Griffin, and the next year transferred to John Wingfield. A portion of this building after 1807, was used by Richard Worsham to operate a popular tavern.

The so-called public square which comprised the area south of Market, north of Broad, east of Spring, and west of Fourth Streets, received that name early in the 1790's since the court house was situated on this land and was a center of public activity. Other homes and businesses were also built on this property; however, the nomenclature remained constant. South of Broad and west of Spring Street was James Corbett's store which he opened in 1802, and which was next door to his residence. Also on Broad Street, but further west at the corner of West Street was the building housing William and Oliver H. Prince, Traders and Merchants.

Adjoining that lot was the printing office for the town. In 1800, the first newspaper was established in Washington, this being the Gazette under the editorship of Alexander McMillan. He was an Augustan who had published the Southern Centinel and State Gazette in that city from 1793 to 1799, and had served as state printer of Georgia. Some time before June of 1801, the Washington Gazette had passed into the hands of David Hillhouse who opened the printing office. After his death on March 24, 1803, his widow, Sarah Porter Hillhouse, assumed the duties as editor of the paper, the name of which had been changed in 1801, to the Monitor. The Country Almanac for the year 1805, was published by their presses as were some records for the State Legislature. Sarah Hillhouse was one of the earliest businesswomen in America and proved to be a capable and intelligent lady in the business world. On October 7, 1781, Sarah Porter, the daughter of General Elisha Porter of Hadley, Massachusetts, married David Hillhouse, son of William and Sarah Griswold Hillhouse of Connecticut. Some time prior to 1787, the Hillhouses removed to Wilkes County along with Hillhouse's brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. William Prince. Settling in Washington, the family also owned extensive land in the surrounding area. David Hillhouse entered a land venture with William Longstreet on nine thousand acres of land in Franklin County near the upper reaches of the Oconee River. Longstreet was a pioneer in the development of steam power and with his guidance, the men established an iron foundry. The project, however, was not successful. Upon David Hillhouse's death, in addition to his wife, survivors included daughters Sarah, who married Felix H. Gilbert, Jr., and Mary, who was wed to Andrew Shepherd, the son of a prominent Wilkes planter, and a son, David Porter Hillhouse, who married first Charlotte Stark and second Lucy Locket Lipham. There was also a daughter born four months after David Hillhouse's death, named Caroline Sophia Rebecca, who died in early childhood. Three other children died in infancy. Sarah P. Hillhouse was a gallant woman under these difficult circumstances with which she was faced. Her son was graduated from Yale and both daughters attended the famous Moravian School in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Upon the death of her daughter, Mrs. Sarah Gilbert, in 1808, she became guardian of the Gilberts' young child and after Mr. Gilbert's death in 1813, Mrs. Hillhouse assumed full responsibility for the young girl's upbringing. The child, Sarah Hillhouse Gilbert, was sent to school in New Haven, Connecticut, where she met her future husband, also a Georgian, Adam Leopold Alexander, a student at Yale. Mrs. Sarah Hillhouse, after a remarkable

WASHINGTON BUSINESS DISTRICT IN 1805
(key to chart on opposite page)

1. Home of John the Shoemaker
2. Jail
3. Home of John Chisholm
4. Home of the late Peter Van Allen
5. Wilkes Academy
6. Garland Wingfield's building
7. Hillhouse family graveyard
8. Home of Lewis Picquet
9. Home of James Corbett
10. Francis Baldwin's distillery
11. Home of Patsy Williamson
12. Louis Prudhomme's store
13. Louis Maquire and Nicholas LePrestre, merchants
14. Stephen Minton's store
15. James Corbett's store
16. Willis Hotel
17. Home of William Sanson, Sr.
18. Old Court House
19. Home of Thomas Terrell, Jr.
20. McShorter's house
21. Gilbert's store
22. New Court House
23. Home of Andrew Ruddle
24. Home of David Plumb
25. Home of Benjamin Branham
26. John Griffin's law office



1805

career, died March 26, 1831, a much beloved and highly successful lady.

Other families that should be discussed at this time are the Hays, the Gilberts, and the Shepherds. Gilbert Hay was a physician of some local prestige residing on the west side of Washington at his home Haywood which he built in 1791. It was situated some distance north of Broad Street just off the former town common. He was also a large landowner as much of the land immediately adjoining Washington to the west was in his possession. Hay was one of the few Virginians who adhered to the Clark political faction and served as John Clark's second in the famous duel with Crawford. Of Virginia ancestry, Hay married Elizabeth Gilbert, daughter of Felix Gilbert, and had four children, one of whom was Dr. Felix Hay. Felix Gilbert, a close associate of many of the Broad River settlers while in Virginia, removed to Wilkes County at about the same time as Mathews brought his entourage. Rather than settling with the others, however, Gilbert established himself just northeast of Washington. Gilbert was a Scotsman whose frugality in business enterprises was profitable for him and at his death, he had amassed a sizeable fortune. Married to the daughter of Peter Grant, his daughters Nancy and Maria Felixiana were wed respectively to Richard Long, son of Nicholas Long, and Robert Christmas. Maria, after the death of her first husband, married Andrew Shepherd, a widower since the death of his wife Mary Hillhouse. Felix Gilbert's sons, William Grant and Felix H., continued the operation of the businesses. In 1808, Felix H. Gilbert built one of the first brick houses above Augusta on his property north and east of the junction of Augusta Road and the Washington town limit. James Shepherd had been a successful planter in Virginia, but became excited about the prospects of greater wealth in Wilkes. Purchasing a large amount of land in Wilkes, Shepherd set up residence in town. His son, Andrew Shepherd, lived opposite Haywood and was married first to Mary Hillhouse and second to Maria Gilbert.

