

THE VOICE

of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and
Cobb Memorial Archives

THE GEORGIA MILITARY INSTITUTE AND ITS CIVIL WAR CONNECTION TO THE HISTORY OF WEST POINT AND SURROUNDING GEORGIA COUNTIES, THE BOYS AND THEIR FATE!



Left: Image of Georgia Military Institute from the New Georgia Encyclopedia

Presenter: Dr. Keith S. Bohannon

The maelstrom of civil war captured adolescent young men and swept, propelled their fates into currents of fierce battle. Virginia has its history of the self-sacrificing cadets of the Virginia Military Institute and the memories of the “Field of Lost Shoes.” Georgia has its history of the self-sacrificing cadets of the Georgia Military Institute whose lives intersected with adult soldiers, townspeople and others in the wartime community of West Point, Georgia. Dr. Bohannon will describe the history of the Georgia Military Institute and

how its history and cadets are connected to our local history in the Chattahoochee Valley.

Dr. Keith S. Bohannon is Professor in the History Department at the University of West Georgia, Carrollton, Georgia. His degrees are B.A. and M.A. from University of Georgia and Ph. D. from Pennsylvania State University.

Dr. Bohannon’s expertise is in the History of the Old South and Civil War and Reconstruction. He has co-authored

two monographs and 21 published articles as well as multiple book reviews in professional journals. His research and writing have addressed a broad variety of topics ranging from battlefield breastwork engineering, soldiers’ stories of battle, and women’s wartime riots. He has made professional presentations from Tuscaloosa, Alabama to Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

The general public is encouraged to attend what will be an excellent and interesting presentation by Dr. Bohannon. Sons of local west Georgia families were enrolled at the Georgia Military Institute when the war began and we encourage descendants of these families to attend the presentation. This quarterly meeting of The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society is now held on the fourth Sunday of the month, Sunday, October 21, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. EDT.

THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING

Sunday, October 21, 2018, 3:00 p. m. EDT

The Lanier Room, H. Grady Bradshaw Library
Valley Alabama

Members of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and
the general public are invited to attend this program.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Malinda Powers

Recently, I heard that the Texas state legislature is considering changing their history textbooks. Advocates are demanding that the term “heroes”, used for almost two centuries to describe the brave defenders of the Alamo, be eradicated. Texas! For over a year television news has been frequently peppered with violent demonstrations where protestors are tearing down and desecrating historic statues across our country. And the NFL leadership and most franchise owners have decided to pledge allegiance to the bottom line, while turning a blind eye to sideline kneeling.

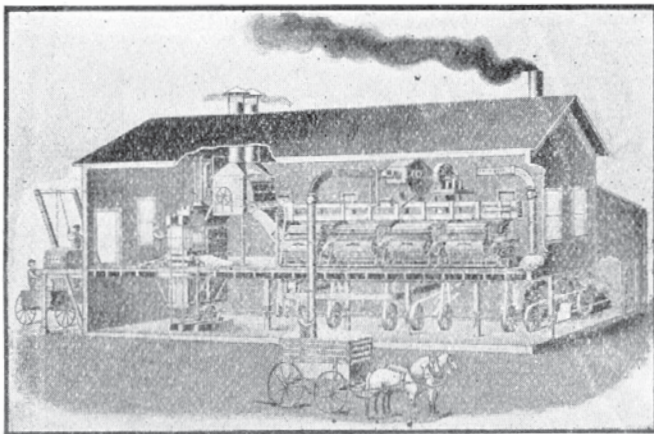
I have had the opportunity to teach both American and Alabama history at the elementary level for many years. I have as a precious keepsake my first classroom flag. Like most of you, I grew up during a time when saying the pledge at the ringing of the morning bell was as American as apple pie. Today, many classrooms ignore that long-standing tradition and many principals and school boards don't seem to notice.

