

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON AND EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

At age thirty-one, on November 12, 1868, **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)**, a Civil War veteran, married twenty-one-year-old **Emma Gwynne Davis (1847–1899)** in Cleburne, Arkansas.

James Gordon Frierson was born in Maury County, Tennessee, the fourth of eleven children (four boys and seven girls). With his family and a large contingent of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, he moved in 1841 to the town of College Hill, Mississippi, in Lafayette County, near Oxford.

As a youngster, James Gordon Frierson received a religious and classical early education¹ at a church-sponsored school called North Mississippi College and at a prep school called the College Hill Male Academy. At age seventeen, he entered the University of Mississippi² at Oxford as a sophomore. He transferred for his senior year to La Grange College³ in Tennessee, where he graduated first in his class in 1858, at age twenty.

James Gordon Frierson was a twenty-three-year-old second-year student at the University of Mississippi Law School⁴ when he joined the Confederate Army in April 1861. During the war, he fought with two different regiments in the Western Theater, mostly in Kentucky and Tennessee. His first tour of Confederate service⁵ with the 15th Mississippi Infantry Regiment ended shortly after the Battle of Fishing Creek (also known as the Battle of Mill Springs) in Kentucky on January 19, 1862. After that battle, he wrote a letter to his mother. In February 1862, he was discharged from the army for “*General debility caused by repeated attacks of Typhoid Fever.*”

James Gordon Frierson had a first cousin, Charles Currin Frierson (1838–1897), who was his close friend, classmate, and Confederate brother-in-arms in the early years of the Civil War.⁶

James Gordon Frierson re-enlisted in April 1862 with the 30th Mississippi Infantry Regiment and began his second period of Confederate service⁷ during the Siege of Corinth between April 29–May 30, 1862. He was on the



*James Gordon Frierson,
Neville's great-grandfather.*

Confederacy's ill-fated march into Kentucky, at the Battle of Perryville (October 8, 1862), and at the three-day Battle of Murfreesboro (called the Battle of Stones River or the Second Battle of Murfreesboro in the North). On February 1, 1863, one month after the Battle of Murfreesboro (December 31, 1862–January 2, 1863), James Gordon Frierson was elected a second lieutenant. He then led his company for the next ten months but was never elected its captain.⁸ James Gordon Frierson was at the Battle of Chickamauga (September 18–20, 1863) in northwest Georgia, near Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was captured by Federal forces on November 24, 1863, at the Battle of Lookout Mountain and was imprisoned at Johnson's Island⁹ on Lake Erie in Ohio until June 1865.

After the war, James Gordon Frierson learned that the members of his law school class of 1861 had been granted their law degrees by the University of Mississippi. In January 1866, with his brother-in-law, Major Martin Linn Clardy (1844–1914), he established an Oxford, Mississippi, law firm.¹⁰ The firm was not successful, so in late 1866, they moved to northeastern Arkansas, where James Gordon lived in four communities over the next seventeen years.¹¹

In 1870, at around age thirty-three, James Gordon Frierson, a “rebel” Democrat, was one of only four white Southerners elected to the Arkansas State Senate.¹² He was the president of the Arkansas State Senate in 1874 and presided over the Senate during the end of the Reconstruction Period in Arkansas.

In September 1882, about eighteen months before he died, James Gordon Frierson was elected circuit judge for the Second Judicial Circuit, which comprised eight counties in northeastern Arkansas.¹³ Although he served for less than two years, he is known for all time as Judge Frierson. In 1883 Judge James Gordon Frierson purchased a two-acre parcel of land in Jonesboro and built a house to which his family moved in November of that year. The home, known as the Frierson House,¹⁴ still stands today.

Judge James Gordon Frierson’s abbreviated but impactful life came to an end on March 8, 1884, when he died of pneumonia at age forty-six.

*Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson,
Neville’s great-grandmother.*





Emma Gwynne Davis was the oldest of the ten children of **Dr. Newlin Addison Davis (1821–1876)** and **Eliza Murray Drake (1826–1888)**. At age eighteen, in June 1865, she left Ozark, Missouri, with her mother and siblings to live in the South with her father, who had fought in the Civil War with the Confederacy.

Emma Gwynne Davis's family was living in Cleburne, Cross County, Arkansas, in 1868, when she met a young lawyer who had recently moved from Mississippi to Cross County. They married and had four children, the youngest of whom was Neville's grandfather **Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)**.

After Judge James Gordon Frierson died, his thirty-seven-year-old widow converted their Jonesboro home into a private subscription school, which for a time was the only school in Jonesboro.¹⁵ During Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson's fifteen years of widowhood, she was a dedicated teacher, driven to support and educate her children.¹⁶

Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson died on August 9, 1899, at age fifty-two. Her obituaries described her as a cultured woman and a "*woman of great intellectual endowment.*"¹⁷

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

1. THE EARLY EDUCATION OF JAMES GORDON FRIERSON*

Neville's great-grandfather **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)**, who was born in November 1837, was between three and four years old when he moved with his family from Maury County, Tennessee, to College Hill, Lafayette County, Mississippi, in 1841.

The Friersons' arrival in Mississippi occurred shortly after the local Presbyterian Church in College Hill, previously called the Ebenezer Church, founded North Mississippi College in 1840. For that reason, at that time, both the church and the community adopted the name College Hill. North Mississippi College, like many antebellum colleges, served students of all ages. Its attendees were divided into three classes: the first was an elementary department, the second a college preparatory department, and the third a collegiate program that led to a literary degree.


In August 1844, the North Mississippi College Board of Trustees established the following annual tuition rates for each class:

1st Class	Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic	\$10
2nd Class	English Grammar, Modern Geography, History of the U. S.	\$16
3rd Class	Latin, Greek, and French Languages, Ancient Geography, and all other Branches of Science	\$25

James Gordon Frierson and his many siblings enrolled at North Mississippi College in the 1840s, and their father, **Charles Calvin Frierson (1811–1879)**, was elected a trustee of the college on July 3, 1848. In late 1848, faced with competition from the new University of Mississippi in nearby Oxford, North Mississippi College abandoned its collegiate program, leaving just an elementary program and a preparatory school. Without a collegiate program, the school changed its name to College Hill Male Academy.

*In this and subsequent notes, information and documents about James Gordon Frierson's education are drawn from the research of David Sansing (b. 1933), a professor emeritus of history at the University of Mississippi and the author of *The University of Mississippi, A Sesquicentennial History* (1995) and *A Place Called Mississippi* (2014), a Mississippi history textbook that is used in public and private high schools in Mississippi.

College Hill Male Academy,



THE Exercises of this Institution will be resumed on Monday, the 1st of January 1855. The scholastic year, of ten months, will be divided into two sessions. The first session commencing on the 1st of January and continuing till the 4th of July. The second commencing about the last of August and continuing four months.

RATES OF TUITION.

Reading Writing, Arithmetic and Primary Geography, per month,	\$2.00
When any higher English branches are included, per month,	3.00
Classic studies per month	4.00
Contingent charges	0.50

Pupils may be entered at any time and charged till the end of the session. No deduction will be made for absence, except in case of protracted illness, but students may be withdrawn at the end of any month, provided full settlement be made at the time of withdrawal.

Board can be had in respectable families at moderate prices.

A. ENLOE, *Principal.*

College Hill, Nov. 25, 1854. --n33--5w.

FAMILY GROCERY

Oxford Democratic Flag
May 26, 1855 AND

An advertisement in an Oxford, Mississippi, newspaper, Democratic Flag, announced the beginning of the January 1855 session for College Hill Male Academy.

James Gordon Frierson attended school at College Hill Male Academy between 1849 and 1855, along with his first cousin Charles Currin Frierson (1838–1897), the son of his father’s brother **Edward Livingston Frierson (1798–1865)**. James Gordon Frierson and his first cousin Charles Currin Frierson attended the first session (January 1st to July 4th) of the 1855 academic year at College Hill Male Academy but not the second. In the fall of 1855, at age seventeen, they were both admitted to the University of Mississippi.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

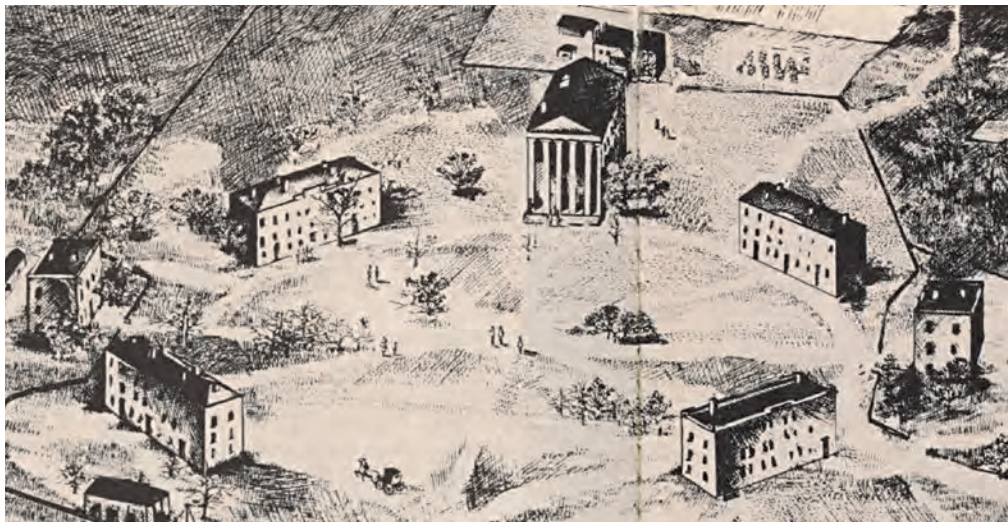
PAGES 36–39

2. JAMES GORDON FRIERSON AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884), Neville’s great-grandfather, was a student at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss*) during his sophomore (1855–56) and junior (1856–57) years.

The University of Mississippi, located in Oxford, was five miles from James Gordon Frierson’s home in College Hill. In 1855, while they were students at the College Hill Male Academy, James Gordon and his first cousin Charles Currin Frierson (1838–1897) applied to enter and were accepted into the sophomore class at the University of Mississippi. The University of Mississippi catalogue for 1855–56 notes that the university allowed students to be admitted to “*a higher class than the Freshman*” if they were “*fully equal in advancement to the class for which they apply.*”

When James Gordon Frierson entered Ole Miss in 1855, the campus consisted of a circle of seven buildings: the Lyceum** and its steward’s hall (where meals were prepared), two dormitories, two professors’ residences, and a chapel. Another dormitory was added in 1857.



A drawing of the Circle of the University of Mississippi in 1861. The Circle is anchored by the Lyceum and surrounded by flanking buildings. This drawing is by Debra Freeland, senior graphic designer at Ole Miss.

*Ole Miss was the name chosen for the university’s yearbook in 1896. The University of Mississippi has been known by this affectionate nickname since that time. “Ole Miss” was a term that slaves used to refer to the wife of a plantation owner.

**A lyceum was a gymnasium or meeting place in the Classical Period (500–323 BCE) of ancient Greece. The Lyceum at the University of Mississippi was used as a hospital during the Civil War (1861–65). Today it is the university’s administration building.



The Lyceum, built in 1848 at a cost of \$50,000, has always been the iconic building of Ole Miss. A Greek Revival structure with grand Ionic columns, the Lyceum originally housed classrooms and the library.

The expenses for James Gordon Frierson to attend the University of Mississippi were outlined in the school's catalogue for the 1855–56 academic year. Assuming a ten-month school year, he would have paid \$146 for tuition and boarding. Today total annual fees are about \$17,500 for in-state students and \$28,500 for out-of-state students.

EXPENSES.	
The stated expenses of the University, exclusive of books, clothing, lights, furniture, &c., are as follows, viz. :	
Board, per month, at the Steward Hall, (quarterly in advance,)	\$10 00
Tuition, in advance, for ten months, including fuel,.....	40 00
College Fee,.....	3 00
A deposit to cover damage to buildings, &c.,.....	3 00
No charge is made for servant hire, as the students are at liberty to hire servants, or not, as they may prefer.	
<hr/>	
PRIVATE BOARDING.	
Students have the privilege of boarding in private families, approved by the Faculty, where the terms of board can be arranged to suit the parties; but no student is allowed to lodge in Oxford until the dormitories become occupied, except those whose parents or guardians reside in town.	

