

## Tales from Beyond the Grave: The Life and Legend of Thomas Marion “Mountain Tom” Clark

By Lee Freeman

Most locals have seen the marker and know the story of how Tom aka “Mountain Tom” Clark lies buried underneath East Tennessee Street in Florence. They know that he was a Civil War era outlaw, born in the mountain area of East Tennessee, that he deserted the Confederate Army after killing a man; that he was arrested with two outlaws in Sept. of 1872; that he boasted of killing eighteen men and one child; that he hid gold in a deserted cave somewhere; that he was captured dressed as a woman; etc.. Unfortunately, this and much of the rest of what most people know about Tom Clark is simply urban legend, folklore.

The man largely responsible for this was the late Dr. Maurice “Wade” Pruitt (1911-1976), whose 1977 posthumously-published book *Bugger Saga* (“Mustn’t cry, son, ‘cause the Buggers’ll get you if you don’t watch out”) attempted to chronicle Tom Clark’s life and times, and that of some of his gang members.<sup>1</sup> While drawing upon some historical sources, *Bugger Saga* is based primarily upon oral tradition, stories told to Pruitt by his grandparents and other relatives. Pruitt stated in an un-sourced interview included in the book: “Anyway, I have aimed at the truth and if I have, at times, not hit the Bull’s eye, I am sorry, but that’s the way I’ve recollected hearing them tell it.”<sup>2</sup> As folklore, these tales are invaluable however as an accurate record of Tom Clark’s life and career, they leave much to be desired. The following article will seek to separate fact from folklore with regard to the life and crimes of Thomas Marion Clark. Because Pruitt’s book is the only published account of Tom Clark, and because what it says is taken as gospel by many, I have quoted and referred to it fairly extensively in this article, while at the same time relying upon primary historical documents wherever possible. There are actually more period historical records for Tom and his gang than might at first be assumed.

So what *do* we know about Tom Clark? Well, for starters, Tom may not have had the nickname “Mountain Tom” and may not have been born in East Tennessee. Tom was married to Sarah Bradford in Franklin County, Tennessee in September of 1847,<sup>3</sup> and while Tom’s 1850 and 1860 census enumerations do record his birthplace as Tennessee Tom’s father Henry Clark, a native of Kentucky, repeatedly shows up in the US censuses from 1830 to 1850 living in Jackson County, Alabama.<sup>4</sup> So if Henry Clark was ever in Franklin County, Tennessee it must have been before 1830 (or possibly in between census years) As for Tom’s nickname “Mountain Tom,” the earliest and only historical reference I can locate which refers to him as “Mountain Tom” is a March, 1893 *Florence Times* (reprinted from the *Sheffield Reaper*) biographical sketch of Tom written by armchair historian Mr. T. S. Fedore of South Florence, in Colbert County.<sup>5</sup> Fedore says Tom was named “Mountain Tom” to differentiate him from another Tom Clark who was known as “Chinubbee” Tom.<sup>6</sup> Every other 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century historical reference to Tom that I can find however refers to him simply as “Tom Clark” or “Thomas Clark.” Nothing is known of Tom’s life before the Civil War, though Wade Pruitt surmised that the Clarks may have arrived in Lauderdale in the 1830s and that Tom was a cattle thief before the Civil War.

While claiming to be a “correct write-up” of the “fiend” Clark, based upon careful historical investigation, much of Fedore’s sketch seems to be anecdotal, and is another reason why myth and folklore about Clark still abound, as Pruitt quotes authoritatively from this article in *Bugger Saga*.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas Marion Clark was born ca. 1828, the oldest of ten children born to Henry (1804-betwn.1860-1866) and Nancy (ca. 1804-aft. 1870) Clark. Tom's siblings were: Celia C. (1830-); Murphy (1833-aft. 1880); Dennis (1836-aft. 1864); Mary Ann (1838-aft. 1870); Nancy (1840-); Sarah (1842-); Bishop (1842-aft. 1865); Thomas (1844-); and Jane (1850-aft. 1870).

Tom and his wife Sarah would eventually have six children: Sarah Elizabeth (1850-); James H. (1852-); Mary R. (1855-); Ambrose Marion (1858-1930); John W. (1860-1940); Frances Elizabeth "Lizzie" (1867-1948).<sup>8</sup> Pruitt says Tom had a mistress named Martha Kirkland alias Blackburn by whom he had two illegitimate sons named Warren and Bill however if so there is no documentation for them.<sup>9</sup>

In *Bugger Saga* Dr. Pruitt stated that the Clarks arrived in Lauderdale County before 1837, where they worked as day laborers for several local families. Pruitt located a Lauderdale County deed from 1837 in which an Andrew Clark apprenticed his son Thomas M. to a James Stewart to learn the trade of tailor.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Pruitt surmised that this was Henry Clark who made his mark as Andrew rather than under his real name, however this is inaccurate. The Clarks moved to Lauderdale County from Jackson County, AL between 1859 (Tom) and 1860 (Henry), buying land from the US Government in S24 (Tom) and S35 (Henry) of T1SR11W, then the Hines Community, now known as Zip City.<sup>11</sup> By the time of the 1860 census, both Tom and Henry had 40 acre farms. Tom had 10 improved and 30 unimproved acres and his farm was valued at \$100; Henry's farm was valued at \$125.<sup>12</sup>

Wade Pruitt in *Bugger Saga* says that Henry Clark, "ashamed of the behavior of his sons," left Nancy and his children and "went west deserting his family and was never heard from again." According to Pruitt Nancy "later took up with a man named Woods, hence Tom Clark's alias of Bill Woods."<sup>13</sup> However no evidence of this has been found. Tom and his brother Murphy Clark were enumerated in the 1866 Alabama State Census in Lauderdale County however Henry and Nancy are absent.<sup>14</sup> A 72 year-old Nancy was enumerated in the 1870 federal population census with daughters Mary and Jane and two young children, probably grandchildren (their post office was listed as Green Hill).<sup>15</sup> As Henry is not enumerated he had probably died by this time though no record of his death has been found. No record has been found of Nancy Clark's death, either at this time.

Wade Pruitt also states that Tom's brother Murphy was a member of Tom's gang and was killed by his brothers Tom and Dennis for holding out the spoils from various robberies, however Murphy actually outlived Tom, and was living in Madison County, Alabama in 1880.<sup>16</sup>

There are no known photos of Tom or Sarah Clark, though there are photos of at least three of their children-sons Ambrose Marion and John W. and daughter Lizzie.<sup>17</sup> So we don't know what Clark looked like. Quoting the 1934 testimony of Mrs. Alice Willis, Pruitt says that Tom "was a short, thin-like man, rather good looking with a swarthy complexion and dark hair," and that the Clarks were "part Indian," however this information, like so much else in *Bugger Saga* is anecdotal.<sup>18</sup>

By 1870, perhaps tired of her husband's criminal exploits, Sallie Clark apparently took the remaining children still living at home and moved to Wolf Springs, in Lawrence County, Alabama, where she was enumerated as head of household.<sup>19</sup> I haven't located Tom in the population census of 1870 yet but there is a chunk of this census that is missing and Tom may have been enumerated in this missing section, or perhaps he was hiding out?