Political correctness infiltrated our educational system several decades ago. During the 1970's, the idea of our nation as a “melting pot” of different cultures and heritage was seen as a unifying factor, a national strength. By the

1990's, however, that melting pot was replaced by multiculturalism and, as those students grew into adulthood, a national philosophy of globalism began to take hold.

The teaching of history and civics in our American schools has never been more important to the future of our democracy than it is right now. Children should develop a deeper understanding of our nation's founding principles. What is the Constitution and what does the Bill of Rights guarantee? How does a democracy work and why is free enterprise better than socialism? What precious freedoms do U.S. citizens enjoy that are basically non-existent in many parts of the world? What would it be like to be forbidden by law to worship God or pursue the career of your choice?

At the conclusion of drafting the U.S. Constitution, Benjamin Franklin was asked by a Philadelphia citizen, “Mr. Franklin, what have you given us?” His famous reply: “We have given you a republic, *if you can keep it!*” Two hundred and thirty-one years later, we remain at risk of losing our most precious form of government. We must double-down on our commitment to educate our children about our freedoms and responsibilities. And we must teach them by example how to love and appreciate their country once more, all the while working to make the USA a stronger, fairer, and better nation for all our citizenry. ■



Three 70-Saw Pratt Complete Outfit.

J. W. GRADY,
DEALER IN
Dry Goods, Groceries and General Merchandise.
ALSO STEAM GINNERY IN CONNECTION.

Prind. Ala., Jan'y 22 1903

*This cut-away illustration of a cotton gin, powered by steam, along with all the text appears on a business card dated 1903. The illustration is quite small, but in an effort to show more detail, it has been enlarged a great deal more than the words.
-courtesy Don Clark via county collection.*

The VOICE is a quarterly newsletter of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 718, West Point, Georgia 31833

Editor: Dr. Horace (Mac) Holderfield (holderfieldh12@msn.com)

Find us on Facebook and visit our website at <http://cvhistoricalsociety.org>

MISSION STATEMENT: As a non-profit membership organization, the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society seeks to preserve and promote the history and heritage of Chambers County, Alabama, West Point, Georgia, and the greater Chattahoochee Valley area. CVHS produces and sells historical books and media, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and presents programs with speakers on historical topics of local and regional interest.

VISION STATEMENT: Having been in continuous operation since its founding in 1953, the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society strives to uphold the vision of its founders while posturing the organization for growth in the 21st century.



Join us for an Amazing Experience!

June 22 – 26, 2019



Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society's

ALABAMA Anniversary Tour

On Our State's Bi-centennial Anniversary!

Featuring

- All five state capitals, including the “Lost Capitals” of St. Stephens and Old Cahaba
- Constitution Village and U.S. Space & Rocket Center in **Huntsville**
- Sloss Furnace and Civil Rights Institute in **Birmingham**
- University of Alabama historic tour in **Tuscaloosa**
- Black Belt, antebellum homes, and Edmund Pettis Bridge in **Selma**
- Fort of Colonial **Mobile**, Historic Downtown, and Battle of Mobile Bay at historic Fort Gaines and Fort Morgan
- In **Montgomery**, Rosa Parks Museum, First White House of the Confederacy, State Capitol, and State Archives!

The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society is a non-profit organization. This marks our fifth consecutive history-oriented tour, the proceeds of which support historic preservation in our area. Most of our travelers have joined us on two or more tours and represent Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

How much is it going to cost?

\$895/person double occupancy \$1195/person single occupancy

What is included?

- Round-trip deluxe motor coach transportation from Valley, Alabama
- 4 nights’ accommodations at beautiful 3-star hotels, including the historic *Malaga Inn* in Mobile
- On-board DVD presentations on related history
- Breakfast daily; snacks and beverages aboard bus
- All admissions

Do I have to pay all at once? Not unless you prefer. Otherwise, a \$95 deposit is due at time of registration. Balance may be spread over 3 convenient payments:

