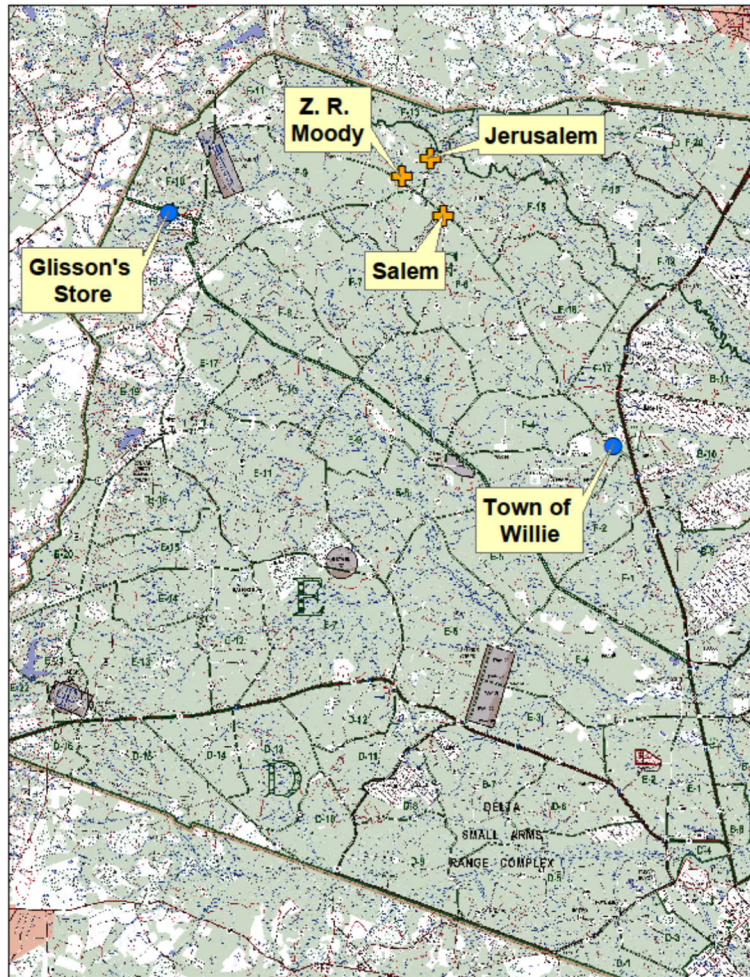


November 29, 2023

Fall 2023 Tour



DPW Environmental Division
1550 Veterans Parkway, Bldg. 1137, Fort Stewart, GA 31314
Phone: 912-767-2010

November 29, 2023

Fall Cemetery Tour

FALL 2023 CEMETERY & HISTORIC SITES TOUR



Glisson's Store, Town of Willie, Salem Cemetery,
Jerusalem Cemetery and Z. R. Moody Cemetery

THE TOWN OF WILLIE

In 1910, entrepreneur Willie G. Tuten extended his Savannah & Southern Railroad west from nearby Strum Bay Community. Mr. Tuten built a rail station on the west side of what was *then* part of Sunbury Road and established the community of Willie (named after his daughter Nellie Willie Lee Tuten). After construction of the railroad station in Willie, a land sale was held on June 28, 1911 to stimulate development around the new rail stop. Willie grew quickly into a substantial village, with a post office and grade school. By August 1915, the community of Willie was incorporated as a town by the Georgia General Assembly.

By 1920, the town had 320 people thus making it larger than Hinesville at that time. The town had three general stores, a drug store, a millinery shop, a feed store, a barber shop, sawmill, cotton gin, turpentine distillery, a Masonic Lodge, a railroad station, school house, post office, and a Methodist Church. The initial church that served the area that would become Willie was Soules Chapel Methodist Church and it is believed to have been established in the 1850s. Eventually, this church became known as the Willie Methodist Church. Ministers that served the Willie Methodist Church included R. F. Dennis, W. J. Churchwell, W. N. Hill, J. M. Rustin, E. M. Elder, J. D. McCord, J. E. Fair, E. J. Grimes, W. E. Dennis, C. B. Ray, and Hoke Bell. Superintendents of the Sunday School included James Smart Darsey, George Turner Darsey, Arthur Floyd May, Alma Darsey Heape, Charles Feston Darsey, and William Road Floyd. Organists for the church included Eva Darsey, Ruth Caswell, Julia Darsey, Effie Darsey, Eleanor Smith May, Emma Kate Brewton Bacon, and Mildred Smith Bacon.

NOTES

Additional Online Fort Stewart Cemetery Resources:

<https://home.army.mil/stewart/about/Garrison/DPW/environmental/prevention-and-compliance/crm>

NOTES

In 1934, the Willie Christian Church was established. Members of this new church had previously worshipped at the Willie Methodist Church, the court building, and in the school auditorium. Ministers of this church included Rev. Aytry Gunter, Bruce Nay, and Victor P. Bowers. Members of this new church included E. Polk and family, Cleveland Darsey and family, Earl Bacon and family, and Will Hughes and family.

The Post Office for Willie was established February 25, 1911 and was then discontinued on June 30, 1941. The Postmasters were Joseph Roswell Ellarbee (1911), Alma A. Darsey (1914), Bella Caswell Floyd (1916, 1920), and William Preston Gooden Sr. (1921).