The first known record of Tom Clark's war-time activities comes from a *Chicago Tribune* article of September 24, 1863, in which Capt. Francis F. McArthur of Co. C, 9<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry USA stated that FW Lincoln, of Co. F, 9<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry, USA "was killed in an engagement with the guerilla chief Tom Clark, while entering Montezuma, Tennessee, on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst."<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, nothing more is known of this encounter. Attempts to research FW Lincoln have been unsuccessful, as no one by that name can be located in Co. F of the 9<sup>th</sup> Illinois.

As for Tom, his killing of Lincoln is ironic, considering they were both on the same side. Service records for Tom and his brother Dennis, indicate that Tom enlisted as a private in Co B, 2<sup>nd</sup> TN Mtd Inf, USA, but deserted in August of 1864, and Dennis, who enlisted in Co. C deserted in September of 1864.<sup>21</sup>

In his 1893 biographical sketch TS Fedore has Tom conscripted into the Confederate Army before killing a man and deserting to join the Union Army. Capt. Risden D. DeFord of the 6<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Cavalry, USA (of whom more will be said later) also stated that not only Clark, but two of his gang members, John Campbell and Charles Oliver, had served in the Confederate Army before deserting to join the Union Army however so far no Confederate service records have been located for Tom.<sup>22</sup>

Limestone County, Alabama native Susan Lawrance Davis' 1924 *Authentic History of the Ku Klux Klan*, while referencing Tom, has numerous inaccuracies. For instance Davis has Tom conscripted into the 4<sup>th</sup> Alabama Cavalry, CSA, deserting, and then joining the 6<sup>th</sup> Tennessee, "a Federal Regiment, which was commanded by Capt. Elias Thrasher, a home-made Yankee." Though recording Thrasher's regiment and rank incorrectly, Davis does at least have Clark deserting.<sup>23</sup>

Tom's service records indicate that the 36 year-old Clark "joined for duty and enrolled" as a private in Co. B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee Mounted Infantry, USA on October 15, 1863 in Nashville. Tom's enlistment date in his service records is interesting because of the skirmish near Montezuma, Tennessee in which FW Lincoln was killed. This skirmish, it will be recalled, occurred on September 15, 1863. Yet according to his service records, Tom didn't enlist in Co. B, 2<sup>nd</sup> TN Mtd. Inf. until Oct. of 1863. Was Tom in another regiment before joining the 2<sup>nd</sup> TN (if so, no records exist)? Or are his service records mistaken as to his actual date of enlistment? At any rate, his service records also state that Clark "deserted the service at Clifton, Tenn. Aug. 21, 1864." According to his service records Tom also owed the US \$88.98 for "arms, equipment, etc." as well as \$120.00 "for one horse."

The regiment in which Tom enlisted, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee Mounted Infantry, USA, was organized at Nashville, Clifton and Franklin, Tennessee between October, 1863 and June, 1864, and was primarily comprised of men from Hardin, Wayne, Lawrence and Decatur Counties, but had a few men from Lauderdale County, Alabama. Capt.<sup>24</sup> Thomas Jefferson Cypert (1827-1918) of Cypress Inn, in Wayne County, Tennessee, a staunch Unionist and abolitionist, founded Co. A of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tenn. After the war, Cypert wrote a memoir of his wartime experiences which was edited and published as *Tried Men and True or Union Life in Dixie* by Prof. Margaret M. Storey in 2011.<sup>25</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee Mounted Infantry was used primarily for scouting and anti-guerilla missions, sometimes supported by gunboats on the river, and also railroad defense, especially the Nashville and Louisville line.<sup>26</sup>

The man in command of Co. B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee Mtd. Inf., 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Elias Thrasher (1823-1900), has become inextricably linked with Tom's gang. It is not certain, however, that he was a gang member.

The son of Unionists William B. L. and Susan Hoaltshousen Thrasher, Elias changed his address from Alabama to nearby Wayne County, Tennessee because of his pro-Union sentiments and proceeded to raise a company of volunteers, of which he was made captain, however after 2 months, “getting tired on account of its responsibilities of acting as Captain, resigned and offered my services as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. of Co. B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee Mounted Infantry, Col. John Murphy commanding.”<sup>27</sup> According to his Southern Claims commission file this was on November 18, 1863; Thrasher’s service records state that he commanded Co. B from March 14, 1864 until the close of the war.<sup>28</sup>

Pretty much the sole evidence for Thrasher’s involvement in Tom’s gang comes from two war-time reports, the first an April 23, 1864 report by Col. R. Rowett of the 7<sup>th</sup> Illinois and 9<sup>th</sup> Ohio USA regiments, at the time headquartered in Florence, which states that Rowett had “Received communication from Major Murphy complaining that Thrasher with his men are committing many depredations, and asking that Thrasher be ordered to report to him.”<sup>29</sup> But an April 24, 1864 report by Brigadier-General Greville Dodge, writing from the headquarters of the 16<sup>th</sup> Army Corps at Athens, stated that “The man Thrasher you speak of I know nothing about. He is not in my command, nor ever has been. You better inform Major Murphy. He must belong to the State troops.”<sup>30</sup> Yet in a report dated March 1-6, 1865 Capt. Lot Abraham of Co. D, Fourth Iowa Cavalry, USA, who had been ordered to apprehend Thrasher’s party, writing to his superior, Major E. B. Beaumont, stated: “Several citizens told me they believed most of the robbing had been done by men who were with Lieutenant Thrasher, or men from about Clifton [Tenn.]. They all say Thrasher is an honorable man, but blame him for having such men with him. Tom and Bishop Clark, Tom Dennis, Paul Ketty, Bill Bridges, and Pete Grimes are the names of some of his party. A man calling himself Phillips seems to be the worst character.”<sup>31</sup>

Prof. Margaret Storey holds Thrasher guilty of waging “a no-holds-barred battle against his enemies” with his “extremely aggressive actions against rebels throughout the war.” She writes, “What seems clear in an otherwise murky situation is that Thrasher was closely associated with men who were known to be outlaws—particularly Tom Clark, also a veteran of Company B, who continued to terrorize people well after the war and was captured and lynched<sup>32</sup> by Florence citizens in 1872.” Dr. Pruitt wrote in *Bugger Sage* that one reason he was certain that Thrasher was an outlaw is the fact that the 1850 census showed Thrasher as a boarder in the Campbell House Hotel owned by Clark gang member John Campbell’s parents, Garrick and Anne Campbell.<sup>33</sup> Thrasher, who at the time was still single and working as a carpenter, was enumerated in the 1850 census in the Campbell House Hotel but John Campbell was only 8 years old at the time.<sup>34</sup> Significantly no charges were ever brought against Thrasher for any alleged participation in crimes committed by Tom’s gang and 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century historical sources that recount Tom’s gang’s crimes are all silent with regards to Thrasher.<sup>35</sup> After the war, Thrasher received an \$8 a month Union invalid’s pension and was awarded \$806 by the Southern Claims Commission. Certainly stories that Thrasher died sometime in the 1880s of mysterious circumstances at the Florence Hotel are untrue, as the widowed Thrasher died peacefully at his sister Hettie Marks’ house near Jacksonburg (just off Chisholm Hwy about 5 miles from the AL/TN state line) on December 8, 1900.<sup>36</sup>

