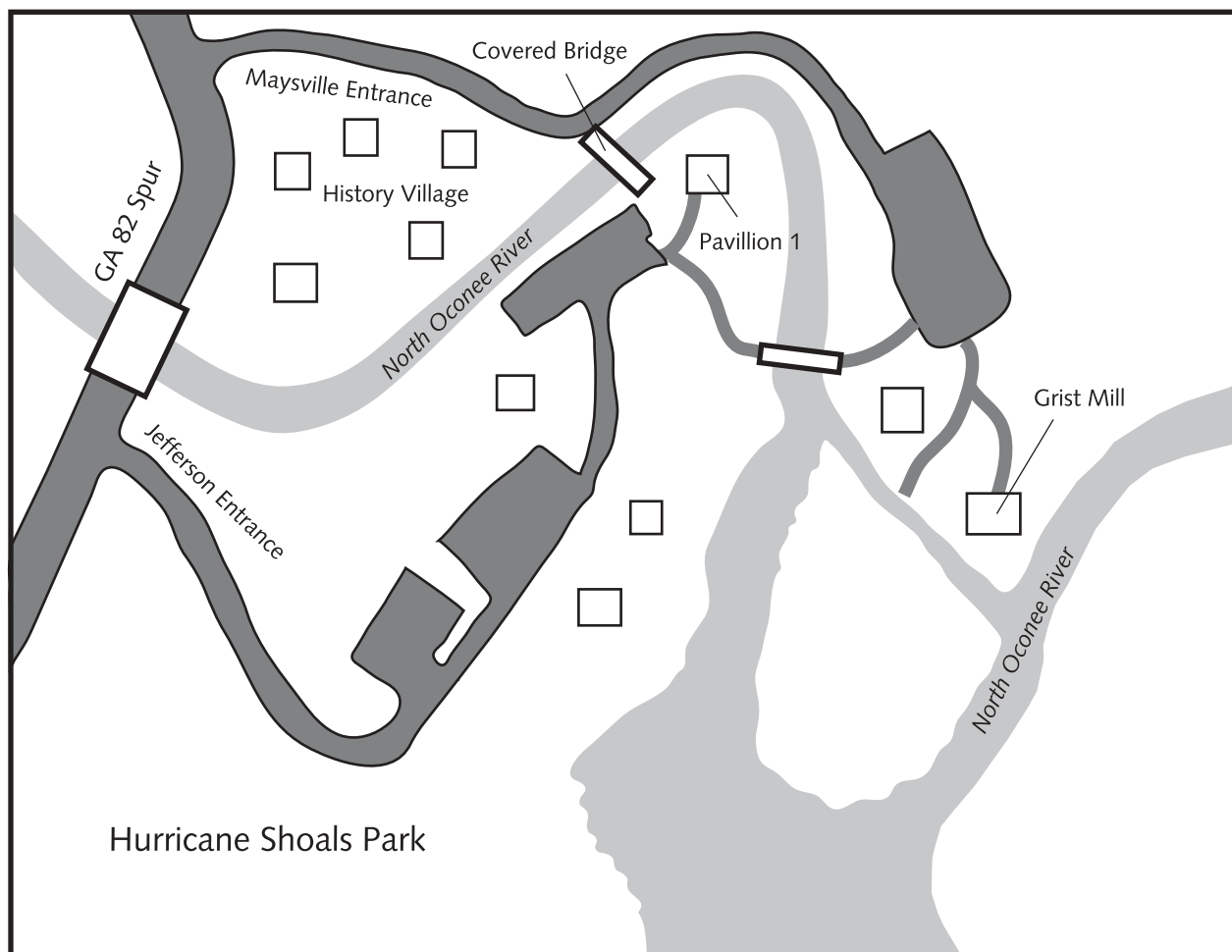


# *Jackson County Historical Society News*

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may 1 2003



The Jackson County Historical Society Picnic will be held at Hurricane Shoals Park, Pavilion 1 on Thursday, May 1, at 6:30 p.m. All members and their families are invited to attend. There will be a tour of the reconstructed Covered Bridge and the History Village.

