Madison County Historical Society

MCHS News

May 2022

https://madcohistory.org

Vol. 10 No. 3

MCHS Centennial Picnic at Oakdale Read About it Here - Visit June 12

Current members of the Madison County Historical Society have been invited to the MCHS Centennial Picnic at Oakdale, a



farm that has been in the Mudge family since 1836. Oakdale has a fascinating story that is the subject of this newsletter, beginning on page seven

Plans for the Picnic include tours of the mansion and grounds at Oakdale, and a program by Steve Mudge. The Society and the

Mudge family are looking forward to hosting an MCHS event at Oakdale for the first time since 1963.

For those planning to purchase tickets, the committee recommends early reservations since the number of tickets is limited. There has already been a lot of interest expressed for the event and the Society anticipates that tickets will sell out before June 1, the last day to buy tickets.

Madison County's Indian Captivity/Origin Story What Really Happened to the Gillhams?

On Sunday, June 5 at 2 p.m. the MCHS Speaker Series will return to an in-person format. The program will be held at Immanuel United Methodist Church at 800 N. Main St., Edwardsville, directly across the street from the Library. The June program will be presented by Library Research Manager Mary Z. Rose on the subject of the only documented Indian captive narrative of Madison County.

It is the story of how in the late 18th century, members of the James Gillham family, then living in Kentucky, were abducted by indigenous warriors who took their captives to what later became Illinois. Sometime after Gillham recovered his family, the Gillhams relocated to Illinois and eventually settled in Chouteau Township. They were some of the earliest non-indigenous settlers in Madison County. It is said that Gillham moved to Madison County after being impressed by the prairie, soil, and natural resources of this area that he discovered while searching for his family.

Speaker Series - continued page 2

A New Look for a New Era



Look at us! The Society is kicking off its second century with a fresh new look to match its renewed organization and outlook. Graphic designer Sherrie Hickman of Creative Options Design created the new logo to represent both the museum and library and the colors are bright and fresh, just like the future of MCHS.

When the Museum and Library lost Madison County funding last year, literally days before the centennial anniversary of the Society, MCHS knew the second century, especially in the beginning, was going to be challenging. The number of staff members was reduced, operations reorganized, volunteer hours increased, fundraising efforts improved, and a more concerted effort was made to bring awareness of the Society, the Museum and Library to the public at large. The MCHS Board couldn't be more pleased with the progress made in the last six months.

The Society is unable to announce details yet, but MCHS has just been awarded a matching grant that will provide funds to complete the restoration of the Weir House building and provide funds for the first of ten galleries. Last month MCHS received a Federal grant for the immigration project with SIUE (described in the March newsletter) that will be part of another gallery. It's a very exciting time.

If you are able, please consider becoming an MCHS volunteer or making a donation toward the matching grant. Volunteer projects include everything from gardening and yard work to research and clerical assistance.

Warning - the excitement is catching!

Hours Wed - Fri, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday 1-4 p.m. Madison County History Museum and Library 801 N. Main Street Edwardsville, IL 62025 Contact us:
Library: 618-656-7569
Society: 618-656-1294
Email: info@madcohistory.org

MCHS VOLUNTEERS

Robert "Bob" Gill

MCHS was saddened to learn of the unexpected death of Bob Gill on April 29. A talented videographer, Bob has been filming the Society's Speaker Series Program for the last two years while in-person meetings were not possible. Each program, thanks to Bob's



Bob Gill receiving his Certificate of Excellence Award from Dr. Jenny Barker-Devine, Jacksonville, a member of the ISHS Board of Directors. (ISHS)

collections of photographs, maps, and music was made special. Last year's program on the former Village of Leclaire received an award at the Illinois State Historical Society's Best of Illinois History Awards last month.

One of the judges commented about the program, "Nice production values, great use of the 1990s interviews, historic photos, news clippings, and shots of modern-day Leclaire "

Volunteer Projects

Some examples of the outstanding work being done by MCHS Volunteers:

Marty Lane and LaVerne Bloemker have finished indexing the Alton historical house tours in the house history index.

Betty Byrd and Gary Forshaw worked on an obituary organization project.

Mindy Phillips completed work with the Bertha Love collection and began work on accessions. Mindy's last day as a volunteer was April 28. She is beginning a professional position at the National Archives.

Intern Lauren Russell's last day was May 5. She cataloged projectile points.

Mike Reinhardt has provided flowers for the urns and planters while a father/son duo, Steve and Brian Hansen gave the lawn its first mowing, including a nice trim.

Connie Royston just finished indexing the new Arcadia book on Glen Carbon.

Steve Rensberry is doing a lot of work on the MCHS website to introduce the new graphics as soon as possible.

RECENT VOLUNTEERS THANK YOU!

Donna Bardon
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Bob Gill
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Marty Lane
Scott Oliva
Mindy Phillips
Steve Rensberry
Mike Reinhardt
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Mary Westerhold

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

- Helen Keller

Speaker Series - Continued from page 1

These are all verifiable facts except for the assumption as to why the Gillhams moved to Illinois. Rose needed to know more. She wanted to know who was taken and specifically who took them. How long were the captives in captivity, and what was it like? How were they rescued? What effect did the experience have on them? In this program, Mary will explore these questions and some possible answers.