Some time before or after his military desertion (exactly when isn’t known), Thomas Marion Clark formed a gang of guerillas, bushwhackers and outlaws. The core members came from Cos. B, C, E, and I of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tenn. Mounted, however the gang may have contained men who were in or had deserted the Confederate Army as well. Though Pruitt refers to Tom’s gang as “the Buggers” and some modern authors refer to them as “the Clifton Shebang” and the “Buttermilk Rangers”(this nickname was allegedly

given them by Union Capt. Ridsen D. DeFord; according to Pruitt DeFord said the gang consisted of “clabber coppers and chicken thieves”), period accounts refer to them simply as “Tom Clark’s gang.”

The gang may have started out as horse thieves. The *Montgomery Weekly Advertiser* reported on March 30, 1864 that “In Lauderdale county [sic] the conduct of the enemy has been as bad as in Limestone. This county is continually ravaged by bands of Tories, [sic] who have been armed by the enemy. They are stealing all the horses, mules and cotton.”<sup>37</sup> Other, local newspapers of 1865 and 1866 reported an increase in horse stealing. Limestone County author Susan L. Davis stated that “Peaceable law-abiding negroes [sic] were often attacked by these bands of Tories and carpetbaggers, and the Ku Klux Klan went to their aid each time. . . .”<sup>38</sup>

Pruitt has Clark before his 1872 hanging admitting to “a score and ten more” murders, including the murders of three Confederate soldiers supposedly buried near the old Parsonage Chapel cemetery in Lauderdale County, as well one child. A December, 1892 *Florence Herald* article titled “A Reminiscence: A Hanging Bee in Florence Years Ago,” asserts that Clark had not only “cut out the tongue of a confederate [sic] soldier,” but had also “in the presence of its mother deliberately shot an infant to death.”<sup>39</sup> This last murder described by the *Herald* may be the basis for the assertion by Wade Pruitt that Clark once bayoneted an infant after murdering it’s parents, though Pruitt attributes this story in the chapter endnotes to William T. Rhodes and Silas Bradley whom he apparently interviewed in 1934.<sup>40</sup> However the source I have relied upon for the number of murders attributed to Tom is the *Lauderdale Times* September 5, 1872 extra’s account of Tom’s lynching (reprinted on September 10). According to the *Times* Clark “is said to have killed sixteen men during his life” (no child was mentioned). However of these reported sixteen, only five can be documented, the already-discussed killing of FW Lincoln in September of 1863, Tom’s murder of Allen Howell in October of 1864 (recounted by Pruitt in *Bugger Saga*), and the three murders committed on the Wilson Plantation the night of April 30, 1865.

According to Pruitt, Tom Clark shot and killed Allen Howell on October 27, 1864, as he was sitting on a fence on his property about a mile southwest of Pruitton, in Lauderdale County. Pruitt doesn’t say why Clark wanted to kill Howell, but seems to imply that as the Howells were breeders of fine horses that this may have been the reason.<sup>41</sup> No obituary for Howell exists. However an administrator’s notice dated October 18, 1865, in the *Florence Journal* of the same date, lists son John W. Howell and widow, Dorinda G. Howell as administrator and administratrix of the late Allen Howell’s estate. In retaliation for killing his father, Levi or “Lee” Howell exacted his revenge by shooting Tom Clark in October of 1866. Pruitt goes into great detail regarding this shooting however his information is anecdotal. The *Florence Journal* of Thursday, November 1, 1866, under the heading “Shooting Affair,” stated:

On last Monday evening, Mr. Thomas Clark was shot at and dangerously wounded by Mr. Lee Howell. The occurrence happened near the “Baugh Place,” some fifteen miles North west [sic] from Florence. Clark is the party who killed Mr. Howell’s father during the war, hence the action on the part of an affectionate son. There is we hear, a slight chance of Clark’s recovery <sup>42</sup>

Obviously Clark did recover, and he and his gang continued their spree of murder and theft, which culminated in the murders on the Wilson Plantation the night of April 30, 1865. Several period sources chronicled these murders, including the *Nashville Dispatch* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

On the night of April 30, 1865, Tom and between five and thirty gang members (the sources vary) raided the plantation of the elderly John S. Wilson (which in 1872 became the community of St. Florian, settled by German Catholic colonists from various Northern states).<sup>43</sup>

According to Pruitt, there were twenty “buggers” in the raiding party; Jill Garrett, in her *History of Lauderdale County, Alabama*, says there were four, all members of “the Thrasher party that began preying on the citizens of Lauderdale County after Roddey’s Cavalry was forced out of the valley.”<sup>44</sup> In his autobiography *Father of the Blues* W. C. Handy says there were three, and that all three were later hanged.<sup>45</sup> Though it contains some errors I have relied upon the *Dispatch*’s account, as it is the earliest written account of these murders.

The *Nashville Dispatch* of May 13, 1865, reported Tom Clark’s gang’s raid on the Wilson plantation. It began by stating:

We have the particulars of a horrible massacre at the residence of Mr. John Wilson near Baily’s [sic] Springs Alabama . . . It appears that five men called at the residence of Mr. Wilson, six miles from Florence after night and demanded admittance, which was refused them. The inmates of the house were an old man upwards of 75 years of age, Harvey Wilson [it was actually Matthew Wilson], his nephew, and young [Turner Saunders “Coonie”] Foster, son of Judge Foster of this city, who were armed and prepared to defend themselves.<sup>46</sup>

The *Dispatch* continued by saying:

The men outside the house then stated that they were soldiers from Eastport [MS] who had been out on a scout and were returning, tired and hungry. Upon this Mr. Wilson ordered that they be admitted. As soon as the door was open, they sprang in and disarmed the inmates. They then demanded of Mr. Wilson to tell where his money was, which he refused to do. They threatened to kill him if he did not tell. He replied that they could easily do that and it would make but little difference as he had but a short time to live. Mr. Wilson, still refusing to tell where his money was, was severely beaten by a portion of the men, the others having secured young Wilson and Foster. Still refusing they stripped him and laid him upon a lot of books which they had torn up and thrown upon the hearth. They then set fire to the paper which burned the old man severely but they still failed to extort from him where his money was. After considerable importunity from these young men, he told them they would find \$160 in silver under the front steps.

