

THE VOICE

of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and
Cobb Memorial Archives

HISTORY CLOSE TO HOME: THE MUSEUM OF EAST ALABAMA

Are you a resident of East Alabama? Did you grow up there? If not, have you ever visited the region? It is a region with a rather complex history and a richness of stories and other trappings of days long gone. Fortunately, though, there is a place where this is made easier (and wonderfully presentable). This place, of course, is the Museum of East Alabama in Opelika, AL.

Please join us for a discussion on this wonderful museum on Sunday, April 23rd, 2023, at 2:00 PM CDT (3:00 PM EDT) for our quarterly presentation. This virtual presentation (once again on Zoom) will feature the director of the museum. Our presenter, Mr. Glenn Buxton, has been the official director of the Museum of East Alabama since he retired from a long broadcasting career in 2006. He will be discussing the various exhibits and services that the Museum of East Alabama currently provides.

The Museum of East Alabama was first open to the public in 1989. It occupies the site of the former Clement Hotel on 121 South St. in downtown Opelika, AL. It is open to the public, free of charge, from 10 AM to 4 PM Tuesdays through Fridays. The museum has an impressive collection of artifacts and exhibits on display detailing the history of this region from pre-Columbian times up until the present day.

The Museum currently has two main exhibition halls, the one adjacent to the main room being reserved for the history of Alabama's Native peoples. These exhibits cover a wide

variety of historical periods of Native history in Alabama. Its oldest (and most well-known) artifact on display is a canoe used by the "Eastern Woodland" culture in 3500 B.C. The canoe was originally unearthed in northwestern Florida, but used by the same Eastern Woodland peoples who inhabited what is now East Alabama during the same time period. They have many other artifacts from both ancient and more "recent" Native inhabitants of Alabama. These artifacts include projectile artifacts ("arrowheads"), pottery, jewelry and ceremonial wear, and more. The most "recent" Native exhibit is a pair of Muscogee women's legging (a ceremonial outfit) going back to the early 1840s.

There are many other interesting exhibits on display, such as several clothing exhibits spanning back 200 years. One of the more interesting of these is a collection of wedding gowns worn by women of the region throughout various decades of the 20th century (from the 1920s up until the 1950s). There are some very interesting "war-time" exhibits covering the "spoils of war" from World War II. One of the most notable are the collection of Samurai swords (formerly owned by officers in the Japanese Imperial Forces) confiscated by U.S. servicemen native to Lee County during the war. As one can also probably imagine, there are many exhibits focusing on the Industrial history of this



Photo from Museum of East Alabama website (eastalabama.org)

region (including machinery and other exhibits from the various cotton mills that once employed the majority of East Alabama's work force). The most recent display is an exhibit on the unfortunate history of lynchings and extrajudicial killings that African-Americans often endured in Alabama from the Reconstruction era up until the late 20th century. Part of the larger "remembrance project" based out of Montgomery, this exhibit was largely curated and produced by the History Department at Auburn University.

Join us for this very informative and interesting presentation on April 23rd. To attend this virtual meeting email ccpowers02@gmail.com prior to 12:00 PM noon (EDT) on Sunday, April 23rd. You will then be sent the Zoom link with instructions regarding how to join the meeting.

THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING

Sunday, April 23rd, 2023

3:00 p.m. EDT (2:00 CDT)

VIRTUAL MEETING

Portrait of Sheriff Pat Garrett, before 1909, from Wikimedia Commons

PAT GARRETT

5—Day in June 1850 when Patrick Floyd Jarvis Garrett was born near Cusseta, Chambers County, Alabama, to John Lumpkin and Elizabeth Ann Jarvis Garrett.

1852—Year that Pat's grandfather, Patrick Jarvis, died. His will mentioned Pat: "I give and bequeath to my grandson, Patrick F J Garrett, my rifle gun and saddle and bridle." The grandfather is buried at Cusseta Cemetery.

30,000—Dollars of debt that the family was left in after Pat's father died in 1868. Pat's mother had died the previous year. This prompted Pat, at the age of 18, to leave Louisiana, where the family had settled when he was 3 years old, and head west.

