

Elizabeth Pritchard Newsom Memorial Room

This room is dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Newsom, and is furnished with many of her personal possessions, including her rocking chair and her typewriter. This great lady, known to all as “Miss Elizabeth,” was the driving force behind the genealogy committee, and she spent much of her life working to preserve the history of our county. This room reflects many of her important contributions to our historic community, not the least of which was her genealogical research. Among the treasures stored here are more than 13,000 index cards filled with information on more than 9,000 individuals. This collection of information on Washington County and her citizens forms the basis of our genealogical library, and reveals just what an important role Miss Elizabeth played in preserving the roots of our ancestors.



We are a committee of the Washington
County Historical Society



Publications for Sale: A Partial Listing

- *African Americans of Washington County, Georgia; From Colonial Times Through Reconstruction*
- *Cotton to Kaolin: A History of Washington County, Georgia 1784-1989*
- *Washington County, Georgia, Tombstone Inscriptions*
- *Washington County, GA Estate Papers 1829-1903*
- *Historical Survey of Sherman's March to the Sea and the Flight of Jefferson Davis Through Washington County, Georgia*
- *History & Memories of the Old Jail House*
- *Washington County, Georgia Marriage Records Books A-M 1828-1938*

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Washington County Genealogy Research Center and Old Jail Museum



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**Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
2pm-5pm
Saturday 10am-3pm**

Open by appointment on request

The Old Jail Museum

When viewed from its front facade, this two-story building presents itself as a pleasant Victorian town house. Built of brick and stone, the front section was a home for the sheriffs of Washington County and their families from 1891 until 1975. Inside, visitors will find many period architectural elements including Italianate arched windows, carved mantels surrounding coal burning



fireplaces, and a staircase with its beautifully carved newel posts and railings. In 1901 the sheriff's daughter, Essie English, ran down these stairs after her clothing caught fire. She would die two weeks later from her burns. If you listen closely, you might just hear her footfalls on these same stairs, for it is said that Essie is still with us. Perhaps you may find yourself in conversation with this friendly spirit.

The rear section of the building once housed the prisoners and ne'er-do-wells of Washington County. Visitors will find themselves within the very cells these prisoners inhabited so many years ago. The jail, built by the Pauley Jail Company of St. Louis, Missouri, was said to be escape-proof.



The iron jail cells with their still-functioning locking mechanisms.

Also on display throughout the building are many historic artifacts including a handmade plantation desk, the antique desk once used by the sheriff's of Washington County, and our newest acquisition, a drum used in the Civil War. The drum is pictured here in a photograph from 1916 with its original owner, Thomas Harris Sparks, who was a drummer boy in the Confederate Army. He was just 14 years old at the start of the war.



Genealogy Research Center

The Genealogy Research Center's library contains a wealth of information on all aspects of Washington County's history. Some of this information includes books and files on family histories, cemetery information, census and marriage records, obituaries, and of course, copies of Miss Elizabeth's archive of index cards. All of these sources and many more, are available to researchers.



Whether you visit us in person, telephone, or just email an inquiry, our knowledgeable staff will always be on hand to assist your journey through the past.