

The Life of AUGUSTUS LEVAN WITHERINGTON

"UNCLE GUS"

Born: 31 December 1818

Feliciana Parish, Louisiana

Early Years Spent At

Fork Sepulga in Conecuh County, Alabama

Migrated to Champagnolle in Union County, Arkansas about 1847

Murdered: 27 March 1869

Moro Bay, Bradley County, Arkansas

Buried New London Cemetery, Union County, Arkansas

Information Developed by

WILLIAM R. KING, JR.

3rd Great Grand-Nephew of 'Gus' Witherington

3rd Great-Grandson of John Witherington, the Older Brother of 'Gus'

AUGUSTUS LEVAN WITHERINGTON

Of Feliciana Parish, LA, Conecuh County, AL, Union & Bradley Counties, AR

by Bill King

AUGUSTUS LEVAN WITHERINGTON was born December 31, 1818 in Feliciana Parish, Orleans Territory. Gus was murdered on March 27, 1869 at Moro Bay, Bradley CO, AR and is buried at New London Cemetery in Union County. He was the youngest son of **WILLIAM WITHERINGTON, JR.** and **SARAH 'SALLY' STANLEY**. Both his mother and father were born in Darlington District, SC and the family migrated to Feliciana Parish about 1809. In 1813, William Witherington, Jr. received an Ensign's Commission in the 17th Regiment of the Mississippi Territory Militia, during the War of 1812. Family tales indicate that both he and his oldest son, Daniel, fought with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans. Daniel had served as a young Private in the Louisiana Militia. The family later moved to Conecuh County, AL about 1819, while Gus was still a very young child.

About 1847, Gus and two of his older brothers, **John** and **James** migrated to Southern Arkansas from Conecuh County, Alabama. Gus and James settled in Union County, living near the communities of Champagnolle and Old Union quite near the Ouachita River. Gus later operated the ferry crossing at Pigeon Hill in Union County, and also owned a small plantation of 365 Acres just across the Ouachita River in Bradley County. He called his plantation Mount Vernon.

Older brother **John**, and his wife, **MARY ELLIS**, settled a few miles north of the Ouachita River near the early community of Artesian in Ouachita County (now a part of Calhoun County). His brother **James** was killed in a hunting accident in 1849 there in Union County and is buried at Wesley Chapel Cemetery, located five miles east of El Dorado near Old Union.

Gus Witherington's first marriage was to **MARTHA K. LOVETT** in February 1848 in Union County, AR. Martha was the daughter of **THOMAS LOVETT**. Gus and Martha had six known children: **Mary** (who married T.J. Smith); **Sarah** (who married Lucius A. Turner); **Dick** (who died as a young boy at age 5); **Arlina** (No info available); and **'Willie' B.** (No info available).

Following Martha's death on October 30, 1857 (immediately following the birth of 'Willie'), Gus married **MARY EMMA FINCH** on January 13, 1859 in El Dorado, Union CO, AR. Mary Emma was the daughter of **JOSEPH FINCH** and **EMMA KRESS**. Mary Emma was born in 1838 in Ontario, Canada. Mary Emma bore Gus four additional children: **Henry Stuart** (no information available); **Emma Evalyon** (married Edmund Pendelton Harrison, Sr. in Union County); **Madeleine Augusta** (married Dr. Thomas Clemens Hart in Pine Bluff); and **Hattie May** (married Frank G. Price).

The following pages will provide the reader with many of the activities of 'Uncle Gus' throughout his life in Conecuh County, Alabama and Union & Bradley Counties in Southern Arkansas. His life was one of early hardship, but it is quite apparent that Gus Witherington was a man of large size, great strength and capacity, and with an adventurous nature, a driving ambition and a solid work ethic.

In June 1998, following the annual Witherington Family Reunion at Moro Bay State Park, my wife and I visited the New London Cemetery in Union County, a few miles south of Moro Bay where 'Uncle Gus' was murdered in 1869. We spent a few quiet and reflective moments at his gravesite. I commented to my wife that I wished that I could have known 'Uncle Gus' personally as I knew that I would have enjoyed sitting with him and hearing the many interesting stories of his life experiences. "Uncle Gus was a very special man!"

GUS WITHERINGTON OF UNION COUNTY, ARKANSAS

And

THE CONFEDERATE STEAMBOAT

'THE MORGAN NELSON'

Note: The following is an exact transcription of a letter dated 8 Jan. 1992 from W. C. Finch (former Mayor of Crossett, Ark.) to Bill Witherington (researcher of Witherington Family of Southern Arkansas - now deceased). This letter was discovered in research materials of Bill Witherington, borrowed by Bill King (a Witherington Descendant) from Janis Hopper of Hot Springs Village, AR (daughter of Bill Witherington). This letter has been transcribed by Bill King on July 15, 1998 (as it was written) as a matter of 'family' and Civil War interest of those doing research of the Witherington families and of Civil War times in Calhoun & Union Counties, AR.

Letter of W. C. Finch of Crossett, AR dated 8 January 1992 to his cousin, Bill Witherington.