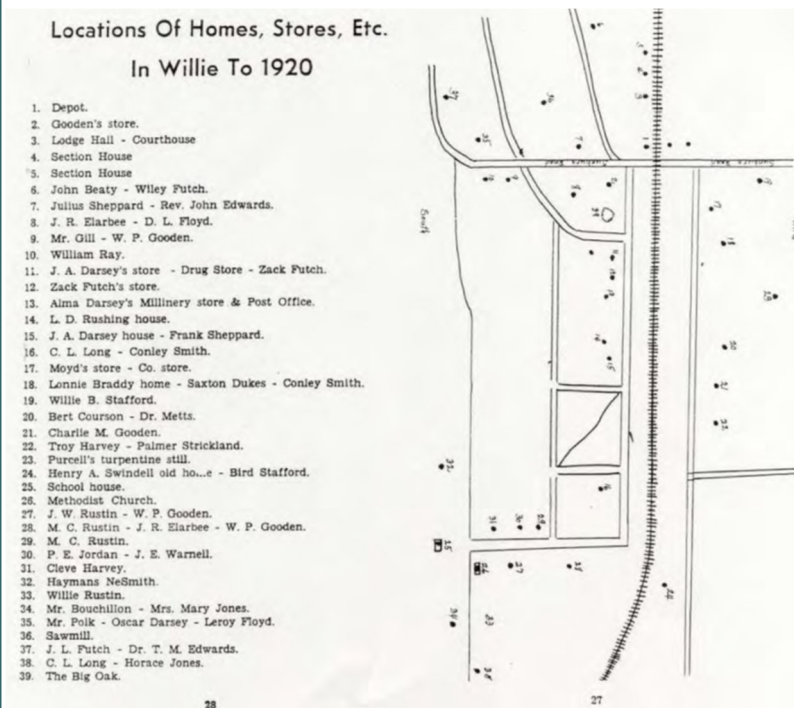
In 1923, the Savannah & Southern Railroad closed, taking Willie off the railroad network. The Great Depression, along with overuse of resources and the boll weevil impact to the cotton industry also took its toll. According to one former resident, Harris D. Mobley, "[V]irgin forests [were] cut over, cotton [had] gone sour, and the naval stores [turpentine] there for the few at the sweat of the many...the proud native sons left for jobs in Florida and beyond". By 1940, the population of



Town of Willie circa 1941.

Willie had decreased to 192; however, the town remained one of the largest communities within what would become Fort Stewart.

Family names associated with the former community included Johnson, Adkins, Gethers, Hodges, Hines, Chisholm, Garrison, Ball, Hollard, Porter, Fraser, Logan, Strickland, Stewart, Collins, Mikell, Levant, Bacon, Haynes, Moody, and Nail. There are no cemeteries within the immediate area of Willie other than a small family cemetery called Porter Cemetery. Neighboring community cemeteries such as Warnell, Stewart Town/Strum Bay, Thomas Hill and Bethany cemeteries were the closest established cemeteries that would have likely served the community's needs.



Sketch map of the Town of Willie (from Effie Smith's *The Town of Willie*, 1973).

In November of 1993, the Evans County Historical Society approached Fort Stewart about the possibility of restoring Glisson's Store. Soon thereafter, Fort Stewart assessed the store's historic value and it was determined in coordination with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office as being eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. With such designation, the Army is required to take into account any potential adverse impacts that may occur from the Army's mission that may occur in the vicinity of this historic property. In 1995, the Army began rehabilitating the structure back to its original architectural character and stabilized the structure from further deterioration. This was done in accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Guidelines for historic rehabilitation. The majority of the work conducted included significant repairs to the roof and repointing of bricks.

In 2019, Fort Stewart initiated further repairs to the structure to maintain its historical integrity. Repairs to the previously repaired roof included the addition of parapet coping, repairing chimney and roof flashing, and inspection/repair of all roof fasteners. The front and rear door jambs were restored and the canopy's steel posts were sealed, repainted, and caulked. Exterior brickwork was repointed where mortar had disintegrated, eroded, or cracked while matching the original texture and color. Damaged brick was also replaced with matching brick to ensure the original design was maintained as feasibly possible. The Glisson's Store is routinely inspected for any further signs of deterioration and appropriate measures are taken to maintain its historic character.

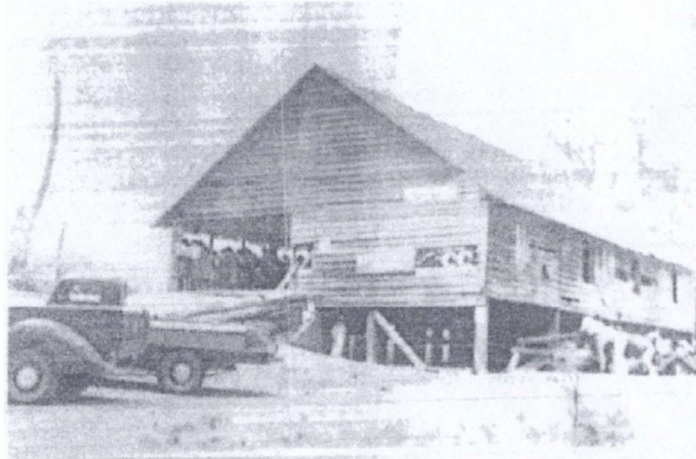


Photo of Glisson's Mill circa 1930s.



Photo of Glisson's Store circa early 1930s.

T. A. SHEPPARD'S STORE (Site 9LI763)

According to former residents of Willie, T. A. Sheppard owned and operated a general store at the intersection of Old Sunbury Road and the former Savannah and Southern Railroad. The initial transaction for all three parcels of land was a sale by C. C. Daniels to H. A. Swindle in 1871. This property was part of three headright grants issued between 1834 and 1840. Joseph L. Futch and his wife, Ella V. Futch, purchased 625 acres, containing the Store's site, in transactions dated 1896 to 1906, and sold a right-of-way to the Savannah & Southern Railroad in 1911. The deed records indicate that F. L. Sheppard purchased a 10-acre parcel from J. L. Futch in November of 1911. J. H. Beatty purchased five acres of the right-of-way from J. L. and Ella Futch in 1923. In 1930, J. H. Beatty finalized a 1919 bond for title on 10 acres, which were apparently purchased from F. L. Sheppard in the latter year, but the deed was not recorded.

