

Willis J Upchurch**XID – 2081**

Commentary: Willis J. Upchurch was a son of Thomas Gay Upchurch and a grandson of Charles, head of Upchurch Clan 2. He was born in 1826 in Henry County, Georgia.

Acknowledgements: The following Biofile was transcribed by Carla J. Michaels, a volunteer and tireless contributor, who administers the UAFA center in Cary, NC

(1) Willis J Upchurch, son of Patricia and Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr was listed in US 1850 Census of Henry Co, GA – Willis J Upchurch was born 1826, listed as age 24 native of GA and wife Sarah age 25, native of GA. The father Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr lived in a separate residence in the county.

Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr and his oldest son Willis J Upchurch moved to Bowdon, GA, Carroll Co between 1850 and 1860. In the 1860 Census Willis J Upchurch, age 33, farmer, native of GA and wife Sarah, age 38 native of GA. Their children were listed as:

1. Catherine age 8 native of GA
2. William age 7 native of GA
3. Jane age 5 native of GA
4. Charles age 4 native of GA
5. John age 1 native of GA
6. Joe Cephus (born later) (born 1860)

(28)

(2) See 5 Jan 1979 letter West to RPU

Thomas Ralph Upchurch reports that Willis J Upchurch was born 1827 in GA that he married Sarah --- --- who was born in GA in 1822. Willis J Upchurch was a brother of William Barnes Upchurch.

(3) See letter 17 Mar 1980 Ben Lane Upchurch, Sr to RPU

Willis J Upchurch, born 28 Nov 1826, Henry Co, GA, died 1910, was elder son of Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr.

Willis J Upchurch married (1st) Sarah Mabry 1850, married (2nd) 6 Sep 1865 M A Whitehead, Hutchens

Willis J Upchurch “Civil War Record – member 2nd Regiment, GA State Troops, Co I from Carroll Co, GA, Pvt. Date of Enlistment 14 Feb 1863 absent sick Jan 1864. no record of this unit after 11 Jul 1864. They were destroyed by fire at Milledgeville by Gen Sherman.

Children by Sarah:

Catherine Upchurch	born 1852
William B Upchurch	born 4 Jul 1854
Jane Upchurch	born 1855
Charles Upchurch	born 1856
John Upchurch	born 1858
Joe Cephus	born 1860

Children by M A W Hutchens:

Will Upchurch	born 1866
Victoria Upchurch	born 1868
Georgia Upchurch	
Bob Upchurch	
Willborn Upchurch	
Lane Upchurch	
Emina Upchurch	Mittie Upchurch

(4) See letter 29 Mar 1980 Ben Lane Upchurch, Sr to RPU
Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr had a son Willis J Upchurch born 1826 died 29 Nov 1910, lived in Clay Co, AL.

(5) See package from Ben Lane Upchurch, Sr 22 May 1980

E1 Willis J Upchurch

married 1st 1850 Sarah (Sallie Bonner) Mabry 1825 – 1860

married 2nd 6 Sep 1865 M A Whitehead Hutchens 1832 – 1916

C53 Letter 30 Jan 1951 Lane Upchurch to Alice Gray (filed with Lane Upchurch)

“Thomas Gay Upchurch (Sr) and his 3 or 4 sons moved to Clay Co, AL before my day of course. My father’s name was Willis Gay Upchurch and one brother named Lee Upchurch [Joseph E Upchurch XID – 2079 born 1843 – RPU], the other we called him Uncle Pony [Jethro William Upchurch XID – 2074 born Jul 1831 – RPU] I imagine this was a nickname.”

[Note: It is a great puzzle that Lane Upchurch lists his father as Willis Gay Upchurch when all other records show Willis J Upchurch, besides Lane had a 1st cousin Willis Gay Upchurch. My guess is Lane confused “J” with “Gay”. – RPU]

(6) Willis J Upchurch born 1826 (GA) married 1st Sarah --- --- born 1825 (GA); married 2nd Missouri A Hudgens. Willis J Upchurch was son of Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr, grandson of Charles Upchurch. In 1860 Willis J Upchurch was listed in the Carroll co, GA and the Bowden Co, GA Census. Possibly caused by a change of boundary lines.

(7) See letter 1 May 1982 Augusta Lee Upchurch to RPU

Willis J Upchurch born 1826 died 28 Nov 1910 married Missouri A Hudgens born 1832 died 1916.