15—The number of days Pat's first wife, Juanita Martinez, lived after their wedding day. He later married Apolonia Gutierrez and they had eight children.

320—Votes Pat Garrett received when he was elected as Sheriff of Lincoln County, New Mexico.

2—Shots fired by Pat on the night of July 14, 1881. He fired from the shadows of a dark bedroom. One of the shots struck and killed a 21-year-old man named William Henry Bonney, Jr., better known as Billy the Kid, who was reputed to have killed 21 men. This event sealed Pat Garrett's place in American history.

1902—Year Pat Garrett became one of three men known as President Theodore Roosevelt's "White House Gunfighters." He was nominated by the President in 1901 and held the position of Collector of Customs in El Paso until 1906. The other two "Gunfighters" were Bat Masterson and Ben Daniels.

29—Day in February 1908 when Pat was ambushed and killed. At least five men have been accused of the murder, but the crime was never solved.

6.5—Feet in length of the body of Pat Garrett. His body would not fit in a standard coffin and a special one had to be shipped from El Paso.

34—Number of actors who have played Chambers County's native son in film and on television. The list includes James Coburn and Ethan Hawke.

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

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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 newspaper, 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.

THE VTN, JIGGS, AND JIM *by James Patterson*

Daniel Evans, the president and publisher of the *Valley Times-News*, recently announced his decision to discontinue the syndicated comics page. In the VTN's February 18 edition, Evans said that "publishing a comics page has become cost prohibitive."

Like all of us, cartoonists demand to be paid for their work. It is their right. It is the right of the VTN's publisher to end the comics page.

I was raised in Fairfax in the 1960s. The VTN comics page helped me learn to read. As a youth, I read the VTN's comics page regularly.

For adventure, I liked *The Phantom* by Lee Falk (born 1911- died 1999). For comedy, I liked *Blondie* by Chic Young (b.1901- d.1973), *Snuffy Smith* by Fred Laswell (b.1916-d.2001), and *Beetle Bailey* by Mort Walker (b.1923-d.2018). I have several signed drawings from Walker. Dean Young, Chic's son, sent my granddaughter a *Blondie* for her first birthday.

John Rose, who now draws *Barney Google*, sent my granddaughter a birthday card including a message from *Snuffy Smith*. Gloria Henry, star of the 1960s TV series "*Dennis the Menace*" signed several *Dennis the Menace* comic strips.

My favorite comic strip in the VTN was *Bringing Up Father*, also known as *Maggie and Jiggs*, originated by George McManus (1884-1954).

Maggie and Jiggs made their first appearance in newspapers in 1913. I first read the strip in the 1960s.

King Features Syndicate continued to distribute *Bringing Up Father* under other writers until 2000.

Archives of the strip, including the McManus originals, can be seen daily at ComicsKingdom.com

Bringing Up Father followed the lives of Maggie and Jiggs. Maggie was tall; Jiggs was short, very fat, and a cigar smoker. Jiggs was a lazy fellow with no skills who suddenly becomes fabulously rich. My recollection is Jiggs won the Irish Sweepstakes.

McManus introduced the concept of *nouveau riche* to American audiences. The term is widely used to distinguish the "new rich" from the "old rich." The term has been widely used in comedy including TV's *The Beverly Hillbillies* and many other TV programs, films, and stage plays. The *nouveau riche* and high society are, you might say, unsuited for each other. McManus, short and stout, said he was the inspiration for Jiggs.

In a 2022 book *American Comics: A History*, published by Norton, author Jeremy Dauber wrote that on the 25th anniversary of *Bringing Up Father*, "McManus received a congressional dinner and telegrams from Supreme Court justices and cabinet members."

Late in his life, McManus estimated *Bringing Up Father* and the related merchandise including films, radio, comic books, and other merchandise, earned him \$12 million dollars. Fans of the strip included Walt Disney, silent screen actor Buster Keaton, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the 1940s, McManus drew several strips with Jiggs meeting with FDR in Washington, D.C.



U.S. Postal Service postage-stamp honoring "*Bringing Up Father*".

In the comic strip, Jiggs reported to his office only to promptly leave for important meetings at Dinty Moore's saloon to drink beer, gamble, smoke cigars, and eat corned beef and cabbage. Irishman Jiggs, thanks to Irishman McManus, helped popularize corned beef and cabbage in the U.S.