At this point, the ownerships diverge. There is no record of a property purchase for Tract 584 between 1930 and 1941, but in June of 1941, Annie Bacon bought this tract from T. J. Bacon and W. R. Bacon for \$1,200, so the Bacons had acquired the lot sometime in the intervening years. Tract 907 was purchased by J. F. and E. F. Purcell in 1933 from J. H. Beatty. Leroy Floyd is listed as an adjoining property owner to the land purchased by the Purcells, so it is presumed that he bought Tract 1249 from Beatty in 1933, although no deed could be found. On July 16, 1941, the U.S. Government acquired the parcels of land in Willie.

Although this location was previously identified as being the site of T. A. Sheppard's Store, research suggests that the site actually includes the properties of many different individuals, including Frank Sheppard. However, there is no record of T. A. Sheppard and his store. Effie Smith, author of *Town of Willie*, mentions

that a John Rustin operated a Feed Store in the vicinity of the suspected Sheppard's Store but no evidence of his ownership was found. Instead, the historical documents suggest that Joseph and Ella Futch owned the property at the time of the founding of the town of Willie and the site passed through several hands before ending up in the hands of three owners at the time of government acquisition in 1941 (T. L. Floyd, J. F. and E. F. Purcell, and Annie L. Bacon).

According to a 1920 map, a structure is located at the position of the foundation remains of the suspected store. The artifacts recovered during the archaeological excavations of the site suggest an early 20th century date of occupation. Since the historical sources were in conflict, as Effie Smith suggested this location was a feed store, a local informant identified the location as Sheppard's General Store, and the courthouse failed to reveal additional records to clarify these conflicting claims, the archaeological investigation focused on trying to determine the function of the site. The artifact assemblage was compared to other known general stores located on the Installation at the time (Bacon's Store and Gooden's Store) to determine if this site was characteristic of a general store.

Based on the artifacts recovered and their comparison to other nearby general stores in the region, it was concluded that the site probably represents the remains of a store and at least one residence in the Town of Willie. A relatively large amount of non-domestic artifacts were recovered and included thicker than average glass, possibly representing glass from display cases that would likely be used in a store setting. Archaeological investigations encountered ample evidence of at least two, possibly three, structures. Remnants of a concrete slab foundation measuring 36 feet by 24 feet were found at

had acquired the property. Martin had nine children and sold the land around the pond to his children in the 1900s. Remer, the oldest child, bought the 100-acre mill property in 1909, and built the current Glisson's store and gas station at some point in the mid-1920s. Jo Ann Glisson Crews vividly recounts life in this corner of Evans County in the early twentieth century: "[E]veryone would come from miles around especially on Saturday, to have their corn ground at the mill and to purchase the few necessities that they needed from the store. [Remer] sold everything from overalls to gas... but the main function of the store and mill was serving as a gather place for the community. The children would fish and swim in the pond, while their parents shared the news of the week with their neighbors. The people didn't have much money, especially during the Depression, so Remer would grind the corn at the mill on shares to help them out. Baptisms were also a frequent event at 'The Pond.'

With the coming of the Army in 1941, the Glissons had no option but to sell their property, or in the case of Remer, the property was condemned by the government as he was vehemently opposed to losing his family home. According to family lore, Remer Glisson had to be physically removed from the property. Although his home and mill no longer stands, his legacy remains as Glisson's Store is the only remaining standing structure of all of the families and businesses that were displaced as a result of the forming of Camp (now Fort) Stewart in 1941. Mr. Glisson died in 1965 in Thunderbolt, Georgia, and is buried at Beards Creek Baptist Church.

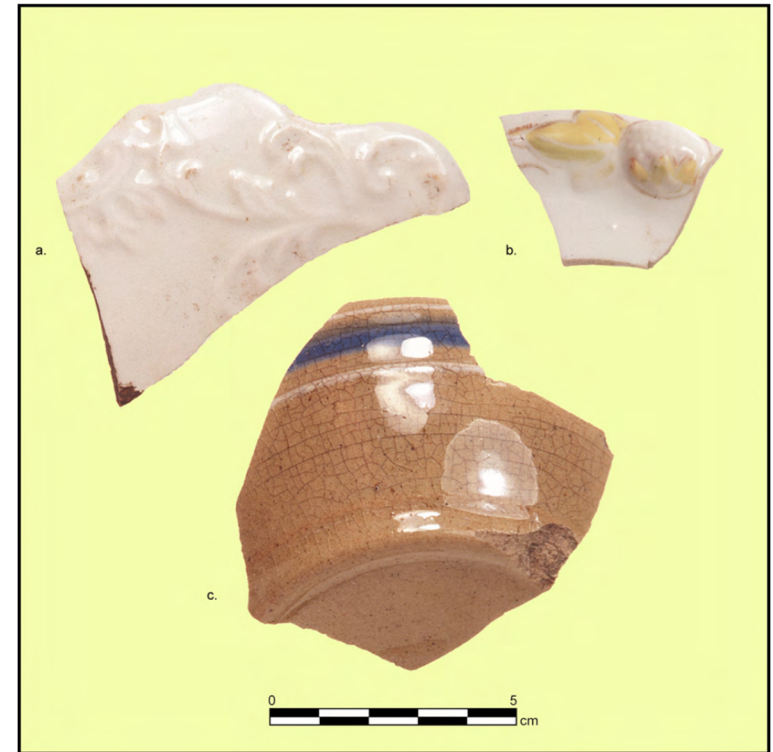
GLISSON'S STORE

Glisson's Store is today the only pre-military building still standing at Fort Stewart. The store may have also been the site of a mid-nineteenth century lumber mill, then known as Brewton's Mill. The land surrounding the pond was originally granted to John DeLoach and W.H. Edwards in 1834, but by the 1850s was apparently owned by Benjamin Brewton, the son of one of the most prominent citizens of Tattnall County, North Carolina native Nathan Brewton (1765-1855). In the 1830s, Nathan owned 9500 acres (or about a quarter of the land of present -day Evans County) and started the first Brewton's Mill north of the Fort Stewart Reservation.