Costs of tuition and board at Ole Miss in 1855.

In 1855, when James Gordon Frierson entered the University of Mississippi, there were 233 students, of which 52 were sophomores. In 2015, the university's total enrollment was 23,838, and it was the state's largest university.

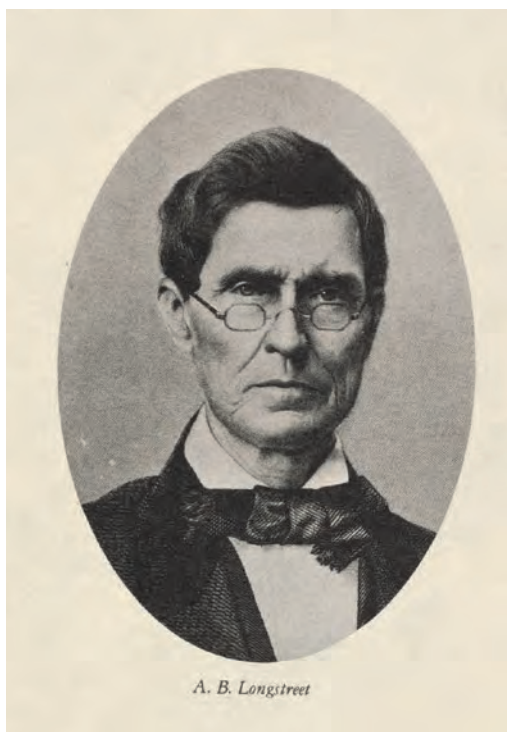
Student life at Ole Miss in the 1850s was described by David Sansing (b. 1933), a Mississippi historian, in his paper “The Education of James Gordon Frierson”:

In antebellum collegiate institutions, students were subjected to a rigorous and non-elective course of instruction identified in contemporary educational literature as the “Classical Curriculum”. They were also subjected to a demanding daily routine of study.

The regular exercises of each day began with prayers at sunrise and closed with evening prayers at vespers. The faculty called the roll at morning and evening prayers, and they recorded the names of the students who were absent.

Most classes met five or six times a week, including Saturday mornings. Professors made every effort to call on each student at each class meeting, and issued demerits to students who were unprepared.

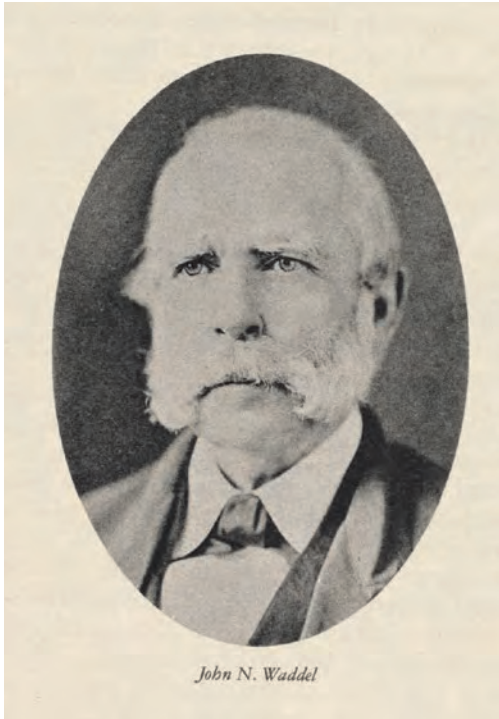
When James Gordon Frierson entered Ole Miss in 1855, the university’s president was a pious and redoubtable sixty-five-year-old Methodist minister named Augustus B. Longstreet (1790–1870).



Augustus B. Longstreet, the second president of the University of Mississippi, served from 1849 to 1856, during which time James Gordon Frierson was a student at the school.

He believed that “education [was] the loyal handmaiden of religion,” and he regarded “the encroachment of scientific discoveries upon sacred mysteries with profound intolerance.”

In 1856, after serving as president for seven years, Longstreet was forced to resign, allegedly because he was spending too much time on church matters. The infighting taking place at Ole Miss about the place of religion in education had a major influence on James Gordon Frierson’s decision to transfer to the newly formed LaGrange Synodical College (a Presbyterian school) in Tennessee for his senior year in 1857.



John Newton Waddell, a Presbyterian professor at the University of Mississippi who resigned and moved to LaGrange Synodical College in 1856. This event motivated James Gordon Frierson to transfer from Ole Miss to LaGrange for his senior year.

James Gordon Frierson's Greek and Latin professor at Ole Miss was John Newton Waddell (1812–1895), a Presbyterian divine* who often preached in the church at College Hill. He was a mentor to James Gordon Frierson and a family friend. When he was not selected to succeed Longstreet as the president of Ole Miss in 1856, he resigned and joined the faculty at LaGrange Synodical College. James Gordon followed him there.

Incidentally, in 1865, after the Civil War ended, Waddell became the chancellor of the University of Mississippi. He led the university through most of the Reconstruction Period (1865–77), resigning in 1874. In 1879 Waddell became the chancellor of Southwestern Presbyterian University in Clarksville, Tennessee. He served in that position until 1888. In 1925 that college moved to Memphis, Tennessee, and became Southwestern at Memphis. Neville and I were students there from 1954 to 1958. In 1984 Southwestern at Memphis was re-named Rhodes College.

*A divine is a theologian or religious scholar. The name Waddell is often spelled Waddel.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

3. JAMES GORDON FRIERSON AT LAGRANGE SYNODICAL COLLEGE

For their senior college year (1857–58), **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)** and his first cousin Charles Currin Frierson (1838–1897) transferred from the University of Mississippi to LaGrange Synodical College, sometimes called LaGrange Presbyterian College.



A painting of LaGrange Presbyterian College by Paul Tudor Jones (1909–1999), who was pastor of the Idlewild Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tennessee, from 1954 to 1975. James Gordon Frierson graduated from LaGrange in 1858.

LaGrange Synodical College was established in 1857 by the Memphis Synod of the Presbyterian Church. The school was located in LaGrange, Tennessee, about fifty miles north of College Hill, Mississippi, and just across the Mississippi-Tennessee border.

In his 1891 memoir, John Newton Waddell (1812–1895), a close friend of the Frierson family and professor of ancient languages at LaGrange College from 1857 to 1861, wrote about the opening of LaGrange Synodical College:

It is a noteworthy fact in the history of La Grange Synodical College that it opened with a full number of college classes. The Seniors were seven; the juniors, seven; the sophomores, fifteen; the freshmen, thirty; the scientific class, fourteen; and the primary school, forty-six; the total in all departments numbering 119.

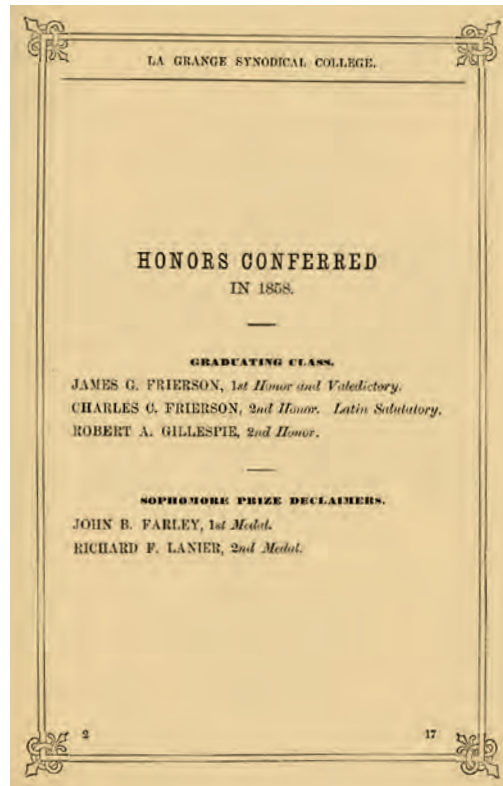
Of these there were . . . from Mississippi, forty. . . . It was a fact that three of our newly organized Senior class left the University of Mississippi . . . and entered LaGrange.

No effort was ever made . . . to draw off students from [the University of Mississippi]. It is to be attributed to the fact that this new enterprise was a church college, which caused a rally of the Presbyterians of the two adjoining states to its patronage and support.

In his memoir, Professor Waddell also proudly stated that the senior who graduated with the highest honors was “a young man [James Gordon Frierson] who had left the University of Mississippi to join the LaGrange College at its opening.”

After earning a bachelor of arts degree at LaGrange College, James Gordon Frierson returned to College Hill. In the fall of 1859, at age twenty-one, he entered the Law School at the University of Mississippi.

LaGrange Synodical College had a very short life. In its fourth year of existence, the Civil War erupted, and the school ceased operation. During the war, the college was occupied by Federal troops, used as a hospital, and mostly destroyed in the winter of 1863–64 in order to secure building materials for encamped Northern soldiers. LaGrange Synodical College did not reopen after the end of the Civil War.



A page from the 1858 LaGrange Synodical College catalogue showing that James Gordon Frierson graduated first in his class in 1858.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

4. JAMES GORDON FRIERSON AT LAW SCHOOL AND OFF TO THE CIVIL WAR

In 1859, one year after graduating from LaGrange Synodical College, **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)** entered the Law School at the University of Mississippi, which was established in 1854, just five years before James Gordon Frierson entered the school. It was the first state-supported law school in the Deep South. The 1860–1861 catalogue for the school shows that there were fourteen law students in James Gordon Frierson’s junior class and ten in his senior class.

These catalogues also list the faculty members who taught there during his tenure. Several of these men are notable. Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard (1809–1889) was the chancellor of the University of Mississippi from 1856 to 1861 and a professor of physics, astronomy, and civil engineering. He was a progressive academician who relaxed religious strictures at the university during his tenure.



Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard was chancellor of the University of Mississippi during the two years that James Gordon Frierson attended law school.

Barnard was a strong Unionist who opposed secession.

In 1861, when the Civil War broke out, Jefferson Davis (1808–1889), the president of the Confederacy, provided him with safe passage to the North. In May 1864, Barnard began a twenty-five-year stint as the president of Columbia College in New York City. He is credited with making Columbia the major Ivy League university it is today, and he is the eponym for Barnard College, the women’s affiliate of Columbia.

Another major historic figure whom James Gordon Frierson encountered at the University of Mississippi Law School was Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus* Lamar II (1825–1893), professor of ethics and metaphysics.** At Ole Miss, Lamar also taught constitutional law.

*These pretentious names were derived from a Roman statesman and aristocrat, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus (519–430 BCE), who was considered a model of civic virtue. The notation BCE, which means “before the Common Era,” is increasingly used in lieu of B.C., which means “before Christ.” When BCE is used for “before Christ,” the notation CE, which means “Common Era,” is used in place of AD, which stands for “Anno Domini,” Latin for “year of our Lord,” or the number of years since the birth of Jesus Christ.

**Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of existence, being, and the world.



Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar II, a law professor at the University of Mississippi during James Gordon Frierson's tenure there, from 1859 to 1861, is perhaps Mississippi's preeminent statesman of all time.

In 1860–61, while at the University of Mississippi, L. Q. C. Lamar drafted Mississippi's Ordinance for Secession and was a delegate from Lafayette County to the Secession Convention, which met in January 1861. During the Civil War, he mostly served as a diplomat on behalf of the Confederacy.

During the early years of the Reconstruction Period (1865–77), L. Q. C. Lamar taught at the Ole Miss Law School, and in 1873 he was elected to the United States House of Representatives. He became a United States Senator in 1877 and served until 1885, when President Grover Cleveland (1837–1908) appointed him to the position of Secretary of the Interior. In 1888 President Cleveland appointed L. Q. C. Lamar to the United States

Supreme Court, on which he served until his death in 1893. He was the first person of Southern origin appointed to the Supreme Court after the Civil War.

