

CHAPTER III

DAVID SHANNON ROBINSON

BARNWELL COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND LOWNDES COUNTY, GEORGIA

David Shannon Robinson was the youngest son of John and Nancy (Ray) Robinson. He was born near Old Ellenton in Barnwell County, South Carolina on July 30, 1835. His middle name, Shannon, was given after the Shannon River in Ireland, where our ancestors once lived. His birthplace, Old Ellenton, was moved in 1950 to a new location 20 miles west, because the area was taken for the new Savannah River Project by the United States Government. The town's new location is known as New Ellenton.

David Shannon migrated to Lowndes County, Georgia between October 1850 and August 1854, possibly accompanied by his mother, Nancy, and brother, Allen. It is believed they came to be with David Shannon's father, John, and brother, George, who had come to this area in 1850 with Nancy's brother, Hiram Ray. David Shannon, Allen, and Nancy packed up their necessary belongings on

a cart. The cart and their possessions were pulled by an ox for the long journey south.

This area of Georgia was still a sparsely settled frontier. The Creek Indians had conceded their rights to this land in a treaty of 1818 which led to the creation of three large counties from this vast territory. Irwin County was formed on December 15, 1818, consisting of sixteen land districts, divided into 6,500 lots. Most lots consisted of 490 acres each, which totaled approximately 3-million acres of land in the county. Later, Lowndes County was created on December 23, 1825, and Berrien County on February 25, 1856. As a time reference, the city of Valdosta, Georgia, was incorporated by the legislature on December 7, 1860. The first train to go through Valdosta was the Atlantic and Gulf train in 1860, which was pulled by the engine known as "Satilla Number Three."

In the early 1850's (about six to ten years prior to the railroad's arrival in Valdosta), David Shannon came to Lowndes County, Georgia and was considered a real pioneer. Most of the settlers coming to this area were from North and South Carolina or the older parts of Georgia. Maybe they had heard that crop growing and grazing conditions were better down in southern Georgia. Many of them moved their herds of cattle and flocks of sheep along with their families. Wildlife such as deer, turkey, and fish was bountiful; however, life was still difficult in the frontier. All the clothes were made by hand, usually from the wool or cotton grown on their own farm. Items of luxury were not available, and such items as cotton, wool, chickens, eggs, beeswax, tallow, and hides were usually bartered to obtain the necessities of life. It was not an easy task to pick up and move. In addition to the difficulties of acquiring the basic necessities for sustaining life, people also had the natural barriers of the country to contend with. Roads were almost nonexistent, trails were rough, and navigation by waterways was difficult due to fallen trees and rough waters. However, our

ancestors survived all of these dangers and successfully migrated southward.

The following maps (Exhibit 3-1 & 3-2) are for identifying geographical areas involving David Shannon's life.

Exhibit 3-1: County Map For The State Of Georgia (and part of South Carolina), 1920

- David Shannon's birthplace, Barnwell County, South Carolina (Reference B-4).
- David Shannon and Nancy Carolina Fountain's first homestead on rented land in the 663rd. district, Lowndes County *, Georgia (Reference E-2.5).

