

ETOWAH VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March/April 1995

P.O. Box 1886, Cartersville, Georgia 30120, Phone (404) 606-8862

VOLUME 15

WILLIAM TATUM WOFFORD

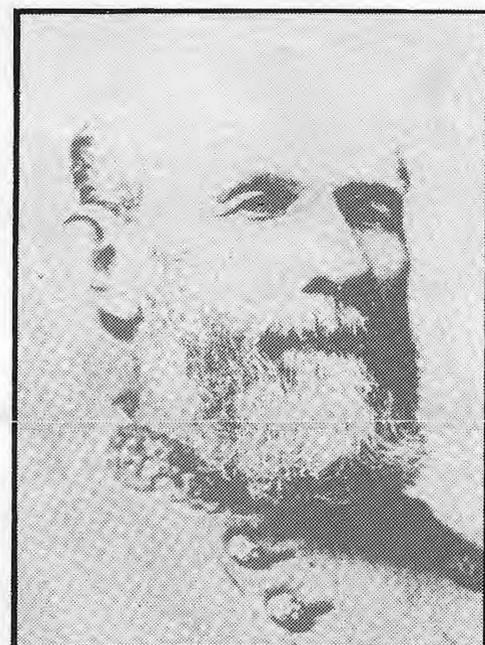
EDITOR'S NOTE: This article appeared in The News and Courant on September 8, 1887. It is the memorial read at the reunion of his regiment, the eighteenth of Georgia.

General William Tatum Wofford was born in Habersham County, Georgia, on the 28th day of June, 1824, and died at his residence near Cass Station, in Bartow County, on the 22nd of May, 1884. His ancestors were an old Virginia family. His father died when he was a mere child. He was educated at the common schools in his neighborhood, and was taught by his mother the noble traits and fine impulses which distinguished his long career. He attended a high school at Lawrenceville, and was noted for his industry, perseverance, integrity and sociability. After leaving this school he studied law at Athens, Georgia and was admitted to the bar in the year 1845, and soon thereafter located at Cassville, where he attained eminence at the bar in competition with some of the brightest legal minds of the state. In 1847, then quite a young man, he raised a company of cavalry and went to Mexico to join in the war then raging between the United States and that country. Here he distinguished himself in a skirmish with a large force of Mexican guerrillas, displaying that cool courage that so highly distinguished him in the War Between the States. His company was in a battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James E. Calhoun, of Columbus, Georgia. For his conduct in Mexico he was complimented by a public resolution of the General Assembly of Georgia in 1850. After the conclusion of a treaty of peace with Mexico, he returned to his home in Cass County, and was the next year elected to the House of Representatives from Cass County, which then

included nearly all of Gordon County. He served this and the succeeding term of the legislature with credit to himself, though one of the youngest members. In his election he received the highest vote in the county. The legislature of 1851 was distinguished for the number of brilliant and experienced men it contained.

It was probably the ablest legislative body ever assembled in the state, consisting of such men as B. H. Hill, James A. Merriwether, Francis S. Bartow, James I. Seward, Dr. W. H. Felton and many others of like character. Yet General Wofford was said at the time to be one of the most useful members of the distinguished house. He did not aspire to a seat in the next house, but was almost unanimously elected clerk, which position he filled to the satisfaction of all. He continued to practice his chosen profession, the law.

On the 16th of August, 1859, he was united in marriage in Hopedale, in Murray County, Georgia with Miss Julia A. Dwight, daughter of Dr. Samuel B. Dwight. Four daughters were born to him, the three eldest dying in infancy, the other, Miss Lela Dwight Wofford, his only living child, now lives with her mother's relatives in Murray County, a very popular, fascinating young



Picture taken from A History of Old Cassville 1833-1864.

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"Wofford" Continued

lady, and truly a worthy daughter of an illustrious sire. He was greatly opposed to secession, and his career, connected with his canvass and election as a delegate to the secession convention in 1861, is the most remarkable and illustrative of his life. He ran as an anti-seces-



W.T. Wofford's grave site in the Cassville Cemetery. He is buried next to his first wife, Julia, who died September 9, 1878. Other graves include his mother and his three eldest infant children. Gen. Wofford's epitaph reads, "A Captain of Cavalry in the war with Mexico: Colonel and General in the war between the states. Soldier, Patriot and Gentleman".

sionist. The fiery fervor of that day cannot be described. Public feeling was at a white heat. The blinding adumbration of war was over the land. Men lived in a flaming excitement. The contagious and irresistible fever of revolution, inspired by a believed wrong, was seizing a people. It was a wild time, growing wilder, and in the delirious influences men threw themselves into the rushing current with frenzied enthusiasm. Opposition, remonstrance, protest, were unavailing.