Those engaged in torturing him then went out and found the money as directed. Coming in they found the old man dying. The leader of the gang then deliberately shot young Wilson through the breast, killing him dead. He then aimed at young Foster and just as his pistol fired, the latter made a motion of the body which saved his life, the ball having entered and passed through his left arm and lodging in the body; from which it was subsequently extracted. Young Foster fell on his face and feigned death, having the presence of mind enough to know that that was his only hope of escape with his life.<sup>47</sup>

Foster, in the meantime, had been discovered the next morning in a shed where he had crawled to hide and was taken to his relative Mr. McAlister’s. According to the *Dispatch*, Tom and the gang returned to the Wilson place that night and asked the slaves if there were any survivors, to which the slaves replied

that only Foster had survived. The gang trailed him to the McAlisters', actually firing shots into the window of the house, barely missing Mrs. McAlister. The *Dispatch* closed its report by saying "We are gratified to learn that no ladies were killed or injured at Mr. Wilson's."

Other sources reporting the Wilson raid are the diary of Maj. John W. Green of the 1<sup>st</sup> KY, Inf, CSA, the famous "Orphan Brigade," who was marching through Lauderdale County on his way home at the time, whose diary was later edited and published by A. D. Kirwan as *Johnny Green of the Orphan Brigade*. Green's account differs only in certain small details from the others, though he mentions the Wilson house being set on fire by the outlaws; WC Handy's 1941 autobiography *Father of the Blues* also refers to the Wilson murders, though as Handy tells the story, there were only three outlaws and they were all later hung five miles outside of Florence.<sup>48</sup> In *Father of the Blues* Handy also tells us that his grandfather Christopher Brewer, a former slave who remained on the plantation after the war, was shot by the outlaws for refusing to tell where Wilson's money was hidden, yet survived, and that Brewer's first wife was hit over the head by one of the men with a gun.<sup>49</sup> Brewer later went to Nashville and informed Foster where the money was hidden, but sources vary as to exactly how much money Foster retrieved. Pruitt says it was \$9,000 in gold however the *Florence Times* of October 3, 1902 reporting that Turner Saunders Foster was in town for a visit, stated that in 1868 Foster retrieved "\$32,000," an obvious misprint, but did the paper mean \$32.00, \$320.00, or \$3,200?<sup>50</sup>

Elizabeth Saunders Blair Stubbs, on p. 353 of her "Notes and Genealogies" which forms Part II of James E. Saunders' 1899 (published posthumously) *Early Settlers of Alabama*, has another Wilson relative, Randolph Foster, "three times hung up and let down by them" [the Tories and Federals] in order to convince him to tell where his grandfather's money was hidden, yet according to Mrs. Stubbs, he too refused to talk. Mrs. Stubbs also then has Wilson, his grandson and nephew shot, the house set alight, and later, the outlaws executed.

Following their dastardly raid on the Wilson plantation Clark's gang was reported in several sources to have ridden brazenly into Florence and roughed up several citizens, again looking for money. Some of the residents they harassed and tortured were Jewish merchants Simon Forcht and Alexander Falk, Dr. James T. Hargraves, Mr. McAlester, James Hancock, English druggist Joseph Milner, William Henry Wade, "and others." According to Wade Pruitt, Joseph Milner, who had salt literally rubbed into his wounds, allegedly carried the scars of his beating until the day he died. According to Pruitt, upon discovering that Dr. Hargraves had fled, the outlaws burned his house "just for the hell of it."<sup>51</sup> Private John Green related that the gang threatened to burn Forcht's store if he made any noise, then threw a rope around his neck and threatened him with hanging until he gave them \$1500. Green also stated that the outlaws robbed "every rich man in Florence," including John McAlester's store. McAlester's house was also a target but, McAlester's slave "Uncle" Simon warned him in advance that the gang was coming, McAlester stuffed all his money into his pockets and rushed off to Cypress Swamp to hide it. From there he intended to head for Decatur where there was a Union garrison, to appeal for protection. When the outlaws ransacked the McAlester house they found nothing because a slave named "Aunt" Polly had hidden the silverware in her trunk underneath her clothes.<sup>52</sup>

As Mrs. Stubbs wrote, two of Clark's gang were executed for their part in the Wilson murders. Florence residents John Campbell and Charles Oliver, both of Co. I, 2<sup>nd</sup> TN Mtd Inf, USA, were captured, taken to Florence, tried by Judge Vincent M. Benham, found guilty, and then executed by Federal firing squad.

In its August, 22, 1865 issue the *Chicago Tribune* reported that “the Federal troops succeeded in capturing two men [Campbell and Oliver], who, upon being recognized by young Foster, were shot.”<sup>53</sup> However the *Nashville Dispatch*’s correspondent “Duke,” in that paper’s May 18, 1865 issue reported that Capt. John H. Riggs of the 8<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry, USA had captured the two men though it was actually Capt. Risdan D. DeFord of Co H, 6<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Cavalry, USA who captured them.<sup>54</sup> Both men were from well-respected families; Campbell’s parents were Garrick and Anne Campbell, owners of the Campbell House Hotel (the old Marshall House Hotel) on Court Street near the site of Florence’s first court house while Oliver’s parents were Daniel and Jane R. Oliver. Daniel Oliver was an early Florence surveyor and teacher at Florence’s Preparatory Academy.<sup>55</sup> Duke asserted that Campbell’s family “is said to be one of the first in the place, though of secesh proclivities. Oliver lives in the vicinity of Florence and is also of respectable parents.” Before joining the 2<sup>nd</sup> TN Mtd Inf, Duke wrote, both men had deserted the Confederate Army (no CSA service records have been located for either Campbell or Oliver). According to Duke, the testimony produced at their trial “showed them to be the most hardened villains, and cold blooded murderers on God’s footstool. Not only did they commit murder for the sake of plunder, but for personal gratification. Several instances were brought up in which they had ravished defenseless women, knocking them down in the most brutal manner if they resisted.” One of these women, a “bright mulatto girl, almost white,” testified that before raping her, Oliver had knocked her down with the butt of his pistol.

Duke tells us that the two men were found guilty and executed one mile outside Florence on the Military Road and then buried by a burial detail from Florence. Before their execution, seeing their fate was sealed, the two men confessed to being with Clark’s gang the night of the Wilson murders but insisted that they had had no part in them.<sup>56</sup>

According to Duke, shortly thereafter, two other outlaws, Francis Gibson and Tom Brydges were also apprehended and killed by the Union Army under Capt. Riggs (these men too may have been captured by DeFord and not Riggs). Riggs then departed, leaving Lt. Col. W. L. Buck and a force of 200 men to clean out the rest of the outlaws.