In early 1861, when Mississippi seceded from the Union and the Civil War began, James Gordon Frierson was among the jubilant young Mississippians who were excited about the war. There was singing and dancing in the streets. Chancellor Barnard, the University of Mississippi's president, advised parents to keep their sons in school. Even Jefferson Davis said that sending young boys off to war was *"like grinding the seed corn of the republic."* However, the university students were all imbued with a romantic notion of war, and they rushed to enlist in the Confederate Army. Just a few months before graduating from law school, on April 26, 1861, at age twenty-three, James Gordon Frierson enlisted in the Confederate Army. Very few of his fellow students would survive the Civil War.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

5. JAMES GORDON FRIERSON: HIS FIRST CIVIL WAR TOUR OF DUTY

James Gordon Frierson's (1837–1884) first tour of duty in the Civil War lasted for just over nine months. It began a few days after the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, and ended shortly after the Battle of Fishing Creek (called Mill Springs in the North) on January 19, 1862.



James Gordon Frierson's first tour of duty in the Civil War began in Water Valley, Mississippi, in April 1861 and concluded a little over nine months later in Gainesboro, Tennessee, where he was discharged for medical reasons.

— on foot
 + + + + + train

James Gordon Frierson was a twenty-three-year-old, second-year law student at the University of Mississippi when he joined the Water Valley Rifles on April 23, 1861. Water Valley, eighteen miles southwest of the university, is the county seat of Yalobusha County, which borders Lafayette County, where James Gordon Frierson lived. Charles Currin Frierson (1838–1897), James's first cousin and classmate through high school and college, joined the Water Valley Rifles at the same time.

On May 26, 1861, in Corinth, Mississippi, the Water Valley Rifles mustered into the Confederate Army and became Company F of the 15th Mississippi Infantry Regiment. The commanding officer of the regiment was Colonel Walter Scott Statham (1832–1862) of Grenada, Mississippi.

The 15th Mississippi Regiment's first assignment was to join with other Confederate soldiers to protect the Tennessee-Kentucky border during the latter state's period of neutrality. To that end, James Gordon Frierson's regiment traveled by rail on August 13, 1861, to Knoxville, Tennessee, about sixty miles south of the Cumberland Gap. Upon the regiment's arrival in Knoxville, James Gordon became ill and was given a furlough, though he was ordered to stay in Knoxville. He soon recovered, for he was on the march to Cumberland Gap on September 13, 1861. On September 19, he marched to Cumberland Ford, a shallow crossing on the Cumberland River in Kentucky, about fifteen miles north of Cumberland Gap. On November 6, James Gordon's regiment moved down the Cumberland River and set up winter camp at a place known as Mill Springs, near Nancy, Kentucky, on the north bank of the Cumberland river.

At dawn on January 19, 1862, with the 15th Mississippi Regiment at the head of the column, the Confederate forces attacked Federal forces, led by General George H. Thomas (1816–1870), at Nancy (then called Logan's Crossroads) about 10 miles north of Mill Springs. The attack was ordered by Major General George B. Crittenden (1812–1880) and led by Brigadier General Felix Zollicoffer (1812–1862), who was killed while on his horse in the battle. The Confederate attack failed, and Crittenden was subsequently arrested for drunkenness. This battle, called the Battle of Fishing Creek in the South, was the first important loss for the Confederates in the Civil War, for it broke the South's defensive line west of the Appalachian Mountains.

Though the Confederates were defeated, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Cary Walthall (1831–1898), who led the 15th Mississippi Regiment at the Battle of Fishing Creek emerged from the battle as a hero. His regiment, to which James Gordon Frierson belonged, fought bravely; 44 men were killed, 153 wounded, and 29 missing. Walthall later became a distinguished Confederate general and a United States senator from Mississippi from 1885 to 1894.

On January 28, 1862, James Gordon Frierson wrote the following letter* to his mother, **Mildred Paine Frierson (1812–1874)**.

Gainsboro Tenn

Jan 28th 62

Dear Mother

As Charlie [Charles Currin Frierson] is going to write home I thought I would drop you a few lines. I have been doing tolerably well ever since I left. We came up to this place on the boat, and hearing that the Yankees, 3000 strong were posted [on both sides of the River at Burksville (Burkesville, Kentucky), with] several pieces of [artillery], we stopped [hired a wagon], [ten of us] & started afoot. We got [with] in [10 miles] of Monticello [Kentucky] when we heard of the battle [a some] of the soldiers coming back. We [turned around] and came back just before the Regt. [got with] the boys yesterday. It was [only through] God's Providence that [our squad] escaped being taken prisoners.

We [passed] right through a company of Yankees on [poplar] [mountain]. There were ten of us in the [squad] all unarmed. They were concealed in the [bushes], when we passed. [The Yankees] took some 5 or 6 prisoners who were coming directly behind us, not more than 15 minutes after we passed.

*Charlie has written about the battle so I will close, [suffice it to say] that the 15th Miss Regt [has immortalized itself]. They fought singlehanded 36,000 Yankees for 3 hours 15 min—217 killed wounded & missing.** Every man in the Regt has his clothes cut by bullets, some of their coats & hats shot all to pieces. Capt. Bankhead*** killed 4 Yankees before they took him. Capt. Collins of Quitman Rifles had 25 bullets shot through his clothes & did not touch his flesh. The boys are all safe except S.B. [Smith Buford] who is missing. [He survived.] Henry B. [Buford] slightly wounded ball just glanced. He is almost well.*

I must close, good Bye

Your affectionate son,

James

* This letter from James Gordon Frierson and another written by Charles Currin Frierson are owned and were transcribed by Gay Carter (b. 1951), a great-great-niece of Charles Currin and a fourth cousin of Neville. Gay Carter is a retired librarian from the University of Houston-Clear Lake in Houston, Texas. The letters are available on a website entitled "Letters of Charles and James Frierson, Co. F. 15th Mississippi Infantry." NOTE TO READER: for all letters in this book, italic text in brackets indicates the transcriber's best guess at a word. My clarifications are noted in non-italic text in brackets.

** According to the Mill Springs Battlefield Association, the Union had 4,500 soldiers and the Confederacy had 6,500 men at the Battle of Mill Springs. The Union reported 246 casualties of the battle, including 39 killed in action. The Confederacy suffered 533 casualties, including more than 120 killed in action.

*** Captain Robert A. Bankhead (1838–1862), a surgeon in the 15th Mississippi Regiment, was killed at the Battle of Fishing Creek. He was from Water Valley, Mississippi.

This letter was written nine days after the Battle of Fishing Creek and was sent from his encampment at Gainesboro, Tennessee, about seventy miles southwest of the battle site. From his letter, we know that James Gordon Frierson was not with the 15th Mississippi Regiment when it led the attack at the Battle of Fishing Creek because his first cousin Charles Currin Frierson in a letter to his parents, stated, "*Jim was in fifty miles of us during the fight.*" James Gordon Frierson's letter suggests that he was with a squad down the Cumberland River, near Burkesville, Kentucky, during the Battle of Fishing Creek and narrowly escaped capture after the battle.

James Gordon Frierson's letter is addressed to his mother, Mildred Nicholson Paine Frierson, and signed James, which is presumably how he was addressed by his family. The name Jim, used by his cousin Charles Currin Frierson, is probably the name others gave to James Gordon Frierson.

Shortly after writing this letter, James Gordon Frierson was discharged from the Confederate Army. Records state that he had typhoid fever. The description of James Gordon Frierson, recorded at the time of his discharge, states, "*Born in Maury County, TN; age 23; [he was twenty-four] 6' tall; dark complexion; grey eyes; black hair; law student.*" His military career with Company F of the 15th Mississippi Regiment had ended, but he would soon re-enter Confederate service.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

6. CHARLES CURRIN FRIERSON, JAMES GORDON FRIERSON'S FIRST COUSIN

Charles Currin Frierson (1838–1897) was a first cousin of Neville's great-grandfather **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)**, who was born on November 5, 1837, two months and two days before Charles Currin's birth on January 7, 1838. Charles Currin Frierson was the son of **Edward Livingston Frierson (1798–1865)**, the older brother of James Gordon Frierson's father, **Charles Calvin Frierson (1811–1879)**. Charles Currin and James Gordon Frierson were both born in Maury County, Tennessee, and traveled as young boys with their parents to College Hill, Mississippi, in about 1841. They were undoubtedly very close to each other: They were classmates throughout their early school and college years, and they joined the Confederate Army at the same time and place, in April 1861. They served together as privates in Company F of the 15th Mississippi Infantry Regiment for nine months at the beginning of the Civil War (1861–65).

There exists today a remarkable photographic portrait of Charles Currin Frierson. It was probably taken in the summer of 1861, and it shows him dressed in his newly acquired Confederate uniform, which would have been identical to the one worn by James Gordon Frierson. Geoffrey R. Walden, a member of the Mill Springs Battlefield Association, wrote about the uniform:

Version of the distinctive Mississippi state infantry uniform, a jacket or short coat, with trousers, both trimmed probably in red (per state regulations). Black slouch hats with stars were popular among Mississippians, and Charles also appears to wear a Confederate battle shirt, with contrasting color trim. He has a knapsack, a belt with Confederate frame buckle, and a tin drum canteen. His musket appears to be an early US model, perhaps ca. 1816, with an unusual style of sling.

Private Charles Currin Frierson, James Gordon Frierson's first cousin, served with him in the Confederate Army in 1861 and 1862. The photograph is from a website entitled "Letters of Charles and James Frierson, Co. F 15th Mississippi Infantry."



There is a strong resemblance between the two cousins, based on a comparison of Charles Currin Frierson's photograph with our only picture of James Gordon Frierson, a photograph likely taken soon after the Civil War.

On January 28, 1862, Charles Currin Frierson wrote a long letter to his parents, Edward Livingston Frierson and Sarah Elvira Stephenson Frierson (1800–1868). The entire letter* is about the Battle of Fishing Creek (Mill Springs), fought in southeastern Kentucky on January 19, 1862. Charles Currin was in the lead column of the attacking Confederates in the battle, which was a disaster for the 15th Mississippi Regiment. Excerpts from his January 28 letter follow:



James Gordon Frierson in a photograph taken after the Civil War.

Camp Gainsboro Tenn.

Jan 28th 1862

Dear Parents:

I expect ere this time you have heard of the great battle of Fishing Creek—undoubtedly it was one of the hardest battles that has ever been fought since the South seceded, for your humble servant was in it & can fully testify to the circumstances I am about to relate.

Although we must acknowledge a defeat this time, at the same time the enemy will have to acknowledge honestly that it was a dear bought victory on their part. I will first tell you of our lost & wounded & then give you the details of the battle from the first to the last of it. . . .

*I was slightly wounded in the thigh, the ball just cut the skin about an inch long—We took out some seven or eight regts, but only two were engaged in the fight: the 15th Miss & Col. Battles [Joel Allen Battle (1811–1872), 20th Tennessee Infantry] from Nashville were the two engaged. We went out with the intention of attacking three regts, that were on this side of the creek & could not cross, so we expected to go up & bag them at once, but when we came up we met with 25,000 men.***

Our regt was on the right & consequently was the first to make the attack, we fought under a heavy fire about an hour before any others came to our assistance then Battles regt came & relieved us a few minutes—but I am much too fast, on Saturday night of the 18th we got orders to cook two days rations & to leave that night at 12 o'clock for Fishing Creek. At twelve o'clock exactly the drums

*The entire letter is available at http://www.geocities.ws/Pentagon/Quarters/1864/frierson_letters.htm.

**This is a major overstatement. There were 4,500 Federal soldiers in the battle.

called us on the color line & every one ready for the tramp, it being as muddy as well it could be. Our men had been fooled so often that not more than half of them went out. We took out 445 men & lost 217, near about half—so you see the Mississippians sustained that character which has always characterized them—

On Sunday morning, the 19th of January 1862 a little after daylight we came up to their pickets & drove them in & went on about half a mile & formed a line of battle [our regiment being the only one in sight] & drove the enemy from a high hill they occupied, we then charged down that hill & fired on them on the next, there we sustained a considerable loss. We then charged up on the hill they were occupying—then fought over their dead bodies, here we did our hardest fighting. . . .

Our company took 56 men to the field & 32 were killed, wounded, & missing—It was the most awful slaughter I ever witnessed in my life. . . .

