

Days Of Old Sumner County

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Sumner County Historical Society

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Edward Albright: Minister to Finland

By SCHS President Kenneth Thomson, Editor Jan Shuxteau

Editor's Note: Though long-time Sumner residents accept the county's "Finland connection" as a simple fact of history, newcomers are typically amazed to learn that a Gallatin newspaper man—a native—was once the United States Minister to Finland! Edward Albright was appointed to this unlikely post in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Now, 86 years later, it is interesting to speculate: Why appoint Albright? Why send him to Finland of all places? What did Albright himself think about all of this?

Edward Albright was born Aug. 18, 1873, in the family home place on Dry Fork Creek, off of Scottsville Pike. Their piano box style house had been built for his parents, John W. and Callie Guthrie Albright. John Albright is remembered as a Confederate soldier, who served in the 24th Tennessee Infantry and every now and then would relate a story about his wartime adventures. John told how he and several friends foraged for food and found a hog secured to a chimney. A carefully planned raid was effected, and the next

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Civil War submarine C.S.S. H.L. Hunley was raised from Charleston Harbor Aug. 8, 2000, and is housed in the , This photo is provided by the Friends of Hunley.

Sumner Man Developed Civil War Sub

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

Nineteen years ago this month, scientists were able to raise the long sunk Civil War submarine, C.S.S. H.L. Hunley, named after its developer/financier, Horace Lawson Hunley, who was born in Sumner County on Dec. 29, 1823.

The C.S.S. H.L. Hunley was one of the earliest submarines and the first in history to succeed in sinking an enemy ship. "The Hunley is to submarine warfare what the Wright brothers' airplane is to aviation. It changed the course of naval history," said Robert Neyland, head of underwater archaeology for the U.S. Navy and the Hunley project director in a July 22, 2002, story, "Raising Hunley Civil War Sub," in *National Geographic*.

Though we Sumner Countians claim Horace Hunley as our own, it should be noted that he moved to New Orleans in his youth. Nevertheless, his family had strong ties to this area. His father, John Hunley, and John's older brothers and sisters moved from Virginia to Sumner County in 1810, along with their widowed mother. Horace would have grown up knowing that his father fought in the War of 1812 in a Sumner County volunteer company under Captain Abraham Bledsoe in the brigade of Gen. William Hall of Gallatin. He would have known that his mother, Louisa Lawson, lived in nearby Smith County before she married his father in February 1822.

The wreck of the Hunley was found outside of Charleston Harbor in May 1995 by a group of ship wreck hunters led by Clive Cussler, the underwater adventure writer known for such books as *Raise the Titanic* and *Treasure*. It took five years for engineers and

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Cemetery Story: Julia and the Ill-fated *W.R. Carter*

By Judith Morgan

Scattered about Sumner County among the various cemeteries—both small and large—are tantalizing inscriptions that hint at dramatic and tragic events. One such inscription is found in a small family cemetery near Gallatin, where the Henley family is buried. On a simple headstone, we see that Julia M. Rice, wife of Dr. C.A. Rice and daughter of J.M. and Mary Henley, "was lost on the ill-fated steamer *W.R. Carter* 2 Feb 1866." This is the rest of that story:

In 1866, Julia Henley had lived not quite 17 years, and her short life had been filled with tragedy. Julia's mother died in childbirth in 1854, when Julia was only five. In 1858, nine-year-old Julia lost her father. Two years later, she lost her 28-year-old sister Mary, "consort of Dr. J.E. Bowman," and her 26-year-old brother John.

That year, 1860, found 11-year-old Julia living on North Water St., Gallatin, in the home of her sister, Dorothy, and her husband John Wilson.



This is the home of John and Dorothy Wilson where Julie lived after her parents' deaths.

The personal tragedies of Julia's life in 1860 were overshadowed by the national tragedy of a country divided. Over the next five years, her town was occupied by Federal troops, her home surrounded by guerrillas trying to destroy the nearby railroad. In 1866, the city was still occupied, but Southern soldiers were returning, and there was a semblance of normal life.

In 1866, Dr. Cornelius A. Rice, born in Kentucky but reared in Mississippi, was a 32-year-old widower, fresh from service as a surgeon in Company A of Mississippi's 12th Infantry Regiment. Cornelius came from a family of doctors and followed his father and two older brothers into that profession. The family had ties to Gallatin: one of the older brothers married into the Rawls family, past owners of the house later known as Trousdale Place. Perhaps it was through this connection that Cornelius met Julia.

However they met, Julia Henley and Dr. C.A. Rice married on Jan. 24, 1866. One of the ex-Confederate soldiers now back in Gallatin was the Rev. Henry Buckner Boude, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, a veteran of the Battle of Shiloh only recently returned from service as Captain in the 7th Battalion of the Tennessee

Cavalry. Boude officiated at the ceremony uniting his fellow Confederate veteran, Dr. Rice, and young Julia Henley, a girl he had probably known for most of her life.