<i>Double Occupancy:</i>	<i>\$895/person</i>	<i>Single Occupancy:</i>	<i>\$1195/person</i>
<i>Deposit ***</i>	<i>\$95</i>	<i>Deposit ***</i>	<i>\$95</i>
<i>1st payment due Feb 1, ‘19</i>	<i>\$200</i>	<i>1st payment due Feb 1, ‘19</i>	<i>\$300</i>
<i>2nd payment due Mar 1, ‘19</i>	<i>\$300</i>	<i>2nd payment due Mar 1, ‘19</i>	<i>\$400</i>
<i>Final payment due May 1, ‘19</i>	<i>\$300</i>	<i>Final payment due May 1, ‘19</i>	<i>\$400</i>

***** Early Bird Special!!! Save \$50 off your deposit by registering early with postmark on or before January 31 !** If registering *after* Feb. 1st, please include deposit and any payments that were due prior to the time of your registration.

Can I get my money back if I decide not to go?

Any payments you have made are subject to forfeiture if you back out. CVHS encourages you to check into **trip** insurance to recoup your investment in the event of accident or illness.

When is the deadline to register?

Registrations will be accepted through May 1, unless we reach our trip capacity of 40 travelers prior to that date. Interested persons are encouraged to register *asap!*

How can I find out more?

Check out our website at www.cvhistoricalsociety.org to download registration form and full itinerary. E-mail questions to: president@cvhistoricalsociety.org or call (706) 645-6702 and leave message.

Read more about this wonderful Alabama Anniversary Tour in the Trip Itinerary on the following page.

TRIP ITINERARY FOR CVHS 2019 ALABAMA ANNIVERSARY TOUR*

ALL times are listed as CENTRAL TIME ZONE

SATURDAY, JUNE 22 We'll depart Cobb Memorial Archives in Valley, Alabama** at 8:00 am for **Huntsville**, aboard our Capital Trailways' deluxe motorcoach. After lunch, we'll visit the site where it all began, the 1819 Alabama State Convention at **Constitution Village**. A guided walking tour follows of Alabama's largest antebellum historic district, **Twickenham**, plus a tour of Alabama's oldest house museum, the **1819 Weeden House**. After checking into the new *Hampton Inn at Providence Village*, you'll discover a variety of excellent restaurants within easy walking distance in Huntsville's trendiest new neighborhood!

SUNDAY, JUNE 23 Off to the **U.S. Space and Rocket Center**, Alabama's #1 tourist attraction! With more than 1,500 artifacts from space exploration, you'll see one of only three Saturn 5 rockets on display in the world! Plus, world-class hands-on interactive exhibits and space travel simulators. After lunch, we'll visit **Sloss Furnace** and learn how **Birmingham's** legendary steel industry began. Next, we'll stop by the city's **Civil Rights Institute**, that pays tribute to the legacy of those men, women, and children who stood against segregation and helped pave the way for civil rights for all. After dinner at **Dreamland BBQ** and check-in at *Hampton Inn* in **Tuscaloosa**, we'll enjoy an optional evening tour of the **University of Alabama**, featuring historical highlights of the campus.

MONDAY, JUNE 24 After visiting the site of the **Old State Capitol**, we'll head south through the **Black Belt** to **Selma**, where we'll visit one of Alabama's most famous antebellum homes, **Sturdivant Hall**. We'll learn Selma's history as we explore historic downtown, including a walk across the famed **Edmund Pettis Bridge**. Following lunch we'll visit the lost capitals of Cahaba at **Old Cahaba Archaeological Park** and **St. Stephens**, Alabama's territorial capital. After check-in at the historic *Malaga Inn* in downtown **Mobile**, a variety of restaurants within easy walking distance await.

