



AN UNDESERVED END...

~Robert~

Defending the Heritage

Uriah R. Gillihan from Jackson Co. Tn and T.W. Phillips from Overton Co. Tn had been members of the 28th Confederate Infantry and had fought in several major battles such as, Shiloh, Fishing Creek, Stone's River. Both had been either wounded or sick and were furloughed from the army. Gillihan and Phillips met in Putman Co in spring of 1865 while on the way home.

Lee had surrendered in April but they were not aware of it. They attended a dance at Buffalo Valley and became involved in a dispute. Fearing for their lives they left Buffalo Valley and went to the home of Charles F. Burton, arriving about daylight. Mr. Burton being a Southern Sympathizer fed the two boys and sent them to hide in a cabin down in the Tom Hollow. They were discovered by the Home Guard who marched them around the area, then physically tormented them with bayonets. They were then tied to separate trees and shot by the Union men.

When the two bodies were discovered Charles F. Burton had them wrapped in blankets and buried. Mr. Burton had a rock wall built around the graves which he kept clean and decorated with flowers for the remainder of his life. There are descendants of the Burton family, and the Lewis Fletcher family, who helped bury the soldiers, still living in the Chestnut Mound area who are knowledgeable about this event.

In the 1970's Guy Boyd grandson of Lewis Fletcher, that helped build the wall around the graves in 1865, was instrumental in getting stone markers placed at the graves.

In Vol.V. No. 1 of the Smith County Historical & Genealogical Society newsletter is a article by Katheryn Frye Dickens titled TOM HOLLOW REVEALS CONFEDERATE HISTORY. This is a well-researched and interesting account of this event.

The Confederate Soldiers Graves are located approx. 3 miles south of Chestnut Mound in the Tom Hollow off St. Mary's Hollow Road. These graves are located in a very narrow hollow that can be entered at #197 St. Mary's Hollow Road. There is a very rough road accessible by four wheel drive for one-half mile and then a walk of 3/10 mile. It is one of the most remote areas of Smith County. Formerly there were two or three cabins in the hollow but none today.