Dear Bill,

Gus Witherington came to York, PA in 1858 on business and met Mary Emma Finch and married her there. {BILL KING'S NOTE: They actually met in New Orleans, not York, PA, and were married in Union County, Arkansas/Source 1859 Union County Marriage Bond 'B', Page 206} Gus then persuaded her brother Wm. S. Finch, her sister Amelia Finch, and her father Joseph Henry Finch and her mother Emma Dean (nee Kress) Conkey Finch all to move to Arkansas with him. Mary Emma did not want to move without her family. They arrived at Gus' home at Pigeon Hill Arkansas in 1858 on the west bank of the Ouachita River. The 1860 census of Union CO shows them all in Gus' household.

In 1862, Wm S. Finch married Rebecca Rogers Terrell at New London, Arkansas which is about a 1 1/2 miles south of Pigeon Hill. Also Joseph Henry Finch died in 1862 and was buried at the New London Cemetery, near the New London Baptist Church on Winchester Road. The Terrells were members of this church and possibly Gus Witherington was also. (The church secretary is checking the old records for me now).

Amelia Finch met and married a steamboat captain named Robert L. Withers from Longview, Arkansas on the Saline River. They met when the whole family was making a trip to New Orleans. Capt. Bob owned an interest in this steamboat 'Morgan Nelson' at the time.

Gus Witherington organized a company for the Confederate Army of men from the New London, Pigeon Hill and Longview areas; Union and Ashley counties on the two rivers. Gus was the Captain, Wm S. Finch and Bob Withers were Lt.'s. In May 1863 the 3 brothers-in-law bought out all the shares of the 'Morgan Nelson' steamboat as partners. (All this sounds to me as if Gus was well fixed enough to outfit a Co. of soldiers and to buy a 1/3 interest in a steamboat, as well as to move all his in-laws from Pennsylvania to Arkansas.)

They loaded the company on the steamboat and went to New Orleans to volunteer. The General told Gus he would accept his company with thanks but he would not accept Gus because he'd be the first one killed. Gus was 6' 6 1/2" tall. The General then said he could also use the steamboat, so they struck a deal. Gus, W. S. Finch and Capt Bob were given commissions each of Captain in the Confederate Army. The boat was to be operated by them to haul supplies up river for the CSA Army to various points on the Mississippi, Black, Red, Ouachita and Saline Rivers. They were allowed to haul cotton and other products south to New Orleans for civilians and could keep the money for non-military hauls. They also carried two flags, USA and CSA as well as uniforms for both sides to aid them in running the 'Yankee' blockades. (They could have been shot as spies if caught.) However, they were not caught and they operated the boat for the Confederacy, Major Latimer's Quartermaster's Corps, HDQ Camden, Arkansas, from May 1862 to June 1865 when they took the Oath of Allegiance to the USA. They all 3 ended up 'rich' with each a chest full of Confederate bills. Their only real assets left were their lands and the boat 'Morgan Nelson' which they sold in New Orleans.

Captain Bob Withers used his share to buy another steamboat 'Carrie Poole' which he operated for several years. He also operated a ferry on the Saline River near Longview at Cavaness Landing. Wm S. Finch went into partnership with his other brother-in-law William Simon Terrell. They built and operated a store at Pigeon Hill until 1882 when Rebecca, his wife, died. She is buried at New London Cemetery near her father-in-law, J. H. Finch. (stone still readable.)

I have pictures of Rebecca and Gus' stones. They are in the middle of the cemetery. I believe J.H. Finch is between. I was told by an elderly lady at New London that this was correct, that J.H. Finch's stone was damaged in a storm and the pieces later scattered and lost. There is a goodly space between Gus and Rebecca, enough for J.H. plus space for each of their spouses. Possibly Gus' first wife is there next to him but I could not find a stone. I believe this was a Finch Row (planned) as the Terrells are in another part of the cemetery some distance west.

Wm Simon Terrell stayed at New London with the store and died there (there is still a store at the ferry landing at Pigeon Hill, on the Union County side of the River). Wm S. Finch married Sarah Jane Everett of New London. They moved to Warren...had 3 children and are both buried at Warren.

Emma Dean Finch went to live with her daughter Amelia and Capt. Bob Withers at Longview. Emma Dean is buried at Prairie Chapel Cemetery next to her son-in-law Capt. Robert L. Withers in the Withers Plot.

Amelia Finch Withers lived into the 1920's and is buried in a Withers Plot in the Hamburg Cemetery with several sons and daughters. Mary Emma Finch Witherington, later married William D. Harrison and moved to Pine Bluff, Arkansas. They had two girls, Versa and Pearl. In the 1940's Pearl lived in Portland, AR. Mary Emma is buried in Pine Bluff with 2nd husband, William D. Harrison.

Hattie May Witherington Price lived in Hamburg and is buried in the Hamburg Cemetery. We visited 'Cousin Hattie' often when I was a child. Vera Welch was a good friend, both in Fordyce & Little Rock of my mother's family (Calhoun) who were raised in Fordyce as well as Minnie Finch Koonce, daughter of Wm S. Finch who married Edgar Koonce.