For the past two years, the Speaker Series was done as a series of films that can be found on the Society website. The latest, an introduction to cemetery preservation by Jeff Pauk, was the April program. Jeff is the owner of a small family cemetery and has taken classes on how to safely preserve cemeteries. As a surveyor, Jeff has had a special interest in cemeteries for decades, helping to identify locations, and more.

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Publications MCHS News

6 issues annually Cindy Reinhardt, Editor cindy.reinhardt@madcohistory.org

VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the Museum or the Library. If interested, please call 618-656-7569.

MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through a MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our website, or at the Library.

THE Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

2022 MCHS CALENDAR

MCHS SPEAKER SERIES

February*
Sundown Towns of Madison County
Presenter: Bryan Jack

March*
First, Do No Harm:
An Introduction to Cemetery Restoration
Presenter: Jeffrey Pauk

June 5 - 2 p.m.

Madison County's Indian Captivity/Origin Story:
What Really Happened to the Gillhams?
Presenter: Mary Z. Rose

August 7 - 2 p.m.
Researching Your Family Tree With DNA
Presenter: Debi Hensley Burgess

Location: Immanuel United Methodist Church 800 N. Main Street, Edwardsville

*February and March programs are available online at https://madcohistory.org/speaker-series/

WORKSHOPS & SUMMER CAMPS

March 26
Exploring the History of your House
(A members-only workshop*)
Presenter: Cindy Reinhardt

Fri.-Sat. May 20-21 Cemetery Restoration Workshop Co-sponsored by MCHS, Illinois State Historical Society and St. Clair County Historical Society

July 18-21 Kids Exploring History Summer Camp Grades 4-6 visit sites in Madison County

*Watch the MCHS website for additional members-only workshops later this year.



MCHS EVENTS

Sunday, June 12 MCHS Centennial Picnic Oakdale Farm, Grantfork (ticketed event)

Saturday, August 27 MCHS Trivia Night Glen Carbon American Legion

Saturday, September 24
Family History Walk:
A Stroll through Edwardsville
(costumed guides; family friendly)

Saturday, October 15 Living History Days: A Vintage Baseball Game

Saturday, October 29
Peering into the Past: Paranormally
(ticketed event)

Sunday, November 6
Dining in History & Annual Meeting
Old Bakery Beer Company, Alton
Presenter: Lacy McDonald
(ticketed event)

Additional events will be added as details are completed

FOR INFORMATION Call: 618-656-1294

Follow us on Facebook:

Madison County Historical Society

Explore the MCHS website: https://madcohistory.org

Additional details will be available closer to event dates



Encourage MCHS Membership!

Help us maintain the MCHS museum and library by becoming a member! Join online or call us at the number listed above. Members receive six issues of the award winning MCHS News annually.

Madison County Historical Society

2022 MCHS MEMBERSHIP & DONOR LIST

Thank You for Your Continued Support!

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An asterisk (*) following the member's name indicates they have made monetary donations in addition to their membership dues. Thank you for your generosity!

Can't find your name on the list? That indicates we have no record of your membership being renewed for 2022. If that is the case, this will be your last newsletter. (Please don't let that happen!) Contact us at 618-656-1294.

MCHS 2022 Membership and Donor List (cont. from page 4)

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OTHER WAYS TO HELP

Anyone who shops on Amazon could be helping MCHS while they shop, and at no cost to them. The Amazon Smile program gives MCHS a small portion of each sale. The shopper simply uses their regular account for shopping. Once MCHS is designated as the recipient, a portion of every item purchased through Amazon Smile will be deposited in the MCHS account. Here's where to sign up:

https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage? g=Madison+County+Historical+Society&orig=%2F&ie=UTF-8

The Society encourages everyone to shop local first, but when you go online, please consider doing it in a way that will benefit the Society. Be sure to choose the correct Madison County Historical Society (other states have them too!)!

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Board Member Cindy Reinhardt had one of those milestone birthdays this year and took advantage of Facebook's "Network for Good" program to hold a birthday fundraiser for the Madison County Historical Society. Facebook gives 100% of the funds raised to the not-for-profit. This very happy birthday fund-raiser brought in \$995.00

NEWSLETTER SPONSOR: STEVE MUDGE

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A. LOUISE GREGORY MUDGE (GAMMY)

This special issue of the MCHS News is sponsored by Steve Mudge, in memory of his beloved grandmother, Louise Mudge, who was one of the people who during her lifetime worked tirelessly to preserve the family homestead at Oakdale.

SPONSOR A NEWSLETTER

One of the Society's major expenses each year is printing and postage for the MCHS News. The Society is now seeking sponsors (\$500) for each issue. MCHS is very grateful to Steve Mudge for sponsoring this expanded issue in memory of his grandmother.

Sponsors can use their space to promote a business, congratulate a family member on a special occasion, or create a tribute to a special person. The \$500 donation is roughly the cost of printing and mailing each newsletter.



FAMILY HISTORY WALK

Saturday, Sept. 24, 2022 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Self-guided tours of historic sites in Edwardsville with re-enactors at each location.

Pick up your free Family History
Walk map at the MCHS Weir
House, 801 N. Main,
Edwardsville

VINTAGE BASEBALL

Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022
12:30 to 4 p.m.

Winston Brown Recreation Complex Edwardsville, IL

12:30 Batting practice for kids and adults (MCHS donation required)

1:30 Original baseball game rules reviewed

2:00 Vintage baseball!

Food and beverages by MCHS



SAVE THE DATES!



