

The Voice

*Of
The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society
And
The Cobb Memorial Archives*

SPEAKING ABOUT THE PAST TO THE PRESENT, FOR A BETTER FUTURE

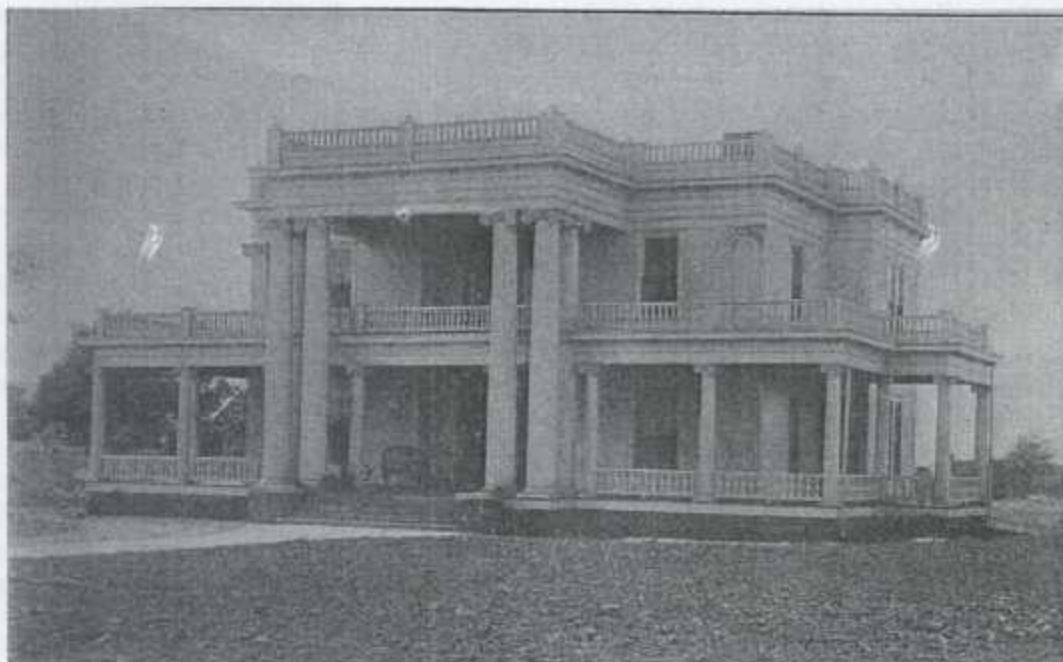
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C.V.H.S. Quarterly Meeting

Sunday, January 17, 2010, 3:00 p.m. EDST
The Lanier Room, H. Grady Bradshaw Library
Valley, Alabama

Speaker: Judge M. Calvin Milford

No program information was available at press time.



Home of Senator and Mrs. J. Thomas Heflin in LaFayette, Alabama. This photograph is from the "LaFayette College Handbook, 1911-1912". See related story on page 6.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have been very busy for the past two months meeting folks and scanning their old Chambers County photographs. As described in the July edition of *The Voice*, I have signed a letter of agreement with Arcadia Publishing on behalf of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and the Chambers County Museum for our organizations to prepare a photographic history of Chambers County to be submitted to Arcadia Publishing in April, 2010. The monograph will contain 240 images and 18,000 words of text. The Steering Committee for this effort is composed of Don Clark, Virginia Weldon, Linda Burton, Mary Helen Benford, Linda Holderfield and me as Chair.

The Valley-Times News, *The Lafayette Sun* and *The Randolph Leader* are most helpful in printing our articles and pictures through which we are soliciting images from the public to be used in the publication. After almost two months of announcing this project to the public, we are experiencing a wave of interest and phone calls, but the voluntary contribution of images from the general public has been slow to develop. We are identifying and phoning individuals in the various communities who may have collections of old photos and are inviting them to allow us to use their images in the book. We are getting a good response to direct solicitation. We are finding one of a kind images which we could only hope existed, such as the train Johnny Ray, stopping about 1920 at the Stroud depot with two freight cars and two passenger cars. One individual from Randolph County has shared the only photograph of the Hickory Flat School which we know to exist. Another individual from Randolph County has shared photographs of Standing Rock in the days of buggies and livery stables. We will continue to appeal to individuals to help us in the search for images representing all of the old villages and communities in Chambers County. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find the old photographs as the descendants of the old families leave the county and take their photographic collections with them. We are told stories of old family collections being distributed to relatives at recent family reunions and then the individual photos leave the county forever. We must continue to appeal to families to deposit collections of old photos in the Cobb Archives or at least leave a photographic copy with the Archives when estates are being disbursed or families are relocating to other counties and other states. Chambers County has contained an abundance of old photographic images but finding these images is taking on the characteristic of panning for gold, of intense prospecting. The exciting finds of unknown or forgotten images evoke in us a personal curiosity and engagement with the past lives of our families, their friends and their communities. We all experience the immediate power of the image to pull us into its reality but we may require a thousand words of text to stimulate the identical emotional or intellectual response. We all remember the old Chinese proverb we learned as children and we know that many stories may be derived from a single photograph. The preservation and interpretation of images is a most important function of our historical society and the Cobb Archives.