Directions: Take Highway I-85 to the Dry Pond Exit #140. Turn east on 82 to 82 spur, turn left and travel over I-85 to the first park entrance. Park in the last parking area.

**JCHS OFFICERS 2002-2003**

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**OBITUARIES**

*excerpt from the Jackson Herald November 20, 1875*

A very sad dispensation has been visited on the family of Mr. Elijah Veal, who lives in Randolph's District, Jackson County. Four of Mr. Veal's children died but recently, in a very short time of each other of pneumonia. Three of them, two males and one female, had, but a comparatively little while previous, been married—all in the same family—that of Mr. Puckett, of the same neighborhood, we suppose.

(editor's note) Mr. Elijah Albright Veal, of Madison County, Georgia married Virginia Elizabeth Kidd daughter of James Kidd of Hall County, on March 1, 1838. Mr. Veal died November 22, 1900.

*excerpt from the Jackson Herald February 19, 1925*

Mrs. Virginia Veal, 102 years old, died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. T. T. Cooper, near here, Monday...

Mrs. Veal was born September 29, 1822, and was almost one hundred and three years old at her death.

Funeral services were conducted and interment held in Zion cemetery Wednesday morning at 11'oclock...

**GRANDMA VEAL SPEAKS HER MIND ON HER 102ND BIRTHDAY**

*excerpt from Atlanta Journal Constitution 1924 by Peggy Mitchell (Margaret Mitchell, author of "Gone With The Wind")*

Grandma Virginia Elizabeth Veal, of Braselton, GA., celebrated her 102nd birthday on September 27, by speaking her mind on bobbed hair, short skirts, fast cars, trousers for women and other "abominations."

Grandma Veal's birthday party, given at the home of her "baby girl," Mrs. T. T. Cooper, age 59 years, of Braselton, was very different from a similar celebration held by Mrs. Myra Able, 99-years-old flapper, of Ashtabula, Ohio, who observed the day by bobbing her hair.

Five generations of descendants gathered at the family reunion, listened to Grandma Veal's opinions on votes, trousers and short hair for women.

Mrs. Veal, who has reached the age of 102 years with all faculties unimpaired save a slight deafness, presents a remarkable picture of a strong mind dominating a worn-out, century-old body. Her memory for exact dates would shame a history professor, her strength of will and clearness of mind despite her 102 years, are those of a middle-aged woman.

**Lots of Pep**

Grandma Veal is a slight, tiny figure, yet erect of carriage. Her small face is wrinkled and faintly yellow, but marked with strength and determination. Her nose is curved strong and clear cut, the nose of a pioneer woman who feared no hardships and did her full share of work the days before modern conveniences were dreamed of. Her eyes, undimmed by age, gleam vivariously over her spectacles and her small hands are constantly in motion as she talks. Grandma Veal, to quote a modern phrase that she scorns, "has lots of pep."

The mother of fourteen children, of whom five are now living, Mrs. Veal has 62 grandchildren, 179 great-grandchildren and 87 great-great-grandchildren, that she knows of.

"Of course there may be a lot more that I don't know about." she admitted, her eyes sparkling youthfully as she looked around the crowded little house at the relatives who had gathered to celebrate her birth-

day. "Everytime I hear of a new one I put it down and I try to keep track of the families. But there are so many of them."

When told of the ninety-nine-year-old flapper of Ohio who celebrated her birthday by bobbing her hair, Grandma was scandalized. No woman ought to bob her hair, whether she was nineteen or a hundred and nineteen, she stated in uncompromising accents.

### **Bobbed Hair, Derby Hats and Votes**

"If I bobbed my hair," said Grandma Veal, vigorously combing up her back locks with a tortoiseshell comb, "I'd expect my folks to get me a derby hat and a pair of pants and make me vote! Vote—just that! The women who bob their hair, VOTE!"

