



History Abounds in Crenshaw County

By Paul Hudgins, Registered Forester, Alabama Forestry Commission

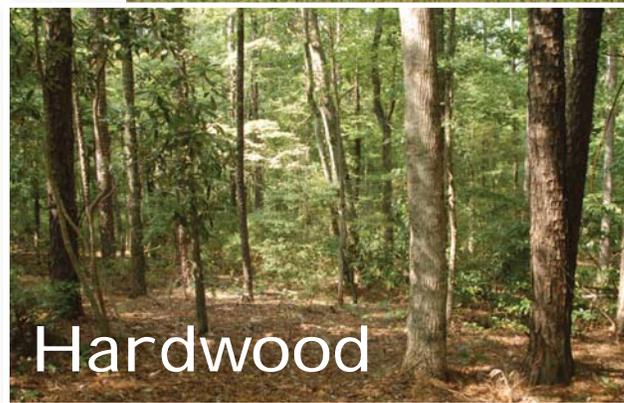
A true love of the land and the history that can be discovered within its boundaries

is what best describes the Clark-Burnside, LLC. The pride that comes with owning 800 acres of land in Crenshaw County and knowing that it has been in the family for 150 years is truly an inspiration for Charlie Clark; his wife, Debbie; his sister, Amy Paul; and their cousin, Hal Burnside. In the last three years, Charlie and his sister have added an additional 400 acres to the family land holdings, bringing the total to 1,200 acres of well diverse, multiple-use land.

This property was first recognized as an Alabama TREASURE Forest in 1999, but even before then, Charlie and the family were great examples for the multiple-use land stewardship philosophy that the TREASURE Forest program embodies. Maximizing timber production on the family land is their primary objective; however, wildlife habitat improvement is a very close secondary objective.

Everybody enjoys the wildlife viewing and harvesting opportunities that abound on the property. This is apparent with the planting of an estimated 25 acres of food plots annually. The willingness to plant 125 acres each year in a cultivated crop has proven to be a benefit for the family as well as friends alike. Sweet corn is often planted for production, but a few ears do manage to find their way into the freezers of family and friends as well as the local wildlife reserve.

Charlie personally conducts or oversees the prescribed burning of 150 acres a year for timber stand improvement and the resulting improved wildlife habitat. Using the family farm tractor and sprayer, the mid-rotation spraying of the pine plantations has added to the family enjoyment and overall aesthetic value of the property. In the last five years, the planting of 60 acres of longleaf pine has increased the overall diversity that is already present.