Benjamin Brewton (1796-1876), started his own grist mill by the 1850s, and possibly earlier. Benjamin's mill was also called Brewton's Mill and was probably located in the vicinity of today's Glisson's Mill Pond. Benjamin served as a state legislator in the early 1840s, and in 1861 the county elected him as one of two representatives sent to Milledgeville for the Georgia Secession Convention (both Benjamin and the other Tattnall delegate voted against seceding from the Union). In about the 1850s John B. Glisson moved into the area. In the 1860s and 1870s, Glisson purchased property from Benjamin Brewton. John B. Glisson became a judge of the Tattnall County Inferior Court and was elected to the state legislature in the early 1880s.

In November 1890, John granted "the privilege of ponding waters on the land... for the purpose of running a mill on Little Canoochee Creek" to his fourth child Martin (1857-1929). This was the origin of the current Glisson's Mill Pond. By the 1890s Martin

the southeastern portion of the site. Evidence of a brick-lined well, displaced brick piers, and a trash pit were recorded at this site.



Selected ceramics recovered from 9LI763 (Sheppard's Store). a. Ironstone platter rim; b. polychrome floral painted porcelain bowl; c. banded stoneware bowl.

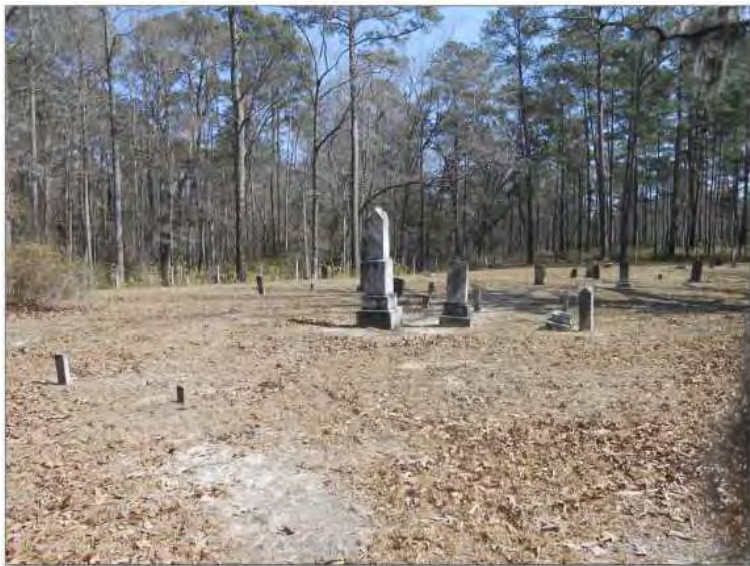


Selected glass artifacts from 9LI763 (Sheppard's Store).
a. nail polish bottle, cap, and brush; b. Hind's Honey and Almond Crème bottle.

In the year that Rev. S. N. Walker was called to pastor, a committee was formed to build a new church. The new wood frame church was 40 feet by 60 feet with a porch and two doors in front (left side for men and right side for women). When Reverend Walker died in 1930, Reverend Lockett was the pastor of the church for about a year and then Reverend N. C. Conner took over as the new pastor, who was also the founder of the Conners Temple Baptist Church in Savannah. Membership at this time was no more than about 50 members which paid 60 cents a month or donated work to pay their dues to maintain the church. The first Sunday School was also organized around this time by Houston Johnson and was their first Superintendent.

In 1942 with the military acquiring the area, the congregation was faced with either building a new church or moving their existing church. It was decided to move the Old Jerusalem Church to its current location in Groveland. During the transition between moving the new church, members met at the Old Salem Church as it was no longer being used during this tumultuous period.

Upon receipt of the land, the church and the congregants built a log structure and Reverend R. Williams continued to serve as their pastor until 1872. The church then had seven more ministers until early 1887 when Reverend S. N. Walker was called to serve. The first Board of Deacons for the Church were prominent African American farmers and included Samuel Boggs, M. C. Cassedy, Francis Geiger, Moses and Joseph Johnson, Edward Levant and Cyrus Moody.



Jerusalem Cemetery photo.



Selected metal artifacts from 9LI763 (Sheppard's Store).
a. cosmetic case; b. clock part; c. buggy or automobile hub.

This site is in essentially the “downtown” part of Willie, strategically located opposite the Willie Train Station which was the social hub of the community and northern part of Liberty County. The site was also situated along the Old Sunbury Road, an important transportation route leading to the north and northwest portions of surrounding communities. Although the economy of the area was no doubt put under severe stress by the loss of the railroad in the 1920s and the Great Depression in the 1930s, both the historical documentation and the archaeological investigations suggest that the site continued to be an important focus of activities in the local area. The number of structures depicted on the 1939 Liberty County Highway map suggests that there continued to be cultural activity at the site through the Depression.

Although there is still some uncertainty as to the identity of the site occupants, the sheer quantity and variety of artifacts suggests that this site was a store that handled a wide range of domestic, personal, and agricultural products. It may possibly represent two different stores. Due to the fact that F. L. Sheppard owned it for a period of around eight or nine years, it is possible that his son, T. A., might have operated a store on his father's property at some time, confirming a former resident's recollection; however, Effie states that a feed store was in this area, west of Sunbury Road, but opposite the station. She also states that a general mercantile store was on the same side of the road and railroad tracts. Two structures are depicted on her map of Willie in close proximity to this site, but neither structure is identified. Perhaps one was the feed store and the other the mercantile.