"There was utter scorn in her tone as she retied her soft black silk kerchief about her white hair. The bobbed-haired grandchildren and great-grandchildren ranged about the walls, ducked their shingled heads guiltily and grinned at grandma as her piercing old eyes sought them out. The matronly daughters and granddaughters who had obviously exercised their prerogative of suffrage, smiled and clucked reprovingly at Grandma.

"I didn't want to see suffrage come, Mamma." mildly said Mrs. J. D. Deaton, one of Mrs. Veal's daughters, now living at Flowery Branch," but now it's here, I think we women ought to vote for the right things."

"Woman's place is in the home," stated Grandma with finality, waving back the suffrage members of her family. "It's her place to stay there and make a home and raise the children and let the man do the bossing and voting. No good can come of women aping men, running around the country, riding in fast cars, cutting their hair, voting and wearing pants, PANTS!" Her tone breathed the anathema at "pants" as it had done at "votes!"

"Now, Grandma, knickers aren't pants!"

"Knickers are pants and pants on a woman are a scandal and a disgrace," said Grandma with such decision that one felt that the Supreme Court of the United States had made a ruling, "and it's against the Good Book," she finished, triumphantly. That settled the question and the young and irreverent generation was quelled.

As the old lady talked, the automobiles and wagons filled with cousins, in-laws, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and continued to arrive, for despite the driving rain and the knee-deep mud the entire family wanted to make Grandma's birthday party a success. Soon the small house was filled to overflowing, the men, crowded out, ranged themselves on benches on the porch where the rain dripped from the eaves; little boys, some barefoot and in overalls, some uncomfortable in imprisoning stiff collars, overran the wet yard despite the rain, and prowled into the barn; the women crowded the small rooms, grouped about Grandma, who presided in the semi-circle of smiling relatives like a queen on a throne; small girls, red haired, black-haired, curly and bobbed, ringed around the old lady, with fingers in mouths and curious eyes wide as she talked on about old times, and old customs, pausing every now and then to stroke with a thin, yellowed hand the soft hair of some great-grandchild.

### **Old Paths Are Lost**

"The old paths are all lost." said she, her voice rising shrill above the patter of the rain on the roof. "No one follows the old paths now, no one loves the old meetings. I've been going to meetings all my life and they aren't like they used to be."

"Now Mamma, there's lots of good meetings now."

The old lady paused in fairness. "Yes, I guess there are good meetings now days but the old days and old paths seem best. They always do—to old folks. But it does seem to me that there's more wickedness these days than there used to be," she reflected. "but that's because there's more folks to be wicked now than when I was young.

When I was young there were mighty few folks living around here. Of course, there weren't any railroad trains through here. My goodness, no! I remember when the first railroad came through this part of the country and how everybody came for miles around to see it. I remember one old lady shouted out loud when she saw the engine coming.

"My land, the poor thing must be tired! Just listen to how it's panting!" The old lady clapped her hands and laughed gleefully, her eyes sparkling as she looked at the five generations listening with breathless interest. "Wasn't that silly of her? But, you see, she hadn't



“People came from far and near in automobiles, buggies, spring wagons and even “prairie schooners.” The band concerts were followed with the mountainous cake with 102 candles of every color in the spectrum before her. When it was announced that everybody’s picture was a “gown of snowy whiteness” with a quaint piece of lace around the neck.” excerpt from an article written by Margaret Mitchell, who

ever seen a train before. We used to do all our traveling by mule wagon or ox cart.”

Mrs. Veal’s father owned a store near what is now Braselton and when he went to trade in Augusta, the nearest large town, he took his whole family and most of his household hoods with him, for the journey required some weeks. In those days the roads were uncertain and some times there were no roads at all. The Indians had been removed but there were still a few left on reservations and at times they were dangerous. There were also bridgeless rivers and trackless forests, and so traveling when Grandma Veal was a child was a dangerous undertaking.