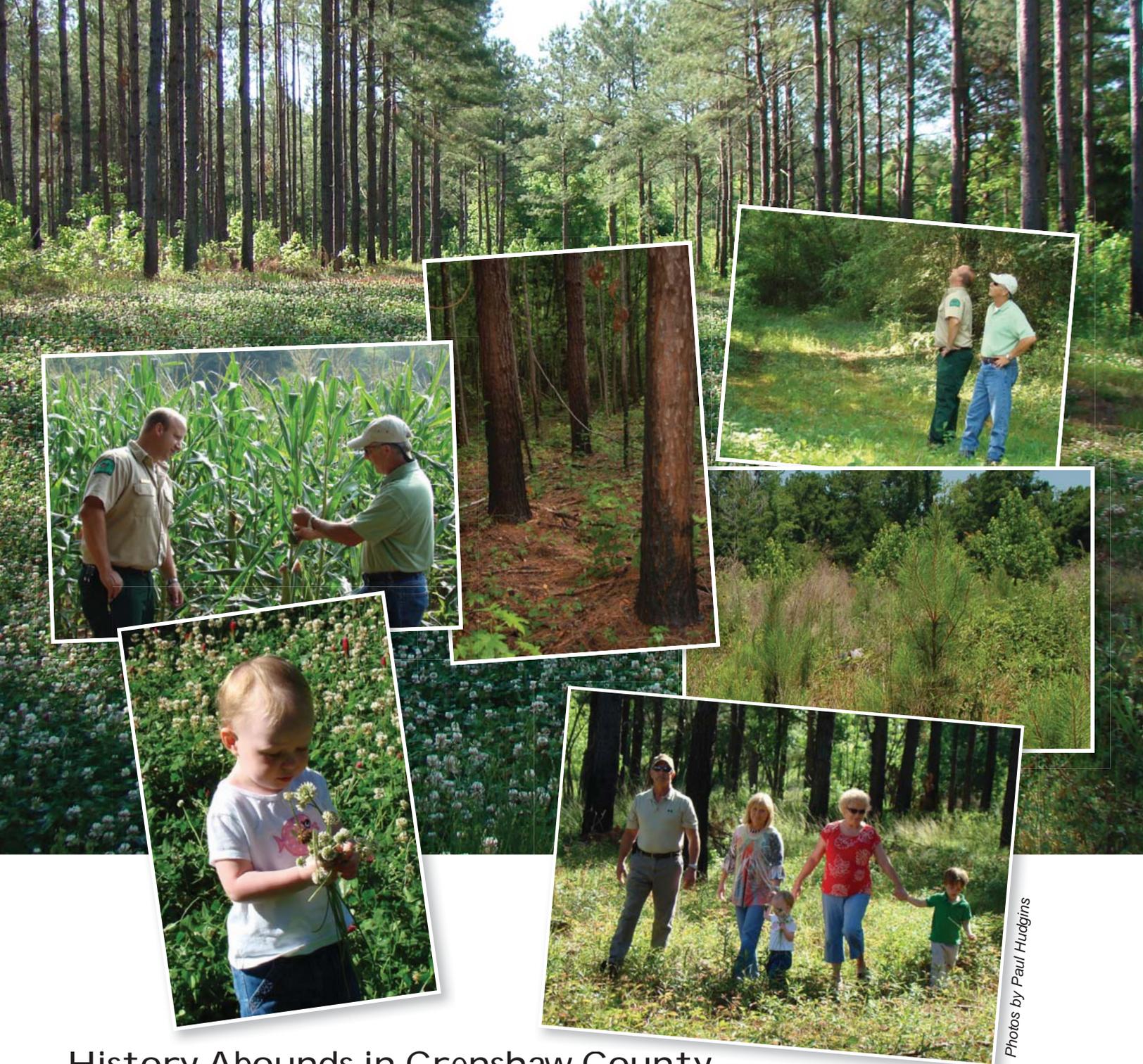


The Clark-Burnside, LLC boasts 150 acres of plantation pine in various stages of development. An additional 150 acres of plantation pine that was planted for wildlife habitat enhancement under the Conservation Reserve Program has also been a blessing for the family. The rest of the total 1,200 acres is in natural hardwood timber.

Charlie has been active in the local Crenshaw County ATFA chapter for the past 10 years, serving as president, vice-

president, and program chair. He is also a member of the Forest Landowner's Association. Because of his love of the land, Charlie participates in numerous workshops and attends tours and other educational opportunities across the state every year hoping to learn a new way of doing something while passing along his enthusiasm for the great outdoors to other landowners.

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Photos by Paul Huggins

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As he stated simply, “I’ve always loved history.” Charlie first found a piece of that history when he was 8 years old. While out exploring the family woods one day, he came across half of an arrowhead. From that point on, he became fascinated with Native American history and he has been able to share his knowledge with hundreds of interested landowners, homeowners, and children across Alabama. In researching Native American history, Charlie has determined that there is an Indian burial mound on the property.

Another unique aspect to the family land is an old cemetery that can be found resting among a hardwood stand on the back side of the property, dating back to the early 1800s when the first church located in Crenshaw County was built here. It was later determined that the dirt floor “Valley Church” as it was known, because it sat in a valley, was disassembled and relocated a mile down the road after a case of malaria killed several of the church members. It was then renamed the Mount Ida Church.

The Clark-Burnside, LLC was awarded the Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest award in 2007, and Charlie was further honored with the W. Kelley Mosley Environmental Award that same year. For him, a true love of family, the land, and the history that can be found among its fields, hardwoods, and pine stands is what makes Clark-Burnside, LLC a true piece of heaven in Crenshaw County. 🌲