TUESDAY, JUNE 25 Oui, oui! We'll begin our day learning about the French colonists who founded Old Mobile as we tour the **Fort of Colonial Mobile** and the **Museum of Mobile**. On **Dauphin Island** we'll explore

the Battle of Mobile Bay at historic **Fort Gaines**, then cross the bay via ferry to continue this Civil War saga at **Fort Morgan**. After a drive up the East Bay and dinner in Fairhope, we'll check-in the *Hilton Garden Inn* in Daphne for the night.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26 On our final day, we head for the state capital in **Montgomery**. We'll visit Troy State University's **Rosa Parks Museum** as well as the **First White House of the Confederacy**. At the **State Capitol**, we'll see the beautiful Rotunda, its ceiling filled with larger than life murals depicting Alabama's historical highlights, the historic chamber where the Confederate States of America was organized, and the bronze star where Jefferson Davis was sworn in as President. Our tour will conclude, appropriately enough, at the highly-acclaimed **Museum of Alabama** in the Alabama State Archives, a must-see for every Alabamian. We will return to Valley, at approximately 5:00 pm.

Program Notes: Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society has been active in historic preservation since our founding in 1953. For many years our organization has been a member of the Alabama Historical Association. This tour will be our 5th consecutive motor coach tour. Our travelers are not only from Alabama, but also represent Georgia, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and even Wisconsin. We are proud that most of our travelers have been on two or three of our previous excursions, a testament to the high quality of our programs and attention to detail for our guests' maximum enjoyment!

Proceeds from these tours benefit historic preservation efforts in our region of the state.

Be sure to visit our website for trip details and registration form. For questions, please email president@cvhistoricalsociety.org or call (706) 645-6702 and leave message.

*CVHS reserves the right to make changes and/or substitutions to the above itinerary as needed. In such cases, a revised copy will replace the former along with the date of the revision.

** Cobb Memorial Archives is part of the Chambers County Bradshaw Library at 3419 20th Avenue (aka U.S. Highway 29), Valley, Alabama 36854. From Interstate 85, take Exit 79, turn right (south) and proceed roughly one mile. The library is located approximately 20 minutes from Opelika.



COIN PURSE AND LIBERTY HEAD DOLLAR

One of the more fascinating items in our vault collection is a tiny black leather coin purse. Upon opening the metal clasp, one finds inside an 1851 Liberty Head one dollar coin of solid gold.

The following information is taken directly from coinvalues.com: “Liberty Head gold dollars, designed by James B. Longacre, are the smallest coin that the U.S. Mint has ever produced. In fact, they measure just 13 mm in diameter – compare that to a modern U.S. dime, which has a diameter of 17.9 mm! What’s more, a \$1 gold coin weighs in at a mere 1.672 grams – less than a penny, which has just 1/100th the face value. While these tiny dollar coins may actually be worth more than their weight in gold (the bullion value of these coins is quite small, and these coins are valued higher due to their numismatic worth), they can be had more cheaply than some of the larger gold coins of a newer vintage.”

The website reports that there were over 3.3 million of these 1851 gold coin minted (at Philadelphia), and its current market value is \$250. Not that CVHS is interesting in selling! At this point we’ve yet to discover who placed this heirloom in our vault or why. So, a mystery remains of the tiny black purse with its solitary treasure piece, perhaps even more compelling than the tiny gold coin itself!

■



Top: Coin purse, tooled leather and metal

Middle: Liberty Head coin, showing back and front sides

Bottom: size relationship of both items as compared to a common modern-day coin, the U.S. quarter

THE JAMES RAY KUYKENDAHL AWARD OF 2003: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In late August CVHS was contacted by the Alabama Historical Association(AHA) which requested information for an article to be written by former President AHA, Mrs. Gayle Thomas. CVHS, which received AHA recognition in 2003 for its work to preserve and interpret local history, was asked to report on its major efforts in carrying out its mission since 2003. Mrs. Thomas would be receiving reports from various local historical organizations and writing the report to be published as an article in the *Alabama Review*. Below is our summation of significant efforts in the past 15 years as we would explain our selves to persons who might not know about our area and CVHS.