The legislative act incorporating the town of Washington was passed on December 7, 1805. However, earlier that year the definite boundaries of the town had been established by the Board of Commissioners originally named to promote an academy lottery, but whose duties had become expanded at the necessity of the town's growth and development. Members of the Board were John Griffin, William Prince, Joel Abbott, Richard Worsham, Felix H. Gilbert, and Gilbert Hay with Nicholas Long serving as President of the Board. This position, in effect, made him the first mayor of Washington, although he never assumed that title. Nicholas Long was a North Carolinian, who, like his wife, was raised near the Virginia border. Moving to Washington, he lived in the "big gulley" section of the town north of the Court House. Long also owned a plantation known as Belmont a few miles northeast of Washington on the road to Mallorysville. A highly intelligent man, he soon became influential in Washington politics, and, although some were skeptical of his motives due to his involvement in land speculation, he proved an honest and capable administrator. In the War of 1812, he served as a colonel in the Forty-third Regiment of Infantry, although the unit was never in the field. His children also distinguished themselves through marriage and successful vocations. Margaret Long married Thomas Telfair, son of Governor Edward Telfair, who was later a member of the United States House of Representatives. Eliza Long wed a Mr. DuBose while her sisters Sarah and Eugenia married James Rembert and Lock Weems respectively. John Long became a wealthy planter in Washington County. Nicholas Long's oldest son Richard was a successful lawyer in Wilkes and married Nancy Hay, the daughter of Dr. Gilbert Hay.

Education in Wilkes continued to improve as the area became more permanently settled. Succoth Academy, Hope Hull's Methodist school, secured in 1795, the services of the Rev. Barton W. Stone as professor of languages, and prospered for several years. John Springer, after retiring from his teaching, assumed the duties as a member of the Board for the Wilkes County Academy. On August 11, 1796, he was elected President of the Board, an office which he held until his death on September 3, 1798. Shortly before

his death, he was also named a Trustee of the University of Georgia. His position as President of the Academy Commissioners was taken by Hope Hull who also proved capable in that capacity. Through Springer's influence, the Board vigorously sought in 1797, to have the University of Georgia located in Washington. David Meriwether went before the Senatus Acadimus in Louisville to speak for the proposition, but it was not accepted. This did, however, exemplify the interest which the county had begun to place on education.

The Board was, in one respect, still unchanged from their earlier activities. Although more conscientious about the promulgation of education, the members remained financially troubled. On November 2, 1796, the Grand Inquest of the Wilkes County Court upon investigation found an embarrassing mis-appropriation of funds amounting to almost five hundred dollars. In the first decade of the nineteenth century it became necessary to establish a lottery, which ran for several years, in an attempt to add monies to the academy treasury. This proved somewhat successful, but fell short of the needed amount and subscriptions were taken. Certain of the academy lots in the town were also sold to the public by 1810. On May 1, 1799, the new building on the lot at the corner of Liberty and Second Streets was inspected by the Board. It was apparent, however, that this was to be only a transitional building while the major project of the Board was completed one-half mile west of the town limits on land previously owned and donated by Benajah Smith. In 1807, this new academy, built by David Gaddy, which was for male students only, was completed. It contained, in addition to classrooms, a nondenominational chapel for the various religious groups in the town. This facility was used more as a lecture hall for visiting evangelists and other speakers since most of the townspeople who were churchgoers had close affinity to the county churches. The older school building was made into the girls' academy or seminary after the boys' school was moved out. Isaac Jones served as rector of the old academy in 1802, and William Prince, Jr. served in that capacity from 1803 to 1805. By 1808, at which time the school system had been separated into male and female academies, Duncan Green Campbell had been appointed superintendent of the female seminary. Campbell married Mary Williamson, the youngest daughter of Micajah Williamson. Duncan G. Campbell's ancestors arrived in North Carolina in 1739, with a band of Scotch highlanders containing among others Allen and Flora McDonald and led by Neill McNeill. Born on February 17, 1787, Duncan's father was John Archibald Campbell who had served in the Revolution as an officer with General Greene. Graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1807, Duncan Campbell moved to Washington, Georgia, and took charge of the school. He studied law under Judge Griffin and was admitted to the bar, shortly thereafter being elected Solicitor-general of the Western Circuit. Becoming more involved in state politics, he was several times a member of the Georgia legislature and authored the first bill in Georgia history promoting the cause of female education. Later he was appointed by President Monroe to serve as a Commissioner for the Creek Treaty of 1824, which ceded much of the land in western Georgia and Alabama to the respective states. Campbell was also a longtime Trustee of the University of Georgia. He died in 1828, only a few months after his nomination for Governor and before the election. His survivors included a son, John A. Campbell, who served on the United States Supreme Court from 1853 to 1861.

John A. Campbell was born in Washington on June 24, 1811. At the age of eleven he entered Franklin College in Athens where he graduated in 1825, with highest honors. Appointed to West Point after graduation, he attended that institution for three years, but returned to Wilkes when his father died in 1828. He then studied law under Governor Clark and was admitted to the bar in 1829, at the age of eighteen. The following year he removed from Georgia to Alabama. In 1853, John A. Campbell was appointed to an associate justiceship on the United States Supreme Court by President Franklin Pierce. During his tenure on the court, he was a participant in the famous Dred Scott case which