



WINDOWS TO THE PAST

Primitive Watercolors From
Guilford County, North Carolina,
in the 1820s

THE WORLD.



DELINEATED
BY
ABIGAIL ALBERTSON

FOR
JUDITH MENDENHALL.

WINDOWS TO THE PAST

Primitive Watercolors From
Guilford County, North Carolina,
in the 1820s

Karen Cobb Carroll

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ON THE COVER: ANDREW LINDSAY AND DAUGHTER MARY ELIZA

THE TOWN

Guilford County, carved from the older Rowan and Orange Counties, was established in 1771, and Martinville (established in 1785 in what is now northwest Greensboro) eventually became its county seat. When citizens in the eastern part of the county pressed for a more central location, however, the appropriate legislation was passed in 1808 to “remove the seat of Justice to the Centre of our said County [Guilford]”¹. The act appointed seven town commissioners to obtain the necessary land.

Because the surveyed center of the county, a low depression with poor drainage, was seen as both an unhealthy place and a poor building site for such a new beginning, the commissioners chose the nearest high ground on which to lay out the town. They purchased 42 acres in an area known as the “Pine Barrens” from Ralph Gorrell, I, for \$98.00, and divided the tract into lots, 44 of which were sold at public auction. The proceeds from this sale, \$1689.44 1/2, enabled the commissioners to remove the county records from Martinville, and rebuild the courthouse, jail, stocks, and whipping post, all of which were erected near the intersection of Elm and Market Streets, the log courthouse being in the intersection itself.

By 1815 the 45 lots which comprised Greensborough (as it was originally spelled) were valued at \$14,776 (an additional lot had been sold in the interim). Jamestown, the other “city” in Guilford, was twice as large, with 99 lots. But the county’s economy was still very much based upon agriculture, most of the capital being invested in farm land and slaves. Of the 2,355 county poll taxes collected in 1815, 34% were paid on

blacks. Although few land owners possessed over ten slaves, the blacks did represent a numerically significant portion of the county population.² Greensboro was very much a small rural seat of government in a farming county.

The decade of the 1820s was one of measurable growth for Greensboro. In 1810 the state legislature adopted Greensboro’s first charter, allowing town administration by six commissioners, appointed by the legislature. An 1824 act allowed for five commissioners of police to be elected by the “free men” of Greensboro to one year terms.³ In 1828 additional legislation was passed “for the better regulation of the town of Greensboro and Guilford County.”⁴ Five commissioners, a secretary, and a tax collector/police officer guided the town.⁵ A tax schedule was established and a town census ordered.

The 1829 census of Greensboro showed a small town beginning to thrive. The 59 town lots were valued at \$51,185, an average of \$867.54 per lot. This represents 164.2% gain in value over the 1815 average of \$328.36 per lot, and more than 21 times the 1808 average lot value of \$38.39. The most valuable real estate, occupied by the Mount Hecla Steam Cotton Mill, was located at the corner of Bellemeade and Greene Streets.

As the town grew and prospered, it began to exert its influence on citizens throughout the county. Serving as the hub of governmental organization, it was natural that Greensboro became the hub of military organization as well. Guilford County boasted a militia company as early as 1807, with parades and drills held in Martinville. By 1810, military

activity had moved to Greensboro, although the militia still called themselves the “Martinville Regiment.” Before 1822 the name was changed to the “First Regiment of the Guilford Militia,” and the established uniform was a hat and plume, coat and pants, epaulettes, boots, sword and sash. Some officers were paid, and although all able bodied men were expected to serve, exemptions were granted for a number of years or for life.⁶

Musters and parades were an important part of the military, and public notices such as the following were frequent:

“Capt. Peeples Company of Cavalry will parade at Paisley’s Spring near Greensborough, on Wednesday the 11th instant, precisely at ten o’clock A.M. armed and equipped as the law directs.”⁷

In 1828 a new company was established for the Greensboro district east of town. Fourteen years later the First Regiment, with all its companies, had become the 57th regiment of the North Carolina Militia.⁸ This unit, despite reorganization, continued to serve into the 20th century.

Educational institutions were another important aspect of life in and around Greensboro in the early 19th century. Greensboro Academy, chartered by act of the legislature in 1816, was administered by the Rev. Eli Caruthers in the 1820s. Its counterpart, the Greensboro Female Academy, was run by Miss Judith Mendenhall. The William Paisley family was also especially active in the early history of these schools. By 1846 at least six other institutions opened their doors.⁹ William Swaim, editor of the local newspaper, commented on the town’s educational opportunities:

In a government, which can only be upheld by the

wisdom and virtue of its population, we are not to overlook the institutions of learning, in our estimate of the advantages possessed by particular cities, towns, or neighborhoods. And fortunately for us, we are blessed with a male, and a female Academy, now under the superintendence or preceptors and preceptresses inferior, in point of qualifications, to none; - these Academies are, at this time, on the “full type of successful operation,” and want nothing but that encouragement which they deserve, to place them among the first institutions of the kind in the country. To these may be added, a Sabbath school, at the female Academy, under the superintendence of the Misses Hoggs.¹⁰

The schools functioned on variable schedules and obtained school books through purchase at the **Patriot** office.

In addition to established schools, subscription schools were also present in Guilford County in the early 19th century. By this method, a teacher would sign a contract with local citizens, usually the parents of school children. The subscribers would pay the teacher’s salary, prorated per pupil. Both men and women served as teachers, and conditions of employment varied.¹¹

Articles of an agreement made this 14th Day of December in the year 1825 betwen Robert Gorrell of the one part and we the sevrel Subscribers of the other part Witnesseth that I Robert Gorrell Do here by obligate myself to teach a English Commen school the term of three months Saterday Excepted and The Said Gorrell And majorrity of the Subscribers Doth agree the School is to continue for two Quarters and I Said

Gorrell am to Discharge My Duty in Said School as far as in my power The School is to be kept where the majority of Employers Doth agree and we the Subscribers are to furnish a comfortable house and fire wood when needed and I Sd Gorrell obligate myself to give Rageler and Due attendance to the School Except in case of Sickness or accident of Myself or family or this article Shall be void the School Shall commence on Tuesday the 19th Inst and We the Subscriber are to pay said Gorrell for Each Scholler one Doller and fifty cents or one Doller and one Bushel of corn at choise with the Subscriber if paid In corn it is to be Delivered at Said Gorrell's house Also any subscriber sending more than he or she has subscribed shall pay for the same.¹²

This article of agreement made between Mary W. Thom in one part and the Undersigned in the other certifieth that the said MW Thom promises to teach an English School Orthography Reading Writing Arithmetic English Grammer &c for the term of six months at \$3 per Scholar which would be \$6 for the term of twelve months She promises to attend faithfully in due time and take all possibly pains to render Satisfaction

We the Undersigned do promise to pay the said Mary W. Thom as above required for the said term of Six months We also promise to furnish fuel and what else may be deemed necessary to render the School Comfortable with A good School house in testimony whereof we have hereunto Set our names

Dec 3rd 1830

NB from 16 to 20 or more Scholars

NB She would allow her Employers and herself to be

at liberty at the end of one Qr to be satisfied and determine whether she shall continue 6 months or not payment will not be required until the School expires except in cases of necessity when she makes application to her Employers She will expect their assistance Board herself¹³

Students pursuing higher education often attended the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Others attended medical colleges in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Greensboro Female College was chartered in 1838 and provided higher education for women. Education at all levels was an important part of life in early Greensboro.

The town also served as the hub of the county's economic activity, and by 1820, stage roads connected Greensboro with many areas of the state. Present-day (1983) Market Street connected with roads leading to Hillsboro and Raleigh on the east, and Salem on the west. What is now Church Street once led to Milton and Yanceyville (Caswell County), and today's Battleground Avenue served as the transportation artery north into Virginia. The road to Salisbury, since obliterated by progress, followed a general southwest course from the 200 block of present-day West Market Street. The road to Asheboro followed much of what is today Ashe Street, and the Fayetteville Road followed present day Asheboro Street.¹⁴

These connections to other areas of the state encouraged the development of service-related industry. Albright's Hotel, established before 1835, was located at 105-107 E. Market Street.¹⁵ Moring's Tavern also served the traveler during this period.¹⁶ Merchants in Greensboro provided goods to travelers and native Guilfordians alike. Five stores operated in 1829; by 1833 this number grew to 27 establishments.¹⁷

John M. Logan operated a general merchandise store for many years, as did Robert Lindsay and his sons, David Caldwell, Jr., and Robert Moderwell.