In a 1902 account published in the *Florence Herald* Capt. Risdan D. DeFord, a former resident of Florence, corrected certain errors from an earlier newspaper article. He recalled how he had been informed by Elias Thrasher’s father when passing the Thrasher farm that two of Clark’s gang, Campbell and Oliver, had just passed by his place with spoils from their raid on the Wilson Plantation headed for Oliver’s house on Mobile Street in Florence. So Capt. DeFord and his men, who were on their way to Eastport with a series of dispatches, instead headed into Florence, where they tricked Oliver’s mother into calling him out (by blowing a trumpet, at which signal Oliver and Campbell had prearranged to come out of hiding).<sup>57</sup> Thus were John Campbell and Charles Oliver caught, tried and executed for their part in the Wilson murders.

Wade Pruitt states that after the war Tom Clark “is said to have taken refuge in Jackson County, Alabama, with a family of Southern sympathizers, posing as a C.S.A. agent hiding from the Federals.” Yet for this, too, there is no historical documentation. We do not know what Clark was up to between May, 1865 and September 5, 1872, only that he was shot by Lee Howell in October of 1866 and according to the

*Lauderdale Times* of Tuesday, August 13, 1872, on Sunday, August 11, Clark had been incarcerated in the Lauderdale County jail, having been arrested the previous week in Jackson County and extradited to Lauderdale. Clark was charged in separate indictments with murder, assault with intent to murder, fornication and adultery.<sup>58</sup>

Pruitt, unaware of Tom's arrest in August of 1872, has Tom arrested with two thieves near Gravelly Springs on September 4, 1872, though he does quote verbatim the *Lauderdale Times*' account of the lynching which clearly states that only two outlaws were arrested by city marshal William Edward Blair's posse.<sup>59</sup> However as already stated, Clark was already languishing in jail when Ed Blair's posse set out to track down the two thieves.

The *Lauderdale Times Extra!* of September 5, which was reprinted on September 10, chronicled the arrest of the two thieves and their subsequent lynching. Other papers chronicled the lynching over the years, among them the *Tuscumbia North Alabamian* of September 5, 1872, the *Athens Post* of September 13, 1872, the *Charleston Daily News* of September 11, 1872 (which reprinted the *Lauderdale Times*' account verbatim), the *Florence Herald* of Thursday, December 8, 1892, and the *Florence Times* of Saturday, December 10, 1892, and TS Fedore's biographical sketch of Tom in the *Florence Times* of Saturday, March 4, 1893, however, while relying upon these papers for certain peripheral details I have relied upon the *Lauderdale Times* September 10, 1872 reprint of its September 5 extra for the principal details of this incident.

It seems that a man from Athens came to Lauderdale County on Tuesday, September 3, warning Florentines of a series of robberies recently committed there, and that the robbers were last seen headed for Florence. However little heed was paid to this report until "two men were seen on the streets driving a sorrel mare to a buggy" at "half-past two o'clock" that night.<sup>60</sup> The buggy was described by the *Florence Herald* in 1892 as being "of the newest and handsomest pattern. Fleet horses, covered with gold-mounted harness drew them thither and fine wine and good cigars helped them beguile the hours en route."<sup>61</sup> The next morning it was discovered that the houses of James Hancock, Judge Thomas T. Allington, and Robert Tennant Simpson had been robbed during the night, watches being stolen from Allington and Simpson.<sup>62</sup> According to the *Herald's* 1892 account of the incident, the jail was also robbed: "Arriving in the city, they hitched their team and went immediately to the jail where they helped themselves to the best the larder afforded. Our present efficient city marshal, Hope Morrison, was jailor at that time, and so quiet were the visitors that he knew nothing of their being there until the next morning." The *Herald* said that in all a dozen or more houses were visited by the thieves, whereas the *Lauderdale Times* in 1872 only mentioned three. According to the *Herald* "nearly every one in Florence was robbed."<sup>63</sup>

The next morning, September 4, a posse comprised of William Barks, William Joiner, and W. B. Warson was put together by city marshal Ed Blair, which tracked the two outlaws to Mr. David Pettipool's near Gravelly Springs, about twenty miles west of Florence. The outlaws, "elegantly dressed" (possibly in stolen suits), had stopped for lunch and seeing that they were outnumbered, offered no resistance and gave over their weapons when Marshal Blair demanded their surrender. A search of the two men revealed nothing however a breastpin was noticed sticking out of the lining of the buggy top. The posse found eight watches, a handful of breastpins, and some \$365 in the buggy top. Upon opening a drummer's (traveling salesman's) satchel in the buggy, they found "files, saws, and other burglarious instruments . . . amongst which was found a murderous slingshot."<sup>64</sup>

The two outlaws were placed in the buggy and driven back to Florence, with Blair and his intrepid deputies walking behind and in front of the buggy. All the while the outlaws complained incessantly about the dust and heat. The odd-looking party was joined just above Gravelly Springs by an unnamed political candidate who was canvassing the county and soon after by the city marshal of Athens and his companion. The whole city of Florence had turned out by the time the posse returned and upon reaching Florence the two desperadoes were incarcerated in the county jail on Pine Street. Fearing trouble, Sheriff Samuel Hudson deputized eight extra men to help stand guard. Wade Pruitt indicates that his great-uncle Judge Joe Henry Chisholm was one of these eight deputies however the *Times* didn't name them.<sup>65</sup> And sure enough, about midnight, a "great crowd" rushed the jail and demanded the keys to the cells however the jailor refused to hand them over and "fired on the mob," which returned fire and overpowered the deputies. The crowd forced open the cell doors, and then Clark and the two men were "taken out and carried immediately to an adjoining square, and hanged by the neck until dead."<sup>66</sup> That lot was behind the Masonic Lodge hall, and as late as 1928 the tree they hung from was still standing.<sup>67</sup>

One of the two thieves reportedly asked that his share of the \$365 be given to his sister in Indianapolis; according to the *Lauderdale Times*, "The younger robber marched up boldly to the tree and requested the executioners to hold him up and then drop him, instead of drawing him up." The *Times* reported that this same man attempted to escape but was shot by some person unknown, recaptured and hung with the others. Reportedly, Tom Clark's prayers were "agonizing, and were heard by the citizens living near." Pruitt states that Clark was not allowed the benefit of clergy before he was hung but actually Rev. Joel Whitten, the venerable pastor of First Methodist Church, was roused from sleep to pray with Tom. According to a biographical sketch of Whitten, published in December of 1897 in the *Florence Times*, the good Reverend "feared his prayers for this desperado were not satisfactory, so hardened had he become in crime."<sup>68</sup>

