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History and the Gilmore Lodge

by Brooks Gilmore, M.D.*

Gilmore Lodge takes its name from Dr. Clyde Manley Gilmore. Dr. Gilmore was born in 1900 near Rives Chapel Church. His parents were Claude Odell Gilmore and Dora Foushee. Dr. Gilmore graduated from Bonlee High School, Wake Forest College, and the Medical College of Virginia. After completing his medical education he came to Greensboro where he practiced cardiology and internal medicine until his death in 1955. He established the Gilmore Clinic, the first multi-specialty medical facility in the area.

The history of the land on which Gilmore Lodge is located is an intimate part of the historical record of Chatham County.

John Brooks and His Descendants Settle on Tick Creek

Our story begins in 1755 when John and Susan Brooks and their six sons secured land grants in the Tick Creek area that were located from Rocky River to Ore Hill (now Mt. Vernon Springs).¹ John and Susan's grant was just south of Tick Creek on what is now Ike Brooks Road. Eldest son Thomas's grant was on Rocky River near where Tick Creek joins the river. The second son, Joab, had his grant north of his father's grant. (The Chatham Middle School is now located on Joab's grant and his gravesite is in front of the school.) John, Jr., Mark, and James, the third, fourth, and fifth sons, were granted land along Ephraim and Tick Creeks west of Ore Hill. These three later left North Carolina for

*Dr. Brooks Gilmore has been a patron member of CCHA since 1993. Before his retirement, Dr. Gilmore practiced internal medicine in Greensboro. In this article Dr. Gilmore combines personal recollections with historical data and shares family photographs and clippings.

Dr. Gilmore's article about Dr. David Watson appeared in the November 2000 Chatham Historical Journal.

Georgia and South Carolina. The youngest son, Isaac, lived with his parents and inherited the senior John's grant. These grants were called Granville grants because they were part of the land that the English King George II assigned to the Earl of Granville (one of the Lords Proprietors) for development and settlement.

John Brooks, Sr., had brought his family of six young sons and his wife Susan from England to America in the early part of the seventeen-hundreds.² After landing in Jamestown, the family spent some time in Virginia, where the older sons married, then moved to North Carolina, obtaining land near Cross Creek in Cumberland County before coming to the Tick Creek area of Orange, later Chatham, County.

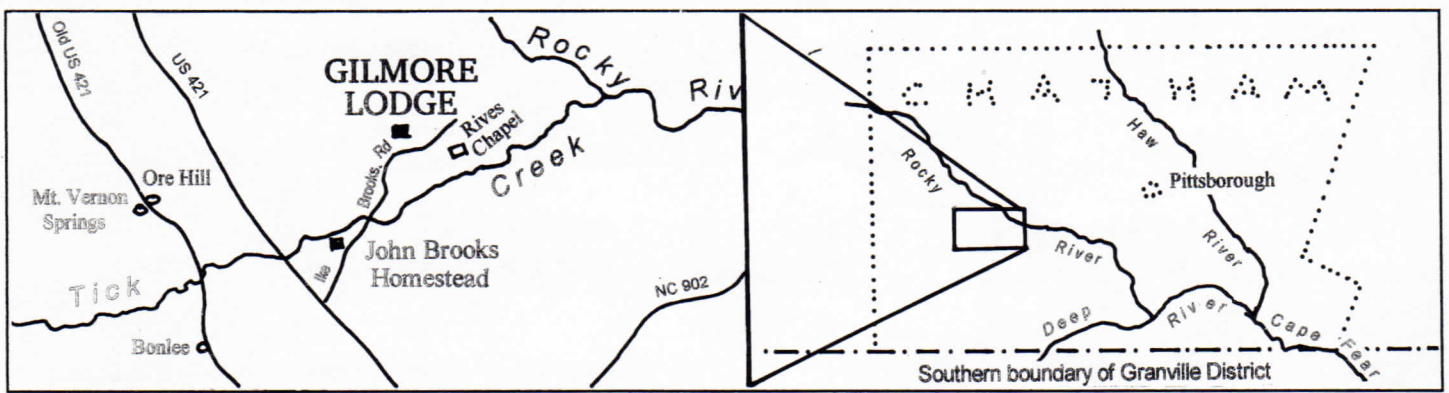
John, Sr., built his home on his grant just south of Tick Creek. The house was said to be the first framed house and the first with glass windows in Chatham County. There was one large room on the first floor, a narrow stairway leading to the second floor where there was another large room, a basement (unusual for the area and time), and a brick chimney (also unusual for the time). The kitchen was in an outbuilding because of the danger of fire. Nothing remains from the house except a sea chest with the initials "S. B.," a clock that came from "over the water," and a few timbers. John Brooks died in 1766 or 1767, and Isaac inherited the land grant and the home.