(8) See letter 13 Feb 1970 Martha Lucy Upchurch to William Kendrick Upchurch, Sr filed with Martha

“Willis J Upchurch born 1826 Henry Co, GA) died 28 Nov 1910 (Ashland, Clay Co, AL). He is on the 1860 Census in Bowden Village, Carroll Co, GA. He was 33 and his wife Sarah [Mabry] age 38. Willis J Upchurch was a member of the 8th Regiment GA State Troops, Co I. He was a private. There is no record of his unit after 11 Jul 1864 as the files were destroyed by fire at Milledgeville, GA by Sherman. His wife evidently died sometime between 1860 and 1863. He left for the war in 1863 leaving his children with his mother and father (Patience and Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr). After returning from the war he married M A Whitehead Hutchins on 6 Sep 1865 and moved to Clay Co, AL.”

(9) See letter 1 Feb 1988 Augusta Lee Upchurch to RPU

Willis J Upchurch, I married 1st Sally Bonner Mabry

married 2nd Missouri A Hudgens

(10) See letter 15 Mar 1988 Augusta Lee Upchurch to RPU

“On 7 Apr 1970 I copied the following from stones in the Liberty Church Cemetery located 4 miles west of Ashland in Clay Co, AL

Willis J Upchurch	died 28 Nov 1910	age 89 years
M A Upchurch	1832 – 1916	wife

(11) See letter 13 Dec 1988 Ruth Upchurch Unruh to RPU

WJU member 2nd Regiment GA State Troops, Co, I from Carroll Co, GGA, Pvt.

14 Feb 1863. Absent sick Jan 1864. No record of unit after 11 Jul 1864 as records destroyed by fire at Milledgeville, GA by Sherman.

(12) See letter 15 Aug 1990 James Shannon Elder to RPU

WJU, I married 2nd Missouri A White head Hudgens Claibornes Regiment, Partisan Rangers, 7th Regiment Housor (?), service records do not show him present at any time.

(13) See letter 3 Oct James Shannon Elder to RPU

WJU, I born 7 Jan 1821 Henry Co, GA) (buried Liberty Church Cemetery, Ashland, AL), CSA. Farmer. Reported to be in Claibornes Regiment, Partisan Rangers, 7th Regiment. Service records (compiled confederate service records) do not show him present at any time. In Clay co, AL 1870. Tombstone lists age at death as 89 years (birth circa 1821) (Not 28 Nov 1826). From Pension applications: In Co “P” 2nd GA Infantry. Joined Feb 1862. Discharged Jul 1864 due to spine injury at Atlanta born 7 1821. Received pension in Clay Co, AL.

(14) Item from letter 29 Aug 1996 Jack Ray Upchurch to Misti Johnson

My grandfather’s name was John Henry Upchurch and his father was Charles M Upchurch. Charles’ father was **Willis J Upchurch** and his grandfather was Thomas Gay Upchurch. Thomas Gay Upchurch and **Willis J Upchurch** both moved from Carroll County – Bowdon, GA to Ashland, AL (just outside Lineville, AL) around 1865. This is when your immediate Upchurch Family came to your area.

Just why they moved from Carroll County is not known. Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr owned several hundred acres in and around Bowdon. In fact, he once owned land where downtown Bowdon now sits. In the Bowdon library many references are made to him as being one of the original owners who helped layout where present day downtown Bowdon now sits.

This item was in a letter that Jack Ray Upchurch wrote to 13 year old Misti Johnson of Lineville, AL after meeting Misti and her grandmother Shirley Jean (Upchurch) Johnson at an Upchurch Reunion in Clay Co, AL on 25 Aug 1996.

(15) See notes of RPU 22 May 1980 visit to Ben Lane Upchurch, Sr. Ben related info about the Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr Sub-clan as quoted below. Placed in context by the outline shown (with XIDs).