“Cherokees used to come over the mountains to trade at Pappa’s store,” continued Grandma Veal. “They traded moccasins and skins for food and clothes and hung around the place, in silence, watching the white folks and grunting every now and then. The Indians around the store are about the first thing I remember—except I do remember something when I was two years old!”

“Why, Grandma.” gasped a great grand child at her knee, “can you remember a hundred years ago?”

“Of course, No trouble at all,” replied the old lady, briskly. “I remember when I was two years old that Mamma was milking the cow and I was on the other side of the fence from her. There was a crack in the fence and I kept slipping my little tin cup through into

the bucket and drinking the milk as fast as she milked it.

### When the Stars Fell

“I remember when the stars fell too, for I was older then.

“Oh, Grandma, did any stars fall smack into the front yard?” eagerly questioned the six-year-old, at her knee, pressing closer for information.

“On, no, they didn’t fall to the ground. They just fell through the elements like the shooting stars you see. It was before day that it happened. Mamma was up stirring around early like folks did then, to get things ready for the day and her moving around woke me up. I saw funny lights outside and peeped through a crack in the wall and saw the sky full of falling stars. They dropped into the elements like comets. No I wasn’t scared. It takes a lot to scare me. I watched them till the sun came up and faded them out.”

“Grandma Veal married when she was sixteen, which was not considered too young at that time. She made her own wedding dress, a gown of double woven imported Irish linen, fashioned after the quaint style of 1838, with a basque waist unbelievably small in these days of unrestrained figures, wide hoop skirts, short puffed sleeves, and neckline off the shoulders— a graceful garment that even after eighty-six years breathes the atmosphere of an older quieter day and the charm of the spirited sixteen-



owed by the singing of old-time songs and religious hymns, in which Mrs. Veal joined. Later she presided at the great birthday dinner, she would be taken, she sent for her wedding dress, which she made with her own hands when she was just “sweet sixteen.” It was a long-attended Grandma Veal’s 102d Birthday Party and is in the photograph standing, in a dark hat, behind Grandma Veal.

year-old who wore it.

In the years following her marriage, Virginia Elizabeth Veal saw, step by step, the complete industrial revolution of the world. The sewing machine, the cotton gin and the railroad impressed her as being the most remarkable inventions of all.

### Seed Picked From Cotton by Hand

“The idea of being able to separate the seeds from the cotton by machinery was hard to believe, at first,” said she. “We were so accustomed to doing it by hand. We used to give cotton parties where everybody had refreshments first and spent the evening picking the seed out of the cotton. I have some quilts now that are made of handpicked cotton. My mother made them, a hundred years ago.

“Of course, the railroad and the gin were about the most remarkable things that I’ve seen since I was a child, but because I’m born and bred a farmer, I’ll say that plenty of good bread and meat and good farms now in this state are the things that have impressed me more than any of the inventions of recent years.”

After Grandma Veal had talked at length on old days and old customs and had spoken her mind with some freedom and pungency on the modern days and ways, “Uncle Taylor” Cooper, twice her son-in-law, with whom she now makes her home, pushed his way

through the crowd of fourth-degree cousins who were making Grandma Veal’s acquaintance for the first time, and shouted above the hubbub that the dinner was ready.

### The Birthday Dinner

The old lady, scorning any more assistance than her hand on her son-in-law’s arm, walked into the kitchen and seated herself at the head of the long table. On account of the rain, the annual out-of-door barbecue that is usually the main feature of her birthday parties, had to be foregone and an indoor feast was spread. The table ran the full length of the long kitchen and was crowded to the edges with examples of the “southern cooking” that has made Georgia cooks famous the nation over.

Each family had brought its own lunch and each vied jealously with the others in having the most-tasty basket to spread before Grandma. Fried chicken predominated at the repast, with roast fresh pork and roast hen running it a close second. Pies of every description crowded the table, from succulent grape pie to lemon pie with fluffy merange billowing up lightly like tan clouds. Grandma’s own personal birthday cake, iced to snowy whiteness and studded with candles, occupied one end of the table and marshaled beside it were cakes of every color and flavor. Pickles rubbed elbows

with jars and stuffed eggs spread their golden filling wherever they could find room amid the cakes.