Living History
Days
Sponsored by







Oakdale, as pictured in the 1873 "Illustrated Encyclopedia and Atlas Maps of Madison County, Ill." At an unknown date, someone in the Mudge family had the image colorized for framing.

Oakdale, Established 1836

By Cindy Reinhardt

Oakdale farm, located approximately one mile east of Grantfork, has been owned by the Mudge family since 1836. That alone is an impressive accomplishment, however, it is not all that makes this a special place. There is a rare 1817 blockhouse on the property as well as a 20-room mansion, built for summer occupancy, that dates to 1850. The original owner, Soloman Hinckley Mudge, was

the manager of some of the finest hotels in New Orleans and travelled north with his family every summer for the "offseason." When he built his house near what was then the village of Fitz-James Crossing, he incorporated a taste of the South in the architecture of his home.

Solomon, the son of Rev. and

Mrs. Enoch and Jerusha (Holbrook) Mudge, was born in 1803 in Orrington, Maine. He married Susan Hotchkiss Dodge, a native of Rhode Island, in 1826. They would have 13 children, eight girls and five boys, including nine who survived to adulthood.

According to an 1882 Madison County history, Solomon worked in the "commission and shipping business" in Rhode Island and Maine with his younger brother, Enoch Redington Mudge. In the mid-1830s, he moved west to St.

INFLUENCING LITERATURE

Shown here is a bust of the Rev. Enoch Mudge (1776 -1850). It is a duplicate of the original on display at the Seaman's Bethel, the church in New Bedford where Mudge preached from 1830 until his death in 1850. One of his congregants was the author Herman Melville. In Melville's classic novel, *Moby Dick*, Mudge is one of two

> New England ministers who inspired the character of Father Mapple who appears in Chapter 8. The fictional Father Mapple is the preacher at the New Bedford Whaleman's Chapel.

Since Enoch advanced the money to purchase Oakdale to his son, his name is the first on the deed, although, so far as is known, Enoch never traveled west to see the property.



Above, The mansion at Oakdale, circa 1895. Below, Solomon Hinckley Mudge Dodge Mudge (1808-1891) (Mudge family)

Louis where he entered the fledgling financial industry. His brother moved to New York City and trained at the Astor Hotel for four years, a significant step as will be seen later.

In 1836, Solomon began searching for property in Illinois for a country home. When on his way back to St. Louis after checking a property near Greenville, Illinois, the stage made a stop at the Charter House, an inn east (1803-1860), and his wife, Susan Hotchkiss of Fitz-James Crossing (Grantfork). As

> he looked out on the countryside, there was a "grand and distant view of the landscape south and east," according to the 1882 county history. There were gently rolling hills, several ponds, wildlife, and a beautiful rise, perfect for a house, with a view of the countryside. Solomon purchased 360 acres and the gates to the property were placed next to the stagecoach road, just

yards from Charter House where he first saw the land.

The land was purchased from the Coulter family. Robert S. Coulter was a Revolutionary War veteran who moved to Madison County in 1805. His family lived in a log cabin on the site and in 1817, with the help of his brother Archibald, Coulter built the stone blockhouse still on the property. There will be further information about the blockhouse on page 14.

Choosing a home site on a rise in Section 3, the Mudges immediately built a 10-room frame cottage on the property and gave it a name: Oakdale. According to stories passed down through the family, Solomon first purchased land in Missouri, but his father, the Rev. Enoch Mudge, an abolitionist, offered an advance on his inheritance if Solomon instead purchased land in the free state of Illinois. In a 1915 memoir, Solomon's daughter, Susan Mudge Kearney, said her paternal grandfather paid for the ground and her maternal grandparents paid for the house.

In 1840, Solomon's brother, Enoch, moved to New Orleans to manage the St. Charles Hotel, one of the finest hotels in the country. He soon contacted his brother, Solomon, and convinced him to come to New Orleans and engage in similar work. Solomon worked with his brother for five years and when Enoch returned to New England, Solomon with a son-in-law, William Wilson, took over management of the hotel. Also in 1840, another son-in-law, Orson Eddy Hall, was convinced to move south from St.







Louis to handle bookkeeping for the hotel. Later, another son-in-law, David Morgan Hildreth, would join the family concern.

These four Mudge families, for more than 30 years, were proprietors and/or owners of hotels in New Orleans. It should be noted that the hotels managed by the Mudge family were no ordinary hotels. For example, the original St. Charles Exchange Hotel (it was twice destroyed by fire and rebuilt) had 350 bedrooms and cost more than a half million dollars to build in 1835-1837. This hotel, the St. Louis Hotel, and other smaller hotels, were the finest the city had to offer. The hotels had a reputation for service on a scale appreciated by their wealthy clientele from the South, New England, or Europe. Meals were lavish, accommodations opulent, and the Mudge family became famous for their hospitality, something they brought home with them to Oakdale.

The families also shared Oakdale which became even more important after they moved to the South because no one stayed in New Orleans during the summer if they could afford to leave.

Yellow fever and other diseases spread rapidly in summer, so the finer hotels closed for the season, roughly August 1-Nov 1. During that time, hotels were renovated in preparation for the next season.

Back at Oakdale, the farm gradually expanded to include more than a thousand acres of ground, leased to several local farmers. The grounds surrounding the house became an arboretum and the Mudge, Wilson, Hall, and Hildreth families entertained often.