By the 1990s, it was difficult to find *Maggie and Jiggs* in U.S. newspapers. While living in Mexico City in the 1990s, I found *Maggie and Jiggs* in several Spanish-language newspapers, including Mexico City's *Excelsior* and Monterey's *El Norte*.

In Mexico, *Maggie and Jiggs* were *Ramona and Pancho*. Still, their *nouveau riche* lives were popular with Mexican readers struggling in a difficult

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THE VTN, JIGGS, AND JIM -

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economy. I mailed some of the Spanish-language comic strips to my dad in Valley with my English translations.

In 1995, the U.S. Postal Service issued a First-Class postage-stamp honoring Maggie, Jiggs, their daughter, and McManus, too.

Pre-pandemic, I traveled to New York for a business meeting in Manhattan. I took the subway to The Bronx to pay my respects to George McManus, who died in 1954.

McManus characteristically signed his comic strips with long lines under his “G,” and “M.” In my photo sitting at McManus’s resting place at Forest Lawn Cemetery, The Bronx, you can see his characteristic signature with long lines under his “G” and “M” at the top of the door the “M” about 1/4 way down from the top of the gate.

At the McManus resting place, I thought about the American Dream, Maggie and Jiggs, my late dad, and the VT-N. I also thought of corned beef and cabbage.



James E. Patterson is a writer and speaker in Washington, D.C. He is pictured here at the grave of George McManus

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PAST TIMES

WE GATHERED ROSES AND POET LILIES *by Ron Williams*

“Away in the night—when the candle was burning low, a strange, new sound struck terror to my soul. I heard it coming over the river bridge, coming, coming on and on, forever it seemed to me. It was like a long terror that was coming, coming nearer to me...”

Flora Baker was just a girl on Easter Sunday 1865, the day that the war reached West Point, Georgia; the day that war was, in a sense, dumped in the lap of the Baker family.

More than 45 years later, in October 1911, Miss Baker sat down to tell the story of that spring day in the form of a letter to Mrs. Ed Cumbee, then historian for the West Point Chapter “United Daughters of the Confederacy.” This letter has been preserved in Lindsey’s *The Reason for the Tears*.

Flora was the daughter of Judge A. B. and Elizabeth Shields Baker, who lived one mile from the old river bridge on the LaGrange Road. Flora, one of three daughters, was a shy child, so shy that she had never spoken to any man but her father, the man that she considered the most courtly gentleman she ever knew.

The events of that April day are ironic. The Civil War had been over for a week. The South had lost. Abraham Lincoln was dead in Washington, D.C. Yet, hundreds of miles away this drama was unfolding.

The battle of West Point started at 11:00 o’clock in the morning, and the women were ushered to safety on the east side of the river. Many spent those anxious hours at the Baker home. Fort Tyler fell that evening at 5:00, and the order was issued that anyone on the east side who lived on the west side should go home before the bridges were burned.

“There was a great clatter among them, all trying to get off!!! And Father was trying to help them all,” remembered Baker, “when they heard a great clatter of horses coming down the hill with six horsemen.”

Unknown to the group, these six men had been near the engine house, where the northern soldiers were destroying the trains and the Yankees had fired into them, wounding one, just thirty minutes earlier.

Continued Baker, “Five dashed past, one rained his horse to the gate. They called on him to come on. He answered, ‘Boy, I

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WE GATHERED ROSES AND POET LILIES - *continued from previous page*

can go no further,' and my father caught him on his arms, as he fell from his horse. One of his comrades came back, and they took him into the house, and put him to bed. Then his comrade took their horses and hurried away. Father sent for doctors and called for Aunt Mary to take care of the soldier."

Earlier that morning Judge Baker had sent their horses and provisions out of harm's way. He had to leave home to retrieve these, and he took one daughter with him, leaving the family assured that help was on the way, but the doctors could not come.

Mrs. Baker was ill and could not tend to the soldier, whose name they would learn was McKnight. The duty fell to shy Flora.