The couple soon left on their honeymoon, traveling most likely by rail to Cincinnati or Louisville, where they boarded the *W.R. Carter*, a steamer belonging to the Mississippi Steamship Company valued at \$100,000. The ship would take them down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to Vicksburg. In all likelihood, the couple planned to visit the groom's family and perhaps make their home in Mississippi.

By one account there were at least 250 people on board along with bales of cotton being shipped and other cargo, all insured for \$77,000. Other accounts placed the number of passengers at fewer than 100. Whatever the case, among the passengers were several families with children, two honeymoon couples, several doctors, and a number of ex-soldiers on their way to make a new life. The gaiety of life aboard the steamer and the spirit of hopefulness now that the war was over must have made the trip an exciting adventure for young Julia.

At about 3 a.m. on the morning of February 2, most of the passengers were asleep, but several, unable to sleep, were up smoking near the stove of the main cabin--it was a frigid night--or wandering about and chatting with others. The machinery was running smoothly and the boat going slowly as it neared Island 38 on the Mississippi, about 35 miles north of Vicksburg. Suddenly, with no warning, the boilers exploded. Most of those near the explosion, awake or asleep, died instantly. The entire front portion of the ship was immediately a maelstrom of fire that reminded the few survivors of their worst imaginings of Hell. Amid scalding steam and suffocating smoke, the air filled with flying bolts, bars, stovepipes, and planks, the terrified passengers--those who survived the initial blast--rushed to save themselves. Some, blinded by the smoke and steam, in panic, jumped into the fire instead of the river, while those who jumped into the icy water were soon nearly frozen.

The few survivors had harrowing experiences. One man who had been fully clothed and walking about was thrown into the river, but he was able to find a mattress to float on. The man was soon rescued by a nearby boat, only to be immediately robbed and thrown ashore. His cabin mate, on the other hand, had been in bed and was clad only in a thin flannel nightshirt. He wound up in the river too but managed to reach shore after

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what seemed like an eternity by holding onto a plank and battling his way through the debris. Reunited after another steamer, the *Evening Star*, rescued those still in the water along with those who had made it ashore, the two friends found they had lost everything: "...clothes, money, watches, everything was lost. All of our old friends and acquaintances on board were lost--not one was saved. No person could help another, owing to the explosion blowing everything apart and to pieces, the scalding steam, the intense smoke and darkness, and the wonderful rapidity with which the flames swallowed up everybody and everything. And then the water was so chilling and so benumbing and the current so irresistible—so strong—that nothing could be done." (*N.Y. Times*, Feb. 27, 1866)

No explanation for the accident was ever discovered. Only 35 or so were rescued, and most of those were badly burned or scalded. Among those who perished was young Julia Henley Rice. How did she die? Was she killed in the first explosion? Was she burned in agony or frozen in the icy river? Her husband survived, so perhaps she was alive at first as he struggled to save them both. We shall probably never know.

Cornelius brought his wife of only nine days back home to be buried with her family. He returned to Mississippi to live and work, marrying twice more and dying March 27, 1897, in Biloxi. He is buried in the Biloxi Cemetery. For him, life went on. For Julia, though, a young bride on her honeymoon having perhaps her first really happy experience, the wreck of the "ill-fated *W.R. Carter*" was a tragic ending to a short, tragic life.

Writer's Note: Many thanks go to Ken Thomson for help with genealogical research.

Alvin York Headlines 1919 Fourth of July Celebration

By Judith Morgan

One hundred years ago in the summer of 1919, Sumner County held a Fourth of July event that witnesses declared one of the grandest celebrations in the county's history. It was an emotional time with both nostalgia for all that was lost and joy for what was won—the war was over, local soldiers were home, the Spanish flu had run its course and America was stronger in victory. Author

Judith Morgan describes the celebration in her book, *The Lost World of Langley Hall*.

"Every city and town in Tennessee is planning a rip-roaring time to honor the returning veterans. None is so honored in the state as 'the greatest war hero of the Allied army,' the favorite son Sergeant Alvin York, a Medal of Honor recipient who will eventually be the subject of a major Hollywood motion picture. No one is in greater demand on this special July 4. Even Nashville has to make do with nothing more than a late afternoon appearance by the hero to accept the gift of a pair of mules and a number of farm implements from his grateful admirers. What a coup, then, for Gallatin and Sumner County that it is their parade and their celebration Sergeant York honors with his presence! And what a celebration it is, described as 'the greatest day in the history of Gallatin and withal, one of be remembered.'

"The thousands in attendance begin arriving at sunup and continue to pour in all morning, all eager to catch a glimpse of their hero. The Grand Marshal is none other than Col. Harry Berry, assisted by Gallatin native Col. Charles B. Rogan, commander of Tennessee's National Guard, and another local favorite, Commander D.V.H. Allen. Accompanying Sgt. York is newly elected Governor Albert H. Roberts.