Many historical events took place



Sketch made from a photograph taken about 1900 of the John Brooks house on Tick Creek, said to be the first framed house and the first with glass windows in Chatham County.

Courtesy of Brooks Gilmore



between the Brooks house and the location of Gilmore Lodge. Isaac Brooks was involved in the Regulator movement that started in 1760 as a protest against the taxes the Crown had imposed on the colony; however, he was much more involved with the Revolution. In 1771 he was one of Chatham's first two representatives in the North Carolina Colonial Assembly.³

After the battle of Guilford Courthouse (1781), Col. William Washington, General Green's cavalry commander, used the Brooks home for his headquarters while his men were camped along Tick Creek. Also camped there while their horses were being shod at the Willcox ironworks near Ore Hill were Lee's Legion under Col. Harry Lee (father of Robert E. Lee) and the Delaware Light Infantry.⁴

On one occasion Isaac escaped from David Fanning and his Tory irregulars by jumping out of a second-story window. The Tories kicked out a panel in the stairway door in pursuit of Isaac, who later decreed that the door should never be repaired so that the memory of the event would be retained. The door remained in the house until recently, when it was taken by a family member, and its present location is not known.

Farming and other activities continued along Tick Creek, and the Brooks family was active in church and political affairs. There had been a large out-migration following the Battle of Alamance, when many of the Regulators had to flee with a price on their heads, and another in the 1830s as new lands became available in the west. Three of the Brooks sons had moved by 1840. A renowned member of the family was William Tell Brooks, who was born and lived in the home until he went to Wake Forest as one of the first students at the college.

He had been converted and called to the ministry at the Baptist State Convention that was held at Rives Chapel Church in 1832. It was at this convention that the resolution was passed to establish Wake Forest College. Brooks remained at Wake Forest as Professor of Religion and Philosophy, and the diary he kept is the basis of the early part of Dr. George Washington Paschal's history of Wake Forest College.

Cartersville

Prior to the Civil War, the area of the present Lodge was known as Cartersville, named after a family who had a plantation close by. There were a post office, store, blacksmithy, and a tanyard. When the Civil War began, Company E of the 26th North Carolina Infantry used the location as a muster ground. The name they chose was the Independent Guards.⁵ Sheriff R. B. Paschal states in his diary that he went to the meeting of the volunteers at Cartersville on May 18, 1861.⁶

The roster of Company E contains the names of men of families known today in the area. James M. Brooks and Daniel Boone Thomas carried the battle flag of the 26th to the Federal line of defense in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg⁷ and are the subjects of the Mort Kunstler painting, "The High Water Mark." For many years the spirit of Cartersville was renewed as a group of Civil War re-enactors held their practice sessions at the Lodge. All activities were carried out in Confederate



Re-enactors of the 26th North Carolina Regiment camp near former Cartersville, mustering ground for Civil War volunteers. Gilmore Lodge in background, 1990.
Photo courtesy of Brooks Gilmore

uniforms, using muskets and other period equipment. Dances were held with men in uniforms and the ladies in dresses of the time. The men used only authentic cooking material and tents of their era in the camp.

After the Civil War, the area of the Lodge passed through several hands, either in the Brooks or related fami-

lies. Farming continued but times were hard during the Reconstruction period and poverty was the rule.

Gilmore Family Acquires Property

About 1840 a two-room house was built north of Tick Creek on the John Brooks grant and used by tenants and others. In 1914 Claude Odell Gilmore purchased this house for his father, John Manley Gilmore, and stepmother. John Manley Gilmore did some farming and lived in the house until he died in 1926.