"I tried to hurry," she related, "but my feet would stick to the floor, and my fingers trembled so I could not fasten my apron...I looked at my mother appealingly. She knew what it cost me—she said tenderly, 'Stay by the soldier, and take good care of him?... I closed the door softly, hurried across the hall, and stood by the soldier's bed. I did not look at him, but when I could open my mouth, I said, 'Sir, Mother is sick and cannot come to you, and it will be late before Father comes home. But mother says that Aunt Mary and I can take care of you. If, you please, Sir?'"

"After a moment, he thanked me, so softly—I felt that he was a gentleman, like my father. I raised my eyes quickly and looked at him. I was not afraid anymore."

The soldier suffered all that night. He did not sleep, and Flora, with a newfound courage, stayed with him through the night.

It was then that the new sound, the sound that struck terror in her very soul, began in the distance.

"I wondered if he could hear," she trembled. "Just then, it struck the hilltop, and started down! I gave a leap, clutched the bedpost and quivered! The soldier opened his eyes and said quietly, 'It is the moving of the army.' God save me! May I never hear another."

Morning came with a sigh of relief. The soldier seemed brighter, and Flora ran to pick berries and they enjoyed a breakfast of wafers with the fresh berries and cream.

Not long after, Yankees raided the Baker home, stealing food from the smokehouse, the table, dining room, and even drinking the milk from the churn. Suddenly, a little redheaded Yankee came in and drove them all out with a sword. He promised a guard for the house and a doctor for the soldier.

She wrote, "Soon the good doctor came in to see the soldier and gave him a careful examination... he said that he was very sorry, that he could do nothing for the soldier. He had been mortally wounded... she could have a letter written for his mother."

Tinsley Winston, a neighbor, was sent for and she prepared the letter, and sent Flora up to bed, where she slept through the evening and night, only to find a sad gathering in the morning. The soldier had died.

"He looked very brave and very handsome, and his face was full of peace. Father had a box and coffin made. But they could not decide where to bury our soldier. Brother was buried a mile above on the LaGrange Road—but we could not take him there. We had no conveyance of any kind left. Mother was not willing for him to be buried in the woods by himself. Our yard and garden were on the roadside. Yankees were constantly passing, which made it unsafe for the young men, so Father had gone to ask permission to bury him at the Winston graveyard... we gathered roses and poet lilies to put in his coffin."

Then, we followed him to his grave, a sad little company, Father, the two young men, Abraham, Mammy, Fannie, Little John, and I. Not many Winstons were dead then and their enclosure was small. We buried him on the outside. Miss Tinsley read the burial service and asked Old Uncle Dave (he was a preacher) to say a short prayer. I do not remember any other service at the grave."

Several days later his comrades came back to check on their friend, and learning of his death informed his parents in New Orleans.

That winter the family came and took their son back home to be buried. When they opened the box, the sweet smell of roses and poet lilies, flowers that had been blooming on that fateful April morning, filled the air.



FOB JAMES DRIVE *by Wayne Clark*

Over a half century ago, a four-lane connector road was built from Highway 29 in Langdale to what's now Exit 77 on I-85. It provided residents of the Langdale, Fairfax and River View communities a better way to get to the Interstate than going all the way up Highway 29 to Exit 79 between Shawmut and Lanett. It didn't have a formal name at the time, just a Chambers County Road designation.

In the fall of 1978, a Langdale pastor had an idea for that permanent name. He wanted to call it Fob James Drive after a man who had just been elected governor of Alabama.