Exhibit 3-2: Map of Berrien County, 1908

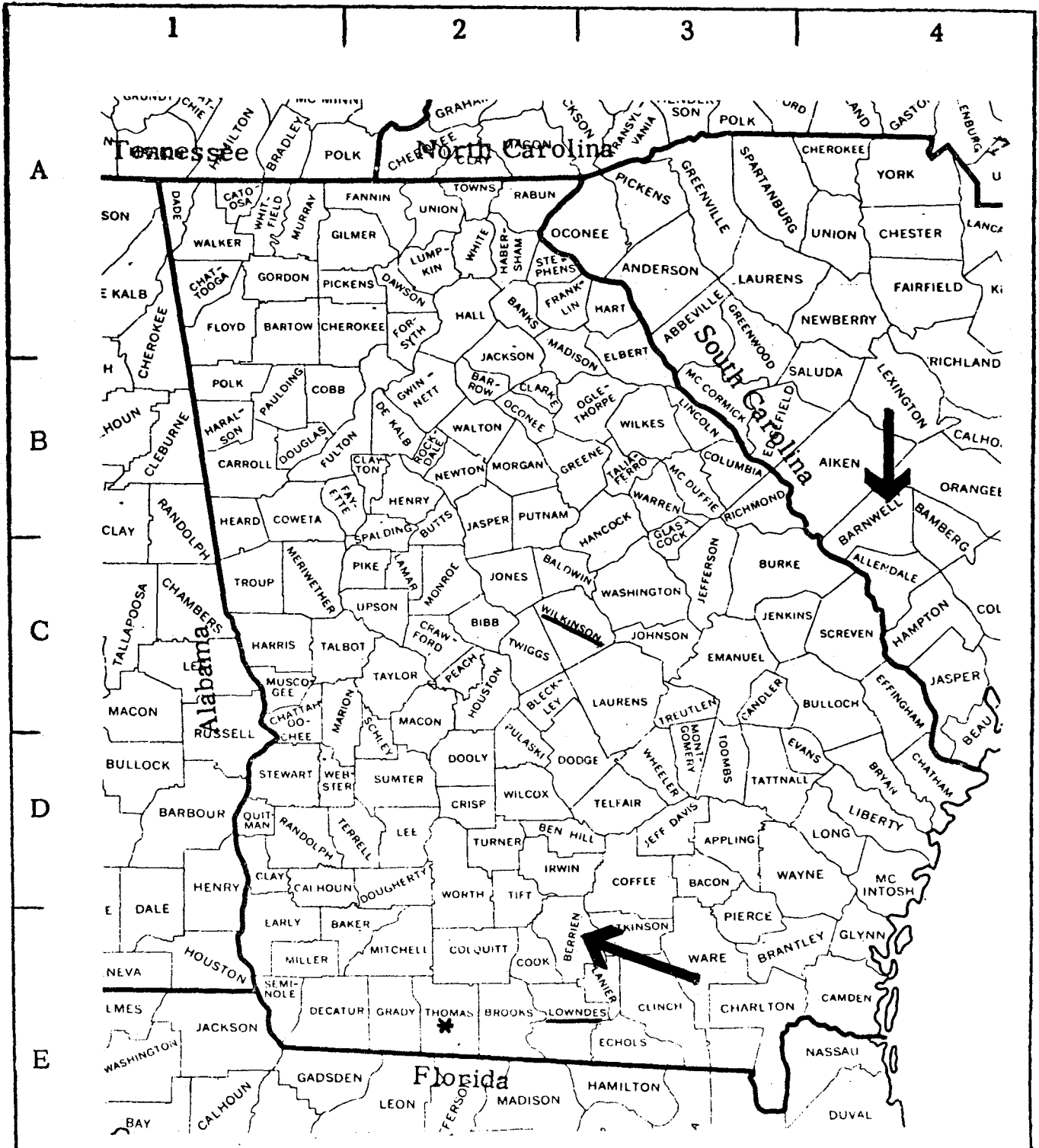
- Pleasant Primitive Baptist Church (constituted in 1835), Lowndes County *, near Cat Creek (Bottom of map, district 10, lot #370).
- David Shannon and Nancy Carolina's first land purchase and homestead at Cat Creek, Lowndes County * (Bottom of map, district 10, lot #364 & 365).
- Oakey Grove at the intersection of Nashville-Tifton Road and Brookfield-Lenox Road, Berrien County (Top of map, district 6, lot #467).

*These legal land descriptions took place in a section of Lowndes County, which later became Berrien County when it was created from Lowndes County on February 25, 1856.

County Map For The State Of

GEORGIA

1920





Berrien County
Map
1908

David Shannon and Nancy Carolina
Robinson's first homestead was at
Cat Creek-Lot #364, 365, and 373.
In 1877, they resettled at Oaky
Grove.