Greensboro provided other goods and services to meet the needs of the local citizens. In 1826, William Adams and son Peter produced fur and wool hats. They not only accepted cash but also jury and state witness tickets as well as county produce as payment. Samuel Shelton operated a cabinet shop for several years. The Lindsay and Hoskins Tannery produced saddles and harness, and Benjamin Overman made and repaired coaches and gigs. John W. Harris procured a manufacturing concern and proceeded to make "cold pressed castor oil."¹⁸

Of all the early entrepreneurs of Greensboro, perhaps the most enterprising was Henry Humphreys. Humphreys arrived in Greensboro before 1815 from Virginia via Caswell County and Jamestown. By 1815 he owned two town lots in the northwest square of Greensboro valued at \$830. In 1828 he began construction of the Mount Hecla Steam Cotton Mill, located at Bellemeade and Greene Streets. The five-story brick structure wove cotton yarns and materials which were sold in North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. By 1829 Humphreys owned three lots in Greensboro valued at \$12,000, 23% of the entire real estate value of the town. At that time he owned several slaves and also employed free blacks and apprentices. The mill operated in Greensboro into the 1850s and issued local scrip to be used in lieu of cash. In addition to the mill, Humphreys operated a large dry goods store with satellite stores in Wilkesboro and Statesville. He also constructed "Humphrey's Folly", a three-story structure on the southwest corner of Market and Elm Streets which served as his residence and store location. Humphreys was

involved in mining and real estate as well and was one of Greensboro's most successful early industrialists.¹⁹

The 1820s and the years following were ones of growth for Greensboro. William A. Graham described the town in 1837:

Greensboro continues to improve rapidly in new and ever elegant buildings - the cotton factory has been doubled - a large Brick building has been erected for the "Caldwell Institute" - and the Methodists are putting up a building for an extensive female seminary - a furnace for smelting cooper has lately been put in operation not far off, the ore of which abounds in this county - I saw to day a specimen of the melted ore, not quite purified, which appears to promise large profits to miners.²⁰

Along with Greensboro's industrial growth developed her social climate. Several clubs and organizations served the community. William Swaim described the Greensborough Library Society in an 1830 article:

We yet have to speak of another institution, which deserves the undivided support of both town and country. We allude to the "Greensborough Library Society." Although the active operations of this Society have been, for a short time, suspended, yet we anticipate the most beneficial results from its recent resuscitation. The Library imbraces almost every work that young men should read, aside from works of a professional character . . . The difficulty of procuring books is obviated by the institution of Library Societies, and now forms no obstacle to improvement. Every young man, whether student, mechanic or apprentice, may, without parsimony, in a short time, layup money enough to

procure access to a library worth \$1000. And then instead wallowing in those sinks of vice and sin which blot the reputation of our country, they may spend their idle moments, in laying the foundation of future usefulness and respectability.²¹

The Greensborough Bible Society organized for “the distribution of the holy scriptures.” The Society was interdenominational, with regular and life membership. Members provided bibles to individuals both at reduced prices and free of charge, according to means. Subscribers included the Rev. David Caldwell, Robert Donnell, Daniel Gillespie, and other leaders of the community.²²

The Greensboro Auxiliary Society was established “... for colonizing the free people of color.” In association with this group, the Meeting for Sufferings, a branch of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, organized the voyage of the **Sally Ann**, a colonization ship which sailed to Haiti in 1826. One hundred twenty-one voluntary emmigrants sailed.²³ Meetings were also held in Guilford County of The Manumission Society of North Carolina, a group committed to ending slavery. The Guilford Sunday School Union met in 1827 at Alamance Church and was led by Dr. Eli Caruthers. Another County organization was the Guilford Agricultural Society. In addition to their meetings they sponsored the 1826 “Cattle Show & Exhibition of Domestic Manufacturers,”²⁴ a forerunner of our County Fair.

Many residents of Guilford County migrated west as part of the general migration from North Carolina. Drawn by the lure of new land and slaveless territories, they left Guilford County to begin again elsewhere. Others, such as Samuel Shelton, moved to areas within North Carolina. Although

Shelton had been in Greensboro only a few years, he moved to Milton, a thriving trade center in Caswell County, and re-established his cabinet shop in 1830. Some businesses moved on the promise of better resources; the Mt. Hecla Mill was relocated in Catawba County to utilize water power.

Greensboro, Town of Promise in the 1820s, was eclipsed by other developing areas of the State and nation. Her development potential would lie dormant for over 100 years before being stirred by the industrialization of the 20th Century.

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<http://www.archive.org/details/windowstopastpri00carr>

THE LIMNER

Painters and others who practice the visual arts have always had ample resources upon which to draw in North Carolina. Such was the case with the early 19th Century limner, or untrained portrait painter, in the State. The limner was an itinerant, an independent journeyman who plied his trade wherever and for as long as support lasted. He saw himself as a craftsman rather than artist, and rarely signed his work.²⁵

North Carolina limners were often from other states and traveled a “circuit” through the area. Towns visited included Newbern, Wilmington, Fayetteville, Raleigh and Salisbury.²⁶ A typical limner would post a notice in the local newspaper, sometimes prior to his arrival, and if the response was sufficiently encouraging he would take up residence at a local inn or boarding house. Many limners not only painted likenesses but also did supplemental work such as giving lessons or painting houses. The following notice, from the **Newbern Herald**, January 20, 1809, is an example.

Mr. Belanger . . . Residing in Wilmington, N.C.
RESPECTFULLY informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Newbern that it is his intention, provided his exertions to serve them should receive a liberal patronage, to adopt it as his place of residence for a few months, but as the removal of his appartus to Newbern, would be attended with much inconvenience and expense, he wishes, previous to his determination to proceed to that place, to ascertain the probable success with which the Ladies and Gentlemen of Newbern would honor him. He therefore solicits all those in the event of his going

to Newbern, would employ him, to leave their names at the Book Store of Mr. S. Hall together with a statement of the likeness they would wish to have taken, that he may, in addition to his present stock, procure the necessary materials for painting, &c. and be enabled to discover whether his removing to that place would be an object of any consequence.

In the following statement are contained a list of the kinds and prices of the likenesses which he proposed to execute, viz.

Profiles Cut,	0	25
Do. set in frames	1	
Do. in water colurs,	3	
Do. do. do. in frames	4	
Minature of Ivory & Glass	10 to 15	
Portraits without Frames	10	
Ensigns and Masons Aprons elegantly executed at various prices.		

N. B. Mr. Bellanger will immediately proceed to Newbern, provided the Ladies and Gentlemen of that place will without loss of time leave their names at the place above mentioned.²⁷

Limners traveled in North Carolina at least as early as 1778. In addition to the locations mentioned above, they worked in Warrenton, Salem, Murphreysboro, Edenton, and Halifax. At least 27 advertising notices were printed in early local papers, 22 notices between 1800 and 1820.²⁸

The life led by the limner is difficult to trace. Few left diaries or account books and their itinerant lifestyle contributed to

their elusive character. However, one such limner, James Guild of Vermont, did leave a diary. Guild traveled widely and worked in North Carolina on several occasions.²⁹

Guild was born in Hatfield, Massachusetts, in 1797. Apparently his father died before he was nine years old and he was indentured to a farmer in Vermont. Upon his indenture release at age 21, he possessed no special skills or aptitudes which encouraged a trade. Financial consideration forced him to become a peddler, and he ". . . wondered why I should stoop so low as to follow so mean a calling (sic)." ³⁰ James wandered somewhat aimlessly for several years but was not only unhappy but also unsuccessful at his work. In despair he decided to try his hand as a tinker, a job he felt "would set me below the common class of people."³¹

After roaming New England, Guild found himself in Albany, NY. He found employment with the group of local "musioners", playing the tamborine. He was asked to participate only for a month, and "[in] the corse (sic) of that time learned to cut profile likenesses [silhouettes]."³² When he arrived in "Chickahominey," the next leg of his journey, he called himself a profile cutter.

James now "cut profiles" as a vocation, and soon bartered for 300 frames in which to sell his work. He continued his travels and rarely stayed in one location over two months. While staying in Auburn (New York) he decided to add "drawing likenesses" to his talents, but his first attempts were quite crude. When his travels left him in "Canadagua," he decided to increase his efforts.

. . . Here I went into a painter's shop, one who painted likenesses, and I my profiles looked so mean when I saw them I asked him what he would show me one day

for, how to distinguish the coulers & he said \$5, and I consented it to it and begin to paint . . . I put up at a tavern and told a Young Lady if she would wash my shirt, I would draw her likeness . . . The Poor Girl sat nipped up so prim and look so smileing it made me smile when I think of while I was daubing on paint on a piece of paper, it could not be caled painting, what it looked more like a strangle cat than it did like her. However I told her it looked like her and she believed it, but I cut her profile and she had a profile if not a likeness. Then I traveled on and stoped at every house and inquired if they wanted any profile likeness taken, and if I could not get but a trifle, I would paint for the sake of learning. In about 3 days I was quite a painter for I had one dollar for painting . . ." ³³

Practice must have improved James' skill, because he continued to draw likenesses through New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. He made his way back to Vermont, there to take up a new "career".

Guild now heard of a writing school in Royalton and decided to best his hand at writing ". . . I jumped into the stage and came to the school and immediately joined it and got my paper and went into the school and began to write . . . and stuck tie (sic) to my writing night and day . . ." ³⁴ Although he felt the school master did not sufficiently attend to discipline and some educational opportunity was lost, apparently James retained enough instruction and practice, because when he started his travels again he fancied himself a "writing master." He established a school in Middlebury, Connecticut.

This was a new business, and I came here without any

recommendor specimen of penmanship, and I hardly knew what a direct ell was, but I told them I was a writer and began my school, and in the first day I had 11 scholars and in the 2 16 scholars, from that to 20 & now then I was in great business. And I would teach my hours and then into my room and write, and although I had but little instruction I learnt faster than my scholars.³⁵

But Guild was still not satisfied with his occupations, especially painting, which he saw as ". . . a mean caling, for it was neither good for society nor beneficial to anyone only to gratify the eye."³⁶ He then determined to learn the rule and mechanics of writing as well. He developed a new writing style for business and soon ran several successful schools.