The Mississippians are down on the Tenn [20th Tennessee Regiment] for running—leaving them so exposed. We were first on the field & the last to leave it. Some of our men that was taken prisoners & escaped says thirty six flags came within our encampments, the next morning, making some 36,000 near 40 regts—Our side lost 4 or 5 hundred, they lost 13 hundred. . . . I am pretty certain I lifted some of them out of their boots for we were in twenty five yards of them at the last charge. In fact our men shot well & were much opposed to the retreat. Jim [James Gordon Frierson] was in fifty miles of us during the fight. As he wants to write home I will close—*

*Give love to Sis [Sarah Dixie (Dickey) Frierson] and all enquiring friends
[Write Soon to] Your Son*

Charlie

Charles Currin Frierson continued to fight with the 15th Mississippi Regiment in the battles of Shiloh (April 6–7, 1862) and Baton Rouge (August 5, 1862); the second battle of Corinth (October 3–4, 1862); and the defense of Atlanta in the late summer of 1864. He rose from the rank of private to sergeant, and for his outstanding service, he was made first lieutenant and regimental ensign in Georgia on September 23, 1864.

Charles Currin Frierson was struck by a cannon ball at the Battle of Franklin in Tennessee on November 30, 1864, while bearing his regimental colors. The blow severely fractured his right hip and left thigh. He was captured on December 17, 1864, at the McGavock Hospital when Federal

**In fact, the Confederacy suffered 533 casualties, including more than 120 killed in action. The Union reported 246 casualties of battle, including 39 killed in action.*

troops reoccupied Franklin. After being hospitalized in a Union hospital in Nashville, he was sent to Camp Chase, a Union prison in Columbus, Ohio. He arrived there on February 10, 1865.

In March 1865, Charles Currin Frierson was released in a prisoner exchange. After spending a few days in Virginia hospitals, he was furloughed for thirty days. While heading home, he was admitted to Way Hospital in Meridian, Mississippi, on March 31, 1865.

After his recovery, he lived in Tallahatchie County, a rural county southwest of Lafayette County, where he had resided before the Civil War.

On July 2, 1884, at age forty-six, Charles Currin Frierson married his third cousin Clotilda “Tillie” Grace Frierson Mitchener (1839–1918), a widow with four children. He became a prosperous planter and part-owner of a general store called Frierson and Flautt in Sumner, Mississippi. Charles Currin Frierson died on July 30, 1897, and is buried in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Clotilda Grace Frierson Mitchener is the grandmother of Frank McClelland Mitchener Jr. (b. 1933), who owns his family’s Tallahatchie County plantation in Sumner, Mississippi. Frank Mitchener is a longtime friend of Neville’s and mine, and we attended college with his wife, Judith Davenport Mitchener (b. 1934) in the 1950s. From 1981 to 1987 and from 1993 to 2000, Frank Mitchener served as chairman of the Board of Trustees of Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College), where we attended college.

Through the ancestry of Frank Mitchener’s grandmother Clotilda Grace Frierson Mitchener Frierson, Frank Mitchener is a fifth cousin of Neville’s father, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**. Thus, Neville and Frank are fifth cousins, once removed. Frank is also the step-grandson of Charles Currin Frierson, Neville’s first cousin, three times removed.

A photograph of an oil portrait of Frank McClelland Mitchener, a step-grandson of Charles Currin Frierson and fifth cousin of Neville’s father, Charles Davis Frierson Jr.

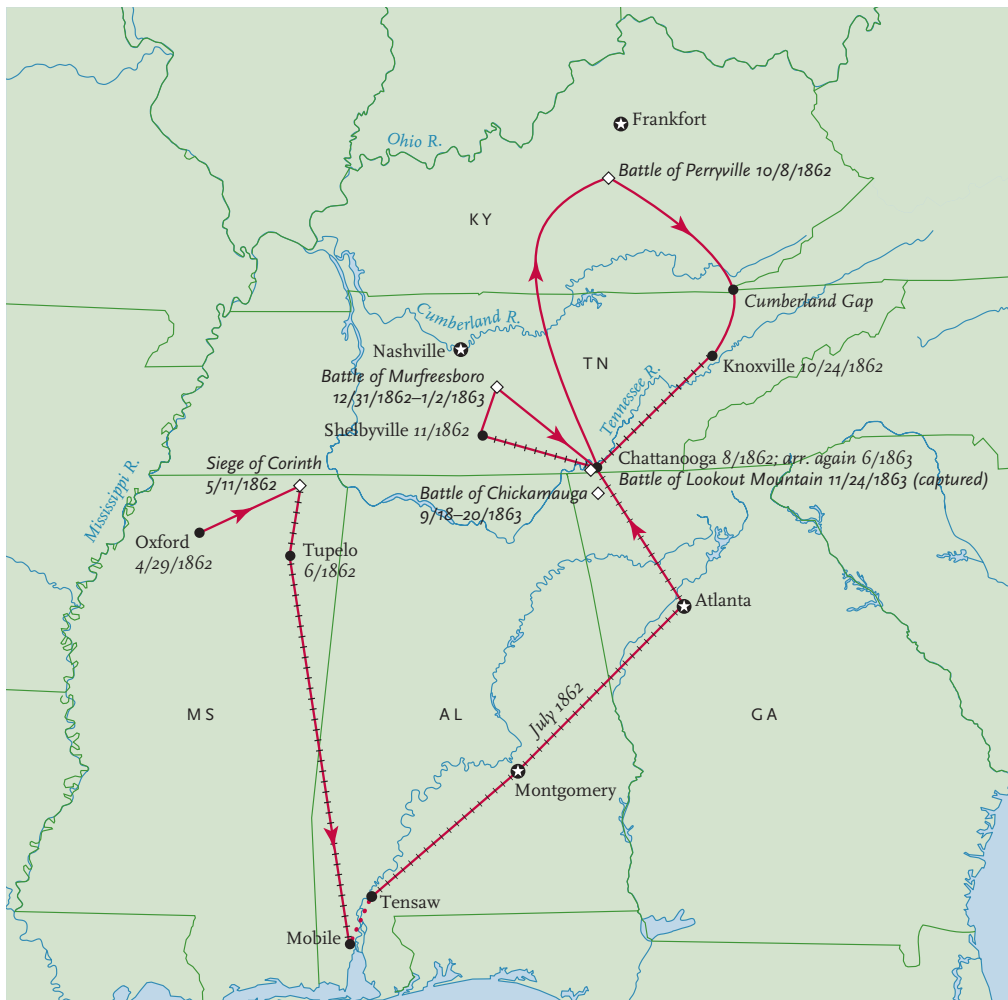


JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

7. JAMES GORDON FRIERSON'S SECOND CIVIL WAR TOUR OF DUTY

James Gordon Frierson's (1837–1884) second Civil War tour of duty lasted almost nineteen months. During that time, he served again in Tennessee and Kentucky, before being captured on November 24, 1863, on Lookout Mountain, overlooking Chattanooga, Tennessee.



The path of James Gordon Frierson's second tour of duty in the Civil War began in Oxford, Mississippi, in April 1862 and concluded nineteen months later, on November 24, 1863, when he was captured at the Battle of Lookout Mountain.

- on foot
- - - - - train
- on boat

On April 29, 1862, at age twenty-four, having recovered from his bouts with typhoid fever, James Gordon Frierson re-enlisted in the Confederate military. With his twenty-year-old brother, **Edwin Dickey Frierson (1842–1906)**, James Gordon joined a Lafayette County company called the “True Mississippians.” After uniting with nine other companies, James Gordon’s company became Company B of the 30th Mississippi Infantry Regiment.

On May 11, 1862, the 30th Mississippi Regiment went to Corinth, Mississippi, which was under siege from advancing Federal forces after their victory at the Battle of Shiloh (April 6–7, 1862). The battlefield of Shiloh is eighteen miles northeast of the town of Corinth, a strategically important railroad town during the Civil War. On May 29, James Gordon Frierson participated in General P. G. T. Beauregard’s (1818–1893) cleverly contrived evacuation from Corinth. Confederate troops retreated fifty miles south to Tupelo, Mississippi, and encamped there for almost two months alongside the tracks of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad.

Next James Gordon Frierson was a part of the memorable and remarkable Confederate troop transfer by train from Tupelo, via Mobile, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia, to Chattanooga in late July 1862. Soon after the soldiers arrived in Chattanooga, the 30th Mississippi set out on a grueling northward march known as Bragg’s invasion of Kentucky. That march culminated in the unsuccessful Battle of Perryville on October 8, 1862. The Confederates then retreated to Knoxville, Tennessee, where James Gordon Frierson arrived on October 24, 1862.

In early November 1862, James Gordon Frierson left Knoxville by train to travel to Camp Withers, near Shelbyville, Tennessee. In late December, the 30th Mississippi Regiment marched twenty-two miles northward to fight the three-day Battle of Murfreesboro, called the Battle of Stones River or the Second Battle of Murfreesboro in the North (December 31, 1862–January 2, 1863).

The Battle of Murfreesboro was a victory for the Union. It was a major clash, and over thirty percent of the participating soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured—the highest percentage for any Civil War battle. Total casualties were 12,906 for the Union and 11,739 for the Confederacy. The impact of this battle on Company B was quite noteworthy, especially for the company’s four officers, who were all from Lafayette County. Two young 2nd lieutenants, Thomas Boone (1835–1863) and George Hope (1839–1863), were killed in the battle. The company’s 1st lieutenant,

William Paine (1831–1869), was severely wounded, left behind, and captured. The company's captain, Thomas H. Robinson (1810–1893), was placed under arrest (presumably for drunkenness or cowardice) after the battle. As a result of all this, on February 1, 1863, Private James Gordon Frierson was elected to the rank of 2nd lieutenant, a position that placed him in command of his company.

On April 17, 1863, James Gordon Frierson was hospitalized by an army surgeon. He returned to duty before the end of May and soon marched back to Chattanooga, where he was encamped at Lookout Mountain.* His next combat encounter was at the Battle of Chickamauga (September 18–20, 1863) in northwest Georgia. That battle is considered the most significant defeat of Union forces in the Western Theater during the Civil War. At Chickamauga, James Gordon Frierson's regiment, the 30th Mississippi, fought in General Edward C. Walthall's (1831–1898) brigade. Though the brigade's losses were heavy (thirty-two percent were killed or wounded), it contributed importantly to the Confederate victory at the Battle of Chickamauga.

After losing the Battle of Chickamauga, Federal forces retreated to Chattanooga, and the Confederates laid siege upon the city. During that time, James Gordon Frierson and the 30th Mississippi Regiment were again stationed on Lookout Mountain. To break the Siege of Chattanooga, the United States War Department sent Major General Joseph Hooker (1814–1879)** from the Eastern Theater to Tennessee. On November 23, 1863, with 10,000 of his troops, Hooker successfully assaulted 8,726 Confederate soldiers defending Lookout Mountain. Soon thereafter, the siege was lifted. The Battle of Lookout Mountain, often called the Battle Above the Clouds, is recorded as a decisive victory for the Federal forces. However, General Ulysses S. Grant (1822–1885), in his much-admired personal memoirs, wrote, "*The Battle of Lookout Mountain is one of the romances of the war. There was no such battle and no action even worthy to be called the battle on Lookout Mountain. It is all poetry.*"

That comment, notwithstanding, we know that 1,064 Confederate soldiers, including James Gordon Frierson, were captured at Lookout Mountain on November 24, 1863.***

*Lookout Mountain (elevation 2,389 feet) is located at the junction of the northwest corner of Georgia, the northeast corner of Alabama, and the southern border of Tennessee. The top of the mountain overlooks the city of Chattanooga.

**Hooker is a slang word for a prostitute. General Joseph Hooker was a notably immoral man, whose encampments attracted many prostitutes. However, the claim that his name is the source of the word is likely a myth.

***Several thousand Confederate troops avoided capture at Lookout Mountain on November 24, 1863. Their retreat was shielded by a full lunar eclipse that evening.