"Hundreds of Great War veterans and a number from the Spanish War are in line along with an honor guard of Confederate soldiers, followed by thousands in automobiles and on foot. The parade, more than a mile in length, begins at 10:30 and wends its way from the Public Square down South Water Street to Coles Ferry Road and in an hour reaches its destination: the majestic grove of trees at Langley Hall where a platform liberally decorated with flags and the national colors has been erected.

"It is a breath-taking scene: the grandeur of the house in the background as nearly a thousand cars are parked in and around the grove, laughter and excitement ringing out as the crowd gathers in the deep shade to hear the speeches and enjoy the meal that has been prepared. The roar of the crowd when Sgt. York speaks echoes among the stately trees as the smell of 'one hundred carcasses' being barbecued wafts through the air. Typical at the time for large outdoor meals, several hundred yards of wire fencing have been strung sideways from tree to tree and covered with tablecloths to hold the hundreds of baskets of food people have brought for the feast."

Albert Gallatin In the Thick of American History

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

Editor's Note: The following story is part two in a series about Gallatin's namesake, Albert Gallatin, reported in the new book, *Jefferson's Treasure How Albert Gallatin Saved the New Nation from Debt*, written by lawyer-historian Gregory May. Part one, published in the previous *Days of Old Sumner County*, described Gallatin's youth in Geneva, his excellent education, how he ran away to America at age 17 and worked to fulfill his dream of land, how he eloped with Sophia and began to dabble in politics.

Shortly before his 29th birthday and still stunned by the death of his wife of only six months, Albert Gallatin arrived in Philadelphia as a delegate from Fayette County to the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention of 1789. This was a very big deal because at that time, Philadelphia, with 42,000 residents, was the largest and most sophisticated city in America. It had been the nation's capital up until earlier that year when the capital moved to New York. Convention delegates knew that Pennsylvania's constitution should reflect certain values and be a model for other states.

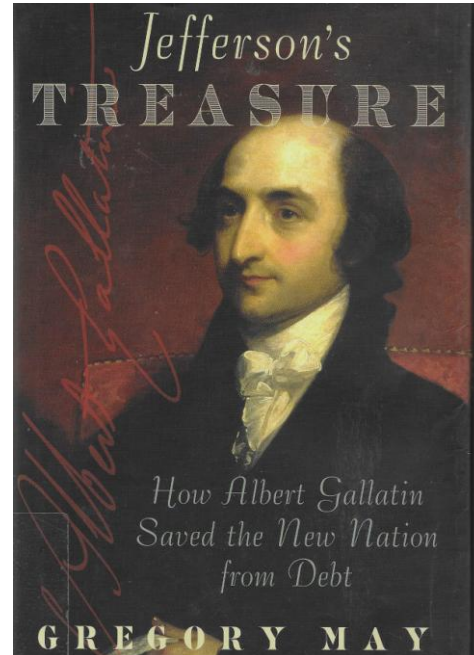
An Antifederalist [Republican], Gallatin became known at the convention for his eloquent opposition to a proposal to reduce the number of convention delegates, a plan that would favor the rich and mean less representation for the ordinary and poor. He spoke up on the importance of popular election, not electors, for state senators. He said that ordinary people were more likely to support property rights—a key issue of the day—under a popularly elected government. He fought to keep a provision in the state constitution giving all long-term male residents—not just the elite—the right to vote.

"Most states gave the vote only to men who owned a house, land or other significant property," explained Gregory May. "Madison had supported that restriction...at the Federal [Constitutional] Convention, and Jefferson had included it in his draft of a constitution for Virginia. But broad suffrage was one of the key liberal features in the Pennsylvania constitution, and the Antifederalists were determined to keep it. They managed to stop the Federalists..."

Gallatin won a seat in the State House of Representatives in the first election under the new Pennsylvania constitution, which he had helped create, and was reelected twice more.

"Gallatin proved himself an effective legislator," wrote May. "He gained, as he later put it, 'an extraordinary influence' in the House...which he attributed to 'my great industry and to the facility

with which I could understand and carry on the current business.' An avid reader, Gallatin worked and studied hard. He confessed to his close friend John Badollet that he had spent the money he needed for new winter clothes on Hume's *History of England*, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and a new edition of Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*...



Albert Gallatin pictured on the cover of May's book

"Gallatin immediately showed an aptitude for public finance," wrote May. "Within a few months of joining the House, he had prepared the Ways and Means Committee's report on a proposal to refinance the state debt...his report made the complex recommendations clear and credible."

Only a year after his recommendations were put in place, state revenue exceeded expenses. Delighted by this turn of events, the governor inscribed the cornerstone of his new house with the notation that Pennsylvania was "happily out of debt."

Gallatin's reputation grew, and in February 1793 he was selected by the State Assembly as a U.S. Senator. Even as he accepted, Gallatin advised the Assembly that he might not be able to serve. He had moved from Massachusetts to Virginia, which had different state and federal citizenship requirements. There was some question as to whether he had held citizenship the full nine years required by law for a U.S. Senator.