At its Annual Conference in 2003, the Alabama Historical Association presented that year's James Ray Kuykendahl Award to The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society (CVHS). The Alabama Historical Association makes the James Ray Kuykendahl Award each year to recognize the initiative and performance of a local historical society in preserving and promoting the public knowledge of local history. The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society was recognized for the award because of its fifty years of exemplary efforts to preserve, conserve local documents and artifacts and to interpret local history through the publishing of 21 monographs and a quarterly newsletter promoting the study of local history and quarterly public presentations on local history.

The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Association, founded in 1953 by community leaders and local historians and genealogists, initiated a program of study and education about the history in the region of Chambers County in Alabama and Troup and Harris Counties in Georgia. Quarterly public meetings were held for membership and the general public to hear presentations on studies in local history prepared by

members, local historians, and academicians. The members of CVHS began a vigorous effort to find and collect local historical books, papers and artifacts important to the preserving and documenting life in the region of three county areas of the Chattahoochee Valley. Initially the collection of preserved materials was conserved, saved, stored in the homes of the members of the Society. The initiatives of The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society promoted the establishment of the Cobb Memorial Archives in 1976 at the same time The H. Grady Bradshaw Chambers County Library was built. Various foundations and community organizations provided the funds to construct and equip the library and archives building with the county government pledging to provide annually the operational funding. The collections of historical materials and artifacts kept in the homes of Society members were now deposited into the new archives for professional management. The Society has maintained an effort to promote the collection and the services of The Cobb Archives, under the administration of the Bradshaw

Library, and assist financially with purchases of equipment, books, subscriptions and services as the availability of its resources permitted.

Since receiving the Kuykendahl Award in 2003, The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society has continued its mission seeking to preserve and promote the history and heritage of Chambers County, Alabama, West Point, Georgia, and the associated Chattahoochee Valley area through the following functions:

- **Publishing Monographs:** CVHS, in the first fifty years of its history stimulated much local historical research and authorship. Prior to 2003 CVHS published 21 volumes written and prepared by its membership. The authors gave their research and writing freely to benefit the

**THE CHATTAHOOCHEE
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organization. After sales income offset printing costs, public sales provided a modest income flow. Members also published other works on local history at their expense for personal income. Since 2003 CVHS has published or reprinted six monographs. An additional monograph prepared and edited by CVHS members took a time-consuming year in preparation where more than 1,500 pre-1945 photographic images were scanned from collections of area citizens to be considered for the Arcadia Publishing Company, *Images of Chambers County*, which was published in 2009 using fewer than 250 images. The work to produce this publication was a joint venture between CVHS and The Chambers County Museum. Again, all the work was volunteer in order that maximum sales revenue would benefit the two local history organizations.

- **Publishing Quarterly Newsletter:** In 2007 CVHS decided to upgrade the quality of the paper and print in the newsletter to afford the best reproduction of historical images in possession of members, CVHS and The Cobb Archives. *The VOICE* ran a series of articles over seven years publishing information and images of Chambers County people, schools, churches, cemeteries commercial buildings and homes. The pattern was set where all articles were now expected to be accompanied by quality historical images.

While acknowledging that expressions of vision and creativity are always at the mercy of resources, the CVHS Board since 2003 has repeatedly declared the priority for best service to the membership and to the public to be a well-prepared quarterly publication including a descriptive or contextual article about local history. CVHS has kept its dues low as possible to insure the greatest opportunity for all citizens to belong to the Society and to receive the newsletter. Originally cost for the newsletter was borne as a gift from the Cobb family which provided the funds to build the Archives rooms in the Library building. Today eighty percent of the income from dues and gifts support the production of the newsletter which is circulated to approximately 150 member addresses each year

and additionally at no cost to more than thirty public libraries, archives, university libraries, state historical agencies and county government. In 2014 CVHS decided to incorporate color as appropriate into the newsletter images. Membership has been generous with gifts to accommodate increasing production costs of *The VOICE*.