Meanwhile James continued to draw likenesses, and when demand for his writing schools diminished he decided to change concentrations; "I now begin to feel as though my penmanship was not worth as much as my painting . . . I quit my schools and went to painting profiles and made out very well."³⁷ But financial considerations intervened and he was again teaching his schools to support his painting.

When I was in Sangersfield after teaching a school, I then went to painting profiles, and often gentlemen would ask me if I could not paint miniatures. Oh yes but the profile comes much cheaper. Oh never mind the price, and having great confidence in myself, I thought I would try although it was the first time, and I made him a very good miniature. This gave me encouragement to pursue it.³⁸

Guild now styled himself a miniature painter and continued to improve. He began to take subscriptions for miniatures

before removing to a town, but teaching writing schools still formed a sizeable portion of his income. He returned home to Vermont and suffered a chronic reversal of health. Guild finally decided to travel southern states to ". . . make something or nothing, either gain my health or loose it."³⁹ This trip concerned chiefly his painting career, both training and practice, and is an interesting chronicle of the restless life of the itinerant.

Now I came to Charleston (Maine?) . . . Then I came to Albany . . . I found my health was asusal (sic) very poor, and wishing to gain some knowledge in painting I would play truant for awhile, for all the practice that I had had in miniature was when I was at Charlestown. I been in the habit of painting on paper and a Gentleman says, cant you paint on Ivory? O Yes but I am out of Ivory. Very well I have a piece and you may paint my miniature, so for the first time I attempted Ivory painting and went so much beyond my expectations that I thought I soon would be a dabster. I then came to Albany. I then dashed about in this City and to gain information in painting, I visited all the different painters and learnt all I could and then started for New York . . . Here I dashed around visiting the different painters and getting all the information I could. The I started for Philadelphia . . . I then came to (Baltimore) and wen round the City stating if I could get 12 engagued I would take them for half price in order to get started. I soon got the number and met with very good success . . . I then left Baltimore and came to Norfolk.⁴⁰

After arriving in Norfolk, Guild met a man visiting from Currituck, North Carolina. The gentleman had his miniature

taken and invited Guild to North Carolina but James required an advance subscription of 20 customers. This was obtained, and Guild traveled to Currituck and from there to Camden and Elizabeth City. He made nearly \$300 in his three months stay but decided to return to New York to further consult and learn from the artists there.⁴¹ After three months in New York, he was ready for another "southern tour."

. . . we arrived in Newburn, N.C.

Now my sole object was to make money. I cared not for this society, nor friendship any more than to have them treat me with politeness, and I do the same to them. I commenced my profession and soon found encouragement. I spend 4 months here and in that time I had cleared my expenses and made \$400 . . . Then when I would leave Town, it so happened that they went to Washington the same day I wanted to go myself. They introduced me to the first families in that place and immediately my friends were newmenous (sic) and my business very good . . . As soon as I found my business dull I was off.

In Washingt(ton) I boarded at one Dr. Talfares. . . . While I was in this place a Gentleman of great welth who lived about fifty miles in the Country on my way to Tarborough was so pleased with my miniatures offered to carry me to his house, and from thence when I pleased, if I would go to his house and paint his family. I accepted his offer and went. Here I spent a fortnight in the most agreeable manner . . . then I went to Tarborough. Here I staid about 3 weeks and made a little cash and then I was off from this Fautville where I spend three weeks. My whole aim was to make money. I did not form any acquaintance but made my business

my study. After this, I went to Wilmington. Here I spent about 4 weeks and wound up my business for N.Y.⁴²

Back in New York Guild further improved his art by instruction and practice. Again he set out south for Charleston, S.C., and after seven months he owned his own studio and had made \$13,000. He then traveled to England, where he apparently advanced his art to the acquirement of the "fame and fortune" he had so actively sought in his earlier years. He died in the West Indies in 1841.⁴³

The Guild diary is relevant to the study of North Carolina limners for several reasons. Obviously he practiced in North Carolina on at least two occasions. Although his continual drive for self-improvement may not have been typical, it was necessary for him to support himself especially in the early years with an additional occupation as did many limners. His transient life style (the diary covers only a period of six years) was typical of Carolina limners, as they located only as long as local demand for their talents would support them. His haphazard training, especially in the early years, was a common characteristic. In addition, most area limners were from out-of-state and often spent only a portion of the year in North Carolina.

The Guilford Limner is the term which will be used to describe the person (or persons) who painted in watercolor the portraits of Guilford County and Greensboro citizens in the 1820s hereinafter described. His (or her) identity remains unknown, but it is probable that he traveled through the area at least twice and perhaps more often. Although it is possible the limner was a resident of Guilford County, it is unlikely. If this were the case, William Swaim, local editor, would probably have commented on it, for few matters of local

interest escaped his notice, and no such article has been located. Also no local newspaper antedating 1826 survives, and local advertisements before that time are scarce. The limner's advertisement was probably word-of-mouth. No known limners are associated with early Greensboro, but the town was connected by stage routes to other areas of the State known to have them, and it may be presumed that Greensboro was included in their itineraries.

The style of the Guilford Limner is unique. He most probably was a practiced miniaturist; details around the face and shoulders of the subjects are quite sharp and chiseled. As the viewer moves away from the face, objects become more primitive in style and detail. Also it seems unlikely that he painted body and background and then later filled in the face of the subject as some primitive painters may have done. The continuity between head and shoulders seems to indicate their rendering at similar time.⁴⁴

The Guilford Limner painted what he saw but often embellished it with the imagination and insight of a craftsman. Motifs for floorcoverings and the styles of the wainscoting vary little from painting to painting. One can wonder if the house of each subject shared these characteristics; this is, of course, unlikely, but it is probable that these items were present in some of the residences. Floor coverings and stenciling were common during the 1820s and marbled wainscoting has been documented in at least two Guilford County houses of this time. The presence of the floor and wainscoting in most of the works is also a vehicle by which to establish a three-dimensional quality to the painting. Other items used to this same end are tables and chairs, exterior landscapes, items held in the hands of the subjects and the cartouche-like identification panels present on several works. Not to say these

items did not serve other purposes as well, but they are a way by which an unschooled painter with a limited technical knowledge could create a technical effect. This is especially important when working with watercolor on paper, an inherently two-dimensional medium (all works in this collection are watercolor on paper).

The Guilford Limner remains an enigma. He came to the County several times and painted a large body of works. Yet no works in this collection are signed; perhaps he did not see his efforts as being worthy of his hallmark. No bills or receipts can be linked to the works, and they do not bear comparison with examples of works of known artists. Yet hope is not lost. In the course of researching this group of paintings two additional paintings belonging to this group were found which were not previously known to exist. As other examples surface and further research is conducted, it is hoped that documentation can be established as to the identity and life of the Guilford Limner.

THE
WATERCOLORS



COLONEL DANIEL GILLESPIE (1743-1829)

ROBERT C. CALDWELL

Robert Craighead Caldwell was the youngest son of the Rev. David and Rachel Craighead Caldwell. Born in 1786, in 1825 he married Mary Maria Latta (1808-1849) of Orange County. He married twice again in 1851 and 1855. Caldwell was a farmer, and lived at his father's home plantation three miles west of Greensboro. The Rev. David Caldwell family was one of the founding families of Guilford County. David Caldwell moved from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania to Guilford County in 1765, and bought a large plantation on Buffalo Creek. He was instrumental in the early years of Buffalo and Alamance Presbyterian Churches and was actively involved in local educational, medical and political issues. Of his nine children several became ministers; at least one, John was involved in politics; and David, Jr. became a physician. Thus the activities of the father were perpetuated in the sons.



ROBERT CRAIGHEAD CALDWELL (1786-1878)



GEORGE ALBRIGHT (1793-1868)

GEORGE AND MARTHA ALBRIGHT

George Albright, son of Daniel and Katy Loy Albright, was a fifth generation American. His ancestors first arrived in New York and later settled in Pennsylvania. His grandfather Jacob Albright moved into Orange County, North Carolina. George was born August 21, 1793, in Alamance County. He married Martha (Patsy) Albright, born January 8, 1802, the daughter of John L. Albright. Their residence at 105-107 East Market Street in Greensboro was one of the hotels in the town. In 1820 he and his young family engaged three free blacks and one person in agriculture, but he was still not listed as a landowner in 1829.

Albright was a well respected man active within the community. He served as Town Commissioner from 1832 to 1835 and was chairman of that group again in 1845 and 1849. He again served in 1858, 1859 and 1863, and was Superintendent of Police in 1856. When Mrs. Ann Royall visited Greensboro in 1830, she observed, "among the

gentlemen were . . . George Albright . . . these are the cream, the rest are the buttermilk, sour enough . . ."⁴⁵. Although Mrs. Royall had an aversion to Presbyterians, Albright was a member of Buffalo Presbyterian Church.

Albright prospered and by 1840 owned 12 slaves and employed one free black. Eleven persons in his household were engaged in manufactures and trade. His real estate holdings in 1850 were valued at \$4,300 and by 1860 they had increased to a value of \$19,500.

Patsy Albright died in 1864 and George Albright died four years later. At his death he owned at least six lots in Greensboro, including one on West Market Street which served in the 1860s as the office of the Greensboro **Patriot**. He owned two shares in the North Carolina Rail Road, and apparently extended a measure of credit at his hotel, for his estate papers include a list of "desperate" notes covering six pages.