Sure enough, his Federalist enemies took advantage of the citizenship question and voted him out after only two months. He did, however, make use of his brief Senate service, joining Republican attacks on the fiscal policies of Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. Gallatin made a motion that the Treasury be audited. Hamilton got mad, refused to cooperate with the audit and held a lingering grudge against Gallatin.

After the Senate

By mid 1794, Gallatin had returned home to Pennsylvania. He had, by that time, married again to Hannah Nicholson, the daughter of a prominent New York Republican family.

Meanwhile, Hamilton had more to worry about than an audit. His new federal excise tax on whiskey resulted in an armed protest, the Whiskey Rebellion. The federal government, still new, didn't know what to do. How should it raise money if not through distilleries, one of the few industries with ready cash? How should it pay for debts from the Revolution? How much force should be used?

The tax hit hard in distillery-rich Pennsylvania, and Gallatin was among those who opposed it. He said the people had the right to disagree with the government—a novel idea to folks who had more experience with a king than a president. He claimed that laws should only be created if their creation had the support of the people. However, when protests against the whiskey tax turned violent, even involving the militia, Gallatin and others feared the situation could turn treasonous and tried to stop it. Gallatin spoke out against armed resistance, even alienating some of his friends as he advised letting the courts settle the issue. Nevertheless, Hamilton considered him one of the instigators of insurrection and said so in a letter to George Washington. Hamilton opined that people should give “sacred respect” to any laws created by the majority of lawmakers.

After their brush with uprising, voters in Fayette County agreed to a judicial decree to pay the tax, but they refused to sign a humiliating federal petition of submission, instead presenting their own declaration—likely written by Gallatin. It explained their beliefs, noted embarrassment for mistreating revenueurs and agreed to pay the tax, *but* declared that citizens would continue to seek its appeal though legal means.

In October of 1794, voters in Western Pennsylvania returned Gallatin to the General Assembly and elected him to the U.S. House of Representatives. The Federalists were furious. They plotted unsuccessfully to keep him out of the General Assembly because of his stand

against the whiskey tax. He ended up giving a speech about the rebellion. It became the first published account of what Gallatin liked to call the “Western Insurrection” and what John Adams in his late-life correspondence with Thomas Jefferson called “Gallatin’s Insurrection.”

Gallatin As Opposition Leader

Pennsylvania Federalists were not the only ones unhappy to find Gallatin so powerful in 1795. On the federal level, Hamilton fumed, when he heard that Gallatin had told Congress his newest funding proposal was a “public curse.” Hamilton had a plan that allowed the government to pay its expenses with bonds that would not come due for decades. On top of that, Hamilton was pushing Congress for money (with no spending reduction) to implement the Jay Treaty, the agreement between the U.S. and Britain to stop British interference with American ships. Republicans, including Gallatin, considered the treaty weak for America and hated it. Specifically, Gallatin was determined to keep the administration frugal by making the Treasury—Hamilton—more accountable to Congress. Gallatin said, for example, that Congress should stop the Treasury from lumping all military appropriations together as a “general grant” to the War Department. It should know where money was spent.

Gallatin was a congressional leader even as a freshman—a fact that always astonished him since he continued to speak with the French accent of his youth and was not rich. Late in life, he attributed it to “Laborious investigation, habits of analysis, thorough knowledge of the subjects...” Other people noted that he had the ability to frame persuasive speeches, a sterling reputation for honesty and intelligence, notoriety from the abuse he took from Federalists and amazing financial talent.

May wrote, “The Genevan [Gallatin] could grasp matters that Hamilton previously had managed to keep just beyond the Republicans’ reach... Gallatin’s ability to show where Hamilton had faltered gave the opposition a vital new advantage. It also gave Gallatin an important opportunity to solidify his leadership position, and he was eager to make the most of it. In the summer recess—spent with his pregnant wife at the Nicholsons’ house in New York—Gallatin wrote a two-hundred page book about public finance [*Sketch of the Finances of the United States*].” It pointed out the fallacies of many Treasury policies in a nonpartisan way.

Editor’s Note: The story of Gallatin will continue in the next newsletter.

Past Medical Treatments: Be Glad You Live in 2019

By Al Dittes, Fountain Head

Writer's Note: Chestnut Hill started out serving the Oak Grove area in 1908 for many years as a home school with neighborhood children into a living room setting with the children of the founding Walen and Wallace families, lay Seventh-day Adventists. In getting acquainted with the community, they found the locals had medical as well as educational needs. Young Susan Walen, later known locally as Susan Ard, wrote the following letter to a family friend in Montclair, N.J., showing how her mother was doing the best she could to help a suffering neighbor using the treatments of the day, including doses of strychnine.

July 7, 1914

Dear Mrs. Scott,

I was glad you wrote me about Helen's birthday, so I could send her a letter. What a sad thing it must be not to be able to see. I am so sorry for her. We are praying that if the Lord thinks best He will give her back her sight.