As a result of the archaeological investigations at this site, it was recommended eligible for listing on the National Register as it may be likely to yield important information on the history of commerce in the local region. Some of the research questions that the site may address in future study include: *What is the economic impact of 9LI763 upon Willie and the surrounding area and What are the differences and similarities between the types and brands of products present at 9LI763 in comparison to other documented stores in the area?* Since this site has yielded and may continue to yield substantive information regarding commercial operations in the early 20th century, the issue of economic influence of the railroad, topics related to mass production, and the effect of the Depression, this site within the Town of Willie has been deemed off limits to training and other land disturbing activities to help preserve a part of the local area's past.

JERUSALEM CEMETERY

There are 117 marked graves in this cemetery, dating from 1890 to 2016. This cemetery marks the site of the Jerusalem Baptist Church and surrounding community, and served the African-American community within Long Branch, located a half mile to the south. In 1865, a group of recently emancipated African-Americans founded the church and for the first two years met under a brush arbor and were led by their Pastor, Reverend R. Williams. In 1872, Miles Moody donated 2 acres of land to the Trustees of the Jerusalem Church and in the deed of gift, Mr. Moody states...

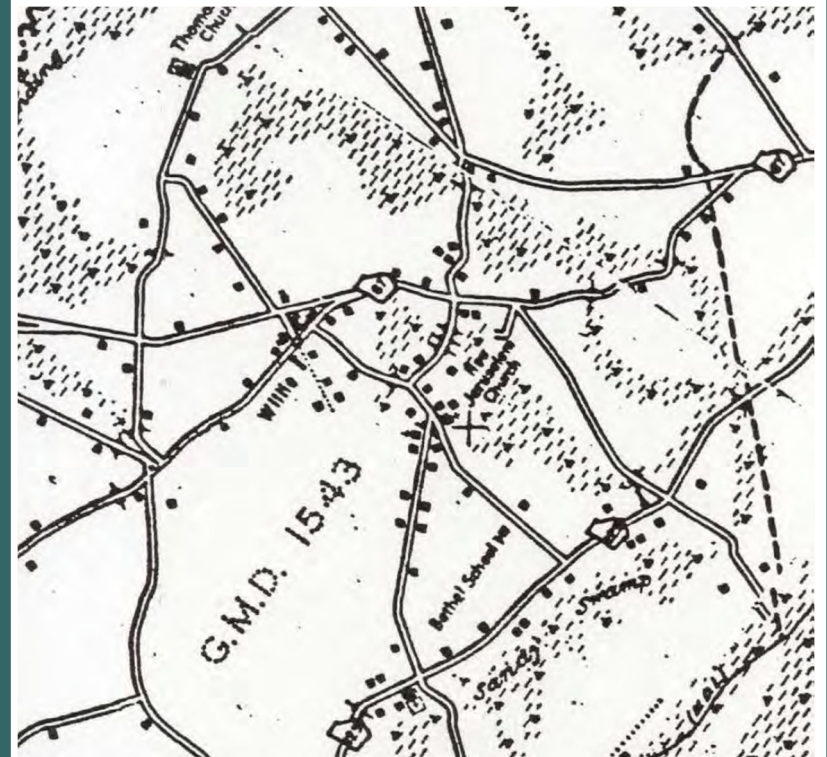
"The intentions of this instrument will certify that I. M. M. Moody...for the encouragement of those who wish to worship God and submit themselves to the [Lord] have erected a house for the worship of Almighty God, known by the name of Jerusalem and constituted themselves into a Baptist Church, having for their trustees, the following named Freeman, Sam Boggs, Joe Johnson, Cyrus Moody, Willis Moody, Ned Ball, and Frank Geiger. Now the above named Trustees on their part do agree to make bylaws for purpose of regulating in a strict religious manner the congregation assembled on their regular stated meetings. It being understood that the privilege granted is for the express purpose only for the Religious worship of Almighty God. And it will be further understood that assembling for purpose than that above named will forfeit their right to assemble any more on the above named premises. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal day and date above written. {Signed} M. M. Moody."

Rushing Moody (wife of Miles Martin Moody) acquired the property upon which the cemetery sits in 1936.

The Moody family, through marriage were connected to several prominent families in the area including the Warnells who operated in the lucrative timber and naval stores industry in the surrounding communities as well as the John Littleberry Hendry family who moved into Liberty County in the late 1790s. Most of the other burials are from the related Sullivan and Southwell families.



Z. R. Moody Cemetery Photo.



Portion of 1939 map of Liberty County highways depicting town of Willie.



Town of Willie, circa 1920.

Artist's conceptual rendering from Effie Smith's *The Town of Willie* (1973), with selected annotations.

Z. R. MOODY CEMETERY

The Z.R. Moody Cemetery is named after the previous landowner, Mrs. Zada Rushing Moody. Originally, the cemetery contained at least 21 marked burials as indicated by the initial inventory conducted during the 1960s. However, at some point in the 1970s and 1991, the number of marked headstones only numbered six and it is unclear as to what happened to the headstones at that time. This cemetery is located on what was part of a 716-acre tract owned by Mrs. Zada Rushing Moody and was part of the traditional Moody family holdings within the Long Branch Community.

The cemetery likely started as a typical family cemetery plot as the first burial in 1866 was that of Dr. Manning J. Moody. Dr. Moody was one of the most prominent members of the local community since the 1840s, practicing medicine, having extensive agricultural holdings, and serving a term each in the Georgia House and Senate. Upon Dr. Moody's death, his widow Penelope Moody gave their son Manning M. Moody 100 acres of the original 4,100 acres held by Dr. Moody in 1866 as well as mules, horses, cattle, hogs, cash, notes, book accounts, furniture, plantation tools, a gold watch, one buggy, two timber carriages, a two-horse wagon, two carts, and all else belonging to her husband's estate. Manning M. Moody (the son) then sold 500 acres to his brother Pharis H. Moody along with the "Moody Place" (Dr. Manning's home). Pharis Moody lived in the "Moody Place" until 1922 when the estate was further subdivided between his eight children. Five hundred and fifty acres of the Moody estate were sold to H. H. Dukes in 1923, who then sold to John P. Moody that same year. J. P. Moody sold 688 acres to the Federal Land Bank to clear a debt, to which Zada

continued to rely on cotton, rice, lumber, and naval stores as their primary exports. It was during this time that Long Branch was known as Moody's, largely from the seemingly hereditary position of Post Master within the Moody Family as well as the Moody Bridge being constructed over the Canoochee River over the former Well's Ferry. By the 1890s, the town once again was known as Long Branch.