The Cobb Memorial Archives holds valuable collections of local photographs which have been placed there by individuals, companies and social organizations. Our project has been well served by the availability of the Archives' excellent collection of photographs. From our experiences of searching the Archives' materials and images, we are considering a single chapter in the photographic history on the Valley area. The businesses, municipalities and earlier villages were highly interconnected in all aspects of life and the reflections of the vitality of this area may be best understood and appreciated when viewed in a coherent presentation. The

other chapters of the book will be organized by topics and not locations.

Following Christmas we will ask the local newspapers to announce dates and times in January for persons to bring photographs to the two library locations for scanning. We have scanner and will travel to an individual's home or other location to examine photographs and scan. So, please help us with this project by providing images or recommending where we may prospect. We have collected a sufficient number of images to know we will have a very engaging and interesting book. So, keep collecting and preserving our stories and our images and thanks to you for your membership and support of our Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society.

- *Horace McLean Holdefield*

ARCHIVE'S REPORT

Just in time to display for Christmas, the Fairfax Variety Club presented to Cobb Archives the complete set of 12 Christmas Balls they had made featuring historic buildings in Valley. These have been created over the last twelve years and are available for purchase individually or as a set from any member of the Fairfax Variety Club. We are delighted to have these lovely ornaments on display.

Members of the Cusseta Baptist Church have presented to Cobb Archives, a bound copy of Original Records of the Cusseta Baptist Church, transcribed by Glenda Brack.

A copy of the Transcription of the Original Church Records for the Baptist Church of Christ, Mount Zion - 1892-1963 has been bound and presented to Cobb Archives by Mrs. Thelma Sanders. These records were also transcribed by Glenda Brack.

Bruce Gray, Jr. and Mrs. Gray have donated the three volume set of History of Alabama and Her People, published in 1927.

Another addition to our church records is a collection of seven Journals of the North Alabama Conference Methodist Episcopal Church South. These are for the Sessions in 1909, 1911, 1914, 1916, 1918, 1920 and 1921.

The Earnest Reunion presented their book Earnest Family Reunion 1909 - 2009, a delightful book filled with pictures of family members throughout the years.

Mac and Linda Holderfield have spent a number of days scanning photographs in our collections and those of individuals who have brought photos to be scanned for possible inclusion in a book to be published by The Chambers County Museum and The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society. The title of the book will be The Photographic History of Chambers County.

Margie, Jenna and I appreciate everyone's generosity and interest in the work of Cobb Archives.

- *Miriam Syler*



The Wm. F. Abernathy home between Buffalo and White Plains on the Roanoke Road, now Hwy. 431. From left to right: Wm. F. Abernathy, Laura Awilda Milford Abernathy, Ola Abernathy, and Allie Abernathy. W.F. Abernathy built this house in 1873; a front porch was later added. The cedar tree on the front right corner grew to a large tree, died and was cut down a few years ago. Photograph was made ca. 1901.

Miss Allie Abernathy's Scrapbooks

In the last quarter of the 19th and into the first decade of the 20th century, living on a rural farm involved much hard work. When there was free time to do as one pleased, their imagination and creativity sought ways to help pass the time of rainy days and cold winter nights. For one young lady, Miss Allie Abernathy's solution to this was scrapbooking. Miss Allie began clipping items of interest to her and her family mainly from *The LaFayette Sun* and *The Roanoke Leader*. At some point the family subscribed to *The Atlanta Constitution* and some articles of national interest were saved from this. She mounted these articles into two large government census profiles and one agricultural book with a homemade paste of flour and water. Beginning in the early 1890s she continued with this hobby for about 30 years.

Laura Alabama Floretta Abernathy, known as "Allie", was born in the Buffalo Community of Chambers County on August 6, 1867. She was the daughter of William Franklin Abernathy and wife Laura Awilda Milford Abernathy. Both the Abernathys and Milfords were early settlers of the county in the late 1830s and early 1840s. The Abernathy family was quite fond of lengthy names and her siblings were: Minnie Margaret Lovella Abernathy; John Rufus Beaty Abernathy; Vanama Buena Vista Abernathy; Samuel Franklin Davis Abernathy and Martha Ola Vodella Abernathy.

Her parents were members of the Rock Spring Baptist Church where the family attended preaching once a month on the third Sunday and Saturday before. Near their home in Buffalo was Lebanon Presbyterian Church and at Marcoot was Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church. These churches all met once a month and on alternating weekends which afforded the Aber-

nathy family to be involved with many different families and neighborhoods. The clippings from her scrapbooks reflect many of the families associated with these three churches. Births, weddings, obituaries, current and social news events gradually filled the three volumes.