MARTHA ALBRIGHT (1802-1864)

JOHN MILTON CUNNINGHAM ELIZABETH CAROLINE McADOO CUNNINGHAM

John Milton Cunningham was the son of James Cunningham (1781-1821) and Mary B. Patrick. His grandfather John Cunningham was a large landowner with over 1600 acres and numerous slaves. John Milton grew up in this tradition, and at the death of his father James inherited several tracts of land, three slaves, some furniture, a watch, books and other items.

Cunningham became a member of the Buffalo Presbyterian Church, now in Greensboro, and married Elizabeth Caroline McAdoo on May 12, 1840. She was the daughter of David and Elizabeth Nicks McAdoo who ran a large plantation near Alamance Church in southeastern Guilford County. The Cunninghams lived five miles northeast of Greensboro and had three children: Aseneth Ann (1841-1863); Lenora Virginia (1842-1864); and James Calvin (1844-1881). In 1844, John Milton bought a 600 acre plantation and mill which had belonged to his grandfather. However, he probably never resided there: "family traditions says that he sent a slave from



JOHN MILTON CUNNINGHAM (1809-1856)

his Guilford County home eight miles twice each day for a jug of water that flowed from an excellent spring below the mill."⁴⁶ This plantation was sold at his death, but was purchased by son James Calvin in 1869 who operated the mill in the 1870s.

At his marriage in 1840 John M. Cunningham was already an established land owner with 14 slaves and four persons involved in agriculture. At the time of his death in 1856 he owned 28 slaves and an estate worth \$4,129.23, including his residence, a 500 acre plantation on "Redyfork" Creek. He was buried at Buffalo Presbyterian Church.

Elizabeth continued to live on her husband's estate. Her two daughters died within a year of each other (1863-1864), and Elizabeth died on July 19, 1867. Her estate, valued at \$6,000, went to son James Calvin. James had served the Confederacy during the Civil War and later became Guilford County Sheriff. His residence was on Church Street in Greensboro.



ELIZABETH CAROLINE McADOO CUNNINGHAM (1814-1867)

ROBERT DONNELL NANCY DONNELL

Robert Donnell was born in York County, Pennsylvania, on March 15, 1766, the son of Robert Donnell, II. He migrated with his family to Guilford County down the Great Wagon Road in 1771. Robert inherited his father's plantation seven years later and married Jane Morrison in 1790. The home was a self-sufficient plantation three miles north of Greensboro which though concentrated on farming, also included a store which marketed meat, flour and meal as far away as Fayetteville, North Carolina, and Petersburg, Virginia. Donnell owned eight slaves from 1800 to 1820; yet family tradition states he was not a slavery advocate. He was one of the original land purchasers for the town of Greensboro, and his lot, in the northeast quadrant, was purchased in 1808 for \$47.50. By 1815 it was appraised at \$175. In 1829, he owned two lots valued at \$700, but did not reside in the town. In 1815, Donnell held over 1200 acres in County property, and he also operated a general store.

Donnell was quite active in community affairs. He served as delegate for Guilford County to the North Carolina Lower House in 1817 and 1819, and was an active long-time member of Buffalo Presbyterian Church. In 1826 he was appointed to a committee to oversee the building of a new session house. For several years following he was responsible for seeing to the upkeep of the house: "to open and shut the doors and windows and sweep the house once a month, and to have \$3 for one year."⁴⁷ He served as President, Treasurer, and

Ruling Elder at various times. In 1830 when pew subscriptions were taken, Donnell's pew was on the front right - a \$6 expense. This location bespeak honor and prestige within the church.

In 1816 Jane Morrison Donnell died. Four years later, Donnell married Nancy McCabe Latta, a widow from Hillsborough, North Carolina. Her father, John Latta, was a delegate to the Halifax Constitutional Convention of 1776 and served as State Senator in later years. Nancy brought to the marriage lands in Orange County inherited from her first husband. Six children were born to this marriage, making a total of 11 Donnell children born between 1791 and 1832. With Donnell's second marriage, his land and slave holdings increased dramatically. In 1820 he had eight slaves; in 1830, 21. By 1840 he had 31 slaves, with eight people involved in agriculture and three persons in manufacture and trade.

Nancy Donnell died in 1841 at the age of 54, when her youngest daughter was just nine years old. Six years later Major Robert Donnell was found drowned in the Haw River. His large estate, which was divided between all his children, included four separate plantations, 23 slaves, and holdings in the State Bank in Raleigh as well as the Bank of Cape Fear. He also remembered the Church: "\$200 to be in the hands of Emsley Donnell the interest to pay a Presbyterian Minister."⁴⁸



ROBERT DONNELL (1766-1847)



NANCY McCABE LATETA DONNELL (1787-1841)



COLONEL DANIEL GILLESPIE (1743-1829)

DANIEL GILLESPIE FAMILY

The Daniel Gillespie group of watercolors is a fascinating collection representing four generations. Daniel Gillespie was born in Frederick County, Virginia, in 1743. In 1765 he received a grant from Lord Granville on South Buffalo Creek, and there he made his home. In 1769 he married Margaret Hall (1741-1834). Gillespie sat at the Halifax Conference in April, 1776, and served with distinction during the Revolution. With the rank of captain, he participated in the Battle of Alamance and the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. After the war he was promoted to Colonel in the State Militia. He served in the North Carolina House of Commons (1779), and the North Carolina Senate (1790-1795). He was a member of the Provisional Congress which drafted the North Carolina State Constitution and of the Convention of 1789 which ratified the Federal Constitution.

Gillespie added several land tracts to his holdings, including a 1783 state grant for 300 acres. By 1815 he owned 868 acres valued at \$2,170. He was one of the original purchasers of lots in Greensboro; his lot on the southeast corner of Elm and Market Streets cost \$136 in 1808. By 1815 that lot was valued at \$1,200 and Gillespie also owned a portion of an additional lot in the southwest square valued at \$125.

In spite of all his land holdings, it seems Gillespie was not a large slave owner. Although he paid three black polls (a type of tax) in 1815, in 1800 he listed only one free black in his household and no slaves. In 1810 he had two slaves, and in 1820, one slave and one free black.

Daniel Gillespie was a long-time active member and ruling elder of Buffalo Presbyterian Church. His lengthy tombstone

inscription at the Buffalo Cemetery ends: "... having through a long life discharged the duties of husband, father and friend, of soldier, statesman, and citizen, with uncommon fidelity, he died in a good old age, January 17, 1829."⁴⁹

Daniel and Margaret Gillespie had eight children. The oldest daughter Nancy married George Rankin in 1791. Rankin owned one slave in 1800 and by 1815 owned 446 acres in the county. Nancy was admitted to Buffalo Church in 1833. Nancy and George had several children, including Thankful Rankin. In 1826 Thankful exhibited and won prizes at the Guilford Agricultural Society's "Cattle Show & Exhibition of Domestic Manufactures." She married William Watson Wharton and by 1846 the Rankins and Whartons had migrated to McNairy County, Tennessee. In 1856 the Whartons continued on to Kerr County, Texas. This migration was chronicled in an interview with David N. Wharton, son of William and Thankful Wharton. He made the trip as a boy of ten, but his clear recollections served to illustrate the type of experiences that many Guilfordians experienced as they moved west. The watercolors of Daniel Gillespie, Nancy Rankin and Thankful Rankin traveled this trip as well.

Sometime in October, 1856, when I was 10 years of age, . . . (we) left McNairy Co., Tenn. in a wagon drawn by 3 mules and a horse, bound for Kerr Co., Texas. In the wagon was packed our household goods, personal effects . . . and enough food to last 2 months.

We averaged 18 miles per day, and it took us 50 days to make the trip. Near San Antonio, we met a young man on horseback who stopped us and asked us where we were going and we told him "Kerr Co.". He said we would never be able to keep our mules and horses



MARGARET HALL GILLESPIE (1741-1834)

and that we better turn back. (The party turned back and settled in DeWitt Co. on rented land).

We planted 60 acres of corn and we harvested 60 acres of nubbins. We were so discouraged we decided to go on to Kerr Co. and brave the depredations of the Indians. This we did going immediately to a log cabin on the Watson Creek survey . . .

We spent the first year in clearing land and getting a crop started, and then hauled lumber from Kerrville to build a house. We all had the surprise of our lives when mother (Thankful Rankin Wharton) said we could have a dance to celebrate the opening of our new home, mother being an old school presbyterian and very religious.⁵⁰

Watson descendants live in Kerr County to this day.

Robert Gillespie, son of Daniel and Margaret Hall Gillespie, was born July 31, 1778. He grew up on his father's farm and made his home on the original land tract of Daniel Gillespie on South Buffalo. He married Nancy Hanner and eight children were born to this marriage. Gillespie was a farmer and probably managed much of his father's acreage. Also not a large slave owner he owned seven slaves in 1820, five of whom were under 14 years of age. The two older blacks were female who worked on the Gillespie farm.

Gillespie died September 23, 1829, and was buried at Buffalo Presbyterian Church. His wife Nancy received the Dower portion of his estate, and the remainder, upon their petition, was divided among his children. Nancy continued her family's support of Buffalo Church; in 1830 her pew subscription placed her behind her brother-in-law Daniel Gillespie and in



ROBERT GILLESPIE (1778-1829)

front of her brother John Hanner. Nancy and her son William Boston remained on the homeplace and farmed. In 1840 she owned four slaves, including at least one house slave, with four persons involved in agriculture. By 1850 she had divested herself of most of her property, and her land was only valued at \$500.