In December 1849, a fire destroyed the Mudge home at Oakdale. A newspaper article published Dec. 13, 1849, in Louisville, Kentucky, and elsewhere throughout the South and Midwest said,

"Destructive Fire. – The handsome private mansion of Mr. S. H. Mudge, one of the proprietors of the St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans, situated in Madison County, Ill., about thirty-six miles from St. Louis, took fire a few evenings since



The original St. Charles Hotel, built in 1837. The Mudge family took over management of the hotel in 1840. (LSM)

KEEPING TRACK OF THE FAMILY

Solomon Hinckley Mudge married Susan Hotchkiss (Dodge) Mudge (1803-1860) (1808-1891)

THEIR CHILDREN

- 1. Emily Dodge Mudge married Orson Eddie Hall and Charles Smith Rogers
- 2. Ellen Crawford "Nellie" Mudge married William E. Wilson
- 3. Ann Lloyd Mudge married David Morgan Hildreth
- 4. Susan Hotchkiss Mudge married Benjamin Elisha Edwards and William Kearny
- 5. Robert Hinckley Mudge (infant death)
- 6. Caroline Frances Mudge (infant death)
- 7. Caroline F. Virginia "Jeanne" Mudge married Theodore Wilmerding and Charles Comte De Meffray
- 8. Sarah Crawford Jerusha Mudge married Jabez Francis Clark
- 9. Hinckley Redington "Reddy" Mudge
- 10. Elliott Wilson "Will" Mudge married Frances "Fanny" M. Clark
- 11. Kate Grafton Mudge (infant death)
- 12. George Mercer Brooke Mudge married Mary Nelson "Nellie" Tracey and Carrie J. Bagley
- 13. Arthur Lloyd Mudge (infant death)

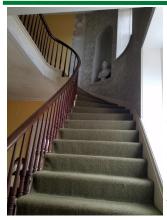
and was entirely consumed. It was a frame building in a cottage style and fitted up in a handsome manner...most of the furniture and the greater part of a large selection of wines, etc., in the cellars, were saved."

The story passed down through the family is that the fire started when a candle ignited curtains. Reportedly, walnut dining room doors were also salvaged from the fire and used in the new, larger home built immediately after the fire. It's interesting to note that the new house was of brick, not frame, to make it less susceptible to fire.

When SIUE Professor Joseph Weber, visited the house a number of years ago, he recognized it immediately as the design of William H. Ranlett, a prominent architect of Augusta, Maine. Three years younger than Solomon, it's possible that the men knew each other from when the Mudge family still lived in Maine. The house followed Ranlett's plans closely, but there were a couple of additions that provided a touch of the South, including ornamental wrought iron balconies, similar to what are seen in New Orleans.

The style is called "Italianate Bracketed." The design features long porches, or verandas, which are designed to invite visitors outdoors where they can become one with nature. The *History of Madison County, Illinois*, 1882, said, "The grounds around the residence were laid out and improved in beautiful park-like style, admired by all who had the pleasure of seeing it." Solomon's friend, Michael Dale, said the grounds were beautifully landscaped with Osage orange enclosures containing "rare fruits and vegetables, the best of their kind, procured without regard to cost and in charge of the gardener. The flowers were numerous and made the whole air flagrant with their fragrance."

The beautiful winding staircase in the house today is not original. It was added at a later date. Steve Mudge, who has



Part of the staircase at Oakdale. (Reinhardt)

done extensive research on the house, thinks a craftsman from New Orleans may have been brought north to build the staircase since it mirrors one that was in the St. Louis Hotel in New Orleans. Joe Weber also pointed out a small circle of mother of pearl on the top of the base pedestal of the staircase. In the past, this could be an indication to contractors that there was no mortgage on the house, in other words, there was a good chance the contractor would be paid.

The massive beams supporting the home were harvested from the timber at Oakdale. The exterior brick was not so easily acquired. It was made in St. Louis and hauled across the river and overland, 36 miles, to Oakdale in wagons. Interior brick was fired on site. The house wasn't as large as the 20-room mansion that can be seen on the property today because an addition was added to the west side of the house in 1893. However, it was a very large home for the neighborhood, and probably caused some speculation. Several out-buildings were constructed in the style of the house, including a carriage house, a servants' quarters, a smokehouse, and other out-buildings one would expect on a farm.

Food was prepared in the basement of the house, with a dumb waiter to carry meals up to the dining room. The weights can still be seen in one of the closets. Dick Mudge, Sr. remembered seeing barrels of flour and sugar in the basement. The servants lived in a separate building. Most years, they are not listed on the census records but in 1860 there are seven listed, all immigrants, primarily from Baden (now southwestern Germany).

ENTERTAINMENT AT OAKDALE

Trying to research what life was like at a country home more than 150 years ago can be difficult, but the Mudge family has an extraordinary amount of documentation in the form of letters and memoirs, as well as a document written



Judge Michael G. Dale (MCHS)

by Judge Michael G. Dale, called "Reminiscences of Col. S. H. Mudge."

Dale called him "Colonel" and he was regularly referred to as "Col, S. H. Mudge" in contemporary newspapers, but to date, there is no evidence that he served in the military. It may be an honorary title.

Dale met Solomon Mudge in St. Louis in 1839, before Solomon moved to New Orleans. He described Solomon as "...a fluent speaker and the feeling of sincerity with which he spoke inspired confi-

dence. With natural grace and a polished manner, added to a manly figure, he would challenge admiration in any company where he might be found. He approached a friend with head erect and a pleasant smile."