Mama is away from home now. She is staying with a young couple who expect a baby very soon. They are Adventists and are conducting a school similar to ours about 12 miles from here.

Several weeks ago Mama said she must rest up well before she went, for she has been pretty tired all summer. But about two weeks ago we heard that one of our neighbors was very sick and wasn't expected to live, so Mama and I went down. We found her very low. Her trouble was a bad case of diarrhea. They had done nothing but give her laudanum. The doctor had said to give it to her until she was so far gone that they would have to shake her to arouse her.

Well, Mama told the people she would do what she could for the woman if they wanted her to. She doubted if they would let her do anything because even though they are very friendly with us, yet, they are rather afraid or shy of us, or our ways of doing things. But to our surprise they consented to Mama giving her warm injections and warm applications to her abdomen. She seemed to feel relieved. Mama spent the night there and through the middle of that night and the succeeding one she kept her alive by warm cloths on her heart.

She gradually improved until in about 10 days from when we first went the doctor said he would have her sitting up in two or three days, but all the time he insisted that every five hours she must have a strychnine tablet to stimulate her heart and every so often a dose of laudanum,

then again another tablet which was to help digest the nourishment she took.

The doctor said they must crowd her digestion so she would get her strength back, he didn't think they were, I guess. One day he fed her himself (I forget whether it was plain milk or biscuit and coffee), and he gave the poor woman so much that she vomited it right up and nearly all the time since, a week I guess, she has not been able to keep anything on her stomach so she has steadily grown weaker until now I hear she is just about as she was when Mama and I first went down.

Mama sat up with her about four nights then I sat up three nights in succession by that time she was feeling so much better that we haven't been down, only occasionally since. I am sorry to hear she is worse.

One day when Mama had a chance to talk with her, she asked her if she was prepared to die and if she had asked Jesus to forgive her sins. She said she had asked him to but not very recently. Mama told her we were praying for her recovery and told her she must pray for herself. The woman said yes she wanted . . .

She doesn't do as much writing as she would like to. Sometimes her eyes trouble her, and she must take care of them or oculists say she will have serious trouble. I don't know as they have bothered her much real recently as she hasn't done much that would put a strain on them. I am so thankful my eyes are strong.

It has been very dry here since the first of May. Just one or two possibly more showers, that mostly wind. Everything needs rain so badly. I heard a man say yesterday it seemed too bad to work hard and not have it count for anything. If rain doesn't come soon, I guess a great many people here will know what want is this winter. But God knows best. He rules all things right.

Have I wearied you with this long letter? Give my love to Helen.

Your friend,
Susan W. Walen
(Excuse the mistakes.)

(ALBRIGHT, Continued from Page 1)

morning his "hogship" was found dressed, quartered and distributed among several mess parties in the camp!

Edward Albright spent a typical boyhood, attending Gallatin schools. He graduated from Cumberland University's law department in 1898, aged 25, and was admitted to the bar that same year. He practiced law for the next six years.

In 1908, he wrote *The Early History of Middle Tennessee*, which was considered a great contribution to the county and state. The book covers the early pioneer settlement until Tennessee's statehood in 1796.



Edward Albright (From the negatives originated by E.M. Stark and now housed in the Archives)

During this same period of Albright's life, he purchased *The Sumner County News*, and was its publisher and editor from 1907 to 1933. His stature as a journalist grew over time. He was twice elected president of the Tennessee Press Association and of the Tri-State Press Association, made up of editors and publishers of Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi. And in 1919, he was elected president of the National Editorial Association, presiding over its convention in Boston in 1920.

Albright's stature as a local leader and businessman also grew. He was elected president of the Gallatin Chamber of Commerce and of the Gallatin Rotary Club. Also, for many years he was a member of the First Presbyterian

Church of Gallatin, where he served as clerk of the session and in many other capacities.

Evolving as one of the foremost newsmen in the state, he naturally began to take stands on political issues and on politicians. In 1916, he successfully managed the campaign of Kenneth D. McKeller for the U.S. Senate. He was named chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee during Woodrow Wilson's administration (March 1913-March 1921), and he served as Federal Marshal for Middle Tennessee. In 1924, he was a Democrat Elector for President on the Davis-Bryan ticket. Later, he was appointed by former Tennessee governor Benton McMillin as the Tennessee State Manager of the Franklin Roosevelt pre-convention campaign committee.

With these political connections in his background, Albright was appointed as minister of Finland in July 1933 by Roosevelt.

He was stationed at the American Legation at Helsingfors. As minister, he worked to lower tariff barriers between the U.S. and the Baltic Republic. In 1934, he protested Finland's embargo on American lard exports and secured the release of cargoes afloat when the embargo was imposed. While in Finland, he kept in close contact with friends and family back home and was saddened to miss the 100th birthday party of his dear friend, Mollie Gardner Herring.

In 1937, he was transferred to Costa Rica at his own request after finding Finland's winters too severe for his health. He moved to Washington, D.C., to train and prepare for his Costa Rica assignment. However, illness had already claimed him, and it became apparent that he would never reach Costa Rica. He died in a Nashville hospital on May 25 at age 63.