Nancy Hanner Gillespie died February 8, 1852. Her will, written in 1849, leaves the bulk of her remaining property to William Boston. She also mentions her slave named Leach: Leach was to "have her own time to do for herself after my death," and to receive her spinning wheel, a chest, small oven, and \$5. Sons Robert and William were to take care of Leach. This was reversed in a codicil written two days before Nancy's death. Leach was then left to William Boston and Daniel, and William Boston "shall have use of her to keep house as long as he carries on the shop." Nancy's last item in the codicil states that she leaves to Robert Hanner Gillespie "my husband's and my own Likenesses."⁵¹

The final watercolor in the Gillespie family group is of John Patterson Gillespie. John was the son of John S. and Nancy Patterson Gillespie, and was the great grandson of Colonial John Gillespie, brother of Colonial Daniel Gillespie. John P. Gillespie died in 1891.

*Two sons Boston & Daniel
I also give to my son Robert all
belonging to my husband and my own
Likeness.*

WILL OF NANCY HANNER GILLESPIE



NANCY HANNER GILLESPIE (1790-1852)



NANCY GILLESPIE RANKIN



THANKFUL RANKIN WHARTON

PATTERSON-GILLE

• 18°



JOHN PATTERSON GILLESPIE (d. 1891)



JOHN MCCLINTOCK LOGAN (1797-1853)

JOHN AND NANCY LOGAN

John McClintock Logan was born October 15, 1797, in County Donegal, Ireland. He immigrated to America and landed in Greensboro via Philadelphia in 1821. Nine years later he became a naturalized American citizen.

Logan was an active politician in early Greensboro. He served as Town Commissioner six times between 1830 and 1842. In 1827 he was Greensboro's Jailer. In 1829 he was appointed Tax Collector and Public Officer for the town and in that same year he and T. Early Strange were appointed to assess taxes and take a town census. He served as Clerk of the County Court from 1837 until his death in 1853.

Logan was an early member of the local militia unit. In 1829 he served as their Scribe and one year later was a Captain. By 1831 he was a Lieutenant Colonel, and in 1834 was the Commanding Officer of the 1st Regiment of the Militia. He resigned that office in 1836. In 1841 he received a commission as Brigadier General of Infantry, 8th Brigade. In 1847, a volunteer company formed within this Brigade for service in the Mexican War was named the Logan Guards in his honor. In 1848 he was elected Major General of the 9th Division.

Logan married Nancy Dick Patrick, sister to Elizabeth Dick Lindsay, in 1825. Their son Thomas died in infancy but their daughter Isabella survived. Nancy died October 8, 1827, and is buried with her infant son. Logan remarried Elizabeth Ambler Strange (1807-1845) of Virginia in 1829-1830. Their home stood on the southwest corner of Elm Street and Friendly Avenue, and of their four children only John Early Logan survived to adulthood.

Before his death Logan achieved a measure of financial security. In April 1829 before his marriage to Elizabeth, his household included four small children (excepting Isabella, identity unknown), two slaves and one free black. His two town lots were valued at \$2,000. One year later, after his marriage, his household had expanded to four children, four adults and ten slaves. By 1840 only five slaves remained. In 1850 Logan's real estate was valued at \$3,600. At his death in 1853 he owned assets in excess of \$13,000. This included 11 lots, a gold mine, a plantation, nine slaves, various bonds and miscellaneous items. These were divided among his two children.



NANCY DICK PATRICK LOGAN (1797-1827)



SUSAN A. GILMORE (1811-1892)

SUSAN A. GILMORE

Susan A Gilmore was born June 5, 1811, daughter of John and Jane Gilmore. On December 15, 1831, she married her first cousin, Robert Shaw Gilmore, Jr. (1809-1901). Robert S. Gilmore, Sr., was a merchant and farmer who lived two miles southeast of Alamance Church in Guilford County. Robert, Jr. grew up upon this farm among nine siblings, including John Adams Gilmore (Gilmer), future Confederate legislator. Robert, Sr. owned both land and slaves and in 1815 owned a lot in the town of Greensboro.

Robert, Jr. inherited a parcel of land from his maternal grandfather, Arthur Forbis. In 1837, he deeded this property to his father and it is presumed that at this time he moved to Mt. Airy, North Carolina, with his wife and two-year old daughter Elizabeth. Four other children were born there. In 1840 Samuel Gilmore, age 12, orphan nephew of Robert and Susan, moved into their home. They raised him and later provided for his education at Trinity College (Duke University). The Gilmores remained in Mt. Airy, where Susan Gilmore died in 1892 at the age of 80. Robert died in 1901.



MARGARET PATTERSON (1796-1865)

MARGARET PATTERSON

Margaret Patterson was born in 1796, the daughter of William and Nancy Patterson. On December 18, 1827 she married widower Robert Rankin of Guilford County. His first wife Margaret Scott had borne at least eight children and died in 1826. To Margaret Patterson Rankin were born three sons. Robert Rankin was a large land owner on North Buffalo Creek, and Margaret lived on this farm, located near Battleground Road. She died in 1865 and was buried at Bethel Church.



JOHN HANNER (1777-1850)

JOHN HANNER FAMILY

The collection of Hanner watercolors is unique. It is the only example in this group of paintings of both parents and all children living at home. John Hanner, born in October, 1777, was the son of Robert and Isabella Erwin Hanner. On September 4, 1801, he married Ann Gillespie, daughter of Colonel John and Elizabeth Armstrong Gillespie. The Hanners had a total of 12 children: Pleasant and an unnamed child died very young, and Emsley survived only two years until 1804. Malinda died in 1826 at age 18, but all other children survived to adulthood. The Hanners lived on an 800 acre tract three miles southeast of Greensboro. Hanner farmed, and by 1830 owned six slaves.

John Hanner was a well-known and well-respected citizen of Greensboro. He served as Clerk of the County Court and Register of Deeds from 1816 until 1832, when he was succeeded by his son Alfred. He was a friend and relative of the large Gillespie family, having married the daughter of Colonel John Gillespie. In 1820 Hanner and Henry Humphreys were co-executors of the will of William C. Chapman. Hanner also performed many church duties in conjunction with Robert Donnell.

Hanner's affiliation with Buffalo Presbyterian Church was long and active. He and his wife were admitted to the Church in August, 1821. By 1825 he served as clerk and later as secretary of the congregation. In 1829 he and two other commissioners were appointed to auction the church pews at public sale. He later served as trustee to the Church and he and many members of his family are buried at Buffalo.



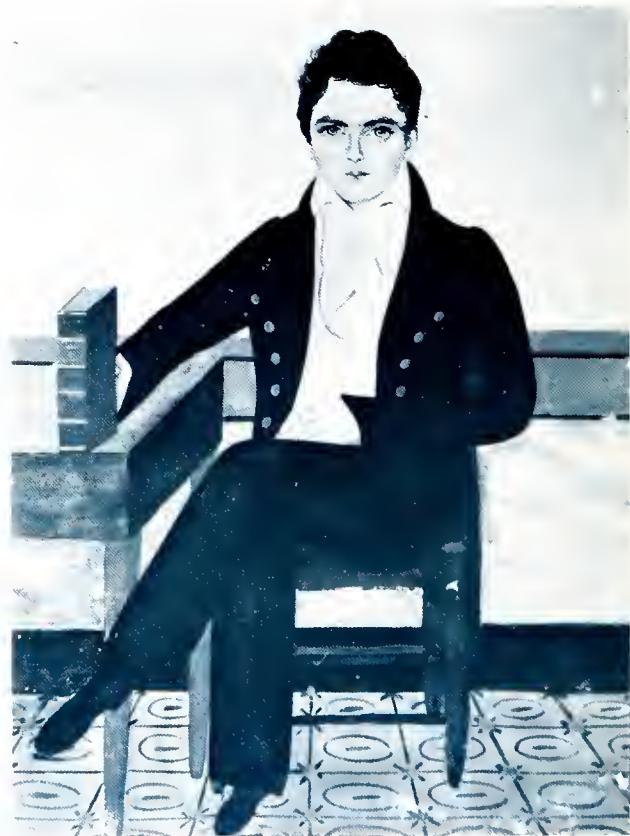
ANN GILLESPIE HANNER (1780-1858)

John Hanner died intestate January 10, 1850. At that time he owned over 600 acres, including his home plantation on South Buffalo and a tract in the Alamance area. The home plantation was awarded to his son Allen. His 12 slaves, valued at \$3,000, were divided among the family members. Ann continued to live at the homeplace until her death in February, 1858. Her will mentioned three slaves. She left to each of her five surviving children one bed and accessories; Allen and daughter Ann Eliza were to divide the remaining household furniture.

The Hanners' eldest daughter Jane was born in 1802. She married Joseph Armfield and died in 1848. Apparently she had left home when the watercolors were painted in 1826, as no painting of this daughter survives.

Alfred Emsley Hanner (1805-1836) was the eldest son of John and Ann Hanner, and an active Greensboro lawyer. Raised on his father's farm, at age one he inherited 100 acres of land adjoining his father's from his grandfather John Gillespie. He was a contemporary of Ralph Gorrell, II, and was licensed to practice law in January, 1928. He served as guardian to the children of Robert Gillespie, and was also administrator of the William Swaim estate in 1835. Apparently a member of the Greensborough Library Society, he published the following notice in 1829:

Persons who have Books borrowed from me are requested to return them as soon as they peruse them, as a number of my books have been borrowed for more than 12 months, it is impossible for me to recollect who have (sic) them in possession, those who have borrowed books within a month may still retain them as my only design is to know where my books are.⁵²



ALFRED EMSLEY HANNER (1805-1836)



JOHN GILLESPIE HANNER (1806-1849)

Hanner was also a member of Buffalo Presbyterian Church, and served in 1832 as Clerk of the County Court and Register of Deeds. He was a colonel in the local militia unit.