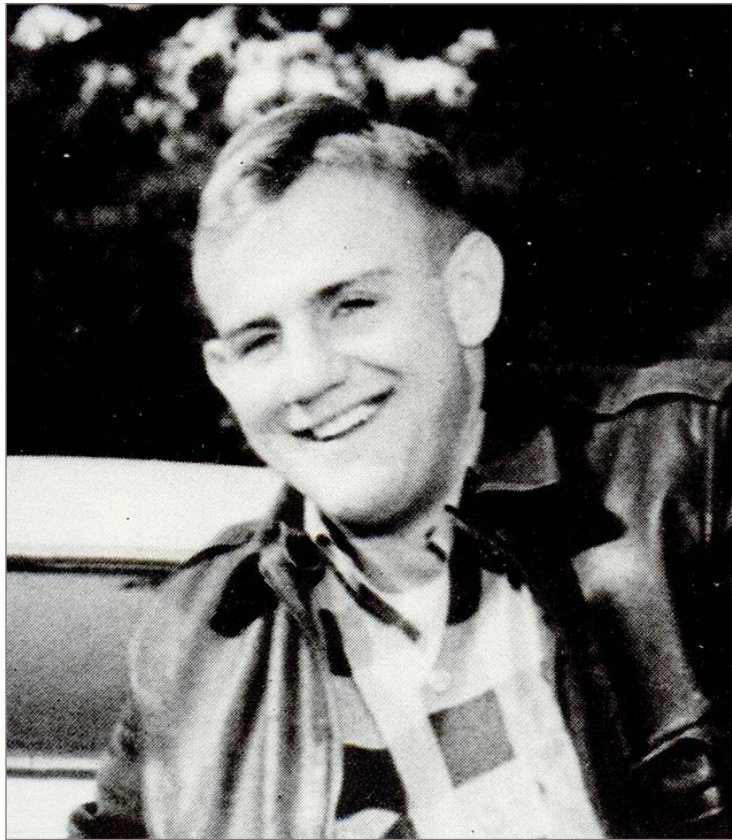
At the Monday, November 27th meeting of the Chambers County Commission, Rev. Brown O'Quinn of the Langdale First United Methodist Church asked the commissioners to consider naming that new four-lane connector Fob James Drive, after the state's governor-elect. Fob James Jr. was the first person born in Chambers County to be elected governor in Alabama. The commissioners liked the idea and approved it in a unanimous vote.

O'Quinn told the commissioners that giving the road this name would send a strong message to the youth of Chambers County. "It will show that any young person in the county can make it anywhere in this state, even to the governor's office," he said.

Fob James Jr. was elected governor as a Democrat on November 7, 1978. He had defeated Alabama Attorney General Bill Baxley in the Democratic Primary and Republican Guy Hunt in the General Election. In that November election, James got more than 90 percent of the vote in Chambers County, where he was born, and 88 percent of the vote in Lee County, where he lived.

James was born September 15, 1934, in Lanett. His dad, Fob Sr., was a football coach at Lanett High and later worked as a recreation director for West Point Manufacturing Company. Fob grew up in the family home on South 4th Street across from a teacher's dormitory and a short walk away from the present site of W.O. Lance Elementary School.

Fob's dad had played college football at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (Auburn). One of his teammates was Bob Harding, who has a school named after him in Valley.



Fob James, former Governor of Alabama, while a student at Auburn in 1956.

Like his dad, Fob Jr. was an excellent athlete. He finished high school at Baylor Prep in Chattanooga and signed a scholarship to Auburn, his dad's alma mater. Playing for legendary Coach Ralph "Shug" Jordan, Fob Jr. was an All American running back in 1955. He received a degree in civil engineering at Auburn and played pro football in Canada with the Montreal Alouettes before joining the U.S. Army and serving as a lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. In 1962 he founded Diversified Products (DP) in Opelika. His company manufactured athletic equipment, specializing in a unique kind of barbell

filled with a patented product known as Orbatron. In addition to the physical fitness equipment, DP also manufactured ballasts and counterweights for farming, industry, and trucking.

At one time, Diversified Products employed over 1,500 people in Opelika, Los Angeles and Toronto and had sales of approximately \$1 billion a year. James served as the company CEO until 1977, when DP was purchased by the Liggett Group.

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FOB JAMES DRIVE - *continued from previous page*

One of James' sons, Gregory, died of cystic fibrosis at age eight. The James family was very supportive of efforts to treat children suffering from this disease and to find a cure for it. The Gregory Fleming James Cystic Fibrosis Research Center at UAB is named in honor of the James child.

In 1994, James was elected governor a second time, this time as a Republican. He defeated incumbent Democrat Jim Folsom Jr. by a narrow margin to become the first candidate in state history to serve one term as governor as a Democrat and one term as a Republican.