- **Financial Assistance for Local Projects since 2003:** A priority of assistance from CVHS has been the Cobb Archives and shared needs with the Bradshaw Library. Since 2003 CVHS has provided funds for monographs, a microfilm storage cabinet, matching funds for digital recording of WWII Veterans' histories, assistance in purchasing ceiling mounted digital projector, rewiring location for microfilm reader, and \$7,000 on the cost of an \$11,000 state of the art digital microfilm reader and printer. CVHS also maintains subscriptions of a number of memberships in historical organizations, such as the Alabama Historical Association, for the Cobb Archives which is under the administration of the Bradshaw Library.

An additional priority for local assistance is to assist local preservation and conservation efforts. Board members have helped local organizations in grant preparation to seek funds for preservation of historic buildings. CVHS has given financial assistance to The Ft. Tyler Association to replace weathered signage at local Fort Tyler, to the local New Hope Rosenwald Foundation for building preservation, to the Fredonia Community House (1919 School Building) for preservation, and to the conservation of the Civil War Fort Tyler Graves in the Pinewood Cemetery in West Point, Georgia. CVHS has also made a number of awards to support the erection of historical markers in Chambers County in recent years. CVHS annually is a patron of the Fredonia Heritage Day where members in historical dress promote the publications of the Society, the services of The Cobb Memorial Archives and in general simply meet the public to chat up history and answer questions about past people and the locale.

► **Documentation of Endangered Historical Sites:** The first example of this function was an activity initiated by a group of concerned citizens who convened wishing to re-stimulate county government to conserve a storm damaged decaying log dwelling which had been long recognized as a fort for local settlers in Cusseta, Chambers County, during the last Indian uprising in 1836. It was decided that a well-regarded graduate student completing a definitive study on the Indian removal from east Alabama should be hired to document the building and that CVHS would supervise the graduate student whose research services would be paid from funds given to CVHS by the local legislator. The legislator was unable to fulfil this agreement and CVHS by default managed and paid for the study. Other consultants from Alabama and Tennessee were engaged who reviewed the site and research pro bono. The documentation effort could not substantiate the folklore of the use of the log building. No information about the building as a fort existed in the federal, state and other records which were descriptive of the location in 1836. The County Commissioners deeded the property back to the family that had deeded the property to the county almost 40 years ago. The young consultant Christopher D. Haverman, received The James F. Sulzby Award for his excellent monograph, *Rivers of Sand: Creek Indian Emigration, Relocation, and Ethnic Cleansing in the American South*, which was derived from the research he was conducting when he also was seeking to document the existence and function of our Fort Cusseta.

A second example of CVHS efforts to document and protect a historical site is described in the General Membership Meeting of January 2011, where Dr. Harry Hopkins, Jacksonville State University, spoke on the subject of Stone Structure Sites of Alabama and Southeastern United States. CVHS with the good cooperation of the land owner involved and a couple score of volunteers, to include academic archeologist, federal archeologist, folklore representatives of Indian tribes, state historical agency historians and others to remove leaf litter, reveal and review a site of two thousand or more year old

ceremonial stone walls and mounds in a most remote and uncultivated location in Chambers County. The site is now well registered and has been the subject of presentations at archeological meetings in the southeast. The hidden site is awaiting more professional study. The site is not publicized and has spiritual and actual rattle snake guardians! CVHS was responsible for the manner in which this site was identified, professionally recognized and protected during the documentation.

A third example of CVHS efforts to protect a local historical site culminated in 2016 in an unsuccessful effort to arouse public and political attention to save from destruction the original 1880's core brick building of the Langdale Textile Mill which could be repurposed as a textile museum and public meeting spaces. All four public general membership meetings of 2016 were dedicated to presenting the history of the textile industry and the five valley communities in the 150th anniversary of the founding of the textile industry at this location on the Chattahoochee River. The Board of CVHS endorsed President Malinda Powers to speak in public and political forums and advocate a plan for saving the oldest and most iconographic original brick building and repurposing that building. Articles about the important heritage of textile manufacturing in this region of the Chattahoochee Valley were published in the local press. Public and political will did not rise to support saving any portion of the historical building. The deconstruction of the manufacturing sites continued.