Hanner, long time friend of William Swaim, editor of the **Greensborough Patriot**, owned the **Patriot** building located seven doors west of the courthouse on what is today West Market Street (then West Street). In addition to serving as Swaim's administrator, Hanner continued to operate the **Patriot** after Swaim's death. In 1836 Hanner and C. N. B. Evans of Milton, North Carolina, bought the newspaper and operated it until 1837.

Alfred became engaged to Isabella McConnell. Family legend states that Isabella was originally engaged to Orpheus Hanner, brother to Alfred, but upon meeting Alfred changed her mind. Whatever the case, their engagement was broken by Alfred's death on August 26, 1836, at age 31. He died of "camp colic" (dysentery) while attending court at Wentworth (Rockingham County), North Carolina, and was buried in the Buffalo Cemetery.

John Gillespie Hanner was born July 6, 1806. He studied medicine with Dr. L. Watson of Greensboro and attended lectures at the University of Pennsylvania. By 1830 he was a practicing physician in Greensboro, and later moved his practice to Randolph County. On October 6, 1840, he married Ann Palmer Goldston, and they located one mile south of present day Siler City (Chatham County), North Carolina. They had three children. Hanner died May 1, 1849, at age 43.

Orpheus Smiley Hanner (1810-1870) was a merchant and farmer. He married Margaret Elizabeth Goldston (1833-1910), sister to Ann Palmer Goldston Hanner. They settled in Chatham County on Margaret's father's home plantation,



ORPHEUS SMILEY HANNER (1810-1870)

which Orpheus later owned. The couple had seven children.

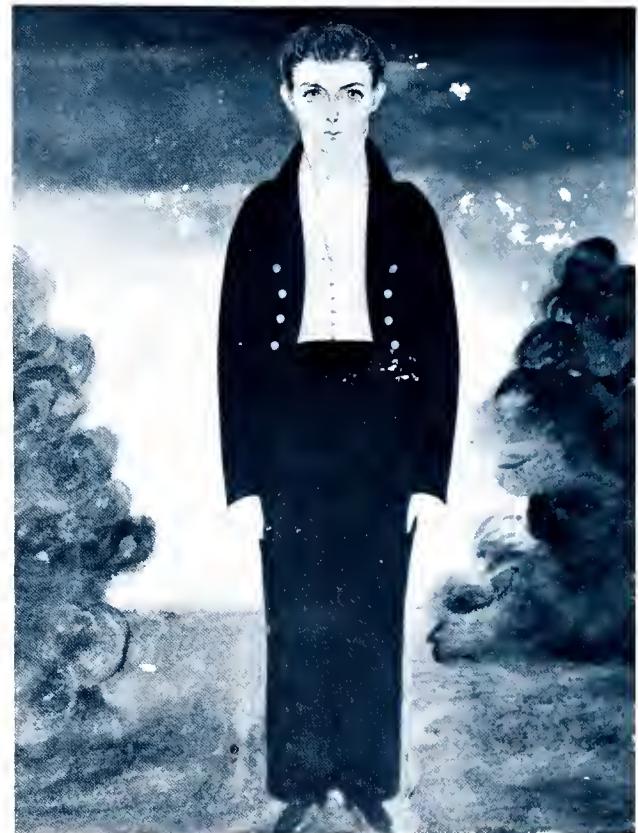
Allen Armstrong Hanner was born March 13, 1813. He inherited his father's homeplace in 1850. He was also a supporter of Buffalo Church. Although he never married, at the death of his brother-in-law Robert Young he accepted guardianship of John A. Young, son of his sister Caroline. At Allen's death on November 25, 1886, he left his property to his nephew, and this became the Greensboro Nursery Company tract.

Daniel James Hanner was born in 1815. In 1849 he married Susan E. A. Young (1829-1882) of Guilford County. He was a merchant at Graham, North Carolina, and later moved to Davidson County. There he established a post office at Hannersville and was a merchant and farmer. Daniel had seven children.

Ann Eliza Hanner married William Tucker of Pleasant Garden (Guilford County), North Carolina, in 1859. They had two children, and Ann Eliza died in 1894.

Caroline Isabelle Hanner was born July 7, 1823. In 1851 she married Robert Clelean Young (1827-1865) of Guilford County. They farmed the Young plantation located six miles east of Greensboro. In 1860 Young's property was valued at \$8,600, and they had three children (only two survived to adulthood). In June, 1861, Robert Young enlisted in the Confederate Army and served in Company F, 19th Regiment, North Carolina Troops (2nd regiment, North Carolina Cavalry). He returned home in 1865, but died on July 9 of that year. Caroline and the children were taken care of by her brother Allen. Her daughter Annie married Frank Starr of Guilford County and settled on the Young plantation. John Allen Young inherited the Hanner homestead from his uncle,

and later established Greensboro Nurseries Company. His mother Caroline died October 25, 1903.



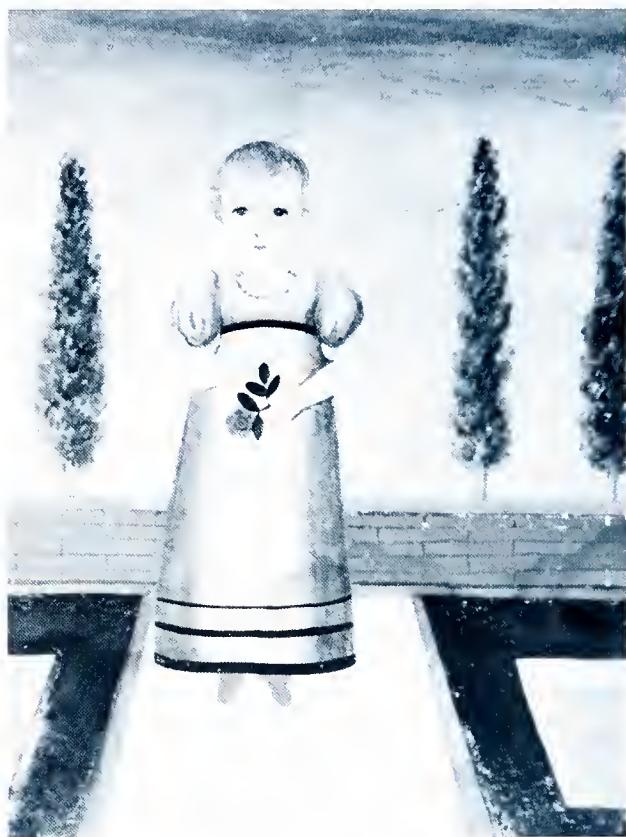
ALLEN ARMSTRONG HANNER (1813-1886)



DANIEL JAMES HANNER (1815-1901)



ANN ELIZA HANNER (d. 1894)



CAROLINE ISABELLE HANNER (1823-1903)

ANDREW LINDSAY FAMILY

Painted in 1828, the watercolors of Andrew Lindsay, his wife and daughters depict a wealthy Guilford County family. Andrew Lindsay was born October 15, 1786, the son of Captain Robert and Nancy McGee Lindsay. He inherited his father's plantation on Deep River which included a store, grist and silk mills, a tanyard and tavern. He bought several tracts on Deep River, and by 1815 he owned 650 acres valued at \$4,500. He also paid taxes in that year on a tavern, store and six slaves. By 1820 Lindsay owned 11 slaves and employed one free black. Four persons of his households were involved in agriculture. Although he did not reside in Greensboro, in 1820 Lindsay owned two town lots on South (Elm) Street valued at \$1,000.

Lindsay's various enterprises prospered steadily. In 1840 he owned 20 slaves and occupied five persons in agriculture, one in commerce, and five in manufacturing. He died of a stroke November 2, 1844, and his will describes the estate of a wealthy man. He bequeathed to his wife and children nearly 2,000 acres of land and two lots with improvements in Greensboro. The will distributed at least 25 slaves, \$23,000 in cash, and 400 shares in the Guilford Gold Mining Company. Without doubt he died one of the wealthiest men in the county.

Elizabeth (Mary Eliza) Lindsay, daughter of Andrew Lindsay, was born January 2, 1822. In 1847 she married Wyatt Fletcher Bowman, also of Guilford County. A merchant and farmer, Bowman also operated a cotton brokerage firm in High Point. Bowman's store, which he purchased in 1850, proved to be a successful venture; by 1860 his holdings were valued at \$29,000. Before 1879 the Bowmans moved to the town of Winston in Forsyth County and resided on the northeast corner of 4th and Cherry Streets. Prominent in the



ANDREW LINDSAY (1786-1844) AND DAUGHTER MARY ELIZA (1822-1910)



ELIZABETH DICK LINDSAY (1792-1845) AND DAUGHTER SUSANNA JULIA (1823-1892)

town's early history, Wyatt Bowman was the first president of Wachovia National Bank, founded in 1879. At his death in 1882 the Bowman estate was worth \$98,378.26. Mary Eliza Lindsay Bowman died August 20, 1910.

Elizabeth Dick Lindsay, daughter of Thomas and Jane Erwin Dick, was born November 16, 1792. She grew up on her father's large (1,500 acres) plantation on the Reedy Fork of Haw River in northeastern Guilford County. On January 2, 1812, she married Andrew Lindsay, and the couple had nine children.