Dr. Clyde Gilmore inherited the property from his parents, Claude Odell Gilmore and Dora Foushee Gilmore, whose grandmother was Nancy Brooks. He eventually bought out the other heirs. After John Manley Gilmore died, Dr. Clyde Gilmore began to use the house as his hunting lodge. At that time the area abounded in game, especially the quail that Dr. Gilmore favored. There were also rabbits, doves, and squirrels.



Gilmore in front of a second streetcar, used for sleeping.

Photo, c1935, courtesy of Brooks Gilmore

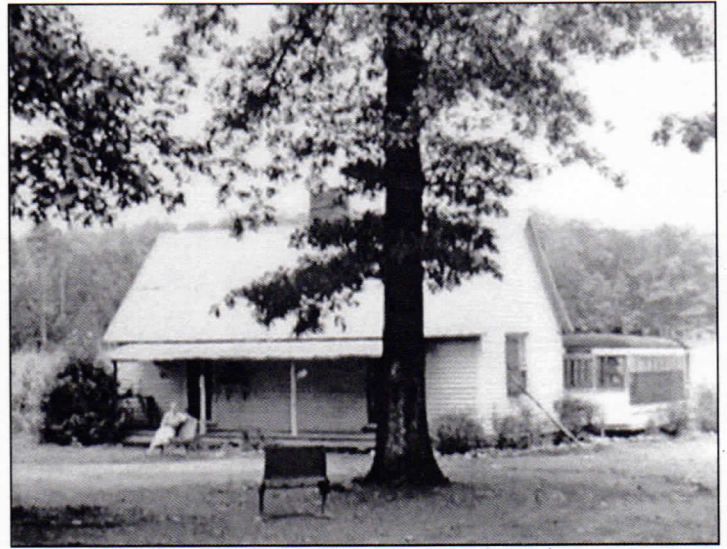
Because of lack of space in the two-room house, in 1932 two streetcars were moved from Greensboro, where they were being taken out of service. One was used for cooking and eating and the other for sleeping. The streetcars remain on the site today. A barn was built over one, and the other is used for storage.

In 1935 Dr. Gilmore was engaged in extensive farming operations, and a log house was built for the farm manager. When the manager left shortly after the log house was built, Dr. Gilmore decided to make the log house his hunting lodge. The small 1840s house was remodeled for another farm manager. By 1939 electric power and a drilled well had been added, and two rooms and a bath were added to the lodge.



A new farm manager's house was converted to a hunting lodge about 1935.

Photo courtesy of Brooks Gilmore



One of two streetcars was used to serve meals to hunters and guests. Benches from the cars were used outside the former Carter plantation house. Photo, c1935, courtesy of Brooks Gilmore

Hunting from the Gilmore Lodge

Hunting activities continued, mostly for quail. Horses had been kept since 1936, and Dr. Gilmore hunted on horseback, dismounting when a covey of quail was found. Pointer bird dogs were used. Several men cared for the lodge and bird dogs over the years. George Walters was a country boy who could hit a running rabbit with a thrown rock. Brack Edwards was never without a cigarette. Brack had been manager of the Borden family hunting grounds west of Bonlee. (Many wealthy northern people had hunting grounds in Chatham and Moore counties because of the quail.) Dee Fields was another country boy and a crack shot. Charlie Thomas, a tall, lanky fellow, was manager until he retired recently. Charlie always said that more game was killed in front of the fireplace at Gilmore Lodge than any other place.

Other activities at the lodge included fox, possum, dove, and rabbit hunts. The early fox hunts were at night, and the men at the lodge would sit in the yard and each would identify his fox hound by its cry. Dr. Gilmore enjoyed taking groups of young boys on rabbit hunts without using guns. Night possum hunts were held in the 1930s. Uncle Frank (Dr. Gilmore's brother) had a pet goat that would run with the dogs in the woods. When a possum was treed, she would put her hooves on the



Ian Milne, huntsman, leading the Sedgefield Hunt in 1974.

Photo courtesy of Brooks Gilmore

tree and give her possum bleat. Brack Edwards's wife was known for her baked possum with sweet potatoes.

By 1955, when Dr. Gilmore died, the quail and rabbit had declined and soon disappeared. Very little crop farming was being done,

and the game no longer had the wheat, corn, and other crops as feed. The increase in predators, especially raccoons, contributed to the decline, and the open pastures provided no cover for the quail and rabbits. Dove hunting continued for some time as the crops raised to feed the cows provided feed for the birds, but this also declined as the dairy farms closed.