► **Tours of Discovery and Study:** In 2015 CVHS inaugurated a program of study tours by bus. For obvious reasons of public interest in family research, it was decided that the first tours would be to Civil War Battlefields and Cemeteries where descendants of CVHS members fought, fell, died and were possibly buried. The fourth tour took place in 2018 and all the major battles of the upper South have been studied with CVHS members being the tour study leaders. Tours were planned to allow any income beyond the required out-lay for a

minimal guaranteed enrollment to be banked to initiate future discovery activities for the public and to fund activities as have been outlined above, such as income from two years was given to Bradshaw Library to assist in purchasing a digital microfilm reader and printer. Plans are underway for the 2019 Tour to study historical sites within Alabama and promote the State in its anniversary year. Our upcoming bus trip, “ALABAMA History Anniversary Tour”, has just received official endorsement from the Alabama Bicentennial Commission (Alabama 200). We’ll be able to incorporate their logo on our publicity, and we’ll also be able to upload our trip info on their official calendar of events.

- **Cemetery Preservation:** Old cemetery identification and preservation is a never-ending challenge for county historical societies. Many misadventures and horror stories abound across the state describing how these sacred sites have been destroyed by machinery with and without malevolent intent. In 2004 CVHS convened a workshop with the support of professionals from the Alabama Historical Commission, Georgia Department of Resources and the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance to introduce the latest issues and consideration to persons interested in cemetery preservation. CVHS needed to know what were the best practices

and what were the legal issues involved in preservation. The workshop was well subscribed and the information provided by the presenters became the baseline for best practices future advice from CVHS to interested parties. CVHS had maintained an effort to record on paper the interments in county cemeteries until the advent of Findagrave. CVHS now recognizes members and individuals who have assumed the mission to load all graves, and many times additional genealogical information, to Findagrave. A number of cemeteries in the county have all interments in the Findagrave database.

In conclusion this evaluation of past performance has not taken into consideration the disastrous impact of the total disappearance of the massive textile industry from our county and the depressed economy which resulted. Community social and economic needs persist. Economies wax and wane; times always change. Manufacturing, automotive related, promises to stimulate prosperity which may provide more support for libraries, archives, etc. Hopefully the guardianship of our history will also benefit from these waxing times of foreign investment but one does wonder. Generational depth in economic and community leadership no longer exists with the new industries. Our efforts are humble. Sustaining local historical society efforts is always a challenge! ■

CORRECTION OF ERROR - IMAGE IDENTIFICATION (SPRING ISSUE 2018)

Archives Report, page 5, The VOICE, VOLUME XXXIX No. 1

Left image, which appeared in the issue, is **Thomas Beverly Royston** from the Double Head Community, North Chambers County. He departed N.Y, N.Y. 31 July 1918 on the ship Walmer Castle for France as member of 321st Infantry, 81st Division, US Army.

Right image is **John Grady Dixon**, Private, Headquarters Troop, 82th Division from the Bethlehem Community near Riverview. Grady is doubled armed with the 1903 Springfield rifle and also a left draw service revolver whose grip may be seen in this image.



Thomas Beverly Royston



John Grady Dixon

IN MEMORIAM, MIRIAM SYLER 1930-2018

Born April 15, 1930, Miriam was the third child of John Kenneth Kirkwood and Sarah Augusta Spratling. Miriam's mother, the first female graduate to earn a degree in Agriculture at Alabama Polytechnic Institute, died days after her birth. Reared by her maternal grandparents north of Gold Hill, she inherited rich stories about her family's pioneer past and honed a love of literature and history. A native of this area, she witnessed much history before she began preserving it. Before her retirement in 2017, she spent thirty-one years at Cobb Memorial Archives.



Miriam Syler

Growing up in the family home, Roamer's Roost, she was surrounded by exotic mementos and furnishings acquired from the travels of family men like her grandfather, Dr. Leckinski Ware Spratling, a specialist in tropical diseases, who served in the United States Navy in far flung places such as Japan, the Philippines, and Panama. During World War I, he commanded the naval hospital in Norfolk, Virginia.