An 1889 lithograph by Kurz and Allison depicting the assault by Major General Joseph Hooker on Confederate troops defending Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga, Tennessee. 2nd Lieutenant James Gordon Frierson was among the Confederate soldiers captured there on November 24, 1863.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

8. 2ND LIEUTENANT JAMES GORDON FRIERSON—NEVER ELECTED A CAPTAIN

In family lore, **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)** is often referred to as a Civil War captain. Although he led his company during most of 1863, he actually remained a 2nd lieutenant during his second tour of duty with the Confederate Army.

James Gordon Frierson was a private in Company B of the 30th Mississippi Infantry Regiment at the Battle of Murfreesboro in Tennessee, which concluded on January 2, 1863. The leadership of Company B at the Battle of Murfreesboro was as follows:

- **CAPTAIN THOMAS HENDERSON ROBINSON (1810–1893)**

In 1860 Thomas Henderson Robinson is recorded as a fifty-year-old hotel operator in Lafayette County, Mississippi, with eleven children. Captain Robinson was arrested after the Battle of Murfreesboro, but he was allowed to remain with his company. Probably to avoid court martial, he submitted his resignation on February 13, 1863, claiming physical disability, which a surgeon attested to on February 15. He was discharged on March 23. After that he moved his family from Lafayette County to Cabarrus County, near Charlotte, North Carolina, where he had been born. He became known as Colonel Robinson and died in Cabarrus County at age eighty-three.

- **1ST LIEUTENANT WILLIAM F. PAINE (1831–1869)**

In 1860 William F. Paine is recorded as a twenty-eight-year-old farmer from Lafayette County with a wife and a one-year-old child. Severely wounded and captured at the Battle of Murfreesboro, he was released in a prisoner exchange in May 1863. Though unfit for field duty, he rejected a medical discharge and was assigned to detached duty. In 1864 and 1865, he was assigned to guard Federal prisoners in Georgia, where he was again captured at the end of the war. He died at age thirty-eight in College Hill, Mississippi.

- **2ND LIEUTENANT GEORGE W. HOPE (1839–1863)**

In 1860 George W. Hope is recorded as a twenty-one-year-old who worked as a farmer in Lafayette County with his father, Levi Hope, who owned twenty-seven slaves. The Hopes were close neighbors of the Friersons in College Hill. George Hope was killed at the Battle of Murfreesboro.

- **2ND LIEUTENANT THOMAS BOONE (1835–1863)**

In 1860 Thomas Boone is recorded as a twenty-five-year-old farmer from Lafayette County with a wife, a six-month-old child, and seventeen slaves. Thomas Boone was killed at the Battle of Murfreesboro.

In January 1863, after the Battle of Murfreesboro, General Braxton Bragg (1817–1876) decided that companies in the Army of Tennessee had become so reduced in size that each company required only one officer, and it was not necessary for that officer to be advanced in rank. Company B effectively had no officers to command it, so an election was called to fill the position of 2nd lieutenant, considered the highest vacancy available in the company at that time. At Fort Withers, near Shelbyville, Tennessee, on February 1, 1863, James Gordon Frierson was elected 2nd lieutenant and became the company's commander.

On April 17, 1863, Lt. James Gordon Frierson was ordered to a hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, and Company B was again without an officer. In a Civil War archive, there is a letter written by John Watson Henderson (1828–1864), a soldier in Company B, to his wife, Sarah Henderson, on April 18, 1863. He explained to her:

Our lieutenant Frierson left yesterday for the hospital. The Dr. thought he was taking the fever [typhoid]. We have no commissioned officers in our Co now. Lieut. Payne has not got off from the Yanks yet, and there is no telling when he will. Old Capt. Robinson has resigned & is now in N. C. with his family.

On April 23, 1863, Patrick Stephen Myers (1843–1884), a young private in Company B, was elected to the rank of junior 2nd lieutenant. He was from DeSoto County, Mississippi, unmarried, and the son of a farmer who owned seventy slaves. He commanded the company until James Gordon Frierson returned from Atlanta in May.

When 1st Lieutenant William F. Paine, a captured prisoner, was exchanged in May 1863, he was the next person in line to become captain of Company B. However, because of his physical condition, the Confederate War Department, which was in charge of promotions within the army, was unwilling to promote Paine to captain and also unwilling to discharge him. This indecision had the effect of blocking any promotion for James Gordon Frierson. Thus, although he commanded Company B for almost ten months, he was never advanced beyond the rank of 2nd lieutenant.

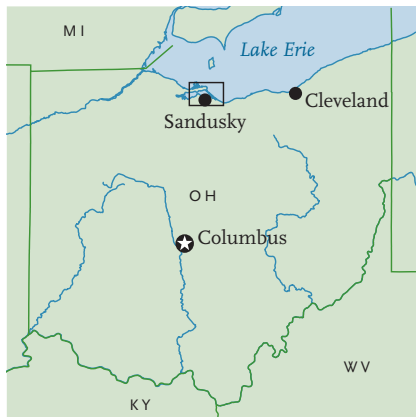
On November 24, 1863, Lieutenants James Gordon Frierson and Patrick Stephen Myers were both captured at Lookout Mountain, and Company B was again without a commanding officer. Regulations would have allowed the promotion of 1st Lieutenant William F. Paine to captain, James Gordon Frierson to 1st lieutenant, and Patrick Myers to 2nd lieutenant (thereby enabling the election of another junior 2nd lieutenant), but this was not done. Thus, for the remaining seventeen months of the Civil War, Company B of the 30th Mississippi Regiment did not have an officer on active duty.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

9. JAMES GORDON FRIERSON: EIGHTEEN MONTHS ON JOHNSON'S ISLAND

On November 24, 1863, **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)** was captured at the Battle of Lookout Mountain, near Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was first sent to a prison in Nashville, and on November 29, 1863, he was transferred to the Louisville Military Prison in Louisville, Kentucky. On December 3, 1863, James Gordon Frierson was admitted to the Johnson's Island Prison, which was located in Sandusky Bay in Lake Erie in Ohio. He was imprisoned there for eighteen months and ten days.



Sandusky, Ohio, located on Lake Erie.



Johnson's Island in Sandusky Bay in Lake Erie.



A contemporary aerial view (taken from the southeast) of Johnson's Island in Lake Erie.

From April 1862 until September 1865, Johnson's Island served as a military prison, mostly for Confederate officers captured during the Civil War. During that time, about ten thousand men passed through the prison gates. Johnson's Island was a more pleasant prison than most Civil War prisons, except when the winter winds howled off of Lake Erie. About two hundred and fifty Confederate prisoners died, mostly of disease, at Johnson's Island. That produced a death rate of about 2.5%, which was the lowest of any Civil War prison.

No Civil War buildings remain on the island, which was bought in 1956 by Cleveland, Ohio, investors who divided it into one thousand residential sites. A causeway to the mainland was constructed in the 1960s. There is a Confederate cemetery located on Johnson's Island. It has 209 tombstones, but some believe that about one hundred other Confederate soldiers are also buried there.

On June 13, 1865, over two months after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee (1807–1870) at the Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia (April 9, 1865), James Gordon Frierson signed the Oath of Allegiance and was released from Johnson's Island. He then returned to his home in College Hill, Mississippi.

Oath of Allegiance of James Gordon Frierson, recorded as "2 Lt. 30 Regt Miss Inf," signed on June 13, 1865, the day he was released from prison at Johnson's Island, Ohio. He was actually twenty-seven years old, not twenty-six.

(Confederate.)

9 | 30 | Miss

James G. Frierson

2 Lt 30 Regt Miss Inf

Name appears as signature to an

Oath of Allegiance

to the United States, subscribed and sworn to at
Johnson's Island, Ohio, June 13, 1865.

Place of residence Oxford Miss

Age 26

Complexion Dark ; hair Dark

Eyes Blue ; height 6 ft. in.

Where captured Lookout Mount

When captured Nov 24, 1863.

Remarks:

Inorsement shows: "Oaths of Allegiance of Prisoners of War released at Johnson's Island, O., June 13th, 1865, as per G. O. 109, A. G. O."

Number of roll:
101; sheet 1

(665) J. Williamson Copyist.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

10. FRIERSON & CLARDY IN OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI

In January 1866, **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)** and Martin Linn Clardy (1844–1914) formed a law partnership in Oxford, Mississippi.



A newspaper advertisement for the law firm of Frierson & Clardy, established in January 1866 in Oxford, Mississippi.

James Gordon Frierson returned to College Hill, Mississippi, in June 1865, after his release from prison on Johnson's Island in Ohio. Shortly afterward, he learned that four years earlier, on June 20, 1861, the board of trustees of the University of Mississippi had conferred a bachelor of law degree on the class of 1861. So although he had never formally graduated, James Gordon Frierson was eligible to practice law.

About six months later, at age twenty-eight, James Gordon Frierson joined with Martin Linn Clardy, a fellow veteran and a Missourian who had earlier attended the University of Mississippi. On April 5, 1866, a few months after their new law partnership began, Martin Clardy married **Eugenia Caroline Frierson (1844–1875)**, James Gordon Frierson's younger sister.

In *The Oxford Falcon*, a local newspaper, an announcement appeared on April 19, 1866:

Hereafter we will be assisted on the editorial department of this paper by Messrs. Frierson & Clardy, young gentlemen of talent and ability and lawyers by profession, in whose hands all claims due, or that may become due this office, will be placed for collection.

They are fully authorized to receive and receipt for subscriptions and advertisements for this office, and our friends in arrears will please call at this office or upon Messrs. Frierson & Clardy, and settle. Love of work, nor patriotism can run this machine; money alone will keep it in motion.

On May 10, the newspaper printed the following notice: “Messrs. Frierson & Clardy are duly authorized to solicit Subscribers, Advertisements and Job Work for this office, and to receive and receipt for same.” The last legal notice related to Frierson & Clardy was published in the September 20, 1866, issue of *The Oxford Falcon*.

In 1866 Oxford was not a good place for two young lawyers to begin a legal practice. Lafayette County had no courthouse, and Oxford had no city hall. The Reconstruction Period (1865–77) was beginning, and the people of Oxford were impoverished. Thus, James Gordon Frierson and Martin Linn Clardy left Oxford in late 1866 and moved to Cross County in northeast Arkansas to continue their law practice.

After a year or so, Martin Linn Clardy and his wife, Eugenia Caroline Frierson Clardy, left Arkansas and moved to Farmington, Missouri (seventy miles southwest of St. Louis). They moved sometime before mid-1869, for in the 1870 census they are enumerated in Missouri with a one-year-old son, Charles Frierson Clardy (1869–1942), who was born there. Their second child, Eugenia Pearl Clardy (1871–1934),* was born in Missouri in September 1871. In 1875, during the birth of another daughter, Myra Linn Clardy (1875–after 1940), Martin Clardy’s wife, Eugenia Frierson Clardy, died.

In 1878 Martin Linn Clardy, a Democrat, was elected to his first of five terms in the United States House of Representatives from Missouri. In ten years, he served under five presidents: Rutherford B. Hayes (1822–1893), James A. Garfield (1831–1881), Chester A. Arthur (1829–1886), Grover Cleveland (1837–1908), and Benjamin Harrison (1833–1901).



In 1879 Martin Linn Clardy remarried and had several more children. He died on July 5, 1914, at age seventy, and is buried in the Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri.

Martin Linn Clardy, law partner and brother-in-law of James Gordon Frierson, later became a five-term United States Congressman from Missouri.