Miss Allie and her sister Buena known as "Boonie" never married. They remained in the family home helping care for their aged parents until Miss Allie died on October 27, 1946. Two of her beloved scrapbooks remained in the old home and one somehow managed to end up in a barn. Occasionally the books would be shown to people by Miss Allie's nephew Riley House and wife Hassie. In the early 1980s Calvin Milford, a distant relative, borrowed the scrapbooks and had several copies made. This created much interest and in 1987 Miss Allie's nephew Frank Abernathy and wife Burma of Roanoke, had the scrapbooks professionally copied and hardbound into one volume by Family Tree in LaGrange, Georgia. The book was marketed and sold locally to many people and is a wonderful resource for researchers with east Alabama family ties.

Now out of print volumes of Miss Allie Abernathy's Scrapbooks occasionally appear on Ebay, an online auction company, and a few volumes have turned up at local estate sales. Most likely Miss Allie never dreamed or imagined how popular and valuable historically her hobby of scrapbooking would be so many years after her death.



Abernathy sisters standing on front steps of Abernathy home, left to right: Beuna "Boonie" Abernathy, Allie Abernathy and Ola Abernathy House. Photographed in 1938.



A striking profile portrait of a then 30-year old James Thomas Heflin that was placed in the Chambers County Courthouse cornerstone in 1899.

Senator James Thomas Heflin

Perhaps one of the most colorful political figures from the south in his day was James Thomas "Cotton Tom" Heflin of LaFayette. He was born April 9, 1869 on his father's cotton plantation at Louina, an old settlement near present day Wadley on the Tallapoosa River. He was the son of Dr. Wyatt L. and Lavicie Catherine Heflin and received a common school education before attending Southern University, Greensboro, Alabama and Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College (Auburn University), Auburn, Alabama. He was admitted to the bar and elected mayor of LaFayette in 1893. In 1896, Heflin married Miss Minnie Kate Schuessler (1875-1916) daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Zack Schuessler.

His first rise to political prominence began as a delegate who helped draft the 1901 Alabama State Constitution. He argued successfully for completely excluding black Alabamians from voting and served as Secretary of State from 1902 to 1904, and was then elected to the United States House of Representatives as a Democrat to fill the vacancy left by the death of Charles W. Thompson. He continued to serve in the House until 1920, when he was elected to the Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the death of John H. Bankhead. In 1928, Heflin was a supporter of Herbert Hoover, a Republican for President, and because of this was denied nomination as a Democrat in 1930. This forced him to run for the Senate as an Independent candidate and was soundly defeated by John Hollis Bankhead, II. Returning to Washington to serve out his term, he initiated a Senate investigation of voting fraud in hopes of overturning Bankhead's election that lasted for 15 months costing taxpayers \$100,000.

In April 1932, the Senate prepared to vote on a committee recommendation against Heflin. Known for his long orations, Heflin delivered a five-hour oration with a thunderous conclusion. Packed with supporters in the gallery, they jumped to their feet with a roar of applause and immediately were ordered out of the chamber. Two days later, the Senate voted by a huge margin to dismiss Heflin's claim.

After his defeat, he was an unsuccessful candidate for election to the House and Senate of several occasions, and later would serve as an appointed special representative of the Federal Housing Administration under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Perhaps one of Heflin's best remembered political accomplishments was in 1914, when he and Texas Senator Morris Shepard introduced a joint resolution that asked for the second Sunday of every May to be designated by the federal government as a national Mother's Day.

Senator Heflin died at his home in LaFayette in 1951 at the age of 82. He, along with his wife and four children are buried in LaFayette Cemetery. His epitaph reads:

*J. Thomas Heflin
1869 - 1951*

Attorney - Statesman - Orator - Patriot

*Mayor, City of LaFayette 1893 - 1895
Legislature of Alabama 1896 - 1900
Alabama Constitutional Convention 1901
Alabama Secretary of State 1902 - 1904
Congress of the United States 1920 - 1931*

*Unawed By Opinion
Unseduced By Flattery
Undismayed By Disaster
He Confronted Life with Antique Courage
And Death with Christian Hope.
Petigru*



Standing on a bale of cotton, U.S. Congressman "Cotton Tom" Heflin addresses a large crowd of voters in the early 1900s at an unknown location, most likely in or around LaFayette.

The annual dues of the **Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society** are due each year on the first of January. Dues are \$12.00 per individual, \$6.00 for any other member of the same household, and \$3.00 for any student who is still in school and is under 21 years of age. Other yearly membership levels include **Benefactor** - \$250; **Patron** - \$100 and **Friend** - \$50. For any **NEW member only** who subscribes after September 1, their membership will be for the remainder of the current year and also the following year. In becoming a member you will receive a quarterly newsletter *The Voice*, which will inform you of quarterly meetings, new publications that are offered during the year, articles of historical interest in the tri-county coverage area and upcoming events.

Please make your check payable to C.V.H.S. and mail along with application below to:

Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society, Inc., 3419 20th Avenue, Valley, AL 36854

2010 Membership Application - The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society

Name _____ Amount \$ _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society
3419 20th Avenue
COBB MEMORIAL ARCHIVES
Valley, Alabama 36854