In recent years, Fob and wife Bobbie have been living in the Miami, Florida area. Fob has been staying in an independent living apartment near the nursing facility where his wife has been residing. The couple had four sons, Gregory, who died in the 1960s; Tim, a businessman who has run for governor several times; Fob III, a trial lawyer, and Patrick.

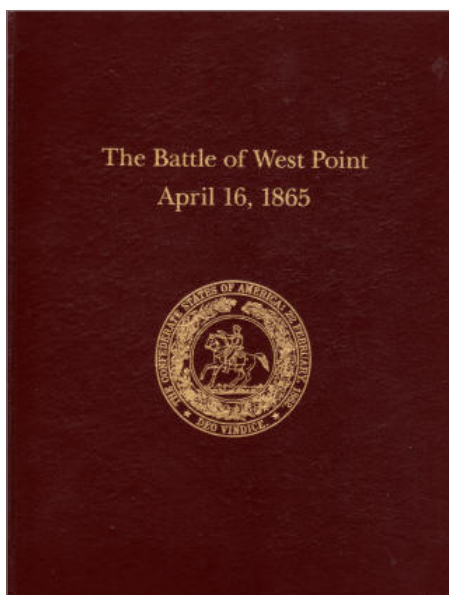
A year-and-a-half after Fob James Drive was named, the mill villages of Shawmut, Langdale, Fairfax and River View came together to form the new city of Valley, and Fob James Drive became an important road in the heart of a new city. A city hall complex and a city park were built off its east end, and a host of businesses are now along both sides of the road closer to the Interstate. There's a strip mall along Fob James

near its intersection with Fairfax Bypass. Included here are Milano's, Papa John's and Winging' It. King Auto Corner is on Fob James as is the WestPoint Home Mill Store, an office for the Chattahoochee Federal Credit Union, Kenny Knox Tire, Valley Collision, Keith's Auto & Transmission, Caldwell's Automotive, offices for Capital City Bank, AuburnBank and Tri-County Insurance, a skating rink and the headquarters for East Alabama Water, Sewer, Fire & EMS. It's also home to a medical pavilion, the Valley campus of Southern Union State Community College and ACTS Academy. A row of medical offices on Fob James Drive includes Valley Direct Primary Care, Enhabit Home Health & Hospice, Shelly Orthodontics and an office for Dr. Ivan Slavich. A new road is being built to connect Fob James with 55th Street. A site off Fob James Drive commonly called the Burney property is a prime site for future growth. Just off the Interstate are some convenience stores, a Waffle House, a Zaxby's, a Church's Chicken and a Quality Inn.

The 12-acre site between Valley Collision and Burney Road is the possible location for a future shopping center.

A whole lot of progress and growth has come to this four-lane connector road from the day it was named Fob James Drive back in 1978.

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AVAILABLE FROM OUR BOOKSTORE

THE BATTLE OF WEST POINT: APRIL 16, 1865

Includes eyewitness accounts of the battle, essays, anniversary commemorations, photographs, archaeology, and rebuilding of the fort. Eleanor D. Scott and Carl Summers, Jr., editors. Copyright 1997. CVHS Publication No. 20.

Hardback \$25

Visit our website.

<https://cvhistoricalsociety.org/category/bookstore/>

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jason Williams

With warmer weather and the spring season upon us, it is a great time to explore all the wonderful historical structures and learn about the history of our local area. For others, Genealogy and Family History may be your primary interest.

From a young age, I would listen to my Great Aunt, Ethel Lane, as she would share stories of how our Burgess, Clemons/Clements, Griggs, Harper, Hatchett, Hughes, Jennings, Lane, Poer, Smith and Thornton ancestors migrated into West Georgia and East Alabama in the early to mid-1800s. They were part of a mass migration that many families in the South eventually made from the farm to town in order to seek more stable employment as the railroads and textile mills were established.

In each edition of *The VOICE*, we try to share information and stories that appeal to everyone. However, we are always looking for interesting articles and facts to include in each issue so please consider a submission for inclusion in a future



The CVHS wants to hear from you.

*Photo from Wikimedia Commons, "No Room for Rumors"
NARA- 515079 (Cropped) 1941-1945*

edition. If you have not renewed your membership for 2023, please complete the enclosed renewal form and mail your payment in as soon as possible.



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