At daybreak that morning, the bodies of three men were discovered hanging from the tree. One was identified as Tom Clark, "one was a short, stalwart man, with the initials F. E. and a star, in Indian [sic] Ink, on his right arm, and two hearts pierced by an arrow on his left hand." The other man was "supposed to be \_\_\_ Gibson." Interestingly, the *Florence Herald* in December of 1892 recorded the name of one of the two lynched thieves as "Mat Dudley."<sup>69</sup> Dr. Hannum, upon examining the thief who had tried to escape and was shot, gave it as his professional medical opinion that this man would've died from his gunshot wound. Coroner Ed Brown empanelled a coroner's jury to hold inquests on the three men, with the verdict returned of "death on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst., by strangulation by hanging at the hands of persons unknown."<sup>70</sup>

The *Tuscumbia North Alabamian*, reporting on the crime in its September 5, 1872 issue was clear in its sentiments: "'He that kills by the sword shall die by the sword.' – They deserved death, but we regret the means."<sup>71</sup> The *Lauderdale Times* was equally clear how it felt:

We hope that people at a distance will not accuse our citizens of lawlessness for this act. We are as lawabiding [sic] as any people in the land; and only, when driven by the highest law of nature's God, self preservation, would our community take the law in their own hands and mete out to these murderers and robbers, the just punishment for their enormous crimes. If ever Mob Law

was justifiable, it was in this instance. Tom Clark, who boasted that he had murdered, in cold blood, sixteen men, deserved hanging sixteen times over. . . This was no Ku-Klux affair, but simply the legitimate effect of an indignant and outraged public feeling. Fearfully and quickly has the hand of retribution overtaken them, but it was only justice asserting her claims upon three of the most heartless villains that ever cursed the world.

We are opposed to mob law, but these men met a death richly deserved, and over their fate we shed no tears.<sup>72</sup>

On October 11, 1872 Grand Jury foreman EB Thompson wrote a grand jury report which was published in the *Lauderdale Times* of October 22. In his report Thompson stated that:

. . . they have used all possible means to ascertain who were engaged in the mob which broke open the jail in Florence, on the night of the -- day of September, 1872, and took therefrom three prisoners, and hung them. They have examined with regard to this melancholy tragedy, the most trustworthy and substantial citizens. It seems that all persons, not parties in the mob, were warned off, and not allowed to come near enough to recognize or identify the persons engaged. Therefore, although they have most diligently inquired into the matter, as sworn to do, they have failed to obtain information or testimony which would enable them to find a true bill against any one of the parties. The Grand Jury take this occasion to express their emphatic disapprobation of all lawlessness. They regret that such an affair should have occurred in this county.<sup>73</sup>

The Circuit Court Minute Docket Book for 1870-1875 records that on November 14, 1872, the charges against Clark which were one count of murder, one count of assault with intent to murder, and two counts of adultery and fornication were abated, due to the death of the defendant.<sup>74</sup> A county treasurer's report published in the *Florence Times-Journal* of February 28, 1873, recorded that on November 19, 1872 Ed Brown had been paid \$7.75 apiece for holding coroner's inquests on the bodies of the three lynched men.<sup>75</sup>

The week of September 13, 1872, Lauderdale County Sheriff Samuel Hudson received a telegram from D F Fora, Sheriff of Randolph County, Indiana. Sheriff Fora stated that he had read in the papers an account of the lynching of the three outlaws in Florence. Fora asked Hudson for physical descriptions of the three men as he had had a jailbreak back in May and he thought his escaped prisoners might be the men lynched in Florence. The *Times* stated that the description of Fora's escaped prisoners pretty well suited the lynched men in Florence. It stated that it heard of these burglars first at Glasgow and Scottsville, Kentucky, then at Lebanon, Nashville, Columbia, Pulaski and Fayetteville Tenn., then at Athens and Florence.<sup>76</sup> Nothing more is known of Sheriff Fora's attempts to identify his escaped prisoners as the lynched Florence outlaws, and I am not certain that his outlaws actually were the three men lynched in Florence.

There is one final episode, this one really strange, connected with the lynching of Tom Clark and the two thieves. In a *North Alabamian* article from January, 1873, the paper reported that it had been "informed by a gentleman from Franklin county, that a man styling himself C. C. Kelly, and who professes to be a brother of one of the desperadoes who were hanged at Florence, not long since, is perambulating the country, and has threatened dire vengeance against the young men of Florence," asserting boldly that

“they had better look to their water buckets.” The *North Alabamian* responded by saying that “although there is little danger in braggarts, yet one of such depravity, as this man, will do to be watched.”<sup>77</sup> Apparently the *North Alabamian* was correct in its assessment, as nothing further was heard from this “braggart.”

Thus ended the life of Thomas Marion Clark. But his story doesn't end there. Tales of Tom survived him beyond the grave. According to *Bugger Saga* the two thieves lynched with Tom were buried on Sweetwater Street, near Mobile Street, across from the city cemetery.<sup>78</sup> However the *Lauderdale Times* reported in its 1872 account of the lynching that Mayor Neander H. Rice, due to public outrage at the crimes of these men by the ladies of Florence and certain members of the black community, ordered the bodies buried in “one of the old fields near our town.” Yet according to *Bugger Saga*, “Clark had always boasted that ‘no one ever ran over him’ so they buried him in the middle of East Tennessee Street in front of the gate to the City Cemetery so everyone could run over him.”<sup>79</sup> The footnote Pruitt gave for this assertion was the testimony of his aunt, Mrs. Lizzie D. Liles from 1934. This is significant because this statement by Mrs. Liles is the earliest evidence I can find that Tom was ever buried underneath East Tennessee Street. It is significant that *none* of the period records of the lynching nor any of the half-dozen or so later accounts of it written before *Bugger Saga* reference a burial under the street. Surely such a significant fact would warrant at least one reference? And yet there is none until the 1934 statement attributed to Mrs. Liles. Add to this the fact that East Tennessee Street probably didn't even extend as far as the City Cemetery. The main entrance in 1872, as it is now, was the Alabama Street entrance (near the Animal Shelter).

Descendants of Tom Clark are equally adamant that he was never buried underneath East Tennessee Street. The late Lewis Patrick, a grandson of Tom's youngest daughter Lizzie Clark Wilson, told me that Clark/Wilson family folklore holds that Tom actually was buried in a deserted field near Florence, which Lewis surmised might have been Maxwell Hill, which is next to the overpass on Royal Avenue and runs alongside Florence Boulevard, where the old National Guard Armory used to be, and which is now being converted into a park by the city. However Lewis also said stories were told in the Clark/Wilson families that Tom's two sons, fearing lest the burial spot of their father become known, had his corpse dug up and reburied in an unmarked plot in Oakwood Cemetery in Tuscumbia. Obviously there is no documentation for this, either and Lewis always stressed that fact.

In September of 1991, the City of Florence Historical Board erected a historical marker on East Tennessee Street, just outside the City Cemetery which chronicles the legend of Tom Clark. The marker's text reads:

“Mountain” Tom Clark Hanged September 4, 1872

This notorious outlaw gang leader who boasted that no one would ever run over Tom Clark lies buried near the center of Tennessee Street where now all who pass by do run over him. In 1872, Clark, who terrorized helpless citizens during the Civil War, confessed to at least nineteen murders, including a child, and was hanged with two companions.