As mistress of a large plantation, Elizabeth Dick Lindsay had diverse responsibilities. Fortunately she left an irregular diary for the years 1837 until her death in 1845. The diary includes many horticultural notes, such as when and how many and what crops were planted. She related numbers of livestock and information about her orchard. She used her notes as a guide to improve or compare next year's planting. She related household chores such as weeding, spinning, pouring candles or making colors fast. She also spoke of husband Andrew's activities, such as going to Philadelphia to buy goods for their store. Elizabeth made notes on the activities of her children and neighbors, relating births, deaths, illnesses, funerals, travels and religious meetings. Elizabeth Lindsay died April 12, 1845, and was buried beside her husband in the Lindsay family graveyard.

Susanna Julia Emmaline Lindsay, pictured with her mother, was born July 20, 1823. She and her sister Mary Eliza (born 1822) shared many childhood activities and both girls received an education. On May 20, 1846, she married Judge Thomas Johnston Wilson, a Salem, North Carolina, attorney. They moved to the new town of Winston and were very active in its early beginnings. Julia died April 21, 1892.



SAMUEL SHELTON

SAMUEL & JANE SHELTON

Samuel Shelton was a chairmaker who practiced in Greensboro from at least 1825 to 1829. On January 25, 1827, he married Jane Mitchell, daughter of Adam Mitchell of Guilford County. In 1828 he purchased "a part of lot #6 North East in the town of Greensboro as laid out by the Commissioners of said town,"⁵³ presumably to establish a shop and/or residence. He made frequent advertisements in the **Greensborough Patriot** for his business throughout 1828 and 1829. In 1829 he is not listed as a land owner in the town census although he did reside there. His household that year consisted of himself, his wife, one daughter, two slaves and one free black.

For an unknown reason, whether business or personal, Shelton left Guilford County in early 1830. By May of that year his shop was located in Milton (Caswell County), North Carolina, "nearly opposite the store of David and William Kyle."⁵⁴ He advertised Windsor chairs, furniture repairs, and house painting. The 1830 Caswell County census listed no slaves or free blacks attached to his household. Shelton was still working in Milton in 1832 but after that date information about his activities is inconclusive.



JANE SHELTON



FRANCIS LUCAS SIMPSON (1789-1873)

FRANCIS AND PRISCILLA SIMPSON

Francis Lucas Simpson, born June 6, 1789, was the son of Moses and Mary Garrett Simpson of Fairfax County, Virginia. By 1800 they moved to northeastern Guilford County. In 1815 Francis married Priscilla Simpson (1795-1865), a distant cousin. Simpson was an active member of the local militia company as early as 1814, and in 1839 was elected Commanding Colonel in the local unit.

Francis Simpson was a large farmer and active politician. His farm was located in the northeastern corner of Guilford County. In 1840 he owned 24 slaves and occupied nine persons in agriculture. He served repeatedly as a Guilford County representative in the lower house of the North Carolina Assembly between 1825 and 1830 and again in 1836.

In 1850 Simpson and his family left Guilford County and moved to the High Rock Farm in Rockingham County. He continued to serve in the militia and eventually returned to the State Legislature in 1862. Simpson died July 22, 1873, and was buried with his wife at the home plantation in northeastern Guilford County.



PRISCILLA SIMPSON (1795-1865)

ARTISTIC PECULIARITIES

The Guilford Limner painted over a period of several years, but many of his works share similar characteristics. While not intended as an artistic critique of the works, this series of observations will comment on certain peculiarities present in the watercolors of the Guilford Limner.

Although the original Robert C. CALDWELL painting is lost, a black and white photographic copy is contained in the research files of the Greensboro Historical Museum. The Caldwell work shares with the other paintings of this group the same details about the head and face as well as primitive surroundings. The identification panel in this painting is very typical of this group of watercolors as is the marbled wainscoting.

The original ALBRIGHT watercolors are lost. These two black and white photographs are painted to resemble the originals, and were probably taken in the 1940s. The wall and floor treatments in each painting vary, and the accessories define the roles of the individual. George, a hotel owner, is pictured at a square table writing. Although quill and paper are also present in the Martha Albright painting, they are placed on a more fashionable, feminine table. Her main "accessory" is the child in her lap (probably her son Daniel, born in 1826).

One can notice on the CUNNINGHAM works the finely detailed head with more naive surroundings. The backgrounds seem to indicate a wall mural; although documented examples have not been established for Guilford County, they were a popular method of interior decoration in the early 19th

century. The Cunningham watercolors stimulate several interesting questions. If one assumes these were painted in the 1820s, the subjects were living in different households and were not married to each other. Other pairs of paintings in this group are of married couples. It is possible that paintings were done of their individual siblings and they have not survived. Or perhaps John Milton and Elizabeth were the only children left at home. At any rate, the limner painted for two individual households, the results of which is this pair of portraits.

The original DONNELL watercolors are unavailable for examination, but these photographic reproductions were given to the Greensboro Historical Museum in 1975. The subjects are represented in their later years; if these were painted in the 1820s, Donnell would have been in his late 50s and Nancy would have been about 40 years of age. Donnell's glasses are an interesting note of age. The artist again used the identifying panel to create a three-dimensional quality and the large scarf or hankerchief in each portrait also adds to this effect. The open, block lettering identifying the subjects is unique in style. The "MAJ" on the Robert Donnell painting was apparently added at a later date.

The Daniel GILLESPIE watercolor is unusual in that he chose to be painted in his military uniform. The sword is in a somewhat unnatural position; it is held as if it is resting on the ground although Gillespie appears to be standing. Possibly he is seated and his hand rests on his lap; but if so, no chair or back support is visible for the 83-year-old Colonel. Again the identification plate attempts to create a three-dimensional effect as does the two-color border surrounding the image.

This border, present in several of the Gillespie group, removes the viewer to the outside of the image as opposed to an unbordered image which assumes the viewer can see all objects. The original watercolor of Colonel Daniel was unavailable for examination; however, this high resolution photographic copy nevertheless conveys the feeling of the original.

The Margaret Gillespie watercolor is in interesting contrast to that of her husband. The painting underwent some well-intentioned restoration years ago and the "AS" and "7" on the identification are part of the restoration. The most obvious contrast is the varied spelling of the surname: "Gillas" on the Margaret painting, and "Galaspi" on the work of Colonel Daniel. Also the dates are different. However, it is known that an additional watercolor, now lost, was done of Colonel Daniel by a "Mr. Oliver" in 1827. Perhaps the watercolor of Margaret is a companion to the one now lost. In any case it is an important image. The hands appear to have been obliterated at some time past and repaired. The baseboard, floor and chair are in a strange juxtaposition; given the scale of the chair, if one extends the back legs they will meet the floor well up on the baseboard.

The painting of Nancy Rankin again incorporates a two-color line border around the image to further the three-dimensional effect. The identification panel also contributes to this impression. The treatment of the chair and table are interesting. Either Nancy sat off center in the chair, or the limner neglected to extend the chair past her right shoulder. Also the table top, which seems to extend all the way to the chair rail, seems to intersect the chair upright. The scarf strategically placed does tend to mask the force of the collision, but the artist's sense of perspective is clearly askew. As in the Gilmore painting the stark white of the upper wall contrasts

sharply with the lower colors of the work.

The painting of Thankful Rankin is quite similar to that of her mother and yet many details are different. The border, wide chair rail and identification panels are very much the same. The older woman is knitting, while the younger holds an open book. The table in the painting of Thankful is more rounded and graceful with an elaborate floral vase. The upper area of the background wall is tinted a light blue, blending it with the blues in the lower portion of the work.

The Robert and Nancy Hanner Gillespie paintings are as closely matched a pair as any in this group save those of Andrew and Elizabeth Lindsay and their daughters. The accessories differentiate the roles of the subjects. In the Nancy Gillespie painting they are decidedly feminine, as she is holding a small book, probably a prayer book, and is shown with a rounded, stylish table with a large vase of flowers. Robert Gillespie, conversely, is shown beside a square working table of writing height with images of corn and limbs of an apple tree to accentuate his role as farmer.

These two works have deteriorated. The bottom of the Nancy Gillespie painting is crumbled and a vertical crease runs down the left side. The Robert Gillespie watercolor suffers from several areas of decay, the most serious being a diagonal tear across the lower half and obliteration of the hands and a section of the right foot.

The original of the John Patterson Gillespie watercolor is unavailable for examination, as are color photographs of the work. However, from this black and white photograph one can see a very young boy wearing the loose pants, coat and collar of a young man. The identification lettering on this work is likened to that of Margaret Gillespie, while the letters on

those of Colonel Daniel, Nancy and Thankful Rankin are similar. The tape marks on the background of the John Gillespie painting are apparently an attempt at conservation.

The LOGAN portraits depict a couple in transition. Married but two years when they were painted, Nancy is in mourning for her recently deceased son (she herself died before the year closed). Logan is involved in business activities, transferring entries from a day book to an account book, probably in relation to his business in his merchandise store. Once again roles of the individual are defined. The chairs, although varied in form are alike in style and the backgrounds are identical. Once again the artist bordered the works as was done in several of the Gillespie paintings.

