

# Washington County Historical Society

129 Jones Street, Sandersville, Georgia 31082, Phone 912-552-6965

## NEWSLETTER

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April 1999

Chartered 1976

### President's message...

Our recognition as the "Affiliate Chapter of the Year" by the Georgia Historical Society honored many volunteer lovers of history and place in Washington County. I hope that every single person who supports us feels that his/her effort sustained our achievements. Pat yourself on the back even if you can only pay dues! It takes funds to preserve. Thank you to every one of you for what you do.

By 2000, I predict we will be proud ex-hosts of a Georgia Trust Ramble, headquartered in the Brown House Museum, with Genealogists in the Old Jail, headed for a National Register of Commercial Sandersville, with collections of African-American Heritage underway, better documented on March to the Sea stories and sites, improved cemetery appearances... perhaps more.

An effort is underway to get a state-funded tourism trail through our county linking Choate structures and railroads.

We won honor partly because of the diversity of our efforts to save our history. It's not over! We have tons of irons in the fire; we need lots of different talent and time donations to pull them off. Ideas and suggestions are welcome, too. A variety of opportunity is among us!

Jo Cummings

### Members to meet Monday, April 26

Our quarterly membership meeting is Monday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the Civic Room of Washington EMC.

There will be some surprises, reports from committees, news about the Georgia Trust Ramble and more about the opening of the Brown House.

Plan to come and bring a friend.

### Georgia Trust to Ramble in Washington County Oct. 15-16

Plans for the Georgia Trust For Historic Preservation Ramble are coming together. This event will be held the week after the Kaolin Festival when we are already looking our best. About 300 visitors from around the state will be in town for this weekend event which will begin Friday, October 15.

After registration, Ramblers will be free to visit the Choate exhibit, the Old City Cemetery, Elder Community Center, the Brown House, the Old Jail Museum, and other buildings, especially those on the National Register. Dinner Friday night will be at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jordan.

Saturday, the group will meet at the Tennille Baptist Church for a program on Charles E. Choate, the history of the area and a short presentation on the kaolin industry. Visitors will then be invited to tour the church, several business structures in the area, the Tennille Women's Club, Choate buildings, and then to travel to Warthen to visit churches and buildings there. Some of the Sandersville buildings will also be open on Saturday too, Lunch will be a box lunch served in the area of the Women's Clubhouse and the Tennille church.

This is a tremendous honor for this group to come here and we hope to show them a really good time.

The Society and the chamber of commerce are co-sponsoring the Ramble. Coordinating the event are Nancy Tarbutton, Jo Cummings and Mary Alice Jordan and they will need lots and lots of help. Please put it on your calendar!

### In Memory of Gene Doyle Brantley

Historical Society members and neighbors and friends of Gene Brantley were saddened to learn that he had been killed in an automobile accident returning from a fishing trip with his son and grandson on April 8. His son Jeff was held overnight at the hospital. His grandson spent several days in the hospital, but he will recover.

Gene was a charter member of the Historical Society, had served as president and continued to be an extremely active member. Currently he was chairman of the Society Genealogy Committee.

He was especially proud of the recent publication of the book he co-authored with two others, "Descendants of Colby Smith" and he had just presented copies to the public library and the Genealogy Committee collection.

He is survived by his wife Ruth, four children, four stepchildren, five siblings and 14 grandchildren.

### Civil War Trails Committee

by Johnny Wilbanks

We have passed the first major milestone for the Civil War Trails project. Unless vetoed by Gov. Barnes, the General Assembly has approved funding to begin "Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trails." Our work will really begin after July 1, when funds are available. I am planning a meeting for May 6 to review actions.

I am working with Charlie Geiger with the Civil War Commission, Tonya Marynell of the Georgia Horse Council and the 49th Georgia on developing a real "Sherman's March to the Sea" trail. We are applying to be one of 12 National Millennium Trails (NMT). Applications will be reviewed for:

1. How it furthers the mission of the White House Millennium Council to "honor the past and imagine the future" of America.
2. How it reflects significant, defining aspects of America's heritage and culture.
3. How it provides tangible, widespread benefits for future generations.
4. How it brings together individuals, groups and organizations, both public and private, in collaborative support of the trail.

A NMT will receive a trail marker bearing the White House Millennium Council logo and will be promoted as an important part of the National Millennium Celebration.

The DOT is playing a major role in this operation. The federal government has appropriated \$4 million for millennium projects.

This event would involve all counties that Sherman and his troops marched through and we hope each county could develop activities surrounding the "March to the Sea."

### Mark your calendar...

- Monday, April 26 - membership meeting
- Monday, July 12 - board meeting
- Monday, July 26 - membership meeting
- Sunday, October 3 - Kaolin Festival Cemetery Ramble
- Monday, October 12 - board meeting
- Monday, October 26 - membership meeting
- Friday-Saturday, October 15-16 - Georgia Trust Ramble here!