Exhibit 3-2

NANCY CAROLINA FOUNTAIN'S FAMILY

Nancy Carolina Fountain, wife of David Shannon Robinson, descended from the Fontaine's of England. It is assumed that Nancy's middle name was associated with the states of North and South Carolina. Jean de-la Fontaine or "John of the Fountain" lived in England and was in the King's service during the reigns of King Frances I, Henry II, Frances II, and until Charles IX, when he resigned. The original name, "Fountain," was one of location, that is, he must have lived near some noted fountain in the province. The "de-la" in the name was retained until about 1633, when it was dropped by his grandson, James, due to feelings of humility under the persecution. Jean de-la Fontaine's great-grandson, James, was born in 1658 and lived in Jenonville, France. He became a Protestant preacher and escaped from France in 1685 due to persecution for his faith. He married Elizabeth Boursignot in 1686 and settled in Bridgewater, England, but eventually moved to Dublin, Ireland, where he died. He left six sons, one of them being Peter Fontaine. He graduated with a degree in law in 1711, was ordained as a minister in London in 1715, and emigrated with his wife to Virginia in 1716. The Reverend Fontaine had seven children: Peter, Moses, Sarah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Aaron, and a daughter who married a Winston. It is from these Fontaines that the Fountains of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia are descended. The original name of "Fontaine" was frequently used as "Fountain" after coming to America (History of Wilkinson County, Victor Davidson, p. 501-3).

In one branch of the family in North Carolina, there were two sons, Francis and John. Francis kept a diary, and in 1754 there appears this entry: "John has married and we learn that he has married well" (History of Wilkinson County, Victor Davidson,

p. 503). There is no concrete evidence, but it is possible that John Fountain married Patrick Henry's daughter, Martha Henry. John served in the Revolutionary War of 1776 with a company of militia from Hyde County, North Carolina. John had at least three children: Israel, born 1775, Ethelred, born 1785 (both born in North Carolina), and Henry. Soon after the birth of Ethelred, John moved to South Carolina. About 1799, he moved deeper into the frontier lands of Georgia and settled in Jefferson County (Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia, Folks Huxford, V. 3, p. 99).

Jefferson County is where Ethelred met Elenor Ingram, daughter of David Ingram. Elenor was born in Burke County (now Jefferson County) in 1786.^{or 96} They were married in Jefferson County on February 11, 1813 and shortly thereafter, they moved to Wilkinson County where all their children were born (See previous reference, p. 99). The following is a list of their children's names, birth dates, and marriage information (Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia, Folks Huxford, V. 7, p. 145):

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Mary | b. Dec. 28, 1814 | m. William (Billie) Waters, son of Issac Waters |
| 2. William E. | b. 1816 | m. Frances Webb on March 31, 1844, daughter of Dawson Webb |
| 3. James I. | b. 1818 | m. Sabrina Chambers on May 17, 1842 |
| 4. Elafair | b. 1822 | m. Henry Cook on May 21, 1845 |
| 5. (Daughter) | b. 1825 | m. John Baker |
| 6. Nancy Carolina | b. Dec. 21, 1831 | m. David Shannon Robinson on Aug. 23, 1854 |

Elenor and Ethelred had moved to Wilkinson County (about two miles from the present town of Gordon) to be with Ethelred's brother, Israel, who had moved to this area about 1815 (this date

should be around 1813, because Elenor and Ethelred moved to Wilkinson County before they had their first child in 1814). Israel was the first by the name of Fountain in Wilkinson County. The earliest official record of him is when he witnessed a deed for land lot #241 in 1816, between Ethelred Fountain of Jefferson County and David Ingram. Ethelred had purchased this land three years after his marriage to Elenor (History of Wilkinson County, Victor Davidson, p. 502-3).