At Oakdale, said Dale, "The Colonel and his most excellent, exemplary, and gifted wife (for theirs was a happy union) dispensed a most liberal hospitality. His children were numerous, chiefly girls, and the suitors were numerous."



The gates to Oakdale, still there today, were located south of the former Charter House. Some of the garden plantings and orchard can be seen past the gate. The Charter House is labeled on old maps, but has been gone for many decades. New recent construction uncovered the stone foundation. (Mudge)

He described how the Colonel enjoyed hunting, but usually took his game around to his neighbors who were "not so well circumstanced" and ask them to share his luck. He was on good terms with all the neighbors.

Dale described meals at Oakdale, saying, "Colonel Mudge was of a most social disposition and his visitors, as such, enjoyed not only his undivided time and services but shared with him of the best in the home, and that was the best to be had in the land. If fruit were on the table, it was the choicest grown in North or South; if wine, it was of the best vintage from his New Orleans stock."

Dinner was a family affair and guests were sometimes surprised to find all the Mudge children at the table with their parents. Dale also remarked on the good humor shared around the table.

Solomon Mudge was socially and politically well-known and well-regarded. Stephen A. Douglas, General Sherman and Henry Clay were among those who visited regularly. It is not known if Abraham Lincoln ever shared that hospitality, but it's possible. Lincoln was hired as an attorney in a lawsuit for Solomon at one time. Unfortunately, Lincoln lost.

Solomon died in New Orleans on March 22, 1860. His body was returned to the farm where he was buried in the Mudge family cemetery. His sons-in-law carried on the business of managing hotels in New Orleans.

Then came the Civil War. Solomon's family scattered. Two daughters moved to Europe during the war, some of

the women and children stayed at Oakdale and some remained in the South and even supported the Confederacy since it had become their home.

Two sons, Hinckley Redington "Reddy" Mudge and Elliott Wilson "Will" Mudge, fought for the South. Reddy, who was born in September 1843, was mustered into Company H of the Louisiana Infantry's 7th Regiment on June 1, 1861. His regiment was sent to Virginia where he fought in Stonewall Jackson's Division. He was killed at Malvern Hill, Virginia, on Aug. 12, 1862, and is buried in the Mudge Cemetery at Oakdale. He was 18 years old.



Elliott Wilson "Will" Mudge (seen above) born June 17, 1845, was only 16 when the war started. He was in school at Flushing, New York, when he was instructed to go at once to Oakdale to get his mother and three of his siblings and take them to New Orleans. It took a month, but he succeeded. On March 5, 1862, he enlisted in Company D, Crescent City Regiment Louisiana Volunteers. The regiment was immediately sent to Corinth and a month later to Shiloh where he was wounded. As soon as he was well enough, he took a furlough to

EDUCATION AT OAKDALE

Will Mudge, in his memoirs, gave an excellent description of the education the children received. During the winter, their mother went to New Orleans for the season while the children stayed home with governesses so they could attend school. Here is his description:

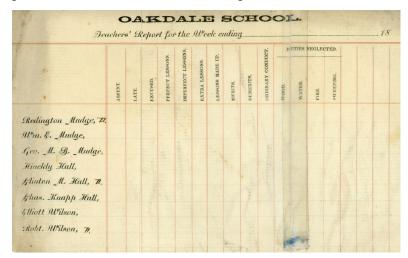
"My first recollection of childhood and school was in 1852, at the age of seven years, when my father and mother took me to Marine, seven miles west of Oakdale Farm, and left me with the family of Mr. Potter, who was the Principal of Marine School. My brother Redington, who was 9 years old, was left there with me. Brother and I remained with Mr. Potter until June 1853, at which time my parents returned to Oakdale Farm for the summer. In the Fall of 1863, we were sent to an Episcopal School in Palmyra, Missouri, which was a boarding school. We remained at this school for one year.

"In the Fall of 1854, brother and I were taken to Highland, six miles south of Oakdale, and placed with the family of Mr. Aikins, where there were three daughters, all older than we were, who helped us learn to speak German or Swiss language, and we went one year to Highland Public School, where during that year, with the help of the Aikins family, we got so we could ask for nearly everything we wanted in their language.

"The following three years of my school life were spent at Oakdale Farm. Father built a schoolhouse in the summer of 1855, and a tutor or teacher was employed to take charge of the school of eight boys, who were my brothers, Reddy and George, and myself, Mr. O. E. Hall's three sons (Will's cousins), Harry, Clinton and Charley and William Wilson's two sons (also cousins), Elliott and Robert. My brother Reddy and I occupied the east room of the schoolhouse, Harry and Clinton the west room and the teacher occupied and slept in the north room. The middle room, which was kept fairly warm with a wood stove, was the school room. (The family believes that this center room was the Coulter log cabin.) George and Charley, being the youngest, slept at the "Big House." Here we eight boys went to school three years."

In 1858-59, Will attended Washington University and in 1860 he was sent to Flushing Institute on Long Island. He was 16 when he left school in the fall of 1861 when the Civil War broke out.