I have marked up a Gus Witherington sheet as we have it in our family records and tombstone pictures. I am searching for a picture of Gus Witherington and a picture of steamboat 'Morgan Nelson'. If I can give you any more information, please write or call.

Sincerely, Wm C. Finch

Transcription of above letter provided by Bill King, Houston, TX

Email from Ed Sanders, Arkansas Historical Society

Bill, the officer in New Orleans was right in rejecting Gus for military service. He WOULD have been the first one shot because a man that size cannot shrink and hide. I did the genealogy of a fellow in northwest several years ago for his great granddaughter, and pointed out to her that his recruiting officer had effectively murdered the man. He was 6' 5" tall and the recruiter put him in the CAVALRY!!! A man that size would have to have a tall horse to keep his feet from dragging the ground, so you've got an 8 foot tall target trying to slip through the woods, or charge across a field. Sure enough, the fellow was killed in his very first engagement! Thanks for a heck of a story!

Best wishes, 'Ed'

Proven Data - Augustus Levan Witherington

Augustus Levan was born December 31, 1818 in Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. 'Gus' was child # 12 of William Witherington, Jr. & Sarah 'Salley' Stanley. He spent his youth growing up with his family, who then lived in north east Conecuh County, AL at an early community known as Fork Sepulga. He later migrated (about 1848) to the river town of Champagnolle in early Union County, AR.

Gus' father, William Witherington, Jr., had received a Commission as 'ENSIGN' in the 17th Regiment, Mississippi Territory on 7 July 1813. The Commission was signed at Washington, MS by David Holmes, Governor of the Mississippi Territory. It is said by some that 'Ensign Witherington' was in the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812, but this has not been proven as fact. At the time, the family was living in Feliciana Parish, Orleans Territory, near current day Clinton, Louisiana.

Following the Civil War, Gus and Mary Emma (Finch) lived in Bradley County across the Ouachita River from Pigeon Hill, Union County. Gus had named his new Plantation in Bradley County 'Mount Vernon'.

Gus was murdered March 27, 1869 at Moro Bay, Bradley County, Arkansas. He is buried in the New London Cemetery, Union County, AR in the Finch Family Plot. Martha Lovett (wife #1) died 1857 in Union County and is buried at Wesley Chapel Cemetery located on Ark Hwy # 15 east of El Dorado. After Gus' death, Mary Emma Finch (wife # 2) married William D. Harrison. Mary Emma Finch and Wm D. Harrison are both buried at Pine Bluff, ARK.

NEW LONDON CEMETERY, Union County, Arkansas

Cemetery established about 1810

AUGUSTUS L. WITHERINGTON

Born January 1, 1819 Died March 27, 1869

Age: 50 Years, 2 Months, 26 Days

Arkansas Census Records Union County - 1850 - Franklin Township

A. L. Witherington 30 m Farmer LA

Martha 21 f AL [1st wife - Martha Lovett, b. 1827]

Mary E. 2 F AL

Sarah 4 mos. F AL

Union County - 1860 - Pigeon Hill Township 3 Aug. 1860

A. L. Witherington 37 r/e \$10k/ per \$25k LA

Mary 22 Canada [2nd wife - Mary Emma Finch, b. 1838-Canada]

Joseph Finch 55 N.Y. [f-i-l]

Emma Finch 50 N.Y. [m-i-l]

W. S. Finch 26 N.Y. [b-i-l]

Amelia Finch 19 Mich. [s-i-l]

Mary Witherington 11 AL

Sarah Witherington 9 ARK

Chayler (sic) Witherington 5 m ARK

Orlena Witherington 7 f ARK

Willie Witherington 3 m ARK

Henry Witherington 3 mos. ARK [1st child of Mary Emma Finch Witherington]

Notes: Gus was married to Mary E. Finch on 13 January 1859 in El Dorado, Union County.

Family moved from AL to ARK before 1850, as 1850 census shows child-Sarah (4 mos) was shown born in AL. First wife, Martha K. Lovett, died 1857 (their son, Willie, was born about 1857, could Martha have died in childbirth??).

1858-59-60 Tax Records - Bradley County, Arkansas

A. L. Witherington

ENSW Sec. 25 Twn. 16 Range 12 84 Acres

ENE 33 16 12 80 Acres

SNW 34 16 12 80 Acres

SWSW 27 16 12 29.83 Acres

SESW 28 16 12 39.89 Acres

NWNW 34 16 12 40 Acres

Total 364.16 Acres

Bill King's Note: *The above land would have been located immediately north and east of the Ouachita River, and lying SE of the community of Moro Bay and east across the river from the Pigeon Hill landing. The Ouachita River makes a large loop to the north (toward Moro Bay) just a bit west of the above land owned by Gus. This is likely the land referred to in family stories as the 'Mount Vernon Plantation' of Gus Witherington.*

Letters of Administration -Estate of Augustus L. Witherington Value of Estate - about \$1500.