- I. Charles Upchurch – Head of Clan
 - A. Thomas Gay Upchurch 2071
 - 1. **Willis J Upchurch** 2081
 - a. Lane Upchurch 4362
 - b. Joe Cephas Upchurch 2088
 - i. Benjamin Franklin Upchurch 4370
 - (I) Ven Lane Upchurch, Sr 4377
 - c. William Benny Upchurch 2084
 - 2. Jethro Wilson Upchurch 2074
 - a. Willis Gay Upchurch 2097
 - i. Martha Lucy (Upchurch) Tidd 2106

Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr moved to about 40 miles west of Atlanta, GA and was there when Bowden Co, GA was formed about 1850. He left Bowden Co, GA and moved to Ashland, Clay Co, AL after 1860 as did his son **Willis J Upchurch**. It is unclear how many children of Willis J Upchurch moved to Clay Co, AL with him. For example, Joe Cephas Upchurch and William Benny Upchurch probably moved to Fairburn, GA about 1870 (one document says 1867). It is unclear as to whether they came from Bowden, GA or Clay Co, AL. Joe Cephas Upchurch spent most of his life in Fairburn, GA. Ben knew him well but does not recall him talking about the Upchurch Family. Benjamin Franklin Upchurch was a salesman. The family of Martha Lucy Upchurch also lived around Fairburn, GA.

Ben went to Ashland, AL and talked to some Upchurch Family members. Love Upchurch was there but Ben did not talk to him.

(16) From biofile of Ben Lane Upchurch, Sr – Packet dated 22 May 1980
 [Note: GA State Troops records for Willis J Upchurch – CJM 15 Aug 2021]

CONFEDERATE PENSION AND RECORD DEPARTMENT
404 State Capitol
Atlanta 3, Georgia

Unpublished records compiled for the State of Georgia by Lillian Henderson show that

Willis J. Upchurch enlisted as a private in Co. I, 2d Regt. Ga. State Troops Feb. 14, 1863. Absent, sick, Jan. 31, 1864. No later record.

The Captain of this Company was W. A. Potts.

This is a true excerpt from records in this office.

Enclose this record with your application. Only one certified copy is furnished.

When records have been furnished by this office and are on file in the Business Office, 5330 Pershing Avenue, St. Louis 12, Missouri, duplicates are not issued.

Records cover the period from early in 1861 through April 1865 and contain no family statistics.

Any alteration of this record is unauthorized and renders it invalid.

Lillian Henderson
Lillian Henderson
Director

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hgh

(17) From biofile of Ben Lane Upchurch, Sr – packet dated 22 May 1980
Re: Charles Upchurch/Thomas Gay Upchurch, SR Sub-clan – A12

Edward Upchurch, born 11/11/1873, grandson of this Gay Upchurch wrote on 12 January 1958,
"I have enclosed copies of newspaper clippings of the death notices of Gay Upchurch, J.W. Upchurch,-----
I remember an aunt Elizabeth Hand, married Hilliary Hand----- another annt, Rhoda Barnes----- Margaret's last name was Bonner.
Mother and Father (J.W. son of Gay) moved back to Georgia to Grandfather Morgan's house, Palmetto Ga. at the time of the Civil War, and then back to Alabama right soon after the war was over. However they moved back to Georgia about 1883.
Uncle Thomas Gay during the Civil War took the Oath of Allegiance in Maryland, and lived there for awhile after the War-----
In Alabama my family lived 3 or 4 miles from Grandfather, but Uncles Joseph and Willis beside Grandfather, one on each side-----

Edward Upchurch = Edward Franklin Upchurch, son of Jethro Wilson Upchurch "J W"
Martha J (A) Upchurch [shown above as Margaret Upchurch] married () John Bonner
"Mother" = nee Rosina A Morgan
Thomas Gay Upchurch, Jr = "Uncle Thomas Gay"

Willis J Upchurch, Joseph Eaton Upchurch
Grandfather = Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr

A-21 = Civil War records of **W J Upchurch**, member of 2nd Regiment, GA State Troops, Co I from Carroll Co, GA

Pvt 14 Feb 1863 absent sick Jan 1864 – No records of this unit after 11 Jul 1864. They were destroyed by fire at Milledgeville, GA by Sherman.

(18) Below is 1 of 33 Upchurch or Upchurch related GA Death Certificates – see GA Geographical File for list.