It was suggestively characteristic of General Wofford in this feverish passion that he coolly and resolutely set his head against the popular current. He opposed secession and took the field as an anti-secession candidate to the secession convention. He was a decided union man from first to last during the whole war, though fighting with conspicuous gallantry to the end of the struggle, for the South. He was elected by about one hundred majority, the county voting about 3,000.

His course in the convention was opposition to secession in any shape, but when the state, through her chosen representatives, spoke, he, as a loyal Georgian,

accepted the situation and volunteered his services in defense of his state, and no more brave or gallant officer ever led a regiment or brigade into deadly conflict.

Entering the state service at the beginning of the war as captain of a company, he was elected colonel of our regiment at Camp Brown in April, 1861. Our regiment was at that time a part of General Phillips' brigade, and was turned by Gov. Brown over to the Confederacy in August, 1861. He was placed in command of the famous Texas brigade and led through the Maryland campaign in 1862.

In January, 1863, he was commissioned Brigadier and his brigade was composed of the 16th, 18th, and 24th regiments and Phillips' and Cobb's legion. In the battle of Chancellorsville, on the 5th of May, 1863, and the second battle of Fredericksburg, 6th of May, 1863, he did conspicuous service. In the first fight his brigade was on the right of Lee's army. He saw the Federal troops moving back when Jackson struck them, and begged to be permitted to charge the enemy's flank.

At the fateful heights of Gettysburg he added to his deserved military reputation. On the third day of this fight General Longstreet sent for General Wofford and

carried him to General Lee, who questioned him closely as to the progress of the charge he had made the day before. Gen. Wofford said he believed he could have taken the heights if supported. General Longstreet asked him if he believed he could do it then. Wofford, with deep reluctance said he did not think they could be carried at all, strengthened as they must have been during the night.

General Wofford's brightest service was at the battle of the Wilderness on the 16th of May, 1864. Hill's corps was retreating. Lee's ordinance train was in danger. Longstreet went in at the double quick to help Hill. Wofford was on the right of the corps and the army. He had a narrow escape. A minie ball struck him in the breast, penetrated his overcoat, glanced upon a button and dropped into the lining of his vest. The enemy was repulsed. At this juncture, General Wofford discovered a chance to flank the enemy and applied for permission to make a charge. It was granted. It was royally made. Wofford carried his brigade like a storm, sweeping everything before it and literally uncovering Longstreet's entire front. But for Longstreet being wounded and thus

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"Wofford" Continued

being disabled from taking prompt advantage of the successful charge, it would have been followed up. For this charge General Wofford was recommended for promotion to major general.

General Longstreet, in his recommendation, said that General Wofford "was distinguished by the energy and rapidity of his attack, and the skill and gallantry which he handled his brigade." Lieutenant General Anderson endorsed: "General Wofford has constantly exhibited superior head courage and ability". General Lee endorsed that General Wofford had "always acted with boldness and judgment, displaying great zeal and promptness". Ex-Governor Herschel V. Johnson, then Confederate State senator, wrote to General Wofford: "The president esteems you very highly. Your career has impressed him very favorably toward you as a brave, energetic and skillful general, and I am proud of you as a Georgian".