By the late 19th century, water transport became outmoded by the relatively inexpensive rail transport in the area. As a result, Long Branch began to suffer since it did not have a rail line. By the early 20th century, as the pine forests were decimated from timbering and naval stores production, Long Branch began to fade away. In 1906, the post office was closed permanently with mail services for the area split between Daisy, Groveland, and Oneida.



Photo of Salem Cemetery.

WILLIE RAILROAD STATION (SITE 9LI973)

The Willie Station was located along the Savannah & Southern Railroad and approximately 60 feet west of the Old Sunbury Road. The location of the station is depicted in Effie Smith's sketch map of the town of Willie and archaeological investigations of the map, in 1999, identified the location as the probable site of the old station. Initial investigations identified a brick pile and a large number of artifacts typical of an early 20th century domestic site. However, deed and title research on the property was problematic, as with most of the Willie tracts. This is largely in part that most of the individual Willie Tracts reference them as lot and block numbers with no plat illustrating the actual town lots thereby tying them back into known boundaries and/or landmarks.

According to the most recent research, this location was owned by six individuals at different points of time. The majority of the site was comprised of two tracts owned by four individuals, W.P. Gooden, T.A. Sheppard, O.J. Sheppard, O.J. Olmstead, and J.J. Edwards. Between 1834 and 1840, headright grants totaling 1,000 acres and encompassing the western portion of Willie were given to Z.L. Baggs and L.B. Daniel. By 1871, this property belonged to C.C. Daniel who sold the 825 acres to H. A. Swindle. Between 1896 and 1908, Joseph L. and Ella V. Futch purchased over 600 acres of the property. W.G. Tuten bought right-of-ways through this 600 acre parcel of land around this time. In 1910, the railroad reached the Old Sunbury Road and Joseph and Ella Futch began to sell off large portions of their land. One of these was to O.J. Olmstead.

Between 1910 and 1917, M.C. Rustin purchased property from Ella or Joseph Futch. This included a plot south of the railroad right-of-way, which he then

sold to F.L. Sheppard. In 1917, F.L. Sheppard sold one and one-half acres of land to J.J. Edwards (the deed was not recorded until 1932). The Savannah & Southern Railroad was dismantled in 1923. In that year, Ella Futch sold five acres of the 100ft railroad right-of-way to J.H. Beatty. This property includes the northwest portion of the site. Between 1923 and 1930, Beatty sold three lots within this property. T.A. Sheppard purchased one of the tracts and W.P. Gooden bought the northwest portions of the site and E.F. Purcell purchased another portion. In 1933, O.J. Olmstead bought land that was part of the estate of Wiley Futch at a sheriff's sale. In 1941, the government bought the four tracts that contain 9LI973 from these four owners.

Ogden J. Olmstead is the only one of the principal owners of the site who was found in the Fort Stewart cemetery database. His headstone in the Taylors Creek Cemetery gives his birth as March 18, 1858 and death as July 11, 1934. According to the 1920 census records for the town of Willie, three of the principal owners are identified. John J. Edwards is listed as a 51-year-old farmer living with his four children on Sunbury Road. William Gooden is listed as a 40-year-old merchant with six children and lived on Lee Street. Effie Smith identifies W.P. Gooden's store as being south of the site. Although a useful map depicting approximate locations of landowners and business operators in the Town of Willie, it lacks street names and other details to allow for greater clarity of the town layout. An Allen T. (may be T.A.) Sheppard is listed as a 30-year-old farmer with four children in 1920. His address is given as Pine Avenue, but we do not know where this street is located, and Smith (1973) provides no locational information for Sheppard's home on her map.

SALEM CEMETERY

Between 1808 and 1810, the South Salem Church and cemetery were established making it one of the earliest cemeteries on Fort Stewart. Although the granite marker denotes an early 1800s establishment, the earliest surviving grave marker within the cemetery dates to 1855. In all likelihood, the initial headstones were likely wooden markers that have long decayed. The Salem Cemetery has 67 marked graves and spans from 1855 to 1935.

The Salem Cemetery is located within the area that would become known as Long Branch (also known as Moody's). During the 1840s, James Moody built a home just south of the Wells Ferry Crossing on the Canoochee River. By 1857, the Long Branch Post Office was established in the home of James Moody's son, Dr. Manning J. Moody. The center of Long Branch was an important crossroads with one road leading to Reidsville to the west, Wells Ferry (crossing the Canoochee River) to the north, and southeast towards Taylors Creek and Hinesville. This transportation route quickly became an important agricultural shipping point. During the latter half of the 19th century, the pine forests surrounding Long Branch were utilized for timbering and turpentine production, which became a large part of the local economy with logs and barrels of turpentine and rosin rafted down the Canoochee to the port of Savannah.

However, by the 1880s, the town appears to have been sparsely populated with only 25 people living in town with no schools and only one church (Salem Church). The community contained a gristmill, a wheel wright, a post office, several physicians, and 18 planters and farmers. Only three years later in 1883, Long Branch is listed as a village of 100 inhabitants with a new school (Salem School) and

should produce gender-related items and evidence of children and other activities associated with a “home place.” In fact, one of the two toys found on this project, a marble, was recovered from a test pit in the area of Edwards’ former property. It will be recalled from the historical records review that Smith reported that the Edwards children occupied themselves by playing marbles, some of which were kept as mementos by their parents.