ELIAS D. KING, here applying for Letters of Administration on the Estate of **AUGUSTUS L. WITHERINGTON** late of said County, being that **AUGUSTUS L. WITHERINGTON** departed this life in Bradley County on or about the 27th day of March 1869.

Heirs: Henry S. Witherington, E. Evalyon Witherington, Madaline A. Witherington, Hattie May Witherington of Bradley County, Ark. Mrs. Mary E. Smith, Union County, Ark. Sallie K. Witherington and Orlina M. Witherington of Texas.

Bond: Dated: May 28, 1869, \$3000 - Elias D. King, Mary E. Witherington, B.C. Weir and James H. Averyt (Avant)

GUS WITHERINGTON, Union County - Pigeon Hill, Arkansas Assets

Inventory of Store June 4, 1869

53 Pairs of Shoes, 15 Pocket Knives, 3 Whet Rocks, 20 Hand Saw Files, 4 Sets of knives & forks, 1 Gross of Coffee, Shoe Brushes, Slates, Boots, Shoes, Spurs, Trunk, Tin Pans, Lamps, Pitchers, Bowls, Stone Dishes, Cups & Saucers, Plates, Tumblers, Goblets, Tin Buckets, Horse Collars, 1 Bolts of Alpaca, Prints, Cotton, Worsted, Flannel. 15 Goats, 2 Milk Cows

Inventory Total: \$ 1016.16

RECEIPT

Received of **Elias D. King, Administrator** of the Estate of Augustus L. Witherington, Deceased, Two Hundred and Ninety Nine Dollars and 54 cents, As a part of my Dower Interest in the proceeds of sale of the personal property belonging to the Estate of the said Augustus L. Witherington, Deceased.

Dated: February 1st, 1870

Signed: *M. E. Witherington*

(Widow of A. L. Witherington, Deceased)



Pigeon Hill, Arkansas, February 11, 1862

J. F. H. HARMON

In Account With Augustus L. Witherington

\$1250.56 Cr.

Bill King Question: Could J. F. H. Harmon have been serving as a 'merchant-banker' in Union County and in possession of funds belonging to the credit of Augustus Levan Witherington?

Final Accounting Current

Estate of Augustus L. Witherington (Deceased), Elias D. King, Administrator

July Term 1883 Confirmed and Ordered of Record

July Term 1884 A. A. Turner, Judge

The following is a transcription of letter dated Feb. 26, 1981 from Gordon L. Harrison, Jr. of Houston to Virginia M. Witherington of Arkadelphia, AR

HARRISON CONVEYOR CO.

4010 Bluebonnet # 115 Houston, Texas 77025 (713) 661-3405

February 26, 1981

Dear Virginia, (Witherington)

Your information on the Finch's strikes a warm part of my soul. We are now discussing our great-grandfather, Augustus Levan Witherington, a most colorful and interesting free spirit.

To digress a moment; I am not a family buff. Leonard Green's wife, Bettye, is the person who has traced the staid Harrison family at the Clayton Library in Houston. Mildred White O'Quin also is a family nut. She has an "Ensign Certificate" of James Witherington, member of the MISSISSIPPI DRAGOONS, dated 1813. I believe this James Witherington is the father of A.L.

My father was a pet of his mother. I suspect they were conspirators in meanness to your mother. My father has many family stories he got from Evelyn Emma Witherington Harrison. My father exaggerates, and imagines events that never happened, so take my further comments with this aberration of Gordon's in mind.

James Witherington appears in 1830 census, Conecuh County, Alabama; A.L. Witherington is not shown.

A. L. first appears in Union County, Arkansas marriages 1829-1870, by Spencer. (1) A. L. Witherington 21 to Martha K. Lovett 18, February 1848. (2) A. L. Witherington 35 to Miss M. E. Finch 21, at Dr. Nance's on 13th Jan 1859.

According to Gordon, Mary Emma Finch left Poughkeepsie, N.Y. to take a position as a music teacher at Madeline Brevard's School for Young Ladies in New Orleans. A. L. evidently met our great-grandmother in New Orleans, and married her in Arkansas. Mary Emma got her brother William S. Finch, Sister Amelia, and mother Emma Dean Finch to live in Arkansas with her. Amelia married Robert Withers. William S. married Rebecca Terrell, sister to Simon Terrell. Both of these men were business associates of A.L. A.L. was very good to the Finch Family.

A.L. was evidently a prosperous businessman, got "Billy-Goats" drunk on Sunday, had many fist fights, and took an active part in the breeding of his female slaves. He was smart enough to be in the Quarter Master Corp in Texas, nearly caught by the Yankees when he was visiting Mary Emma in 1864 at Champagnolle.

As a boy in Warren, I was shown a Warren newspaper dated 1869 headlined: 'MR. DAVIS SHOOTS 'BULLY' GUS WITHERINGTON IN SELF-DEFENSE'.