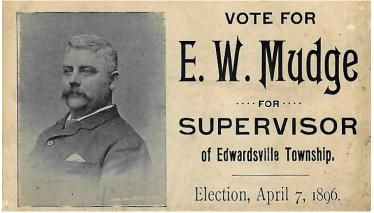
His sister, Susan, older by 11 years, in a 1915 memoir describing her education, also told of attending numerous schools.



travel home to New Orleans and the St. Charles Hotel. While there, from the roof of the hotel, he watched the Union gunboats arrive. New Orleans had fallen. He slipped away with the intention of joining his brother Reddy, but while on his way, he learned of Reddy's death. He returned to New Orleans where he later signed with A Company of the 1st Regiment Louisiana Infantry, from which he was paroled on May 12, 1865. In his memoirs he tells the entire story of his military service, which was almost entirely in Mississippi and Louisiana.

After his parole, he checked in with his sister Emily in New Orleans, then returned to Oakdale where his mother and younger siblings had returned earlier and were managing the farm. His sister, Anne Mudge Hildreth, and her husband, David, also lived near Oakdale, having established a farm of their own adjacent to Oakdale. Ann built a small Episcopal church on part of her land in Section 3, but despite it being a family church, Will Mudge was not welcomed back after the war. On his first Sunday back, a group of neighbors made it clear they didn't want a Confederate in their midst. The Mudge women were accepted, but Will was "encouraged" to leave, so he moved to St. Louis where for two years he worked as a shipping clerk, waiting for tempers to cool.

In 1867, he decided to go into farming. He rented Oakdale from his mother and leased an additional 600 acres from his brother-in-law David Hildreth, who was still running hotels in New Orleans.



Elliott Wilson "Will" Mudge ran for office numerous times and usually won. (Mudge)

The following year, on June 10, 1868, Will's sister, Sally, married Jabez F. Clark, a Collinsville farmer. The wedding was held at Oakdale. The following week, on June 17, 1868, Will married Fanny Clark, Jabez's sister, at the small Episcopal Church in Collinsville. In his memoirs, Will said that during the marriage ceremony, when he endowed her with all his worldly goods, someone from the congregation said, "There goes the old gray mare and saddle bag."

Like far many others, the Civil War was a significant hardship for the Mudge family. When Solomon died in 1860, his widow, Susan, was 62 and, so far as is known, had only the income from Oakdale for support. The generous income provided by the hotels was gone. The sons-in-law remained at their hotels, but the clientele had changed. The Union Army occupied the St. Charles, and one of the hotels was

turned into a military hospital. Fortunately, the hotel business rebounded after the war. Susan lost her son Reddy to the war, and her remaining sons, Will and George, were starting over. George went to New York where he became a successful businessman, and Will chose Oakdale.

Susan continued to live in New Orleans in the winter while her sons-inlaw operated hotels, but came north to Oakdale for the summer as she did before the war. She



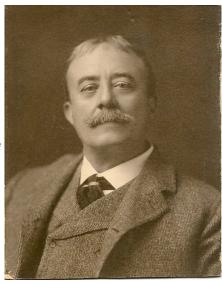
Frances Marion (Clark) Mudge, known as Fannie, married Elliott Wilson Mudge in 1868. (Mudge)

died in 1891 at the age of 82. After her death Will Mudge and Harry Hall, his nephew, bought out the other family shares of Oakdale and split the property. Will took the farmland to the west and Harry took the house with some acreage.

Will and Fanny lived on the farm with his mother until 1879 when they moved into Edwardsville. Oakdale was a beautiful home, but it was not built for Illinois winters. The rooms were heated (not well) by fireplaces and running water was an issue in winter. Lighting was by candlelight. They built a beautiful home on St. Andrew's Row, where Shell Lane is now located. He continued to farm his mother's land with hired help or by renting it for share crops. In town, he sold real estate and insurance while also serving in various public positions including Deputy County Clerk, Township Supervisor, and as a Justice of the Peace.

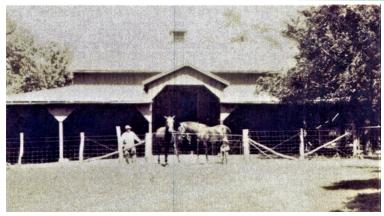
Will's nephew, Harry Hall, was a successful New

Orleans attorney who envisioned a lavish country estate. In 1893, he began major renovations to the house at Oakdale. He hired Frilon H. Oswald. an architect and builder from Alhambra to build a 26' x 26' addition onto the west side of the house and make repairs to just about every surface of the house, window repair and replacement of lintels, tuckpointing, plaster repair, new wallpaper, and more. A fruit cellar was added, basement



Attorney Harry Hall (Mudge)

stairs were placed inside, and a chicken coop was built. A new brick privy to match the house had rooms for men and women, each with three holes framed with walnut seats at a cost of \$200. A barn, that has since burned down, was built



One of the barns at Oakdale. Unfortunately, it was lost to fire. (Mudge)

at a cost of \$370. There was a great deal of arguing back and forth with the builder because there were many cost overruns as various projects were added. They settled at last, and the work was completed.

In addition to work on the house, Harry had hundreds of fruit trees planted on the grounds, but unfortunately he did not live long enough to enjoy it for long. He died suddenly in 1911 at the age of 65. He never did convince his wife, who had a home in Switzerland, to move to Oakdale. She said she hated country living. Perhaps Harry had hoped that the improvements would change her mind.

Will and Fanny's youngest son, Dick Howard Mudge Sr., purchased Harry's portion of Oakdale in 1913 from Harry's widow and his father's portion in 1922, bringing the farm back under one owner.

