

## The Old Murdock Place

In the decade of 1880-1890, N.L. (Nicholas Lewis) Hart (son of Hardy) and his wife Sara owned a 160-acre farm in the northern part of Jackson County. Geographically the property is located on present day Banner Road, a few hundred yards northwest of Collins Church, approximately one mile from the center of Malone. This was perhaps the first home constructed out of saw milled lumber in or around the Malone area.

Nicholas and his Wife owned the family home place consisting of a farm and mercantile store. By the end of the decade the store had ceased operation and was being used as a hay barn.

Thomas Hilliard Murdock, a Georgia native from Randolph County, purchased the property in 1892. After the purchase it becomes known as the Murdock Place. By name in Malone, a direction to the Old Murdock Place is



Mattie b.1874   Ida b.1870   Georgia b.1872   Kitty b.1876  
Thomas Hilliard Murdock b.1845\*\*Mary Elizabeth Martin b.1851  
Clark 1885---Martin 1886---Pearl 1890---John 1883---Lillie 1882  
Mary's pregnant with 10<sup>th</sup> child Willie born: 1892

still common. Thomas Murdock was born in Stewart County, Georgia in 1845. He married Mary Elizabeth Martin, a Randolph County native in 1869. Thomas and Mary resided in Randolph County until 1890. Nine of their 10 children were born there. Family history reveals in 1890 Thomas became unhappy with an open range ordinance imposed by that county. This resulted in a move across the river into Alabama. The last child was born in Alabama in 1892. Shortly after that birth; Thomas lost Mary, and after her death came to Jackson County and purchased this farm from Nicholas Hart.

In 1894 Thomas met and married his second wife Charity Morning. Her spouse, James Rogers had died leaving her a widow. She and Thomas raised his children and one from her previous marriage and remained on the Murdock Place until his death in 1916. After his death a daughter Lizzie Pearl purchased the property from her Step Mother. Another daughter, Lillie moved in with Pearl. Both remained in the house until Lillie's death in 1932 and Pearls in 1939. After Pearl died another family member, Louie Dekle became the owner. In May 1970, Annie and Wilmer Jackson from Detroit Michigan purchased the property from Louie Dekle. In July 1988 John Batson from Naples Florida became the owner. After John died in 1995, Charles Johnson from Grand Ridge was high bidder and new owner in an estate sale. In November 2003, the Skipper's became the new owner of the Murdock Place.

Chronicling the occupants who lived and raised their families in the house are as follows, the dates are reflective to dates vacated; The Harts until 1892; Thomas Murdock, 1916; Lillie and Pearl Murdock, 1939; Joe Conrad, 1950; James Jones, 1952; Arthur Smith, 1958; and W.J. Grice in 1966. The proud old house had been standing unoccupied for 38 years until March 23, 2004. On that date history was reduced to rubble by heavy equipment when the new owners rejected a dismantling proposal due to liability. A well known lady historian and her construction superintendent examined the structure and envisioned great potential. The foundation logs with the bark still in tack and the duel open fire place for cooking was most impressive to her. Their contribution to history is in the dismantling, relocating and reconstruction of historical buildings. She researches the complete history of her projects and formats them in a book for future generations after completely historically reconstructing them in a different location.

Beginning circa 1815 until the middle of the century, log construction was a common practice. As late as 1920 two of the original log structures were still standing in the Malone area. The old Murdock house was one of the first structures to be replaced with saw milled lumber perhaps as early as

1860. Similar to the old Mears Hotel of 20 years prior, fate was not kind to the Old Murdock Home either. Only photographs will remain for future generations.