According to Gordon, A.L. whipped Davis before 1861 (?), and Davis carried a grudge against A.L. Gordon claims A.L. and his son, Henry Stuart, got off of A. L.'s steamboat a Moro Bay, Davis was lying in the bushes and rifle-shot A.L. in the back of the head. (*Note: Newspaper story reported he was killed with a shot gun.*)

Now for another 'juicy' scandal: The Widow Mary Emma married William D. Harrison, son of William Kennon Harrison, brother of Edmund Reid Harrison. Will and our grandfather, Edmund Pendleton Harrison, were first cousins, one married to the mother, the other to the daughter. The Widow Mary Emma must have acquired a loving disposition from A.L. Will D. (Harrison) and Mary Emma had Versa Burton (Aunt Burt) and Pearl Eugenia (Aunt Lolly). They lived in Pine Bluff when E.P. and Evelyn Emma were first married.

August Levan Witherington is my favorite relative. He was the main-stay of the Finch's when they first came to Arkansas. When he died, Mary Emma did not know too much about his business affairs. Gordon claims the poor widow was cheated out of her property. Remember that William S. Finch, Robert Withers and Simon Terrell were his associates and probably advised her about A. L.'s property.

William D. Harrison was a traveling "Daguerreotype" picture-taker. E. P. supposedly held him in contempt. I imagine Will D. (Harrison) helped the Widow Mary Emma dispose of her property.

Best Regards,

Don

Gordon L Harrison, Jr.

NOTES: The above letter was found in family research papers of Virginia M. Witherington of Arkadelphia, Arkansas and was transcribed by Bill King of Houston on August 1, 1999.

Gordon Harrison, Jr. is now retired and living in Houston, Texas (2005).

AUGUSTUS LEVAN WITHERINGTON

The Murder

Below excerpts taken from articles appearing in Arkansas Gazette and were provided Jan 10, 1999 by Jann Woodard of the Bradley County Historical Society, 12008 Ginger Lane, Benton, AR 72015.

Ark. Gazette April 3, 1869 (page 2, col. 5)

Killed: We are informed that Mr. Gus Witherington, late of Champagnolle, was, on Friday 26th ult., at Moro Bay killed by a Mr. James Davis. He was shot three times. We have not heard the particulars of the difficulty. (*From the Camden News*)

AR Gaz. Feb. 6 1872 (page 1 col 2)

The Warren Eagle says Jas. A. Davis, who shot and killed A.L. Wortherington (sic), a highly respected citizen of Bradley county, about three years ago, and made his escape, created quite a sensation the other day by reappearing and surrendering himself to the officers of the law with a view of standing trial.

April 6, 1869 (page 3 col. 2)

A.L. Witherington, formerly of Champagnolle, but more lately of Mt. Vernon, Bradley county, was brutally murdered on the 27th of March, at Moro, Calhoun county, by a man named James A. Davis. He was in conversation at the store door of Bratton & Co., with Mr. Schaer of Little Rock, when Davis approaching from behind shot him without warning. The first shot passed through his head, the second through his body, when falling upon the floor he was shot a third time in the left shoulder. Mr. Witherington was conveyed to Pigeon Hill, where he died on the night of the 19th. Pigeon Hill Masonic Lodge No. 98, buried Mr. Witherington with the usual ceremonies. We will publish their resolutions next week. Mr. Witherington was an old and respected citizen of Union County.

AR Gaz. Oct. 26, 1869 (page 4 col 2)

The governor has offered a reward of \$200 for the arrest and conviction of James Davis, charged with the murder of A.L. Witherington, at Moro Landing, Calhoun County.

Below article provided to Bill King by Jann Woodard of Bradley County Gen. Society

The Bradley County Eagle, Warren, Arkansas, Sat. Jan. 27th, 1872

“The Murderer Now In Jail In This City”

Last Tuesday night our town was thrown into a fever of excitement by the arrival at the Warren House of Mr. James A. Davis. Charged with murder and under an escort of armed men.

It appears that about four years ago a difficulty occurred in the village of Mount Vernon, in this county, between two residents, named A.L. Wortherington (sic) and James A. Davis; the former being the aggressor. Davis was beaten in a most shocking manner, his face being battered in a terrible way; his eyes nearly put out; his jaw broken, and his spine injured beyond recovery. While being thus outraged and unable to defend himself he said: "Wortherington (sic), you had better kill me now, while you have a chance, for if I ever recover, I will kill you!"

At last the difficulty ceased and the parties separated. Time rolled on and about a year elapsed, when they met again, in the village of Moro Bay, on the Ouachita River, about the 28th of March 1869. When Davis saw Wortherington (sic), he said to a bystander: "Is that Wortherington (sic)?" And upon receiving an affirmative reply, walked off, got a shotgun, and deliberately shot his victim dead.

Fearing mob law, James A. Davis took up his abode in Calhoun County where he remained until the time of his arrest. In the meantime it appeared the Grand Jury of this county found a true bill against him for murder in the first degree for which he was arrested.

When the officers presented the warrant, he surrendered cheerfully, and is now closely confined in the county jail. He seems quite indifferent to his situation and thinks the law will justify his deed; and from what we learn, public sympathy is with him, for Wortherington (sic) is represented as being very turbulent and quarrelsome disposition, even to maltreat any person for the least imaginary cause and threatened the life of Davis several times carrying guns to execute his threats. These are represented by the facts in the case and we give them to the public without comment.