An opening prayer was made by W. H. Mahafney, thanking the Lord that He had permitted the beloved old lady to see another birthday with her five generations of relatives around her. Then Grandma Veal rose and asked grace, briefly and in a strong voice that carried all over the little house and did not falter as she prayed that she might be permitted to ask grace at her 103d birthday party.

### Children First

Then the numerous little great-grandchildren who had been holding themselves politely but patiently in restraint reached the table first and began the assault, unchecked by smiling parents. Castor oil could come there after, but Grandma's birthday happened but once a year and parents could afford to be indulgent!

When the children had retired to the wet porches, hands full of cake and pickles, mouths blissfully greased with fried chicken, the grown-ups gathered about the table, eating and getting acquainted. Some relatives had come from afar to this reunion. Miss Corine Roberts had traveled all the way from St. Louis, Mrs. W. C. Pirkle, from Hendrick, Okla., and the Hudgins family, from Abbeyville, Ala.

Seven southern states were represented at Grandma Veal's party and five generations of direct descendants attended, so naturally there were many questions of, "Are you cousin Will's son, or are you one of the other Coopers?" "Are you one of the Winder family, or are you all from Flowery Branch?" And many were the little children hauled from quiet corners where they were devouring chicken to be presented to strange cousins with the question, "Do you think he favors me, or his father?"

"I've got the best-looking kin-folks in the world," boasted Grandma Veal, with pardonable pride, as she looked around the room at the smiling faces. "And I guess I've got the most kin-folks of anybody around here, because if the rain hadn't come there'd have been a thousand here. Well, better luck next year." she finished philosophically.

### HURRICANE SHOALS

Early pioneers were told by Indians of a mystical forest where the Great Spirit lived. Both sides of the Econo River from Yamtrahoochee to Yamatcutah was considered a holy forest by Creeks and Cherokees in the area. Although they were at war, both tribes agreed there would be no fighting or bloodshed of any kind in this forest. The agreement included the understanding that no bird or animal was to be killed.

On April 22, 1784, explorers, Jordan White and Jacob Bankston found the Indian holy ground. At this place they killed a bear and ate it on the spot causing irritation among the Indians. They left and returned on June 20, 1785 with Dr. Henry Therrauld, Jared Cunningham and James Montgomery and established a settlement that extended upriver through the holy forest to Hurricane Shoals. The settlement included a Baptist church, schoolhouse, grist mill and iron furnace and a fort. Henry Therrauld was the first preacher and schoolteacher in the settlement.

The Iron Furnace was used during the Civil War to make cannon balls and ammunition for the Confederacy and an early cotton gin was built up river from the shoals. A covered bridge was built in 1870 and remained until it was burned by vandals in 1970.

Today the Park is a recreation area for Jackson County with pavilions, playgrounds, an amphitheater, a reconstructed Grist Mill, and the reconstructed Covered Bridge. Swimming in the Oconee River and sliding on the Spillway provide fun all summer long. The annual Art in the Park Festival is held every fall by the Tumbling Waters Society who raise funds for improvements as well as funding the History Village project. The History Village is the site of historic presentations during the Art in the Park Festival. The Church was the first building moved to the History Village in 1994 and can be leased for weddings and special events.

**PAY YOUR DUES NOW FOR 2003-2004!!!!!!**

### **Center Presbyterian Church**

The church was organized December 6, 1891. At a meeting of Presbytery in April 1898, the Churches of Center and Sandy Creek (Bethesda) consolidated under the name Sandy Creek Church, the place of worship to be at Center. A windstorm severely damaged the church building in June 1932. The Matthew, Wright, and Brown families rebuilt the church and resumed preaching September 10, 1933. The church never regained prominence in the community and on June 5, 1978 the Athens Presbytery dissolved the Center Church and its doors were closed. The church was deeded to the Jackson County Historical Society by Dwight Matthews, sole surviving Elder, on Sunday 12, 1992. The Tumbling Waters Society of Jackson County moved the building to Hurricane Shoals Park to the site of the Heritage Village in September 1993. The Church was dedicated as the Miles Wilson Matthews Chapel in 1996.