Miriam attended the local school at Sturkie until it closed, then transferred to LaFayette. A child of

the Great Depression, she came of age during World War II. As a high school student, she began keeping a scrapbook about young soldiers from and around LaFayette who were in service. Her life-long refrain "Use it up, wear it out, make do or do without" was crystallized during these lean times.

After graduating from LaFayette High School, she attended Huntingdon College in Montgomery where she was active in the Scribblers Club for young writers and the Canterbury Club for Episcopal students. She worked as a youth director for the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama before marrying a "yankee" from Northern Alabama. Howard Syler, a World War II veteran and graduate of API, began an interior design career with Schnedl-Jones Furniture in West Point. The couple settled in West Point, where they raised two children. Later in life, the arrival of two granddaughters delighted them.

In 1986, she began working at Cobb Memorial Archives. Although she was in her mid-fifties, she discovered her life's calling. For more than three decades, she provided invaluable services to countless researchers. Her extensive knowledge of local history, and especially local families, helped

piece together genealogies. Her charming personality turned archives patrons into lifelong friends.

Miriam Syler knew where the bodies were buried. Any researcher at Cobb Memorial Archives could attest to her unparalleled ability to surmise a local family's genealogy. She could quickly assemble branches of family trees, along with suggestions about which cemeteries to visit and which distant kinfolk to call for more details.

An archives is more than just an assemblage of files, books, and documents. It's a collection of stories about the beginnings and endings of real people. Miriam was resource material more important than any source in print. Miriam dutifully clipped, collected, and cared for the documentary heritage of Chambers County and in doing so, she left us an enduring legacy.

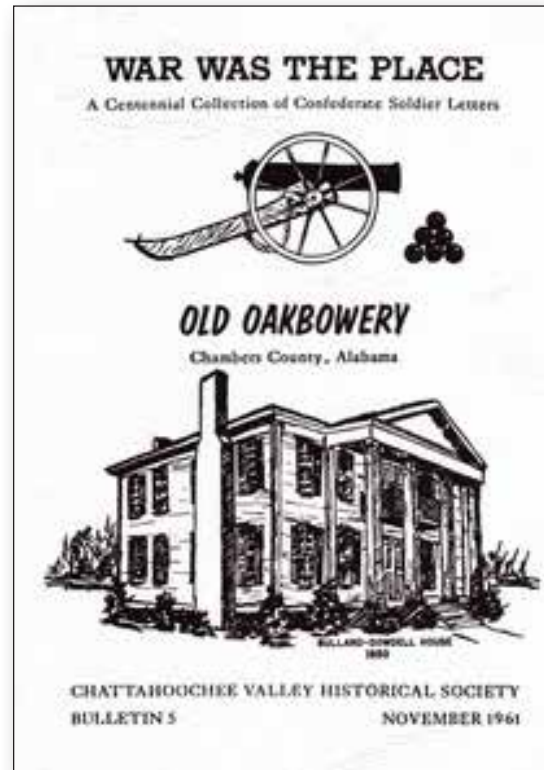
Should you ever uncover a family puzzle in the Miriam Kirkwood Syler Research Room at Cobb Memorial Archives, take a moment to remember the lady first helped everyone find their ancestors in this place.





If you enjoyed reading excerpts of the Confederate diary of Pvt. Louis Merz in our previous issue, you'll most likely enjoy one of our best sellers, *War Was the Place: A Centennial Collection of Confederate Soldier Letters, Old Oakbowery*. Over a dozen of Louis Merz's Civil War letters are published, as well as a very emotional letter from his best friend, Ansel Sterne, who could not reach his fallen comrade before the enemy had overtaken the ground.

Go to our on-line bookstore at www.cvhistoricalsociety.org to order.
\$10 plus postage.



Follow the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society on Facebook and on our website: WWW.CVHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG



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