The Sedgefield Hunt

In 1970 the Sedgefield Hunt from Greensboro was invited to use the lodge. The Sedgefield Hunt is a formal English foxhunt with the hunters mounted on horses. Everyone must be "turned out," that is, formally dressed in their hunt clothing. The Masters and the huntsmen wear red jackets and other riders wear black. The huntsman is an employee of the hunt and in charge of the pack of English foxhounds. Ian Milne, an Englishman from Yorkshire was the huntsman for the Sedgefield Hunt. The Masters are the senior members of the hunt, and wooden hurdles were built at Gilmore Lodge to take their jumps.

After the riders returned, there was a hunt breakfast, really lunch. The hunt breakfast at Gilmore Lodge was well known and featured in two national magazines.⁸

In 1985 the Sedgefield Hunt had to discontinue using the lodge because of the loss of hunting territory due to continued fencing of land for pastures. Deer hunting is the only game activity at the present time. There was some raccoon hunting, but this had to be discontinued because of endemic rabies.

Today's Lodge Activity

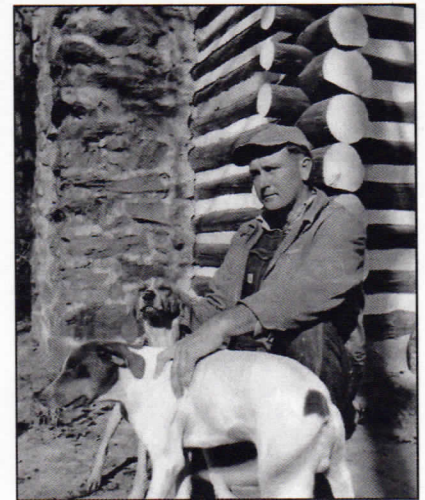
Gilmore Lodge and the surrounding lands are currently owned by Dr. Brooks and Dawn Gilmore, who live in Greensboro but use the lodge as a retreat. In 2002 they donated part of the original Brooks grant to

Wake Forest University. Proceeds from the donation will be used to establish a scholarship for a Chatham County student at Wake Forest who has an interest in history.

The lodge has long been used for family reunions and entertainments of various kinds. For the descendants of John and Susan Brooks, the "Brooks and Kindred Families" reunion is held on the first Sunday in August every year. The family of Dr. and Mrs. Clyde Gilmore and guests gather every year at Thanksgiving for dinner.

Notes

1. Ida Brooks Kellam, *Brooks and Kindred Families*, 1950, p. 11. This book is an extensive genealogy of the Brooks and other families of the area. It is currently in print; for information write Chatham County Historical Association.
2. Kellam, p. 11. The house built by John Brooks was used as a dwelling until the 1920s, when it was allowed to deteriorate due to family disagreements. Dr. Clyde Gilmore always said that \$25 worth of tin roof would have saved the house from destruction.
3. Kellam, p. 147; Wade H. Hadley, Jr. et al, *Chatham County, 1771-1971* (Chatham County Historical Association, 1971; reprint, 1997), p. 10.
4. Steven E. Haller, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, personal communication, 29 March 2002.
5. Roy Gragg, *Covered with Glory, The 26th North Carolina Infantry at the Battle of Gettysburg* (Harper-Collins, 2002), p. 9; George C. Underwood, *Twenty-Sixth Regiment of the North Carolina Troops* (reprint, Broadfoot Bookmark, 1979), p. 374.
6. Richard B. Paschal, "Diaries 1860-1864," (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), entry for 18 May 1861. Sheriff Paschal's diaries record the hardships suffered by the people of Chatham County during the war.
7. Gragg, p. 200.
8. *Southern Living*, May 1982, and *The Progressive Farmer* ("Pig-Picking Carolina Style"), October 1979



George Walters and Spot, 1938

Photo courtesy of Brooks Gilmore

The Chatham Historical Journal is an occasional publication of the Chatham County Historical Association, Inc. Its mission is to preserve and communicate the history of Chatham County.

Correspondence should be addressed to CCHA, Box 93, Pittsboro, N.C. 27312.

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