The GILMORE painting is a study of contrast. The details of the eyes and face contrast with the crudely drawn hands, with the right hand drawn reversed. The colors of the lower half of the painting stand in sharp opposition to the bare upper background. The marbled red area surrounding the name plate and the marbled blue wainscoting are quite different from the bold solid lines of the chair railing. The white pelerine contrasts with the black dress. Again the artist has tried to use the identification plate, a scarf held in the hand, and the background to convey a three-dimensional image. The combinations of colors in the work is quite interesting. Red and blue are layered from the bottom of the painting: red marbled; blue marbled; solid red and solid blue.

The Margaret PATTERSON painting has many features in common with others of this group. The large well defined eyes and face juxtaposed with primitive surroundings are familiar characteristics. The identification panel is a consistent feature, and the lettering style is similar to that in the Shelton

paintings. The background is a dark blue marbled wainscoting with plain upper wall. It is interesting that it appears someone has blocked out her last name; perhaps this was done after she married.

The HANNER portraits are a series of nine works which represent members of the family ranging in age from three to 49 years. Those of John, Ann, Alfred and John Gillespie Hanner were all painted indoors and have common characteristics. The John and Ann Hanner works have similar marbled blue wainscoting and rust-colored chair rails. The floor treatments are related; however, the John Hanner paintings displays the lanced circle design at an angle with an orange highlight in the left half of the circle. Both paintings feature a medium blue wall background and similar chairs. Again, as in the Robert and Nancy Gillespie likenesses, the accessories differentiate the roles of the individuals.

The paintings of Alfred and John also seem to be paired. Each show similar floor treatments, although in the Alfred work the floor is highlighted at the intersection of each square, while the work showing John Gillespie also highlights within the lanced circle. The baseboard, chair rail, background and chair are similar, but the wainscoting in the John Gillespie painting is darker and marbled. The slat back blue chairs are identical, and the tables appear to be as well. The books depicted bespeak the professional training in which each man was engaged; Alfred as a lawyer and John Gillespie as a physician. It appears that some shadowing was attempted down the left side of Alfred Hanner beginning under the arm and extending down the corner of the chair. However, perhaps the limner simply made a mistake in the scale of the chair and attempted to blend the mishap into the image. The half-boots worn by Alfred contrast with the low shoes worn by his

brother, but both were fashionable during this period, as were the different neck treatments.

The remaining children in the Hanner family are depicted out of doors in somewhat stylized settings. Although documentary evidence has not substantiated a formal nursery business owned by John Hanner, it was not unusual for large land owners to enjoy private formal gardens. It is also interesting that John Hanner's grandson founded a nursery on the plantation in later years. Whatever the case, in the portrait of Orpheus Hanner the artist makes use of the plant and base to establish a three-dimensional image. The diagonal character of the brick base is in contrast to the full front image of the subject.

The Allen A. Hanner watercolor is distinct. The background depicts an exterior setting with an angry tone, including a dark sky overhead. Allen is flanked by two large shapes, presumably shrubs, hurriedly painted without any detail. Family tradition relates that the artist painted in this fashion because Allen, a boy of 13 in 1826, refused to stand still and pose for the work. Allen's brother Daniel is depicted in an outdoor setting similar to the one in the John P. Gillespie painting.

The two girls, Ann Eliza and Caroline, are presented in very similar settings. In each painting, the brick wall contains stylized trees, suggestive of a formal garden. Each child is flanked by a blue area which may have been reflecting pools, but was most probably grass. The red shoes worn by Caroline are an interesting contrast to the black or brown footwear of her siblings.

The LINDSAY watercolors are unique in several respects. Obviously they are the only paintings in this group which have two persons in the same painting. They are also the only works

which were painted indoors with a view to the out-of-doors. The painter used reflected light such as off the top hat or flower vase, a characteristic not common in the other works. The interior details in the two works are identical with three exceptions: the Andrew portrait reverses the position of the window; the Elizabeth portrait features a gold outlining of the baseboard and chair rail; and the table in the Andrew portrait features a more elaborate base.

Again the accessories define the roles of the subject. Andrew holds a volume and displays keys; these with his formal dress suggest an administrator of many different interests. Elizabeth holds knitting needles, representing home and family life. The striking orange dresses of the two children are one of the most enduring characteristics of the works. Each girl is holding a long yellow object, perhaps a flower vase, and Julia holds a flower.

The SHELTON paintings were subjected to heavy restoration some 30 to 40 years ago, especially on the upper half of each painting. The backgrounds are identical except that the Samuel Shelton floor is much darker and the wainscoting is black compared to the red wainscoting on the Jane Shelton portrait. Jane's striped dress is a marvelous fashion note for the 1820s and she appears pregnant. She is wearing dancing slippers, perhaps as a concession to swollen ankles. The identifications are in a unique location as compared to other paintings in this group.

The original SIMPSON paintings are unavailable for examination. These photographs are somewhat unclear and unfortunately show reflected light as if photographed from behind glass. Nonetheless they share many of the characteristics of other paintings in this group. Each of the

Simpson works feature a blue marbled wainscoting and red chair rail. The Francis Simpson painting shows the square work table with quill and paper present in many of the paintings of male subjects. He holds a scarf much like the ones

in the Donnell paintings. Priscilla Simpson is seated by a vase of flowers, a familiar setting. The block lettering of the identification panels is similar to that in the Margaret Gillespie and John P. Gillespie paintings.

SUMMARY

This series of watercolors painted in the 1820s is an extraordinary collection of art and history. Although primitive paintings are not rare, works of this type from Piedmont North Carolina are uncommon. The fact that the subjects were all from Guilford County and were interrelated by ties of marriage or friendship makes the group even more interesting. Each work has its own fascination; collectively the group is stunning.

The Guilford watercolors prompt a number of questions. For instance, was the Guilford Limner one man or several? It is impossible to say at this time; indeed, several art professionals have speculated that some works in this group were done by different craftsmen. At one time Jacob Marling of Raleigh, North Carolina, was thought to have painted the two Logan watercolors, but this has been discounted by documentary evidence and stylistic comparisons. A note on the reverse of the Elizabeth and Julia Lindsay painting was written by Julia's granddaughter and stated the work was painted by a "traveling French artist." Testimony as to the artist's identity (or identities) is currently inconclusive, but research is continuing.

What types of people were painted by the Guilford limner? In general all the subjects were well-to-do by the standards of the day. Various occupations are represented, such as a

farmer, politician, town officer, merchant, lawyer, cabinetmaker and physician. Many of these men were active in local political and military affairs. Among the women depicted several were well-educated and all attended to their home and religious duties. The majority of subjects were Scots-Irish in heritage and Presbyterian by faith. Although Quakers and German Lutherans also settled Guilford County in large numbers in the early 19th century, the Quakers tended to center around the Guilford College area in the western portion of the county while German Lutherans settled much of the eastern Guilford County. The Scots-Irish settled in central Guilford around Buffalo and Alamance Presbyterian Churches (near what is today Greensboro).

What were the lives of the subjects like? The 1820s were a time of change and growth in the North Carolina Piedmont. People were still migrating into the state from Pennsylvania and other points north as well as from places in Europe. This time also saw a large migration of Piedmont citizens out of North Carolina to lands west - Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois and others. Many people were becoming "Americanized," and one way to do this was by changing the spelling of their surname. Gilmore, for example, became Gilmer, and Galaspi became Gillespie. Slavery was also very much a part of Guilford County society in the 1820s and most

of the subjects of the Guilford Limner were slave holders. Several also employed free blacks.

What can we learn about relationships from studying these watercolors? All of the watercolor subjects lived in close proximity to each other. All were from Guilford County and many lived within a five-mile radius of Greensboro. The Hanner group and the Gillespie group represent two families related by marriage; Ann Gillespie Hanner was a niece of Colonel Daniel Gillespie, and Nancy Hanner Gillespie was a sister of John Hanner. John Gillespie Hanner married his brother's sister-in-law, and Robert Gilmer married his first cousin. John Gillespie Hanner was also acquainted with Margaret Patterson (he served as her marriage bondsman), and Samuel Shelton (he was Shelton's marriage witness). His brother Orpheus was marriage bondsman to Robert and Susan Gilmore. John Hanner and Robert Donnell held many church offices simultaneously, and Donnell's daughter married a nephew of Robert C. Caldwell. From all these interconnecting links we can see that the subjects of the Guilford Limner knew one another. In 1829, Greensboro's population was only 369 persons, with 115 additional persons outside of town but close by. Transportation during this time was difficult, and many

persons were born and died within a few miles of their home. Their family and friends all formed a close-knit, locally based group which varied little except by birth, death or migration. Of course exceptions are noted, such as John Gillespie Hanner, who studied in Philadelphia, or the Rankin family, who migrated to Tennessee. However for the most part life was seen to be much as life had been before - sons married, inherited their father's plantation, and passed it on to their sons. If aid or assistance was needed, whether to build a barn or birth a child, kinfolk were close by to render help.

Questions stimulated by the Guilford watercolors can be framed to embrace all branches of the humanities. Suffice it to say that the paintings provide an excellent window from which a 1980s viewer can see Guilford County in the 1820s. They bridge the years to allow us to compare lives and lifestyles of that day with current ones. They help us to better understand the early years of our heritage from which our present lives have evolved. Finally, by looking into the past we can see into the future - will the next 160 years afford as much change as the past 160 years? If so, in what ways? Our search for these answers is now beginning.

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ORIGINAL MAP OF GREENSBOROUGH, 1808



ELIZABETH DICK LINDSAY (1792-1845) AND DAUGHTER SUSANNA JULIA (1823-1892)