To RPU in letter 17 May 2011 from Kay Lind Slappey – RPU 17 Jun 2011

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS				MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH Bureau of Vital Statistics					
20950 STATE FILE NUMBER					
1 PLACE OF DEATH					
State—Georgia <i>Fayette</i>					
County <i>Fayette</i> Militia District No. _____ Registered No. <i>1830</i>					
City or Town <i>Coat Point</i> No. <i>309</i> <i>Houstan</i> St. _____ Ward _____ (If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number).					
2 FULL NAME <i>W. B. Upchurch</i>					
(a) Residence <i>Coat Point</i> (Usual place of abode, street and number) Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. da. IF NON-RESIDENT give city or town and state of residence.					
3 SEX <i>Male</i>			4 Color or Race <i>white</i>		
5 Single, Married, Widowed, or Divorced (write the word) <i>married</i>			16 DATE OF DEATH (month, day and year) <i>Aug 16 1924</i>		
6a Name of Husband or Wife, if Married, Widowed or Divorced <i>Mrs Hallie Upchurch</i>			17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <i>Aug 14 1924</i> to <i>Aug 14 1924</i>		
6 DATE OF BIRTH (month, day and year) <i>Aug 4 1850</i>			that I last saw him alive on <i>Aug 14 1924</i>		
7 AGE Years <i>74</i> Months _____ Days _____ If LESS than 1 day, hrs. _____ or min. _____			and that death occurred, on the date stated above at <i>Coat Pt.</i>		
8 OCCUPATION (a) Trade, Profession or particular kind of work <i>Capt of Ga. R.R.</i> (b) General nature of Industry, Business or Establishment in which employed (or employer)			The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: <i>Endocarditis</i>		
9 BIRTHPLACE (State or Country) <i>Ala.</i>			(duration) _____ yrs. _____ mos. _____ da.		
10 NAME OF FATHER <i>J. W. Upchurch</i>			CONTRIBUTORY (Secondary) (duration) _____ yrs. _____ mos. _____ da.		
11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or Country) <i>Ga.</i>			18 Where was disease contracted if not at place of death? <i>at home</i>		
12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <i>Miss Barnes</i>			Did an operation precede death? <i>no</i> Date of _____		
13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or Country) <i>Ga.</i>			Was there an autopsy? <i>no</i>		
14 The Above is True to the Best of My Knowledge. (Informant) <i>W. B. Upchurch</i> (Address) <i>Coat Point</i>			What test confirmed diagnosis? <i>yes</i> (Signed) <i>J. A. Hallaway</i> M.D. (Address) <i>Coat Point</i>		
15 Filed <i>8/18 1924</i> Registrar <i>T. S. Lockhart</i>			19 Place of Burial, Cremation, or Removal Date of Burial <i>West View Cemetery 8/18 1924</i>		
			20 UNDERTAKER <i>Howard P. Carriswell</i> Address <i>Coat Point</i>		

Informant: W F (?) Upchurch

- I. Charles Upchurch – Head of Clan
 - A. Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr
 - 1. **Willis J Upchurch**
 - a. William Benny Upchurch

RPU Note – 20 Jun 2011

Death certificate shows father as J W Upchurch – other records show **Willis J Upchurch**

RPU Note – 30 Jul 2011

Kay styles the informant as W F Upchurch which is probably correct as the deceased had a son William Franklin Upchurch (XID – 4599) who lived in East Point, GA.

(19) See biofile of Martha Lucy Upchurch for letter 13 Jan 1965 to William Kendrick Upchurch, Sr. This letter sent in a packet about 1980 to RPU by Etta Belle Lewter – an extracted paragraph below:

Willis and J.W. were sons of Gay and they all moved to Clay County Ala. Another son Joseph also moved there. Jethro Wilson was my grandfather. Uncle Ed, a son of Jethro, wrote me before he died that **Willis** lived on one side of his grandfather, Gay, and Joseph on the other. Jethro moved to Georgia during the Civil War, enlisted there, served three years, and then moved back to Clay County. He then returned to Georgia in the 80s and died there in 1896.

I do hope that some one of the people in Clay County has the old family Bible. In as much as Gay died there, it is probably there somewhere.

- I. Charles Upchurch – Head of Clan
 - A. Thomas Gay Upchurch, Sr “Gay”
 - 1. **Willis J Upchurch**, I CSS born 28 Nov 1826 (Henry Co, TN)
 - 2. Jethro Wilson Upchurch CSA born 9 Jul 1831
 - a. Edward Franklin Upchurch born 11 Nov 1873 (Ashland, AL)
 - 3. Joseph Eaton Upchurch “Joe” born 1844 (Carroll Co, GA)