Although graves were already dug in a nearby field, outraged townspeople interred Clark beneath Tennessee Street thus bringing his boast to naught.<sup>80</sup>

Despite there being no reliable evidence for Tom's burial beneath East Tennessee Street, the presence of this historical marker will no doubt ensure that most locals will simply take for granted that he is. And perhaps at the end of the day that's okay. After all, as local historian Harry Wallace comments, for Tom to be buried beneath Tennessee Street would be poetic Southern justice.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bugger Saga: The Civil War Story of Guerilla and Bushwhacker Warfare in Lauderdale County, Alabama and Southern Middle Tennessee* (P-Vine Press, Columbia, TN; 1976).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p. 186. Commenting on *Bugger Saga* Prof. Margaret Storey, editor of Capt. Thomas J. Cypert's memoirs, *Tried Men and True or Union Life in Dixie*, writes: "Though there are element of the book that are useful, and at times I have relied on *Bugger Saga* to contextualize Cypert's accounts, it is often sensationalized and badly researched."

<sup>3</sup> "Clark, Thos. to Sarah Bradford, 9-25-1847," Byron and Barbara Sistler, *Early Middle Tennessee Marriages, Vol. I, Grooms*, p. 103. The Florence-Lauderdale Public Library Local History Dept. has an undocumented copy of the original marriage obtained by researcher Charlotte Borden.

<sup>4</sup> 1830 US census, Jackson County, AL, p. 84, household of Henry Clark; 1840 US census, Jackson County, AL, p. 50, household of Henry Clark; US census, 1850, Jackson County, AL (T3SR5W), pp. 95b-96A, household of Henry Clark.

<sup>5</sup> TS Fedore, "Outlaw Tom Clark: History of War-Time Terror in North Alabama; His Past Exploits, Capture and Hanging—A Correct Write-up of this Fiend," in *Florence Times*, Saturday, Mach 4, 1893, p. 1 (orig. pub. in the *Sheffield Reaper*).

<sup>6</sup> This other Thomas Clark (b. 1822 in TN) whose wife was Lucinda (b. 1827), is buried in the Piney Grove Cemetery, just off Chisholm Hwy near Wilson School with his wife, both marked with hand-carved stones with no birth/death dates (I haven't found death records for either of the couple, only for some of their children). I have also never heard him referred to as "Chinubbee" though I suppose t's possible that he was. Like the outlaw Tom, this Thomas Clark still has descendants living in Lauderdale County. I knew some of them as a kid.

<sup>7</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 92.

<sup>8</sup> 1850 US census, Jackson County, AL, p. 234 B; 1860 US census, Lauderdale County, AL, p. 99 A-99B; Undocumented ancestry chart written by Clark descendent the late Lewis Patrick, in the Tom Clark historical vertical file in the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library, Local History Dept.

<sup>9</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 94. A 21 year old Martha Kirkland has been located in the 1860 Lauderdale County census in the household of 59 year-old Mary Kirkland, the widow of Joseph Kirkland however nothing more is known of this Martha Kirkland at present.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 92.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory A. Boyd, *Family Maps of Lauderdale County, Alabama*, Map Group 6, Township 1-S Range 11-W (Huntsville), pp. 101; 106-107.

<sup>12</sup> US agricultural census, 1860, Lauderdale County, AL, page nos. illegible, farms of Henry and Thomas Clark.

<sup>13</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 92.

<sup>14</sup> Alabama state census, 1866, Lauderdale County (T1SR11W), no pagination, households of Thos. and Murphy Clark. Available on Ancestry.com.

<sup>15</sup> 1870 US census, Lauderdale County, AL (Greenhill PO), p. 447 A, household of Nancy Clark.

<sup>16</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 100; US census 1880, Madison County (Beat 16), p. 254 D, household of Murphy Clark.

<sup>17</sup> See these photos on display in the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library Local History/Genealogy Dept. display case on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The photo of Ambrose and John W. was given to the Library by Clark descendant Leon Borden and wife Charlotte. The photo of Lizzie Clark Wilson was donated to the Library by Clark family descendant the late Mr. Lewis Patrick.

<sup>18</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 92.

<sup>19</sup> US census, 1870, Lawrence Co. ,AL (Township 5 Range 9, Wolf Springs), p. 182, household of Sarah Clark

<sup>20</sup> "Killed by Guerillas," *Chicago Tribune*, September 24, 1863, no pagination given.

<sup>21</sup> Service records for Clark, Thomas M., Co. B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tenn. Mtd. Inf., USA and Clark, Dennis, Co. C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tenn. Mtd. Inf., USA, downloaded from Footnote.com, now Fold3 on Nov. 5, 2010, in the Tom Clark file in the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library Local History Dept.