Among the many accolades given Albright at his death was that of fellow Cumberland University alumnus and U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull who stated, "I am greatly grieved to learn of the death of Edward Albright. Over a long period of years, I was privileged to know him intimately and, in common with his many friends, held him in the highest esteem. As a leader in public and civic affairs, his services to his community and to his State were outstanding. In late years, he served his country with marked ability and distinction as United States Minister to Finland and was about to enter upon his duties as Minister to Costa Rica. I personally mourn the passing of one of my most loyal, intimate and trusted friends."

Albright never married. He was survived by his younger brother, Oscar E. Albright, who died in 1954, and by his younger sister, Clemmie Bertha Albright Franklin, who died in 1949.

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archaeologists to come up with a plan to lift and preserve the fragile wreckage, which though only 30 feet underwater, was buried in three feet of mud. It was lifted in a harness by a crane barge named the *Karlissa B.* Now the *H.L. Hunley* and its contents are housed in the Hunley Museum at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center (the old Charleston Navy Base). An international team of scientists continue to work at the *Hunley* conservation project, which is conducted through a partnership with Friends of the *Hunley*, the South Carolina Hunley Commission, Clemson University Restoration Institute, Naval History and Heritage Command and the Charleston Naval Complex Redevelopment Authority. The museum offers weekend tours and is the foremost historic tourist attraction in Charleston.

Horace Hunley Plans War Venture

Prior to the Civil War, Horace Hunley practiced law in New Orleans and represented Orleans Parrish in the Louisiana State Legislature. State historian, the late Walter Durham of Gallatin, wrote in his book *Rebellion Revisited* that “apparently [Hunley] was attracted to the idea of an underwater craft capable of delivering explosives against the hull of an enemy vessel when the Confederacy offered cash bonuses to anyone blowing up and sinking Yankee ships. He became associated with his brother-in-law Robert K. Barrow of New Orleans and two marine engineers [James R. McClintock and Baxter Watson] in 1861 in developing the 19-foot submersible called the *Pioneer*. Later in the year, when the *Pioneer* sank a target barge after successful testing on Lake Pointchartrain, the business partners were elated. To the great disappointment of its builders, however, it was necessary to scuttle the *Pioneer* to keep it from falling into the hands of the Union Admiral David Farragut when he took New Orleans on April 27, 1862.

“Hunley and the two engineers fled to Mobile, where they engaged a machine shop to build another underwater craft to be called *The American Diver*. Although the first product of the Mobile shop sank while attempting to blow up a Federal vessel off Fort Morgan, Mobile Harbor, the developers would not give up. Hunley had two ingredients necessary for the project, money and persistence, and he seems to have supplied both without stint.

“The Mobile shop at once went to work on another submersible, the *C.S.S. H.L. Hunley*. The new craft was simply designed. Built from an iron boiler, it was four feet in diameter and 25 feet in length. Water ballast tanks were provided fore and aft, and flat iron castings were attached to the underside of the craft for more ballast. The

water ballast could be pumped out and the flat irons dropped to raise the vessel from a dive. The submarine was propelled by manpower. A propeller shaft extended almost the full length of the craft and was fitted with eight cranks for the crew to turn by hand. Lateral fins were operated from a lever amidships. There were hatchways fore and aft with glass panes, the only provision made to see out of the craft. A candle was used for illumination and to indicate the status of the oxygen supply. In calm seas, the submarine was capable of making about four miles an hour.



When the sub was raised in 2000, all eight submariners were still at their stations with no broken bones, and the sub was in good condition. This photo was supplied by Friends of Hunley.

“The *C.S.S. H.L. Hunley* had no guns nor explosives on board, but towed torpedoes on a 200-foot rope at a safe distance behind it. The sub was designed to dive under an enemy ship and surface on the other side, dragging the torpedo and exploding it against the ship.

“After a successful trial, the *Hunley* was taken to Charleston, S.C., to be used against the harbor blockade there. With a new crew on board and ready to push off from the Charleston wharf, it was swamped by the waves of a passing ship. It sank at once, taking seven of the eight crew members to death. Within a few days, it was raised and a new crew was recruited. Another trial ended in another disaster; five of the crew died as the submarine went to the bottom.

“The two disasters brought Horace L. Hunley himself to Charleston. Arriving with his own crew, he went directly to Confederate Commander General Beauregard, who had become disenchanted with the new invention, and at length convinced him that the submarine could be operated successfully. His first test of the twice-raised craft was successful.

“Excited both by the possibilities of its usefulness and its melancholy history, a large crowd assembled to observe a test run on Oct. 15, 1863. With Hunley in command, the *C.S.S. H.L.*

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Hunley disappeared beneath the placid waters of the harbor. The crowd watched in vain for it to resurface. It, instead, sank helplessly to the bottom. Hunley and his seven man crew perished inside the submarine.”