### **Harrisburg Courthouse**

The Courthouse in the Thyatira community, served as the seat of the Harrisburg District Probate Judge and was probably built in the late 1880's. It served as the polling place until 1980 and was moved to the Heritage Village in 1993.

### **Freeman Cabin**

The dogtrot log dwelling was built by Hayden Jubal David and his servant in the 1840's near Nicholson. David married Sarah Strickland and after her death Lucindia Pittman. One of their daughters, Lutitia, married Joel Freeman of Madison County. Their son Rufus Clyde Freeman lived in the cabin until his death in January 1991. In 1994, the cabin was moved to the Heritage Village.

### **Veal Cabin**

Elijah Albright Veal built the log cabin in the Cooper Community in 1832. The cabin stood high off the ground and had retractile steps that were taken up at night to prevent easy access of predators. In the 1960's it was moved to Braselton and used as a Boy Scout hut. It was moved to the Heritage Village in 1995.

### **Log Barn**

The Barn was built in the Thyatira Community in the late 1880's. It was moved to the Heritage Village in 1997.

### **Blacksmith Shed**

The shed was built in the Brockton Community in the late 1880's. It was moved from the Robert Tuck Venable Farm to the Heritage Village in 1997.

### **Corn Crib**

The structure was built by Morgan Nix in Apple Valley circa 1900. It was moved to the Village in 1998.

### **Smokehouse, Barn and Privy**

All the buildings were built circa 1900 on the Bertha Pittman Harris Freeman Farm in Galilee Community. They were moved to the Village in 2000.

### **Wood Caretaker's House**

Jesse Wood built the house circa 1800 on State Street in Commerce. A larger home was built in front of it and the smaller building became the Caretaker's home. The larger home was the birthplace of former Governor L. G. Hardman. The larger home was lost to fire, but the smaller home was protected and moved to the Village in 2002.

### **Wood Family Log Cabin**

The log cabin was the most recent building moved to the Village. Funds are being raised to reassemble it.

### **VIEW SOME OF OUR PAST NEWSLETTERS AT:**

**[ROOTSWEB.COM/~GAJACKSO/](http://ROOTSWEB.COM/~GAJACKSO/)**

An index of our history and genealogy collection at the Heritage Room of the Commerce Library is in the July 2002 issue.

## HISTORY AND GENEALOGY EXPO

Date: May 17, 1:00–4:00 P.M.

Location: Auditorium, Conference Room and Foyer of the Athens-Clarke County Library. This event is designed to acquaint people with local historical and genealogical societies, make people aware of publications from the area, meet other people with similar interests, and improve research skills by getting involved in projects. Participants will be free to roam the tables looking at books and materials and hear presentations on projects.

## REUNIONS

The McElhannon Family Reunion (descendants of Revolutionary War Soldier, John McElhannon) will be held in Winder, GA on Saturday, May 31 and Sunday, June 1, 2003. For more information contact: Ann E. McElhannon, 1330 Finch Road, Winder, GA 30680, (770) 867-5489, amcelhannon@juno.com

## NEWSLETTER

The Jackson County Historical Society News is published quarterly and mailed. Back issues can be obtained for \$2.50 each plus postage. Please send your Jackson County family connections with your dues and they will be published in the next newsletter. Newsletters can be viewed online at: [rootsweb.com/~gajackso/](http://rootsweb.com/~gajackso/)

## PAY DUES NOW!

The Jackson County Historical Society's Dues Year runs from July to July. Checks should be written to the Jackson County Historical Society and mailed to the address shown below.

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Life Member	\$100.00

## Jackson County Historical Society

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Commerce, Georgia 30529