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- <sup>22</sup> “Captain DeFord Tells of His Connection with War-Time Incidents,” *Florence Herald*, Friday, July 25, 1902, p. 1.
- <sup>23</sup> Susan Lawrence Davis, *Authentic History of the Ku Klux Klan* (American Library Service, New York; 1924), pp. 1510-152.
- <sup>24</sup> Civil War Centennial Commission, Nashville, TN, *Tennesseans in the Civil War: A Military History of Confederate and Union Units with Available Rosters of Personnel, Part I*, p. 355.
- <sup>25</sup> *Tried Men and True or Union Life in Dixie* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press), 2011.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.
- <sup>27</sup> No. 5216, Claim of Elias Thrasher of Lauderdale County, Ala., Southern Claims Commission file downloaded from Footnote.com now Fold3.
- <sup>28</sup> “Thrasher, Elias, Co. B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tenn. Mtd. Inf.” Service records downloaded Sept. 28, 2011 from Footnote.com, now Fold3, in the Thrasher file in the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library Local History Dept.
- <sup>29</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume 32, p. 460.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>31</sup> Report of Capt. Lot Abraham, *War the Rebellion*, Series 1, Volume 49, Part 1, “Reports,” pp. 73-74. So far no evidence of Bishop Clark’s involvement in Tom’s gang has been found, nor have servive records for him been found.
- <sup>32</sup> Margaret Storey, *Tried Men and True or Union Life in Dixie*, pp. 12; 134.
- <sup>33</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 20.
- <sup>34</sup> US census, 1850, Lauderdale County (the Town of Florence), p. 291 B household of Garrett Campbell.
- <sup>35</sup> Thrasher apparently did have a volatile temper, as several times in the 1850s he was arrested and charged with “assault with intent to murder” (could this be a veiled reference to dueling?), was arrested and charged for carrying a concealed pistol and in April of 1874 was involved in a fisticuff with Florence Mayor Wm. Brock. Thrasher struck Brock because he believed Brock had fined him \$10 in court that morning simply because he didn’t like Thrasher’s politics. So perhaps temperamentally Thrasher was capable of committing the crimes attributed to Tom Clark and his gang however that is a long way from proving he actually was a member of the gang. As stated above, the fact that two Official Record reports state that Tom and his gang were under Thrasher’s command has been enough to inextricably link him to the gang.
- <sup>36</sup> “Old Citizen Gone,” *Florence Times*, Friday, December 21, 1900, p. 1.
- <sup>37</sup> “Yankee Atrocities in North Alabama,” the *Montgomery Weekly Advertiser*, Wednesday, March 30, 1864, p. 1.
- <sup>38</sup> Davis, *Authentic History of the Ku Klux Klan*, pp. 151-152.
- <sup>39</sup> “A Reminiscence: A Hanging Bee in Florence Years Ago,” *Florence Herald*, Saturday, December 10, 1892, p. 1.
- <sup>40</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 99.
- <sup>41</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, pp. 17 and 19.
- <sup>42</sup> “Shooting Affair,” *Florence Journal*, Thursday, November 1, 1866, p. 3. On microfilm at Collier Library on the University of North Alabama Campus.
- <sup>43</sup> In 1871 Wilson’s heirs sold this property to a group of Northern German colonists who founded a community known as St. Florian.
- <sup>44</sup> Jill K. Garrett, *History of Lauderdale County, Alabama*, (privately published circa. 1967. No pub. data) p. 111.
- <sup>45</sup> W C Handy, *Father of the Blues*, (the Macmillan Company: New York, 1941) pp. 3-4. Handy, writing 76 years later, may be confusing the execution of Clark gang members Oliver and Campbell in May of 1865 for their part in the Wilson and other murders with the 1872 execution of Tom and the two anonymous thieves.
- <sup>46</sup> Quoted in Jill K. Garrett’s *History of Florence, Alabama*, pp. 50-51.
- <sup>47</sup> “The Massacre at Baily’s [sic] Springs, Alabama,” the *Nashville Dispatch*, May 13, 1865, quoted in Jill K. Garrett’s *A History of Florence, Alabama*, pp. 50-51.
- <sup>48</sup> *Johnny Green of the Orphan Brigade: The Journal of a Confederate Soldier*, ed. by AW Kirwan, p. 203; W C Handy, *Father of the Blues*, (the Macmillan Company: New York, 1941) pp. 3-4.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 3-4;
- <sup>50</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 94, *Florence Times*, Friday, October 3, 1902, p. 1, “Local News Notes.”
- <sup>51</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 96.
- <sup>52</sup> *Johnny Green of the Orphan Brigade: The Journal of a Confederate Soldier*, ed. by AW Kirwan, pp. 201-203.
- <sup>53</sup> Account of the Wilson raid in “The News,” from *The Chicago Tribune*, August 22, 1865, p. 1.
- <sup>54</sup> Garrett, *History of Florence, Alabama*, pp. 50-51.
- <sup>55</sup> G. Campbell’s Advertisement for the Marshall House, *Florence Gazette*, Saturday, October 6, 1855, p. 2.

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- <sup>56</sup> Garrett, *History of Florence, Alabama*, p. 52.
- <sup>57</sup> "Captain DeFord Tells of His Connection with War-Time Incidents," *Florence Herald*, Friday, July 25, 1902, p. 1.
- <sup>58</sup> Tom Clark's arrest notice from the *Lauderdale Times*, Tuesday, August 13, 1872, p. 3.
- <sup>59</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 90.
- <sup>60</sup> "Great Excitement in Florence. Summary Punishment Visited Upon the Guilty! Crime and Punishment. Three Men Hung on One Tree! Thos. Clark, the Notorious Outlaw, Executed! Robbers Captured and Hung by Outraged Citizens!" *Lauderdale Times*, Tuesday, September 10, 1872, p. 2. Subsequent accounts have Tom and the two outlaws lynched the night of Sept. 4, however it was technically September 5, as the mob stormed the jail at midnight.
- <sup>61</sup> "A Bit of History," the *Florence Herald*, Thursday, December 8, 1892, p. 2.
- <sup>62</sup> "Great Excitement in Florence," *Lauderdale Times*, Tuesday, September 10, 1872.
- <sup>63</sup> "A Bit of History," the *Florence Herald*, Thursday, December 8, 1892, p. 2.
- <sup>64</sup> "Great Excitement in Florence," *Lauderdale Times*, Tuesday, September 10, 1872.
- <sup>65</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 98.
- <sup>66</sup> "Great Excitement in Florence," *Lauderdale Times*, Tuesday, September 10, 1872.
- <sup>67</sup> A *Florence Herald* article of Friday, March 30, 1928 titled "Historic Trees in and Around Florence," stated that "three tress on [the] corner of Court and Tombigbee are gone. In the seventies, three men, two robbers and house-breakers and 'Tom' Clarke [sic], a noted Tory were hung from these tress by a mob. At that time the old Masonic Hall was on a part of the lot, and the trees stood on the back of the lot." The *Lauderdale Times* September 10, 1872 report of the lynching states that "the three were suspended from a tree, which stands in the rear of the site of the old Masonic Lodge."
- <sup>68</sup> Rev. L. F. Whitten, "Rev. Joel W. Whitten," *Florence Times*, Friday, December 24, 1897, p. 1.
- <sup>69</sup> "Great Excitement in Florence," *Lauderdale Times*, Tuesday, September 10, 1872. "A Bit of History," the *Florence Herald*, Thursday, December 8, 1892, p. 1.
- <sup>70</sup> "Great Excitement in Florence," *Lauderdale Times*, Tuesday, September 10, 1872.
- <sup>71</sup> "Hanging of Three Desperadoes," *North Alabamian*, September 5, 1872, p. 2.
- <sup>72</sup> "Great Excitement in Florence," *Lauderdale Times*, Tuesday, September 10, 1872.
- <sup>73</sup> "Grand Jury Report," *Lauderdale Times*, October 22, 1872, p. 2.
- <sup>74</sup> Lauderdale County, Alabama Minute Docket G, Circuit Court 1870-1875, p. 431, nos. 1711, 1731, 1732 and 1787 Original volumes at the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library.
- <sup>75</sup> "Thos. R. Powers, County Treasurer in Account with Lauderdale County," *Florence Times-Journal*, Wednesday, February 28, 1873, p. 2.
- <sup>76</sup> Telegram of Sheriff DF For a to Sheriff Samuel Hudson, dated Sept. 13, 1872, from the *Lauderdale Times*, September 17, 1872, p. 2.
- <sup>77</sup> "Look Out for Him," *North Alabamian*, January 9, 1873.
- <sup>78</sup> Pruitt, *Bugger Saga*, p. 100. He wrote that in 1934 "a long, green house stood over their graves."
- <sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p. 100.
- <sup>80</sup> Terry Pace, "Florence still runs over Clark," *Times Daily*, Sunday, September 8, 1991, p. 1 E.