Below information has been provided by Bryan Howerton 1/23/99, Researcher with Gerdes Civil War Pages.
Email: howerton@cswnet.com

WITHERINGTON, Augustus L

Listed in Union County 1860, age 27, born in Louisiana, occupation merchant. No Arkansas service or pension record.

WITHERS, Robert James

Born 15 Jun 1820 in South Carolina, Died 18 Jun 1901 in Arkansas. Buried in Prairie Chapel Cemetery, Drew County, Arkansas. C.S. Marine Service, Commander, Steamer Morgan Nelson.

Widow - Amelia Finch Withers filed Arkansas pension application #22346 from Bradley County, August 9, 1915. Listed in Ashley County 1860 Census, occupation carpenter

FINCH, William Stuart

Born 11 Sep 1830 at Clarence, New York, Died 19 Jul 1907 at Warren, Arkansas. Buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Bradley County, Arkansas

Listed in Union County, AR on 1860 census. Married Rebecca Rogers Terrell, 10 Jan 1861 in Union Co, Arkansas. Later married Sarah Jane Everett, 30 Sep 1883, Union Co, Arkansas. Widow 'Sallie J. Finch' filed Arkansas pension application #15144 from Bradley County, 6 Aug 1913.

Cited service in Quartermaster's Department of Major Latimer's Ark. Division. <Unable to locate any record of a Major Latimer.>

If these men served in the Confederate navy or marine service, their records would not be filed in Arkansas. The C.S. Navy and Marine Corps (and I assume Marine Service) have their own Compiled Service Records microfilm series, completely separate from the various State volunteers.

Likewise, if they served for example as a quartermaster, working directly for a department or army, their CSRs would be filed with the regular Confederate Army microfilms (again, a separate microfilm series). Hope this helps. *Bryan Howerton*



The Following Messages from Chuck Jackson of St. Louis, dated February 1999

'Morgan Nelson, CSA Marine Service'

Bill - found mentioned in a letter to General Buckner from General E. Kirby Smith. Will "snail mail" the letter to you but will transcribe verbatim below. I think this letter answers the question as to the role of the Morgan Stanley in the Civil War and why I could not find Withers, Witherington, nor Finch in the Civil War books. Headquarters Trans-Mississippi Department. Chuck

Shreveport, February 27, 1865.

To: Lieut. Gen. S. B. Buckner , Commanding, District of West Louisiana

GENERAL:

Major Buckner's communication from Monroe of 21st February with your endorsement is just received. The steamer Barkman was burned in the Bartholomew. The Fletcher and Morgan Nelson have by telegraph to Camden been ordered to Monroe, where they will be at the disposition of Major Buckner for the purpose of procuring corn. The Ouachita country above the Louisiana line is absolutely stripped of forage. To maintain that line the garrison at Camden is compelled to supply itself from the lower Ouachita and its tributaries. It is of vital importance for the protection of Northern Louisiana, as well as the planting interests in the Red River Valley, in the District of Arkansas, that Camden should be held by us. General Magruder estimates that 30,000 bushels of corn will meet his necessities and enable him to maintain the line of the Ouachita until the coming crop can be gathered. The boats will at the disposal of your officers, and I wish you would instruct them to use dispatch and energy in securing and removing the corn from the Boeuf. What is not needed for the District of Arkansas and your cavalry on the Ouachita can be transported up Little River to within sixteen miles of Alexandria, and be made available for the troops in the lower portion of your district.

As the wants of the garrison at Camden are pressing, I wish the first load of the Fletcher sent to that point. You can afterward, as your necessities will allow, increase the amount of corn sent to Camden to 30,000 or even 50,000 bushels.

The boats will remain under your control, and General Magruder instructed that he can depend upon your officers forwarding to Camden the corn necessary for the support of that garrison.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. Kirby Smith, Commanding General, CSA

Bill, The set of books I researched looking for any sign that Withers, Witherington, and/or Finch were in the Confederate Navy were: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. Published under the direction of: The Hon. Curtis D. Wilbur, Secretary of the Navy, by Dudley W. Knox, Captain, U. S. Navy, Retired Officer in Charge, Office of Naval Records and Library by authority of an Act of Congress approved July 31, 1894. United States Government Printing Office Washington - 1927.

Chuck Jackson

E-Mail to/from Robert Owens, Riverboat Researcher rbowens@seark.net Sunday, February 14, 1999

Robert, many thanks for the info on the Morgan Nelson and also for the info below. Believe that this was very likely my relative, A.L. Witherington (not A.J.).

His name was **AUGUSTUS LEVAN WITHERINGTON**. 'Gus' was said to have been a partner with Captain Robert Withers and William Finch as owners of the 'Morgan Nelson'. However, no proof has surfaced on this fact, and is only found in Witherington & Finch family tales handed down through the years. Again, I will greatly appreciate all info on any of the above. Bill King

The Paddle Wheelers

Morgan Nelson: Sternwheel, packet, wooden hull, built at Middletown, Pa. 1859. 109 tons. 120' x 21'.8" x 4'.4". She appeared at New Orleans Jan. 24, 1861, owned by Josiah and James Dillon of Wheeling, Va., with Capt. Joseph Richardson, also of Wheeling, in charge. She had seven changes of ownership at New Orleans 1861-1868, when dismantled.