Dick was born at Oakdale on July 9, 1879. He studied law with another attorney, as was the custom, then went to law school in Chicago for 6 months and passed the bar in 1902. When he married Anne Louise Gregory in January 1917, he was the current mayor of Edwardsville. The service was held at the Alby St. home of her aunt and uncle in

Alton and officiated by the Episcopal priest from Edwardsville. Anne Louise, who always used her middle name, was born in Alexandria, Missouri on Dec. 1, 1893. Her parents were Samuel H. and Martha (Skiles) Gregory and her father a popular riverboat captain on the Mississippi River. The couple would have two children, sons Dick Howard Mudge, Jr. (1919-1978) and John Gregory Mudge (1923-1959) who, like their father, both became attorneys.

Louise loved Oakdale. Her husband was known to say, "I think

that is the only reason she was willing to marry me." Dick and Louise, or Gampy and Gammy as they were known to the family, spent most of every summer out on the farm. The commute wasn't easy in the days before "hard roads." Louise once said they "had been stuck on every hill between

the farm and Edwardsville."

They planned to sell their house in town and move to the farm until World War II began, and they postponed the move until after the war. During that time, they made numerous repairs and improvements, including having the house wired for electricity, which became available in 1941, and installing oil tanks so a heating system, other than fireplaces, was finally installed. All these details are documented in letters sent to their two sons, Dick Jr. and John, during World War II.



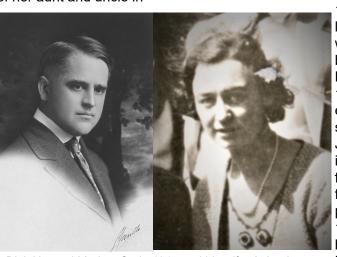
There's more than one way to take a multi-generational portrait as the Mudge family demonstrates here. The framed portraits in back (left to right) are Solomon Mudge and his father the Rev. Enoch Mudge. The four people seated in front are brothers Dick Howard Mudge and Solomon Hinckley Mudge (sons of Will Mudge), Edward Mudge, sitting to the right of his father, and Elliott Wilson "Will" Mudge. It is a five generation portrait if the portraits are included.

Dick and Louise moved out to the farm full-time after the war and lived there until moving back to town in November.

1952. Louise always said she loved it most out there in winter when Oakdale was particularly beautiful. Dick passed away in December 1952, and Louise in 1987. After her death, the property was inherited by the descendants of her two sons, Dick, Jr. and John, who preceded her in death. It was divided again a few years ago when Dick Jr.'s family decided to sell out their portion. The house and about 140 acres are still owned by the heirs of John Gregory Mudge, Dick and Louise's younger son.

Oakdale is a wonderful legacy

and not one often surpassed. The longevity of ownership combined with the wealth of detailed correspondence, memoirs, family stories and public record add to the uniqueness of this property. It remains a beautiful estate, in many ways untouched by time.

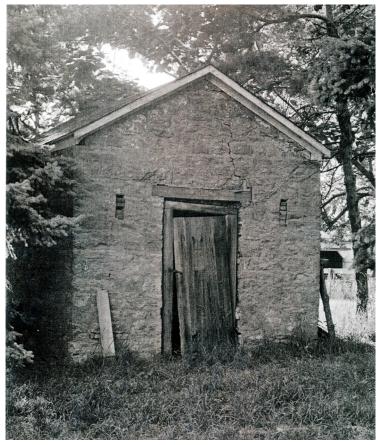


Dick Howard Mudge, Sr. in 1917 and his wife, A. Louise Gregory Mudge in 1932. (Mudge)

THE 1817 COULTER BLOCKHOUSE

The stone blockhouse is one of two built by Revolutionary War veteran Robert Coulter and his brother Archibald. This one was built in 1817, just five years before Robert's death in 1821.

It was built to be a place of refuge from potential attacks by Native Americans. The women and children were suppose to take shelter in the blockhouse while a rider was sent to get help. Not long after it was built, treaties were signed at Edwardsville, and there was no longer a threat of attack.



This view of the blockhouse is probably from the 1940s. Notice the slits in the wall for rifles. (Mudge)

For many years the blockhouse was used as an icehouse. Later a window was cut in the back and many Mudge children over the years used it as a playhouse. The block house was restored a number of years ago, but soon after a storm came through that laid a large tree directly across the building. Restoration work is scheduled to begin in July 2022.

THE COULTER LOG CABIN

Another building erected by the Coulters was a log cabin. The log house was still on the property when it was purchased by the Mudge family and over the years was expanded to a four-room building that was used for a time as a schoolhouse. The schoolhouse provided lodging and classroom space for the teacher and students with the youngest going "home" to the main house at night. It later became the caretaker's residence until the building was destroyed by fire in the early 1980s.



The cemetery gate at Oakdale. Next to the gate, just out of view is a clue to the age of the cemetery. You can still hitch your horse to the ring set into the wall for that purpose. (Hickman)

THE CEMETERY AT OAKDALE

Preservation efforts at Oakdale include Oakdale Cemetery or the Mudge Family Cemetery. The oldest recorded grave is that of Solomon Mudge who died in 1860, but it is likely there are others since the Mudge family lost several children in infancy, and there could be Coulter burials. The burials include two Confederate soldiers, one who died in battle, Hinckley Redington Mudge, and Elliott Wilson Mudge who survived the war. It also has the graves of at least two veterans of World War II.