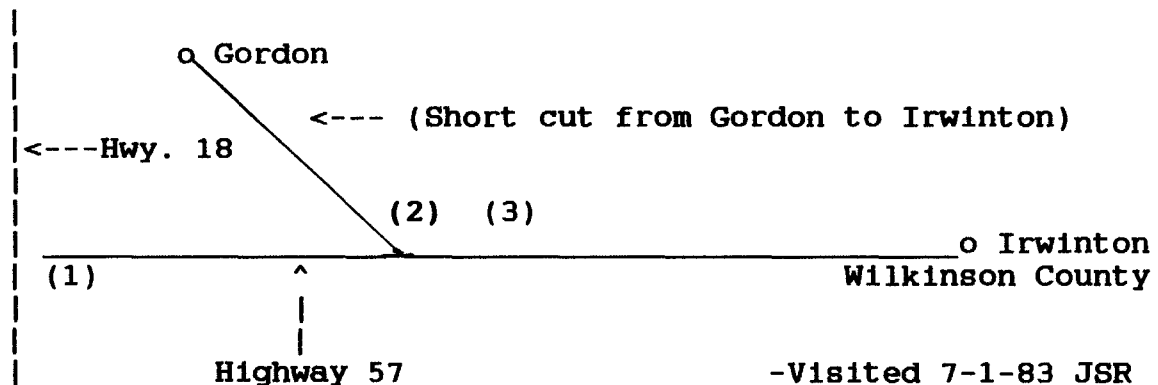
Mary and her husband, William (Billie) Waters, were the first of her family to move to Lowndes County, Georgia in the early 1840s. In 1845, brothers William E. and James and their wives moved to join them, followed by Ethelred, Elenor, and daughter Nancy Carolina. In the 1850 Lowndes County Census (Entry #640), Ethelred is shown at age 65, farming and living with his wife Elenor, age 64, and daughter Nancy Carolina age 20. Ethelred reported North Carolina as his place of birth and Georgia for Elenor and Nancy. Entry #610 shows William E. Fountain to be age 35, working as a laborer with his wife Frances, age 24, and daughter Elizabeth, age 3. All reported Georgia as their place of birth.

William E. and Frances became members at Pleasant Primitive Baptist Church (constituted June 1835) soon after coming to the area. William was the sixth male member to join the church, and Frances was the seventh female member. They continued to live at the Fountain homestead on lot #270 in a section of Lowndes County that was cut into Berrien County in 1856. William E. died at his family home on August 28, 1896, and Frances died two years later on July 6, 1898. They are buried at Pleasant Cemetery near Cat Creek.

William (Billie) and Mary (Fountain) Waters lived next to her brother James in the area near Empire Primitive Baptist Church. William (Billie) was a member and was ordained as a deacon in 1865. Mary died April 24, 1877, at age 62, and she is buried at Pleasant Cemetery near her brother William E. Fountain. William (Billie) Waters left the area soon after Mary died and he

settled in Arkansas. He died there in 1887 and is buried in Arkansas. It is a possibility that William (Billie) knew of a Robinson that lived in Arkansas, which could have been David Shannon's brother, Allen. This may have been what drew him to that state. For additional information on William Waters, see "Civil War Duty" in this chapter.

Ethelred and Elenor returned to Wilkinson County after Nancy Carolina married David Shannon Robinson in 1854. Ethelred wanted to spend his remaining days back near his old homestead. Ethelred died there about 1860. He and Elenor are buried in the Fountain Cemetery located two miles from Gordon, Georgia (Reference (2) in the map below).



- (1) Ramah Primitive Baptist Church and Cemetery.
- (2) Thorp Cemetery (used to be known as Fountain Cemetery).
- (3) McArthur Cemetery. There is a Robinson buried here.