Carrie Poole: Sternwheel, packet, wooden hull, built at Evansville, Ind., 1865. 118'.7" x 21' x 3'.7". Advertised August 1866 running New Orleans-Red River, Capt. J.F. Muse, "draws only 12 inches light." Had four or five owners including Red River Packet Co., and Capt. Noah Scovell. When she burned at Algiers, La., was owned by James M. Kane, New Orleans, with Capt. W.H. King, master. This on July 27, 1870.

Dr. Buffington: Sidewheel packet, wooden hull, built at Cincinnati, Oh. 1857. 157'x32'x5'. Ran New Orleans-Grand Encore (Camden), owned by A.J. Buffington, New Orleans. Capt. L.T. Moore was master in 1858. In 1861 owned by A.L. Witherington, Carrollton (New Orleans), who also was master. Made trips up White River, and was lost there, December 1862.

The above steamboats were mentioned in a paper called The County Explorer. It says: Captain Robert J. Withers, a well-known and respected leader of the community, operated two of several boats that plied the Marie Saline, the Carrie Poole and the Morgan Nelson. This at Longview, Saline River, Arkansas.

The other information was obtained from Way's Packet Directory. *Robert Owens*

From the Web Pages: (1) "Riverboats" and (2) "Riverboat Captains"

1. Name: **DR. BUFFINGTON**

Type: Sidewheeler, Wooden hull packet Size: 175 X 32 X 5

Launched: 1857, Cincinnati, Oh Destroyed: 1862, Dec. lost on White R. (See ** below)

Area: 1857-61, New Orleans - Grand Ecore; 1861, N. O. - White River, Arkansas

Owner: 1857, Buffington, A. J.

*1860, Avant, Nathan T. of Union, Ark.

*1860, Dec. 4, Buffington, Capt. A.J.

1861. Witherington, A.L. of Carrollton, La.

Captain: 1858, Moore, L.T.

*1860, March 28 - 1861 Avant, Nathan T.

The following was copied from the pages of the Journals of the House of Representatives, 2nd Congress of the Confederate States of America. Volume 7, page 13 of the Journals of the Confederate Congress, 1861-1865.

Web Page: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html>

Date: Second Day, Tuesday, May 3, 1864 page 13 (in part)

Mr. A. H. Garland (Augustus H. Garland, Representative of the State of Arkansas) introduced: A bill "to provide for the redemption of the old issue of Treasury notes held by certain Indian tribes," which was read a first and second time and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Also, a bill: "for the relief of **A. L. WITHERINGTON**, of Union County, in the State of Arkansas;" which was read a first and second time and referred to the Committee on Claims.

Early Alabama (Conecuh County) Land Records for Augustus L. Witherington

Aug. 18, 1837 40 Acres SW/SW, Sec. 15, Township 7 N, Range 11 E. (Located near Lyeffion, NE of Witherington Family Cemetery)

July 1, 1845 39.375 A. NE/SW, Sec. 1, Township 6 N, Range 10 E. (located near China and Witherington Cem.)

Early Arkansas (Union County) Land Records for Augustus L. Witherington

Sept 1, 1856 40 Acres SW/NE, Sec 29, Township 17 S, Range 14 W. (Located South of Hwy 15, near Wesley Cemetery)

July 1, 1859 80 Acres SE/NE, Sec 7 Township 17 S, Range 12 W.

NW/SW, Sec 8, Township 17 S, Range 12 W. (Located So. of Pigeon Hill and So. of the Ouachita River)

Family Interview with James Sidney King c. 1936

*Copied from the family records of **Betty Sue Griffin Mitcham of El Dorado**; daughter of Abbie Coral King Griffin and great granddaughter of John Coleman King of Union County.*

James Sidney King was the son of John Coleman King. He was the Grandson of James King, Sr. & Catherine Coleman King (Catherine is buried at Wesley Cemetery in Union County, AR).

James Sidney King of Union County, son of **John Coleman King**, in a 1936 family history interview, told a story of his father and **Gus Witherington** crossing the Mississippi River on rafts and riding horseback when they came to Arkansas. They passed several plantations in the rich Mississippi Valley where the owner's house, known as the 'big house', was set far back from the road and a big gate and a lawn were out in front of the 'big house'. King and Witherington made their headquarters at Norris Springs in Union County and went out each day with a spade looking for rich land, but decided to go to Texas where Dallas now is. They later decided to come back to Union County where the transportation on

the Ouachita River was good and they could get their cotton to market at New Orleans and where the land was rich."

Gus Witherington's grave at New London Cemetery in Union County, AR



Marc Parrish of Georgetown, TX standing at Gus' gravestone in June 2001, following the Witherington Family Reunion at Moro Bay State Park.