The Confederacy honored Horace Hunley by burying him with his crew in a section of Charleston’s Magnolia Cemetery known as Hunley Circle. The tomb overlooks the harbor and Fort Sumter.

Lt. George Dixon, who had helped build the *Hunley*, raised and refitted her and armed her with a torpedo. By this time, the submarine scheme had become a joke along Charleston harbor and was dubbed “the murdering machine” by sailors. General Beauregard, himself, had had enough of the *Hunley* and had written to Dixon that it “Tis more dangerous to those who use it than to [the] enemy.” But Dixon was determined to give it another try. Finally, Beauregard agreed, and Dixon started work to captain the craft. He recruited a crew and—following a command by the general—warned each man of the hazardous nature of their mission.



This photo supplied by the Friends of Hunley shows the encrusted binoculars (top) now restored (bottom) and on display at the Hunley Museum.

According to the *National Geographic*, Admiral John Dahlgren, commander of the Union blockade, had by that time heard about the submarine. He declared that captured submariners deserved to be hanged “for using an engine of war not recognized by civilized nations.”

With a new crew in place and Dixon in command, the *Hunley* was tested again. By then, Union captains blockading the harbor had been tipped off about the sub’s existence by Confederate deserters. They devised a shield of chains around their Ironsides, the ships that operated closest to shore. Dixon decided to go after vulnerable wooden ships, generally anchored 10 to 12 miles off shore. Shoulder-to-shoulder and night after night for weeks, the eight-man crew sweated for hours crammed inside the four-foot high sub, straining at the hand-held propeller crank, trying to reach the wooden fleet. They cranked for hours, managing to go six or so miles from shore. With nothing in reach, they turned around and cranked back to shore and safety before dawn.

According to the *National Geographic*, “Every mission was an endurance test, sunrise sometimes catching the exhausted Confederates still within range of Union guns. Small picket boats that patrolled the waters closer to shore added to their peril. On several occasions, the crew surfaced for air so near one of these launches that they could hear the bored Union sailors talking and singing.

“Leashed to the shore by the limits of their man-powered craft, the submariners were like chained dogs straining to bite a tormentor just beyond their reach. Then one night their taunters unwittingly came close enough to bite when the [Union’s] *U.S.S. Housatonic* took up position just four miles from shore. The moment had come for the *Hunley* to make history.”

On the night of Feb. 17, 1864, the *Hunley* rammed the 1,240-ton steamship, *Housatonic*, with its lethal torpedo. *Housatonic* Sailors actually saw the vessel coming but did not know what it was. The officer on deck said it was a porpoise rising in the water. The exploding torpedo caused the steamship to sink in only five minutes. The submarine did not get blown up because it was some distance away from the ship. Watchers on shore saw the light of a lantern that had been rigged on the *Hunley* to show when their mission was accomplished. They waited in vain for days for the *Hunley* to surface. Finally, it was clear that the submarine and crew were gone for good.

Nowadays, scientists believe that the sub sank and was quickly covered and filled with sand, preserving the metal and remains of the crew, who were still in their seats when the sub was raised. They are uncertain what caused it to sink. Early on, divers found a hole in the side of the *Hunley* and a broken window in its low observation tower that may account for its end. Removing concretion earlier this year, scientists also found a broken in-take pipe that may have caused it to sink.



This photo of the old court house built in 1837 is from Sumner County Archives.

Five Presidents Spoke from the Old Courthouse

The following story is taken from an article by Louie E. Spivey that appeared in the *Sumner County News* on Nov. 9, 1961:

Gallatin's present day courthouse was built in 1939 in the middle of the square. It succeeded a building; however, that saw the county through most of its nearly 233 years of existence. That first building was constructed in 1837, and during its more than a hundred years of use its historic value to the county was tremendous.

The old building had the distinction of being a venue from which every Tennessee governor, with one exception, came to speak. Within its walls, President Andrew Jackson, then Attorney General, tried a lawsuit. Most importantly, the old Gallatin courthouse had the honor of having five U.S. presidents—Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, Andrew Johnson, Benjamin Harrison and Theodore Roosevelt—speak from its platform.

During the existence of the old building, the jail was in separate quarters. A jail of wooden logs, an outer and inner pen, with logs on end for filler was erected on West Franklin Street. Later, a jail was built on South Water Street, which stood for years, after many remodelings. It not only contained cells for prisoners, but living quarters for the sheriff also.

Sumner County was created by an act of the General Assembly of North Carolina on Nov. 17, 1786. However, it was not until the second Monday in April, 1787, at the home of John

Hamilton of Station Camp Creek that the first court of the county was held.

The court continued to meet in 1787 at the home of John Hamilton and in 1788 in the home of Elmore Douglass. The January and April terms of 1790 met in the house of Simon Kuykendall. From that time until July 1790, it met at the home of Elmore Douglass, now the restored Douglass-Clark House museum.