CAT CREEK HOMESTEAD BEFORE THE WAR

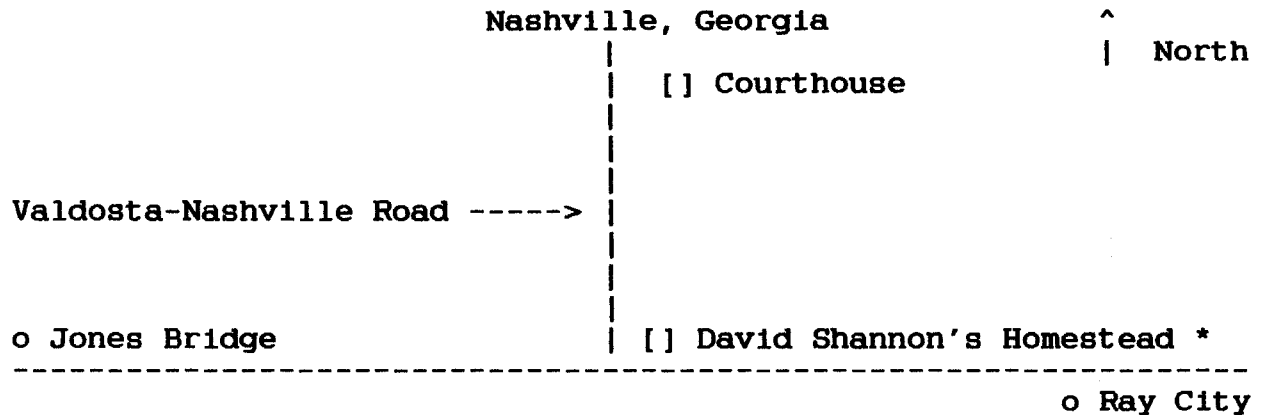
David Shannon's migration from Barnwell County, South Carolina led him to Cat Creek, near Valdosta, in Lowndes County, Georgia. It is still unknown why David Shannon chose to live in Cat Creek when he left South Carolina. This is where David Shannon met his wife Nancy Carolina Fountain. They were married on August 23, 1854 in Lowndes County, Georgia (this section is now Berrien County which was formed February 25, 1856).

In the 1860 Census, dated June 28, David Shannon stated he was still farming on rented land located in the 663rd. district near Valdosta, Georgia. He reported his personal value to be worth \$352. His age was 23, and Nancy was 27. Their children were reported as James Hiram, age 5, David Melton, age 2, and Sarah Ann, 4 months old. The census records did not reveal any information about the death of their second child.

The family bible records of David Shannon and Nancy Carolina (See Exhibit 3-3A through 3-3C) show this child was born on March 22, 1857, and died on March 31, 1857. The name of the child is unknown. It is believed the child was buried at Pleasant Cemetery near Pleasant Church where Nancy Carolina's brother, William E., and wife, Frances, were members.

On November 12, 1860, David Shannon and Nancy Carolina took their savings and purchased their first land which was sixty acres of lot #373 in District 10 of Berrien County. The land was purchased from Nancy Carolina's older brother, James Fountain, and wife, Sabrina. On this land, David Shannon and Nancy Carolina either built a small log house or occupied an existing one on the property. The house was located among four pecan trees. The land was considered good farm land because it was

level and flat. The homestead was located one mile west of Cat Creek and seven miles due south of Nashville, Georgia. The south lot line that runs through the center of the Nashville Courthouse is the same lot line that bordered the east of David Shannon's property.



* Now owned by A.N. Harnage,
Route #2, Nashville, Georgia

John Snyder Robinson and his father, Arlie Snyder Robinson, located the original homestead on August 22, 1979. Arlie had been told stories about his grandfather, David Shannon, living at a place called Cat Creek. He was told that the pecan trees were so tall that the squirrels were the only ones that ever got to eat the pecans from the top of the trees. While at Cat Creek, John and Arlie met the current owner of the land, A. N. Harnage. He showed them where the original homestead once stood. It burnt in a fire in 1940 soon after he purchased the land. The old homestead area today is still identified by four large pecan trees possibly planted by David Shannon. The trees are enormous in size.

The only descendants of David Shannon, other than John and Arlie, that are known to have visited this site was Joseph Milton Robinson, Sr. and his sons, Archie Shannon and Daniel Webster. Dan remembers seeing an old log house with pecan trees on both sides.