Marc Parrish's Witherington Ancestry

Descended from Augustus Levan Witherington

- 1 Augustus Levan WITHERINGTON 1818 - 1869**
+Mary Emma FINCH 1838 - 1886
- 2 Madeleine Augusta WITHERINGTON 1865 - 1941**
+Dr. Thomas Clemens HART Unknown - Unknown
- 3 Ida Madeleine HART 1893 - 1985**
+Thomas Preston WILLIAMS 1891 - 1945
- 4 Marion WILLIAMS (1. Parrish, 2. Hall) 1917 - 2004**
+Wallace Reid PARRISH Unknown - Unknown
- 5 Marc Reid PARRISH 1940 - <living>**
Lives Georgetown, Texas

Photo of Madeleine Augusta Witherington, daughter of Augustus Levan Witherington of Union & Bradley Counties, AR



Madeleine Augusta⁷ Witherington was born Abt. 1865 in Union CO, AR (Source: 1870 Union County AR Census.), and died Abt. 1941 in Dallas, Texas (Source: Marc Parrish Info (Jan. 2001).). She married **(1) (Unknown) Sharp**. She married **(2) Dr. Thomas Clemens Hart** November 10, 1891 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas (Source: Marion Williams Hall-Marc Parish Info (Jan 2001).), son of Rev. Marion Hart and Margaret Clemens.

Notes for Dr. Thomas Clemens Hart: Physician. Practiced in Texas.

Children of Madeleine Witherington and Dr. Hart are:

2 i. Roscoe⁸ Hart, born Unknown.

3 ii. Thomas Hart, Jr., born Unknown.

4 iii. Henry Stuart 'Hal' Hart, born Unknown.

Notes for Henry Stuart 'Hal' Hart: Named for his Uncle, Henry Stuart 'Hallie' Witherington, son of Gus Witherington.

5 iv. Ida Madeleine Hart, born June 1893 in Oklahoma (Source: Marion Williams Hall/Marc Parish Info (Jan 2001).); died August 1985 in Decatur, Wise County, TX (Source: Marion Williams Hall/Marc Parish Info (Jan 2001).). She married Thomas Preston Williams May 01, 1916 in Dallas, Texas (Source: Marion Williams Hall/Marc Parish Info (Jan 2001).); born June 1891 in Oklahoma; died August 1945 in ?.

Notes for Thomas Preston Williams: THOMAS PRESTON WILLIAMS was born June 1891 in Oklahoma. When PRESS (as he was called by his family) was in his early teens, he wanted to see the world beyond the lonesome wilds of Oklahoma. He crawled under a freight car at a near railroad track and road there until he was discovered on a hot and dusty stretch of land. There he was forced off the underpinnings of the train. He told the story many times. Miles from civilization and water, he walked the tracks. The sun was hot and finally he became so thirsty and hot that he knew he could not live much longer in this waterless, unshaded land. He remembered what his mother had taught him. She was a praying mother who spent much time on her knees praying for her family. Press got on his knees and prayed. He got up and walked. About a few yards, there was a lump of ice, This was strange because it had been many hours since the train had passed. Press sucked on the ice. When it was gone, there was another piece of ice. Because of the ice, he survived. When he got to a small town about sunset, a man took him in. The man would only give Press a few drops of water at a time, He told the boy that if it had been a jug of water instead of ice he had found on the track, he would likely have drunk it all and not lived to tell his story. The man let Press stay with him until he was strong enough to go on. There were many tales of his adventurous youth that THOMAS PRESTON WILLIAMS told. He served briefly in the U.S. Navy, was stranded without funds on a job in California and later came to Dallas where he got a job at the Otis Elevator Co. He met and Married IDA MADELEINE HART, May 1, 1916. He died Aug 1945. <Story from Marion Williams Parish>

6 v. Emma Bell Hart, born May 08, 1904 in Dallas, Texas (Source: Marion Williams Hall-Marc Parish Info (Jan 2001).); died March 13, 1979 in Dallas, Texas (Source: Marion Williams Hall-Marc Parish Info (Jan 2001).). She married Ben Amos.



Researcher's Notes:

This information on the life of **AUGUSTUS LEVAN WITHERINGTON** has been developed over the past two years with the help of many researchersfar too many to list here. It is being provided in hopes that some of the information provided of "Uncle Gus" and his life and death will be of interest to Union, Calhoun & Bradley County historians and genealogists.

I visited the New London Cemetery grave of Gus Witherington on June 13, 1999, and I felt very pleased "to have visited with Uncle Gus".

Gus Witherington was my 3rd Great Grand Uncle.

William Witherington, Jr. (the father of Gus, John & James Witherington) was my 4th Great Grandfather. These three sons came to Southern Arkansas from Conecuh County, AL about 1846.

John Witherington was my 3rd Great Grandfather.

I descend from John Witherington (the older brother of Gus & James), who was born 1801 in Darlington District, SC and who died 1855 in Calhoun County, Arkansas.



Date Revised

Sunday, October 15, 2006

WILLIAM R. KING, JR

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