W.P. (Preston) Gooden and J.L. Futch are the only landowners listed in the 1910 census for the 1543rd GMD. Gooden was a 30-year-old salesman at a department store in that year. His address is not given, but he may have been living in the community of Onida (Oneida) on Warnell’s Bridge Road at that time, since the town of Willie was not founded until 1911. Joseph Futch is listed as a 42-year-old farmer with seven children living at an unspecified location in the 1543rd GMD. His 30-year-old wife, Ella, is described as having no trade or profession.

Smith provides a detailed description of several aspects of the homestead. Such descriptions are often helpful in identifying activity areas and determining the function of artifacts found at a homestead. There was a large front yard at the home, which was the playground for the neighborhood, and a sugar cane patch behind the house that was harvested to make and sell syrup. While she does not give a description of the main dwelling, Smith notes the presence of a smokehouse and a garden with a large strawberry patch. She also states that the children frequently occupied their time playing marbles, and some of these were saved by the family as mementos.

Smith characterizes William Preston Gooden (1879-1945) as a merchant who first moved into the area of Warnell’s Bridge, and relocated to Willie by 1921, at which time he began the operation of a general store. At the time of acquisition, Gooden owned the southwest portion of Tract 1241, which is in the east-central portion of the site adjacent to Sunbury Road. No data is given on the location of the Gooden homestead, but Gooden’s Store (9LI312) is depicted as being on the east side of Sunbury Road on Effie Smith’s 1973 map.

Only a brief note is given about T. A. Sheppard (1889-1967) by Smith. He married Nettie Evans, and they had seven children. Smith states that his quarter-acre of property was within the right-of-way for the railroad, and it was purchased from J.H. Beatty between 1923 and 1930; this data was

confirmed by the title search. Also, a local informant stated that T. A. Sheppard had a store north of the railroad bed in the vicinity of this site; however, no evidence was found that T. A. Sheppard ever had legal ownership of the tract.

Although the railroad and the Willie Depot were an important part of the development of the local area, only brief mention is given in historical sources. The railroad was an enterprise of William G. Tuten of Bryan County, primarily to transport logs from the forests of central Liberty and Tattnall counties to his sawmill in Bryan County. The rail or tramway was extended to Sunbury Road by 1910, and eventually ran to Glennville.

Savannah & Southern Railway

W. G. TUTEN, Pres. & Treas.

STEWART STARR, Gen. Mgr.
(In Charge of Operation and Traffic)

GENERAL OFFICES:

LETTFORD, GA.

G. T. TUTEN, V. P. & Sec., G. F. G. P. A., Audr., Car Acc. & Gen. Claim Agt.

NO. 5 Freight	NO. 3 MIX	NO. 1 MIX	MILES	MARCH 2, 1913		NO. 2 MIX	NO. 4 MIX	NO. 6 Freight	
	P. M.	A. M.				A. M.	P. M.		
	X 7 20	X 8 05	0	Norden	Ar	7 5	6 50		
				2.1					
	7 30	8 15	2.1	Bula		7 40	6 35		
				2.5					
	7 45	8 30	1.6	Hayman		7 27	6 20		
				2.5					
	7 55	8 45	7.1	Letford	Lv	7 15	6 05		
	7 55	9 00		Letford	Ar	7 00	5 45		
				1.4					
			8.5	Canoechee Park					
				1.5					
	8 10	9 20	10.0	Strumbay		6 48	5 30		
				2.6					
	8 20	9 30	12.6	Willie	Lv	X 6 35	X 5 15		
	P. M.	A. M.				A. M.	P. M.		
Savannah Division									
Under Const'n									
A. M.				Letford					
6 00			0	3.7					
				Spells					
6 20			3.7	2.4					
				Tuten's Camp					
6 35			6.1						

Line from Speers to Tuten's Camp is Logging
Road. Service as Accommodation.

Connections at Norden With S. A. L. with trains to and from Savannah both morning and evening excepting when Seaboard is more than 30 minutes late.

1913 Savannah & Southern Railroad Schedule.

Connections at Norden With S. A. L. with trains to and from Savannah both morning and evening excepting when Seaboard is more than 30 minutes late.

Since 9LI973 appears to be situated in one of the primary commercial areas and the historical center of the old town of Willie, it has an important place in the history and development of the community. In fact, Willie was the most populous town in the county in 1920, and it boasted schools, churches, industries and public facilities. While in operation, the Willie Depot was a focus of activity. The train station drew passengers from miles around, and the town continued to thrive until the Depression. Friends and relatives gathered at the station for arrivals and departures. Also, the station was an important commercial hub for the transportation of crops from the farms, turpentine, lumber and other goods.

Based on the archaeological investigations, there continues to be considerable activities, even through the loss of the railroad and the hard times of the Depression. One local resident noted that T.A. Sheppard's store was a most popular spot, and the cars would be parked along Sunbury Road on the weekends. However, the location of Sheppard's store remains in question. As noted in the discussion of 9LI763, Smith said there were two stores on the west side of Sunbury Road and north of the railroad, one a feed store operated by Rustin and the other a general mercantile whose owner/operator was not identified. The latter could have been Sheppard's store. There is also the possibility that after he acquired Tract 644, Sheppard converted the depot into a mercantile. Or, he may have operated more than one facility.

The site was also owned by several of the prominent citizens of the county, including W.P. Gooden, J.J. Edwards, T.A. Sheppard, O.J. Olmstead, T.E. Strickland and Zack Futch. Of these, J.J. Edwards is the only one to have a documented residence. This little-investigated part of the site



Selected glass bottle artifacts from 9LI793. a. light green Coke bottle; b. amethyst glass soda bottle.