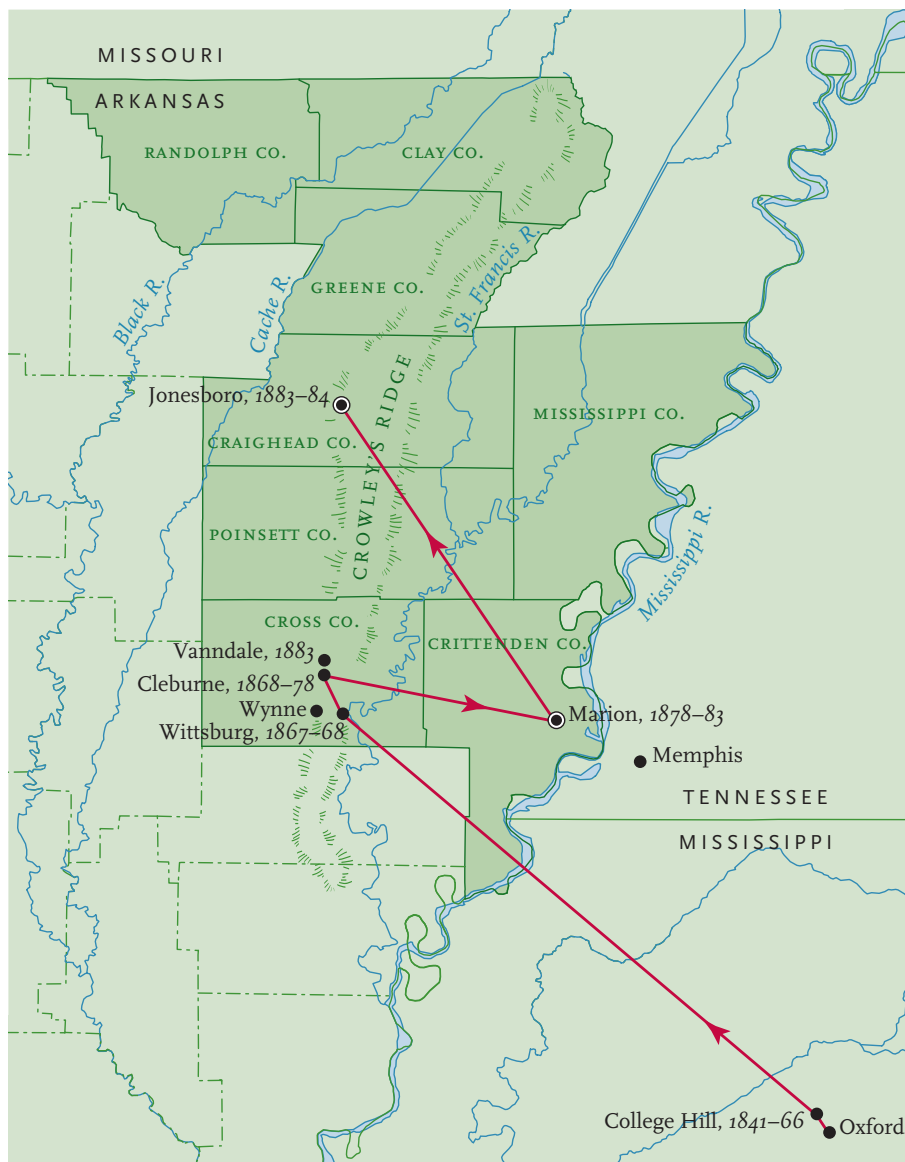
*In 1912 Eugenia Pearl Clardy married her first cousin James Gordon Frierson Jr. (1872–1951), who was the oldest son of her father’s law partner from Oxford. They had no children.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

11. JAMES GORDON FRIERSON MOVES TO NORTHEASTERN ARKANSAS, 1866–84

Sometime in late 1866, **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)**, a twenty-nine-year-old bachelor lawyer, moved from Lafayette County, Mississippi, to northeastern Arkansas. He lived in the following four communities over the next seventeen years.



A map of the eight counties of the Second Judicial District of Arkansas in 1882. James Gordon Frierson lived from 1867 to 1884 in four communities in northeastern Arkansas.

WITTSBURG

Located along the west bank of the St. Francis River in Cross County, a few miles east of Wynne, Arkansas, Wittsburg was an important river port for families migrating along Crowley's Ridge. It was the county seat of Cross County from 1862 to 1865 and from 1868 to 1884.

James Gordon Frierson probably met his wife-to-be, **Emma Gwynne Davis (1847–1899)**, while living in Wittsburg. She had recently moved to Arkansas from East Feliciana Parish in Louisiana with her parents. James Gordon Frierson possibly knew Emma's father, **Dr. Newlin Addison Davis (1821–1876)**, for they both were at the Siege of Corinth in May 1862 and they fought in reasonably close proximity at the Battle of Chickamauga in September 1863.

James Gordon Frierson came to Wittsburg in late 1866 and lived there for only a year or so before he moved to Cleburne, about five miles northwest of Wittsburg. Today Wittsburg has virtually disappeared because it was bypassed by the development of railroads, and over the years, river traffic also lessened. In 1884 the county seat of Cross County was moved to Vanndale, and in 1903 it was located in Wynne, where it remains today.

CLEBURNE

Located at a high point on Crowley's Ridge in Cross County, Cleburne* was a tiny village with one store and a post office when James Gordon Frierson lived there. Cleburne was the county seat of Cross County from 1865 to 1868. The town does not exist today.

Moving to Cleburne in 1867 or early 1868, James Gordon Frierson practiced law there with his brother-in-law, Major Martin Linn Clardy (1844–1914), who later in 1868 or 1869 moved with his wife to his home state of Missouri. James Gordon Frierson bought a 160-acre farm in Cleburne and married Emma Gwynne Davis on November 12, 1868.

In 1870 while living in Cleburne, James Gordon Frierson was elected an Arkansas state senator for the First District, representing the counties of Jackson, Craighead, Poinsett, Cross, and Mississippi. During that time, he was described as a "*Cleburne-Wittsburg native.*"

*The town of Cleburne (pronounced "KLAY-burn") was named for Major General Patrick Cleburne (1828–1864), a brilliant and highly regarded Irish-born American Confederate soldier, who was killed at age thirty-six in the ill-conceived assault by Confederate forces at the Battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864.



The original marriage certificate of James Gordon Frierson and Emma Gwynne Davis. It reads, "This certifies that the rite of Holy Matrimony was celebrated between James G. Frierson of Cross County, Arks. and Emma Gwynne Davis of Cleburne, Arks. on the 12th day of Nov. 1868 at the residence of Dr. N. A. Davis by Wm. A. Cobb, P. E. of the M. E. Church, South." [Presiding Elder] of the M. E. Church, South."

MARION

After living ten years in Cleburne, James Gordon Frierson and his family moved in the fall of 1878 to the town of Marion in Crittenden County, about forty miles east of Cleburne. Located near the Mississippi River, twelve miles west of Memphis, Tennessee, Marion is today a small Arkansas Delta town with a population of about 12,000. James Gordon Frierson and his family resided there for almost five years.

In September of 1882, while living in Marion, James Gordon Frierson was elected judge for the Second Judicial District of Arkansas. His district included the counties of Cross, Craighead, Clay, Randolph, Green, Mississippi, Poinsett, and Crittenden.

JONESBORO

In early 1883, James Gordon Frierson bought property and began to construct a home in the small Craighead County town of Jonesboro, a more central location in his judicial district. Located on Crowley's Ridge, Jonesboro is about sixty miles northwest of Marion. James Gordon Frierson's family arrived there in November 1883. Before coming to live in Jonesboro, they had spent the previous four or five months visiting and living with Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson's sister **Annie Elizabeth Davis Gilliland (1854–1933)** and her family in Vanndale in Cross County, Arkansas.

Jonesboro had a population of between 200 and 300 persons when James Gordon Frierson arrived in 1883. Today it has a population of over 70,000 and is the fourth-largest city in Arkansas.

Judge James Gordon Frierson became ill on February 18, 1884, while riding the circuit in his judicial district. He died in Jonesboro on March 8, 1884, and is buried there. While he lived in Jonesboro for only a few months, his descendants have resided there for almost 134 years.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

12. SENATOR JAMES GORDON FRIERSON, A “REBEL” DEMOCRAT

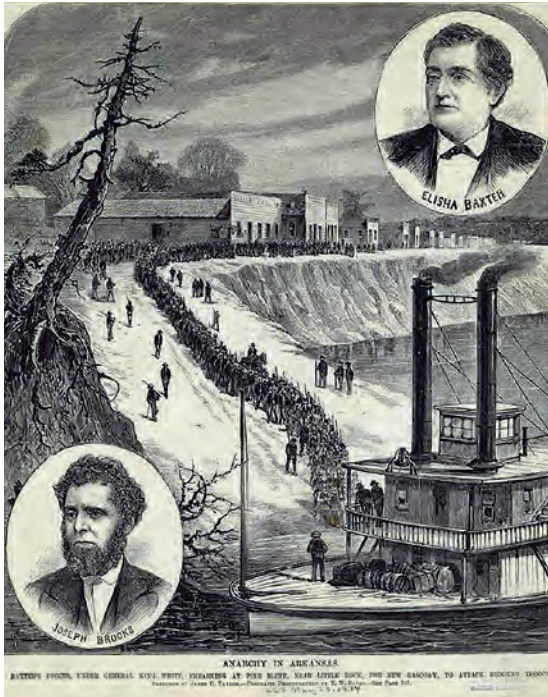
From 1870 to 1874, **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)**, a Cross County Democrat, served in the Arkansas Senate and was a leading political figure during the turbulent and momentous end of the Reconstruction Period (1865–77) after the Civil War. He was elected president of the Arkansas Senate in 1874 and presided over the Senate during the adoption of the 1874 Arkansas Constitution, which is still in effect today.

Some background is necessary to understand James Gordon Frierson’s role in Arkansas history. In 1868 United States Reconstruction policy led to the adoption of a new Arkansas constitution. That new constitution disenfranchised Confederate veterans and gave voting rights to African Americans. As a result, the Arkansas legislature was almost totally controlled by Republicans, who came from three distinctly different backgrounds: scalawags (white Southerners, most of whom had supported the Union during the Civil War),* carpetbaggers (newly arrived Northerners), and freedmen (former slaves). When James Gordon Frierson was elected to the Arkansas Senate in 1870, he was one of only four so-called “rebel” Democratic senators out of a total of twenty-six senators.

The Republicans soon became bitterly divided, however, and the 1872 election for Arkansas’s governor was a hard-fought contest between two Republicans: Joseph Brooks (1821–1877), a Northern abolitionist carpetbagger; and Elisha Baxter (1827–1899), a Southern scalawag Union man. Baxter narrowly won—or at least was declared the winner—and much political and judicial maneuvering ensued.

On April 15, 1874, eighteen months after the election, Joseph Brooks and his armed militia group attacked the state capitol in Little Rock and physically ousted Governor Baxter. This led to several bloody skirmishes, and as many as fifty men were killed over the next few weeks. These events are called the Brooks-Baxter War. Most of Brooks’s supporters were freedmen (former slaves), while Baxter’s support came increasingly from white Democrats. Thus, the Brooks-Baxter War became a

**There were some scalawags who had originally favored secession but joined the Republican Party during Reconstruction and supported granting the rights of citizenship to former slaves. For example, Mississippi’s most prominent scalawag was James L. Alcorn (1816–1894), who was the Republican governor of the state in 1870 and 1871. Alcorn was a wealthy Mississippi Delta planter who had owned nearly one hundred slaves and had served as a Confederate general during the Civil War.*



A drawing of the forces of Elisha Baxter (upper right) embarking at Pine Bluff, near Little Rock, Arkansas, for their attack on the forces of Joseph Brooks (lower left), who had ousted Governor Baxter during the Brooks-Baxter War in April–May 1874.

racial conflict. The war ended when President Ulysses S. Grant (1822–1885) intervened and ordered the reinstatement of Baxter as governor. The outcome of the Brooks-Baxter War effectively ended Reconstruction in Arkansas.

On May 11, 1874, with the backing of the newly reinstated Governor Baxter, the Arkansas Senate elected James Gordon Frierson to replace the previous Senate president, who was a Brooks supporter. On May 18, the newly reorganized legislature passed a bill calling for a constitutional convention, and on September 7, the new constitution was completed and approved by a majority of the delegates, including James Gordon Frierson.

Because former Confederates soldiers had regained suffrage in 1873 and voting by former black slaves was being suppressed, the new constitution was approved by the electorate on October 13, 1874, by a vote of three to one. Democrats were elected overwhelmingly to state offices all over Arkansas, including the governor's office. It would be ninety-three years before another Republican, Winthrop Rockefeller (1912–1973), would serve as governor of Arkansas.