The first real courthouse, a small log building, was erected on West Station Camp Creek, then known as Mrs. Clarke's place. Here court met until January 1793. It then met at different places. From April 1800 until July 1802, court was held at Cairo, then pronounced "Co Ira," which was then the county seat. From October 1802 until January 1803, court was held in Gallatin.

The first Gallatin courthouse was finished in 1803 and accepted by a group of commissioners appointed to oversee its construction. The court room occupied all of the first floor, and the county offices were on the second floor. That building was used until 1837 when the brick structure preceding the present courthouse was built.

The old brick building covered a much smaller area of ground than the present structure. There was room for trees all around the building, which furnished shade for those who had come to town to shop or merely to pass away the time. The building was two stories. The first floor was occupied with offices. The second floor was taken up mostly by the courtroom, but it also had

the offices of the chancery court and the circuit court clerks.

Brings Back Memories

The former court house was well remembered when Spivey wrote of it in 1961. James Brown, whose father was sheriff during the latter years of the old courthouse, told Spivey about the courthouse celebration at the end of World War I.

“I remember my father didn’t want us kids to come up here that day,” he said. “There was so much going on. But we just couldn’t restrain ourselves. When we got here, I remember seeing an effigy of Kaiser Bill—it was up on top of the ball that was on the courthouse cupola.

Somebody had climbed up there and put it up. Later, they took the effigy down and burned it down there somewhere in the area when the Interurban [defunct railroad] station was located. There was the biggest crowd in Gallatin that day I’ve ever seen around the courthouse.”

J.R. Troutt, Sr., remembered the remodeling that took place on the old building. “The building had wooden steps on the outside at first in both the front and the back,” he said. “You went up to the second floor on the outside. Later they changed those steps to steel steps. They made a circle going up. Also, I think that the cupola was added to the building after it was built.

“I remember the building had old-timey shutters that opened on the outside, and farmers would come into town and hitch their horses to the shutters. They would bring in wagon loads of watermelons and cantaloupes and vegetables and park them out there around the building. There were hitching posts all round the square, but they would use the shutters a lot. Behind the Schamberger theater was parking lot. When space would fill up around the courthouse, others would go to the Schamberger lot to park.

“The farmers would have wagon loads of melons, and people would go out to their wagons and eat, the bees and flies swarming all around—they wouldn’t care. They ate with bees swarming.

“There was a well on the south side of the court house—had a hand pump. There was a cup hanging on the pump. It was kept there for people to drink out of—and they did—all drank out of the same cup. The pump provided water for a watering trough for horses also.

“Under the pump was a cave,” Troutt continued. “The entrance was in Lackey’s lot on Lock 4 Road. The cave is still there [in 1961] large enough for people to enter. Boys used to go out to Lackey’s and go into the cave and travel all the way up to the courthouse and tap on the pipe that had been sunk for the pump. You could hear them tapping and you’d know they were there.

“One day I remember a boy got hung up in the cave. His father was a police officer. When he heard that the boy was hung, he went out there and went in. He worked around and got the boy unhung after finding him about half-way between the entrance and the courthouse.

“I remember also that there were lots of trees on the courthouse lawn. When the merchants wouldn’t have much to do, they’d come across to the shade and sit and tell tales. The farmers would come to town and park at the courthouse and stay all day. Some would show horses and other stock. And I remember Jesse Moore. He was an old-time auctioneer. He’d auction stock off at the north side of the building.

“I remember some trials held at the courthouse too,” said Troutt. “One was that of a race horse man named Turpin. He shot and killed a Carter over there in the corner of the square—shot him with a shotgun. Part of that shot went into a buggy, and, you know, they took the wheels off that buggy and packed it piece by piece up into the courtroom [for evidence].

“Never will I forget, I found a .22 pistol, a little old rusty gun, and I had it in my pocket where they were trying Turpin. When they began discussing the gun that had been used for the murder weapon, I got scared, and I made a bee line out of that court room, went on down to Dobbins Pike ‘til I came to a hollow tree, and I got rid of my gun there,” said Troutt. “I also remember the trial of Jim Shafer. He had killed a man named Guthrie out on Nashville Pike for trespassing.”

Troutt himself was a witness at a trial in the old courthouse when he was only 10 years old.

He also recalled some of characters who used to hang out there. “One in particular,” he said, “was a fellow who apparently ate dope. He was a regular in the courthouse—there every day, and he would stand around asleep. You could come up to him and ask him anything and he’d come to with a start. He had a pet buzzard, and the buzzard would come to the square and eat out of the garbage cans placed around here. One day the bird landed on a can for a meal, and the can turned over. This fellow saw it, and he grabbed out a handful of the garbage, threw it up into the air at the buzzard and said, ‘Go home now,’ and the buzzard minded just like a kid.”

Spivey concluded, “And so the remembrances go. Many things that happened at the old hall of justice are trivial, but they strike a responsive chord in the hearts of those who lived them. The old building was of much historical significance, and its remembrances will live as long as a group of Gallatin’s old-timers gather.”

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