Archaeological investigations at the site initially set out to identify the former Willie Depot. A portion of the overall site was identified as the former site of the depot but also properties owned by three other residents. The majority of the diagnostic artifacts recovered from this site range from 1920 to 1940 with most of those dating to the 1930s. Structural evidence of the remains of the old depot may be present but did not appear to be intact. Similar to the Sheppard's Store site, thick glass was recovered on the portion of T. A. Sheppard's lot. A former resident placed Sheppard's Store on the north side of the tracks and the presence of thick glass at this location may indicate it was used for glass display cases that were used in his store, or possibly the old depot was reused as a separate store. A well and a trash pit were also recorded nearby and may be directly associated with the use of that portion of the site as a depot or may be associated with the residence use of the property to the south believed to be J.J. Edward's residence.

Since the railroad transported the products of the local farms and forests to market, as well as passengers to Savannah and other destinations, the Willie Station was an important focal point of commerce and social life in the town and the surrounding area. In fact, the only published photograph found to date of the Willie Station is of a gathering of a Sunday School group waiting to meet the evening train in 1912. It is evident from this photo that the station was located less than 10 feet from the tracks, and it is probable that the west side of the building is in the photo.

Smith mentioned several of the railroad employees at Willie Station. Charlie Tuten managed the train, and Ben Turner was the engineer. Pearl Sheppard was the first ticket agent of the Willie Station; she was replaced by Estel Purcell. W.G. Tuten and his son, Grover T. Tuten, had several tracts of land within Willie; however, none could be specifically identified as the site property. As W.G. Tuten had a 200ft side track and a 100ft-width right-of-way from J.L. Futch in 1911, he already had rights to build the station, and a lease or purchase of

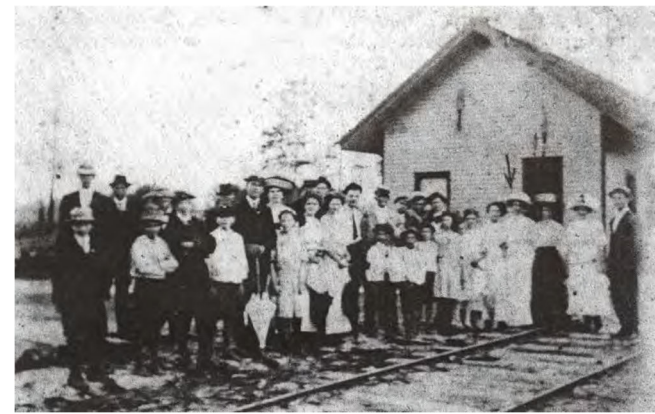
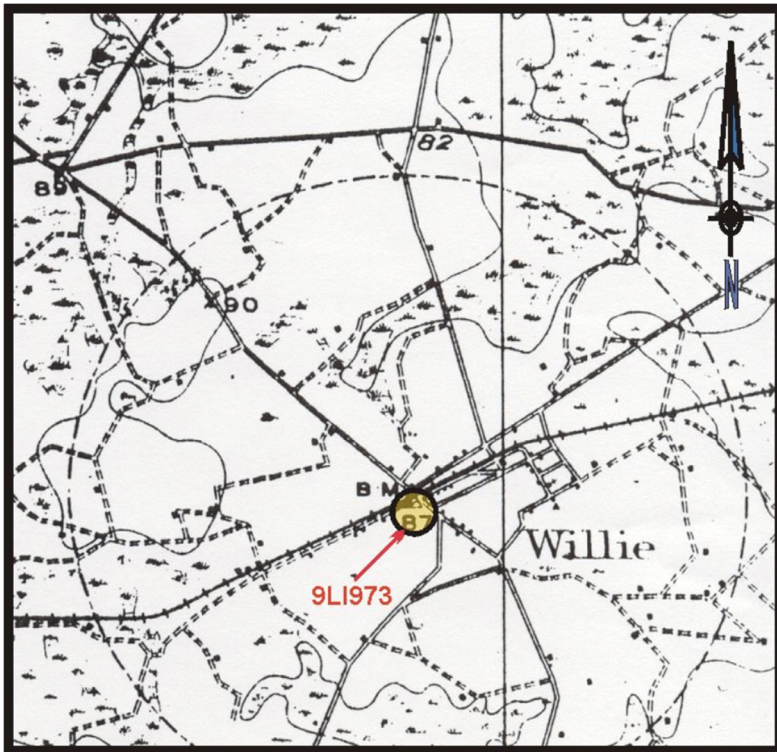
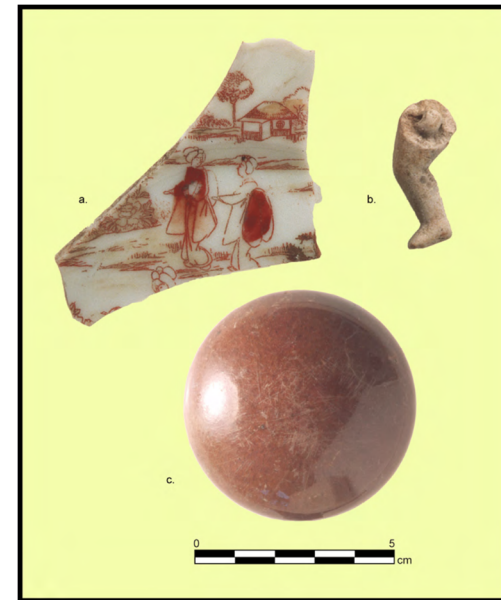


Photo of Willie Station 1912.

the property was unnecessary. The fate of the station when the railroad was dismantled in 1923 was not mentioned in the historical sources. No documentation was found relating to the dispersion of the assets of the Savannah & Southern Railroad, so it is uncertain whether Willie Station was sold to an individual, was dismantled, or reverted to the landowner of the property at that time.



1920 map depicting Willie and Depot location.



Selected artifacts from 9LI973. a. Imari style decorated porcelain saucer fragment; b. doll leg fragment; c. redware



Glass lamp chimney form 9LI973.