Ironically, it was the Republican Governor Baxter who dismantled Reconstruction in Arkansas in 1874, two years before the Reconstruction Era began to end nationally with the 1876 presidential election. Perhaps inevitably, the exploitation of African Americans continued in the South for another three generations.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

13. JUDGE JAMES GORDON FRIERSON: HIS LAST YEARS

On September 4, 1882, while living in Marion, Arkansas, **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)** was elected circuit judge for the Second Judicial District of Arkansas. The Second District was, at that time, composed of eight counties in northeastern Arkansas. On October 30, James Gordon Frierson became Judge Frierson in a proclamation signed by Governor Thomas James Churchill (1824–1905), a former Confederate general. On the following day, James Gordon Frierson signed his oath of office.

The proclamation and the oath of office documents are today hanging in the offices of Scholtens and Averitt PLC, a law firm in Jonesboro, Arkansas. The law partners, Jerrod John “Jay” Scholtens (b. 1970) and Christopher Aaron “Chris” Averitt (b. 1973), are married to sisters Mary-Margaret Hester (b. 1972) and Catherine Neville Hester (b. 1974), James Gordon Frierson’s great-great-granddaughters. They are Neville’s nieces.

Soon after his election as circuit judge, James Gordon Frierson decided to move from Marion to Jonesboro, Arkansas, which was a more central location from which to travel his circuit. In 1883 he bought two acres next to downtown Jonesboro and began to build a home there. In the summer of 1883, as he was beginning his first year of travel through his judicial circuit, his family left Marion and lived for several months with his sister-in-law **Annie Elizabeth Davis Gilliland (1854–1933)** and her husband, James McFerrin Gilliland (1844–1895), in Vanndale, Arkansas. In November the Friersons moved into their new home in Jonesboro.

Shortly after that, while riding his judicial circuit, Judge James Gordon Frierson contracted pneumonia.* He returned to Jonesboro, lingered a while, and died on March 8, 1884. He was forty-six years old. He left behind a thirty-seven-year-old wife, eleven-year-old twins, and a six-year-old son. After he died, some of his family recalled:

James G. Frierson was a remarkable man in his ability to make and hold friends, especially the children. He had a wonderful faculty for telling interesting war tales and Bible stories, and he was a musician. Kind, honest, and true, he was a splendid lawyer and judge. He helped frame the constitution of Arkansas.

*One account states that Judge Frierson was in Osceola, Mississippi County, Arkansas, when he became ill. Other accounts say he was in Pocahontas, Randolph County, Arkansas.

In a book entitled *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, published in 1889, the author wrote about James Gordon Frierson:

He held this office [circuit judge] to the entire satisfaction of all parties, by his pure life and varied learning, winning the respect and affection of the people. He possessed, in an eminent degree, those virtues which adorn the bench, and that law knowledge, which makes the safe and wise jurist a unity of purity and integrity. He was kindly, true and patriotic, a zealous Christian, and as legislator, patriot or jurist, his merit was only exceeded by his modesty.

DEATH OF JUDGE FRIERSON.

After a painful illness of several weeks duration, Judge J. G. Frierson died peacefully at his residence on Main street last Saturday evening at 2 o'clock. Monday evening at the same hour and place funeral services were conducted by the Rev. W. R. Foster, after which the remains were carried to the cemetery and interred. A large concourse of friends followed with tears and sighs to pay the last tribute of respect to a true and good man. The writer enjoyed only a brief acquaintance with Judge Frierson, but he can truthfully say, without affecting the usual formality implied when reference is made to the dead, that it were impossible for a more exalted idea of genuine worth and true merit to have been attained. To know Judge Frierson was but to love him. The habitual sunshine of his countenance, the generous clasp of his hand, the Christian piety of his

every day walk, his unflinching integrity in the discharge of official duties were some of the characteristics that endeared him to the people. But death, alas! loves a shining mark. He invades the happiest homes, dethrones the greatest rulers and brings prince and peasant alike to a common level subject to his relentless and unconquerable power.

In the death of Judge Frierson the country has lost a pure and upright citizen and official, the wife an affectionate husband and his children a loving father. Deceased was born in Maury county Tennessee, November 5th, 1837, and was therefore, in his forty-seventh year. In 1859, he graduated from the law department of the Oxford Mississippi University. In 1866 he moved to this state and began the practice of his profession at Cleburn which at that time was the county site of Cross county; he was then the partner of Martin Claudy who now represents a Missouri district in the National Congress.

In 1870 he was elected to the State Senate and served four years. In 1874 he was elected a delegate to the Constitutional Convention from Cross county, in which body he served with distinction. In September 1882 he was elected Judge of this, the second judicial district, in which capacity he served efficiently and satisfactorily till the day of his death. About one year ago he decided, as a matter of convenience in reaching the appointments of his district, to make his future home in Jonesboro. He selected one of the prettiest lots in town, and up to his late illness had partially completed an elegant residence. He was raised a member of the Presbyterian church, but after his marriage there being no church organization of the Presbyterians, in the neighborhood he and his wife became members of the M. E. Church South. He lived and died consistent with his religious professions.

To the heart-broken and desolate widow, and the three young children to whom their father's name will ever be an honor, the DEMOCRAT tenders words of comfort and cheer. May they realize that "death is the end of labor, the entry into rest."

*Obituary of James Gordon Frierson.
He actually graduated from law school
in 1861, not 1859.*

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS
PAGES 36–39

14. THE FRIERSON HOUSE



A photograph of the Frierson House, Neville's ancestral home, in Jonesboro, Arkansas. The photograph is from the last quarter of the 20th century.

The Frierson House, where three generations of Neville's immediate ancestors lived, was built in 1883–84 by her great-grandfather **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)**. The house was enlarged and given its classical colonial facade in 1903. It contains about 9,500 square feet of floor space.

The Frierson House stands today at its original location at 1112 South Main Street in Jonesboro, Arkansas. For the past thirty-five years, it has been the home of the Charlott Jones School of Art. Below is a timeline that traces the history of the Frierson House:

1883

Judge James Gordon Frierson purchased a two-acre parcel of land in Jonesboro and began construction of a residence. In late 1883, he moved to Jonesboro with his wife, **Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson (1847–1899)**, and three children: twins **James Gordon Frierson Jr. (1872–1951)** and **Camille Frierson (1872–1961)**, age eleven; and **Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)**, age five. Their daughter, Camille, later wrote: "My father, James Gordon Frierson, in 1883 selected and bought a

pretty tree covered lot of two acres on South Main Street, and at once began to build his home. We went to Jonesboro in November while the carpenters were still working on the house.”

1884

Judge Frierson died at age forty-six, on March 8. His thirty-seven-year-old widow, Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson, assumed the debt on the house and land. She then converted four of the large downstairs rooms (the house had ten rooms) into classrooms and opened a private subscription school, which operated for about three years, until 1887.

1896

Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson sold a portion (one hundred feet of frontage) of the original two-acre lot on Main Street at its intersection with Elm Avenue to Morris Berger (1858–1932), who owned a local furniture business. The Berger House, located at 1120 South Main Street, next to the Frierson House, still stands today and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1896

Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson’s twenty-three-year-old daughter, Camille Frierson, married Thomas Allen Hughes (1870–1939) at the Frierson House. After they married, the Hughes couple lived there with Emma Davis Frierson.

1899

Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson died at age fifty-two, on August 9. Camille Frierson Hughes and Thomas Allen Hughes continued to live at the Frierson House.

1901

On April 1, twenty-three-year-old Charles Davis Frierson Sr. married **Charlotte Martin Galloway (1878–1968)** in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The newlywed couple lived at the Frierson House during the first year of their married life.

1902

Charles Davis Frierson Sr. built a house for his wife and himself at 115 East Cherry Avenue, on a site that was a part of the original two acres of the Frierson property. The Cherry Avenue house was the childhood home of Neville’s father, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, and his sister, **Margaret Frierson Cherry (1912–1990)**, who wrote the following:

I suppose Judge Hughes must have bought out the other children's [Charles Davis Frierson Sr. and James Gordon Frierson Jr.] interest in the house [Frierson House]. Your Grandmother and Grandfather Frierson lived in the 1112 Main for a year or so while they were building the house at 115 Cherry Street, which they largely designed themselves, and it's a lovely example of neo-classical architecture.

1903

A major renovation of the Frierson House was completed by Thomas Allen and Camille Frierson Hughes. Camille wrote about remodeling the Frierson House:

About three years [it was actually five years] before we moved to Memphis, we remodeled the original old home in Jonesboro. It was not colonial then, but we changed it to a colonial home. We changed the position of the four front rooms, added large colonial columns, porches all around and so forth, and made it into a lovely place which it grieved me to leave.



A photograph of the newly renovated Frierson House. The top of the photograph reads: "Taken in 1903—Gordon died February, 1904—He is on porch behind Alan Hughes Jr. [who is in front of the balustrade]." The other two people on the porch are unidentified.

1908

In February, after living in the Frierson House for about twelve years, Thomas Allen and Camille Frierson Hughes and their four children moved to Memphis, Tennessee. They initially rented the Frierson House in Jonesboro. According to Margaret Frierson Cherry:

The tragedy of it is that Judge and Mrs. Hughes were never happy at their newly renovated house at 1112 Main because during the time the renovation was going on, they moved into a little rent house they owned apparently. Their little boy, Gordon [Gordon Frierson Hughes (1899–1904)], had pneumonia and soon died [his mother said he died of diphtheria] and Aunt Camille was so disturbed over this and so sad and felt that if they had not lived the winter months in that badly heated house, that little Gordon would not have become ill. So she never really was happy in the house newly done and when Judge Hughes had an opportunity to go into a law firm in Memphis, they moved and spent the rest of their lives there.

After 1910

Sometime between 1910 and 1920, Camille Frierson and Thomas Allen Hughes sold the Frierson House to Albert E. Diamant (1870–1922), a lumberman who had moved to Jonesboro from Missouri. The Diamant family thus became next-door neighbors and friends of Charles Frierson's family during the time Neville's father was growing up at 115 East Cherry Avenue.

1927

Charles Davis Frierson Sr. purchased the Frierson House for \$8,000 from Albert Diamant's widow, Amy Hallam Diamant (1875–1949). He moved into the house in the spring of 1927 with his wife and two children, Charles Davis Frierson Jr., age twenty, and Margaret Frierson, age fourteen.

Charles Davis Frierson Sr. explained his rationale for buying the Frierson House in a letter to his son, Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (called Sonny by his father), on February 20, 1927:

My Dear Sonny

Mrs. Diamant has been trying to sell her home for a long time. She said she must sell it, and finally and reluctantly, I offered to buy it at the price at which she has offered it.

You explain to Perry [Mrs. Diamant's son], as I have explained to all of the children I have been able to talk with, that I did not want to buy their home, but merely bought it because Mrs. Diamant was anxious to sell and might have sold to someone else.

One good thing is that I will pay her in cash, borrowing from the bank, while someone else might have bought it on long time and failed to pay her. I am going to pay her \$8000—that is, of course if the deal finally goes through.

If we can't rent out the house to advantage, we can move in and live there ourselves. It was originally the old Frierson home place anyhow. Our plan is, however, to rent it out as apartments or otherwise, after overhauling it a little.

Mrs. Diamant plans to pay some little debts that are worrying her and move into a smaller house she can rent.

Your Dad

In another letter to Charles Davis Frierson Jr., dated February 26, 1927, Charles Davis Frierson Sr. wrote these words about having purchased the Frierson House:

As to the purchase of the Diamant home, that was a thing I did not seek but it looked like fate rather pushed it on me. It will be quite a load to carry for a while, but I think it is really a bargain as to value. Anyhow, Mrs. Diamant was determined to sell as she felt she was running in debt all the time.

Our idea is to rent it out as a couple of apartments, but, of course, if we are unable to do so we might have to take some other steps; possibly live in it ourselves.

I would not mind doing this after it was overhauled if the interest, taxes, and insurance would not run so high but, as it stands I would prefer to get a little revenue out of the place. However, it looks like I will get a little additional money out of a couple of drainage districts this spring. . . . Hence, it may not be so difficult to carry the load as I feared.

Charles Davis Frierson Sr. and his family moved into the house within the next few months.

1937

Margaret Frierson Cherry and her husband, Francis Adams Cherry (1908–1965), married and lived with her parents at the Frierson House for much of the next eighteen years. The Cherrys also lived in Washington, D.C., during World War II for almost two years (1944–45), in a small house across the street from Neville and her parents for one year (1946), and in Little Rock, Arkansas, at the Governor's Mansion in 1953 and 1954.