Solomon and Susan had eight daughters so all the names in the cemetery are not Mudge. Overtons, Wilsons, Halls, and Bradfords can also be found.



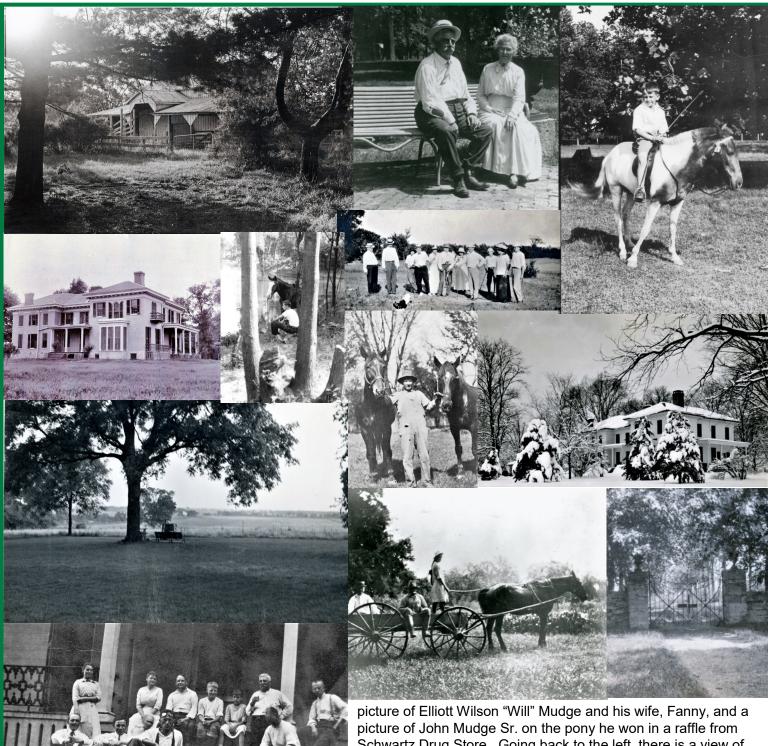
A vintage view of the Cemetery at Oakdale. The cemetery wasn't just for people. In the far corner is a marker that reads, "Our Pet Willie." (Mudge)

THANKS TO THE MUDGE HISTORIANS

This story of Oakdale would not have been possible without the prior research and preservation efforts of Steve Mudge, his grandmother, Louise "Gammy" Mudge, and others in the Mudge family who chose to save, not just Oakdale, but also the volumes of letters, ledgers, photographs, and other documentation that pull the pieces of the story together.

Solomon Mudge's family, now spread around the globe, touched history in many ways. For this story, the focus was on those that had an immediate impact on Oakdale through the 1940s.

Scenes of Life at Oakdale (1910-1950)



Idyllic summers at Oakdale were a staple of life for the Mudge family, where the children could roam the grounds, playing games as old as time, and the adults found a place to get away from day-to-day concerns.

Pictured above, left to right, beginning in the upper left corner is the barn at Oakdale, followed by a

picture of John Mudge Sr. on the pony he won in a raffle from Schwartz Drug Store. Going back to the left, there is a view of the south side of the mansion, and a small picture of John Mudge Sr. with his horse near one of the ponds on the property. Two pictures, one on top of the other, show a group of golfers at the farm in 1914 (no official golf course though), and an caretaker, Charlie Glassmaker with two horses. To the right of that is a view of Oakdale in winter. Back on the left side of the page is one of the serene views from Oakdale. Moving to the right is a 1915 photo of a horse and wagon including another caretaker, Warren Gary Diele. To the right of that is a view of the gates at Oakdale. Moving back to the left, the last photograph shows a gathering of the Mudge family in front of the house at Oakdale, circa 1920.

MINI-MUSEUM OPENS - RENOVATION UPDATE

Area residents are invited to stop in at the Madison County Library at 801 N. Main Street, Edwardsville, to see the new mini-museum exhibits in the gallery created by Director Robert Clouse and Curator Jenn Van Bibber. (See photo at Iright)

There are numerous exhibits in the gallery with

something for everyone. Exhibits include winter sports, Native American history, Robert Wadlow, a large plat map of Madison County and a Window to the "Past" showing rotating historical scenes of Madison County.



Madison County's Indian Captivity/Origin Story What Really Happened to the Gillhams?

Immanual United Methodist Church

800 N. Main St. , Edwardsville, IL

Window restoration is continuing at the Weir House and MCHS just received a bid for restoration of the front and side door of the house. The side door, in Dr. Weir's time, was where patients entered the house. A federal style house is rather plain, except for the front door which is surrounded by side lights and provides the architectural character for the building.

In the photo at left the two upper windows have been removed and artisans are at work restoring them.

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NEED A SPEAKER?

If your organization needs a program speaker, MCHS has options for history presentations. A program is available on the history of MCHS and the Madison County Old Settlers Union, or on what MCHS has to offer area residents today. Volunteers can also provide programming on a variety of topics related to Madison County history. Call 618-656-1294 for information.



MCHS CALENDAR MAY-JUNE 2022

April Speaker Series:

First, Do No Harm:

An Introduction to Cemetery Preservation

with Jeff Pauk

online program

June Speaker Series
—— Information at left

MCHS Centennial Picnic
Sunday June 12
Oakdale, the Mudge Family Farm
(Check invitation for details)

June 5