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## Brown House & Museum

by Mary Alice Jordan

Treasures recently given to the Museum by Dr. William Rawlings, Sr. include a program from Indian Hill School - 1893, a program from Farmers Academy - 1888, a report card signed by Ella Mitchell - 1891, a calendar for 1928, advertising for McCool Telegraph and Business School of Sandersville and 18 Round Table Club yearbooks.

As you do your spring cleaning, remember the Museum may have use of those old treasures you may find.

We welcome Mrs. Greene (Margaret) Jones as a volunteer hostess.

We hope to have a new roof on the Old Jail Museum building soon, as promised by the County Commissioners. Repair work will also be needed because of rain damage.

At long last the plaster work at the Brown House is complete, including the decorative cornice in the parlor. Van Dollar returned to work on Monday, April 5, and is painting ceilings and sanding floors. The wide pine boards will refinish beautifully.

The completion date is still uncertain, but we will be needing volunteer hosts or hostesses. If you would like to work in this wonderful house, please let me know. We will need you in possibly 2-3 months.

If you have not made a contribution to this restoration this year, now would be a good time. Funds are needed to finish this beautiful house.

## Tennille Museum

Tennille city officials are getting closer to starting the restoration of the Tennille Freight Depot. They will be wanting items illustrating Tennille history, railroad history and perhaps a kaolin exhibit. If you have any thing which might illustrate these stories, call Tennille city hall and leave your phone number.

The Society is helping them assemble this exhibit. Search your attics and basements. We need your help!

## African American Heritage

When this committee met Feb. 19, each member received Family Pedigree charts to complete themselves and to distribute to family and friends.

A copy of the 1957 Lincoln-Douglas League Souvenir Book was displayed which showed the number of businesses in the black community at that time.

The Society has received correspondence from Charles Elder (from Massachusetts) and his sister June Cazort (from New Jersey) expressing gratitude that their grandfather is still respected in this community.

A list of names was compiled of members from each community in the area and they will be contacted to help with the committee's work.

Members were asked to contact families of World War II veterans and various church members for histories. Plans were also made to begin compiling names and dates from tombstones.

## "Memories of Yesteryear"

Do you remember when there was no indoor plumbing, when wash day meant scrub boards and lye soap and everyone went to school in a one-room schoolhouse?

If you do, we want to hear from you! The Genealogy Committee is compiling a book on the memories of yesteryear. Suggestions for stories include: candle making, soap making, quilting, making butter, canning or preserving, syrup making, basket weaving, wash day, cooking or making rugs.

Other ideas are: home remedies, herbal remedies, medical folklore, stories about doctors making home visits and their fees, ice cream socials and church socials, swimming holes, Brooks Springs, school days, subjects studied, games children played.

We also want stories about farming, antique farm machinery and tools, hog killing, meat curing and harvest time. Can you tell about ice houses, out houses, root cellars, spring houses and smoke houses.

Submissions for the book may include stories, anecdotes or information as well as unique recipes. Stories can be serious or funny. Send your stories to Genealogy Committee, Attn: Amanda Logue, P.O. Box 6088

## Tidbits

A copy of the book, "Samuel Thomas McAfee, Man of Courage" by Susan Myrick has been given to the Genealogy Room by David McAfee, 14 Lance Court, Columbus, GA 31909.

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Danee Miller Crouch has become a life member of the Society in tribute to her great grandparents who lived in Washington County in the early 1800s. She also wants to support the Society's efforts. Her address: 304 Happy Trail, San Antonio, TX 78231.

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The Society is planning to assemble a mini-library of history books which include a reference to Washington County, Sandersville, Tennille, Oconee or any other community in the county. Those with indexes are obviously the most helpful, but others can certainly be made useful. If you are considering discarding any books you have which would fit this criteria, please call Brenda Hollingsworth at (912) 552-3035.

### 1999-2000 Officers & Committee Chairs

President - Jo Cummings  
Vice-President/Membership - Ray Hollingsworth  
Secretary - Martha Armstrong  
Treasurer - Katye McCoy  
Directors: Marilyn Daniel, Carolyn Fordham, Gwen Hall,  
Allen Hodges, Gladys Spight, Tommy Walker  
African-American Heritage - Katie Smith Poole  
Brown House & Museum - Mary Alice Jordan  
Cemetery - Glenda Ruth Johnson  
Genealogy - Gene Brantley (deceased) & Amanda Logue  
Historic Sites & Districts - Adam Martin  
Hospitality - Gladys Spight  
Living History - We Need You!  
March to the Sea - Johnny Wilbanks  
Program - Deborah Rhodes  
Publicity/Newsletter - Brenda Hollingsworth