1947

Charles Davis Frierson Sr. died on January 17. His sixty-eight-year-old widow, Charlotte Martin Gallaway Frierson, continued to live in the Frierson House with her daughter, her son-in-law, and their three children: Haskille Scott “Scotty” Cherry III (1940–2007), age seven; Charlotte Frierson Cherry (b. 1942), age five; and Francis Adams “Sandy” Cherry Jr. (b. 1947). Charlotte Gallaway Frierson lived as a widow in the Frierson House for the next twenty-one years.

1968

Charlotte Martin Gallaway Frierson died at the Frierson House on January 7, at age eighty-nine.

1970

The Frierson House was conveyed from Charlotte Martin Gallaway Frierson’s estate to her daughter, Margaret Frierson Cherry, who became the sole owner. Margaret had aspirations to restore and preserve the house. Three years later, in 1973, the Frierson House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For most of the decade or so after Charlotte Martin Gallaway Frierson died, the Frierson House was unoccupied. During that time, Margaret Frierson Cherry sought a buyer who would preserve the house, but none materialized. Her best offer came from the Central Baptist Church,* which wanted to demolish the house to create a church parking lot.

1980

The Frierson House was finally bought in 1980 by Dr. Charlott Jones (b. 1927), a former nun who was the director of the Arkansas State Museum in Jonesboro. Her brother, Phil Jones (b. 1930), owned the Morris Berger home next door and later, around 1990, Phil also bought and razed the Cherry Avenue Frierson house, where Neville’s father had lived as a boy. Thus, for a time, the Jones family owned all of the original property bought by James Gordon Frierson in 1883.

Francis Adams “Sandy” Cherry, Neville’s first cousin, recalls that the Frierson House sold for about \$90,000 in 1980, an increase of almost 900% over its 1927 cost of \$8,000.

Charlott Jones lived in the house, did some restoration of it, and opened a private art school there. For the past thirty-five years, the Frierson House has been the home of the Charlott Jones School of Art.

**In the 1970s, the Central Baptist Church, founded in 1931, was located at 1010 South Main Street, quite near the Frierson House at 1112 South Main Street. Today the Central Baptist Church is Jonesboro’s largest church, with 6,000 members and five locations in the Jonesboro area.*

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS
PAGES 36–39

15. EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS FRIERSON'S PRIVATE SCHOOL, 1884–87

For three academic years during the late nineteenth century, Neville's great-grandmother **Emma Gwynne Davis (1847–1899)** operated a private school in Jonesboro, Arkansas. It was the only school in town at that time.



*Emma Gwynne
Davis Frierson, who
ran a private school in
Jonesboro, Arkansas,
from 1884 to 1887.*

Neville's father, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, wrote about the school in a presentation he made about his grandmother:

Upon the death of Judge Frierson in March of 1884, she [Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson] had a house with 10 rooms, 10 fireplaces, and a good cistern. She immediately converted four of the downstairs rooms and opened a school—primary grades through high school. Two other teachers were engaged, and the school offered musical and choral singing, as well as the usual subjects. . . . The students sat on benches.

The school year began on September 1 each year and lasted for ten months. On July 23, 1886, the following advertisement appeared in the *Jonesboro Eagle*:

NOTICE

FRIERSON HIGH SCHOOL

The fall and winter term of this school will open on the first Monday in September 1886. The principal bespeaks a moderate share of the patronage of the people of Jonesboro and the vicinity, and no pains will be spared to render the school satisfactory to those entrusting pupils to her care. Term to continue for ten months, Rates as heretofore.

Emma Frierson, Principal

The rates charged for attending the school are unknown. It is estimated, however, that they probably ranged from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per month.

There was no public school in Jonesboro at the time. Most children simply attended one-room schoolhouses in the county. With Jonesboro's population booming (the town had 200 people in 1881 and 2,000 in 1885), a public school building was erected and opened in September 1887. With the advent of a public school in Jonesboro, Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson announced that the Frierson School would consolidate with the public school and that she would become a teacher at the new school.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

16. A DEDICATED AND COMMITTED TEACHER: EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS FRIERSON

During her fifteen years of widowhood, **Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson (1847–1899)** was deeply driven to support and educate her three children, and she had the skills to do just that.

When she was young and living in Ozark, Missouri, Emma Gwynne Davis received an unusual exposure to what is termed a “classical” education. She was also a talented musician who sang and played the piano. Her son, **Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)**, elaborated on her early education in a biographical piece written in 1935:

During her girlhood Emma Davis had not been physically strong but had an excellent teacher as the result of which she reached mental attainments very rare in those days. Her teacher was Professor Learned, formerly of Massachusetts, who ran a sort of junior college in Ozark, and taught many things not ordinarily taught in such communities.

Hence, Emma received a remarkably thorough training in literature, had read all the English classics at an early age and likewise learned a good deal of Latin and advanced considerably in mathematics and other studies. Her handwriting was beautiful and the facility with which she could write letters, articles, poetry, or anything else for which she was called upon, was an extraordinary thing throughout her life. Her ability to read a novel and narrate to her classes the story of it was very unusual.

Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970) summarized his grandmother’s career after she merged her private school with the Jonesboro, Arkansas, public school in 1887:

For twelve years after the merger of her own and the public school, she supported the family by teaching regular term, summer term in the rural schools, music, kept boarders, operated a small lending library, and found time to teach a Sunday School class of about twenty girls at the Methodist Church, and to launch the first Literary Society and the first Temperance Society.

Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson taught in the Jonesboro public schools from 1887 until her death in 1899, except for one year. Neville’s father, Charles Davis Frierson Jr., explained her absence that one year:

The one term she did not teach was in the late 90’s, when her connection with the Jonesboro school was terminated for one session due to her failure to accord to one of the older students the deference thought to be due to him by reason of his being the son of one of the school’s directors.



Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson, at the rear standing behind a portion of her class of young students at the Jonesboro, Arkansas, public school, in the late 1880s or 1890s.

In fact, she whipped him for bringing a bottle of liquor to school.

She taught the rest of the term in Marion, Arkansas, but returned to the Jonesboro system the next fall.

Charles Davis Frierson Sr., Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson's son, stated this opinion after he recounted his mother's toils during her widowhood: "*Finally, this continued labor to support her family probably caused her death at the age of about fifty-two.*" We do not know the actual cause of Emma Gwynne Frierson's death.

JAMES GORDON FRIERSON | EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS

PAGES 36–39

17. EMMA GWYNNE DAVIS FRIERSON'S OBITUARIES

Neville's great-grandmother **Emma Gwynne Davis (1847–1899)** died at age fifty-two, on August 9, 1899, in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Her obituary appeared in several newspapers.

An obituary for Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson written by her pastor at the Methodist church in Jonesboro. This obituary most likely appeared in a Jonesboro newspaper.

FRIERSON: Mrs. Emma Davis, consort of the late Judge J. G. Frierson was born in Green county, Mo., Feb. 11 1847; died in Jonesboro, Ark., August 9, 1899. She was the daughter of Dr. Davis, a practicing physician of note and an influential politician in Missouri before the war. At the opening of hostilities he cast his fortune with the Confederacy and came South, never returning to Missouri. After the war he settled in Arkansas, and hence our State, specially Eastern and North-eastern Arkansas was blessed with the life, labor and good influence of this cultured Christian woman. It was my good fortune to be her pastor seven years, and her presiding elder four years, and hence my opportunity to know her well. I received her children into the church; married her only daughter to Hon. Allen Hughes, and baptized her grandchild, and never, in any relation of life, as wife, mother, teacher, church member and friend, did I ever observe in her conduct anything that did not comport with the highest type of cultured Christian womanhood. Though a teacher, naturally and by profession, she was also a student, broadening constantly, by close study and extensive reading her well-trained and amply developed intellect. Sister Frierson rendered at different times efficient service as organist and Sunday-school teacher, hesitating not in the absence of a Sunday-school to have one in her own house. She leaves two sons, noble young men, fully prepared for life's battles as a result of a mother's energy and consecration, and one daughter, now a mother herself, having many of the qualities of her sainted mother, to mourn their loss. Sister Frierson's home was her pastor's home, and there was none better. The mother, teacher, friend, has finished her work here and taken her departure for heaven.

M. M. SMITH.

MRS. FRIERSON DEAD.
Aug 9-1899

"Howe'r it be it seems to me
 'Tis only noble to be good.
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than Norman
 blood."

The poet's words were truly exemplified in the pure life and admirable character of that noble Christian lady whose lips were sealed in the eternal silence of death last Wednesday at 1 o'clock. Mrs. Frierson had long been a teacher, and there are boys and girls in Jonesboro, many of whom will hold her name in sacred memory. She was a woman endowed with no ordinary intellect, and broad as was that intellect and culture it was no broader than her humble devotion, her love, her charity and her kindness. She knew no evil, a woman superior in every quality of mind and heart, loved by all who knew her, and her grave will be ever green, and tended by loving hands. She has been a mother to the orphan, a friend to the friendless and has borne the burdens of others when her own burden was overwhelming. Her life has been a blessing to mankind and her death a calamity.

The editor of the ENTERPRISE is among her humblest friends and lays this tribute on her grave, glad that we can add our humble tribute to the thousands of others.

When death fell like a solemn pall and touched her tired eyes there fell a silence on lips that knew no guile. We have seen some giant locomotive as it steamed magnificently and grandly in its course—and we thought it grand. We have seen some mighty cloud roll in splendor across the firmament and join others of its kind until the lightnings flashed and the deep toned muttering shook the universe, and as the work of Almighty God we knew it was grand, but compared to it all; the grandest thing "is the light of a noble and beautiful life wrapping itself about the destiny of humans, and finding its home at last in the blessed bosom of the eternal God." Such was her life. She was buried Thursday, a large concourse of friends following her remains to their last resting place.

(Bob Robin)

DEATH OF MRS. FRIERSON
Aug 9-1899
The Family Was Well Known in Greene County.

The many friends and relatives of Mrs. Emma Davis Frierson will learn with great sorrow of her death at Jonesboro, Ark., on the 9th inst.

She was born in Greene county in February, 1847, her father being Dr. N. A. Davis, who practiced medicine for many years at Ozark before the war. Dr. Davis was a well educated and public spirited citizen, a fine physician and quite an influential politician. He was the leader in the movement for the formation of Christian county in 1858, out of portions of territory taken from Greene and adjoining counties. At the beginning of the civil war Dr. Davis cast his fortunes with the cause of the Confederacy and never returned to Missouri. After the war the family moved to East Feliciana Parish, La., and subsequently to Marion, Ark., where he died.

Mrs. Frierson was a woman of great intellectual endowment, of fine sense and many womanly qualities. The following clipping from the Memphis Commercial-Appeal will be of interest to many persons who knew her and her family in this section of Missouri:

"Died at Jonesboro, Ark., Aug. 9, at 1 o'clock p. m., Mrs. Emma Davis Frierson, wife of the late Judge J. G. Frierson, in the fifty-first year of her age. Words are inadequate to express the many noble and beautiful traits of this good woman. The greater part of her life has been spent in the school rooms of Eastern and North-eastern Arkansas, and as an educator she was considered second to none. Endowed by nature with a generous spirit, it has been her grand mission in life not only to instruct the youthful minds of many children and young people, but it has been her aim and ambition to educate her children and place them in fitting positions in life. Besides this, she has been to a large family of brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews a veritable guiding star, and all her efforts in life were calculated to influence her friends and relatives to bind their hearts in love. In her death the state loses a good woman, Jonesboro loses a shining light, and her family suffers a loss that is almost irreparable. But her loved ones know that she has gone to her Savior and will there await them on the golden shore in the beautiful land of rest."

*Far left:
 An obituary for Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson that appeared in the Jonesboro Enterprise.*

*Left:
 An obituary for Emma Gwynne Davis Frierson that appeared in a newspaper serving an area around Springfield and Ozark, Missouri. This obituary includes a reprint of another one that appeared in the Commercial Appeal, a Memphis, Tennessee, newspaper.*