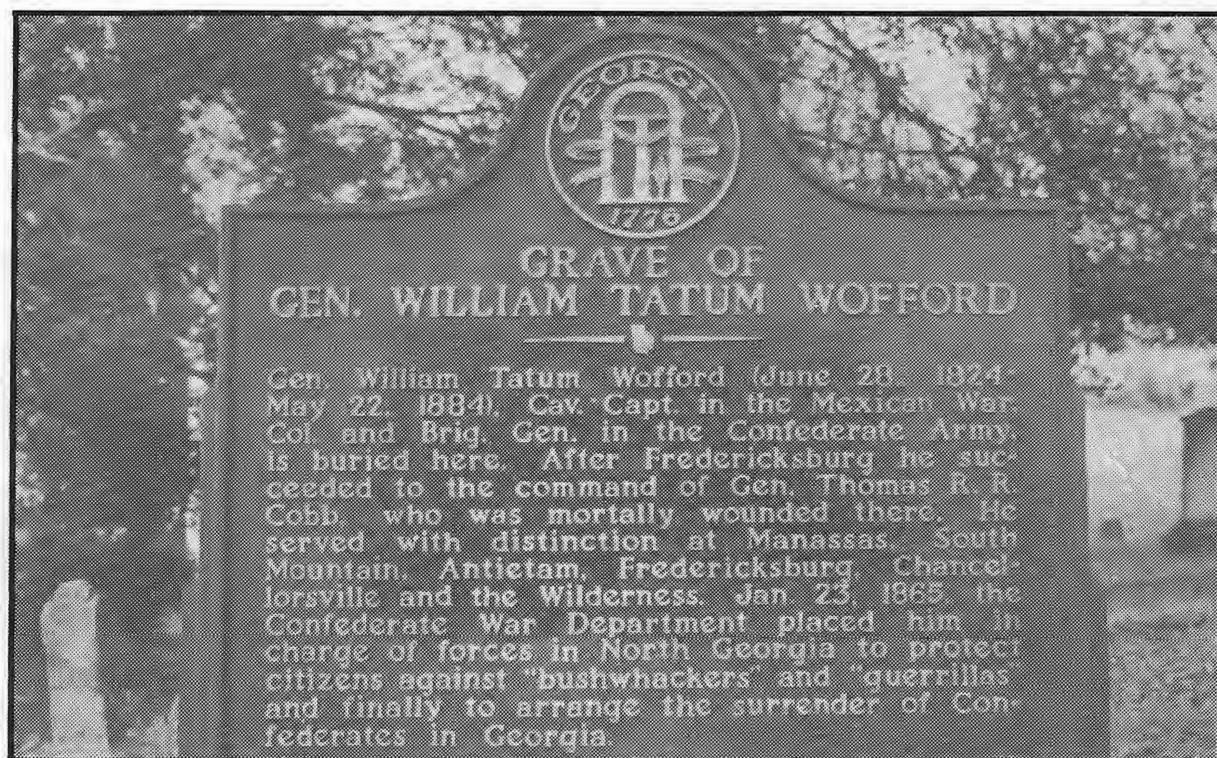
At the battle of Spotsylvania, on the eighth of May, 1864, General Wofford again had a narrow escape. He was putting a piece of artillery in position and a ball struck him, glancing one of his ribs.

On the 23rd of January, 1865, General Wofford, by the request of the authorities and people of Georgia, and by his own desire, entered upon duty as a department commander in North Georgia. He made the last surrender this side of the Mississippi at Kingston, Georgia on the twelfth of May, 1865, to General Judah, commanding federal troops at Dalton. It was through General Wofford's instrumentality, in a conference by flag of truce with General Judah, that the starving people were furnished corn by the Federal authorities.

After the surrender General Wofford asked General Thomas to loan the people 30,000 bushels of corn to feed them while making a crop. That officer promptly granted the request and the corn was distributed. General Wofford also applied to General Thomas to make an order that had been issued and let the people take and use the struggling government stock scattered over the country to help them farm. This request was granted.

General Wofford was elected to Congress in the fall of 1865 under an ordinance of the constitutional convention of that year; but none of the members from the seceded states were admitted to seats during that congress.

The only other place to which he was subsequently elected was a delegate from his senatorial district to the constitutional convention of 1877. During the deliberations of that body he made an enviable reputation by his sensible and conservative course. Had he been permitted to have his way many of the objectionable features



Georgia State historical marker at site of Wofford's grave in the Cassville Cemetery.

in our present constitution would have been eliminated from it.

On the 2nd day of October, 1880, General Wofford was united in marriage in Atlanta, Georgia, with Miss Margaret Langdon, a very estimable lady, who still survives him, and at present resides in Marietta, Georgia.

General Wofford was a very charitable man, as well as benevolent, and did more for the poor than he was really able to do, but it was his nature to disburse himself to relieve the distressed wherever he met them.

On Thursday, the 22nd of May, 1884, General Wofford quietly passed over the river. His remains were interred in the cemetery, at Cassville, by the side of his beloved wife, at 1 o'clock on Saturday. In compliance with a request of his, made some time before his death, he was buried with only a simple Christian burial, Rev. Theo. E. Smith, of the Presbyterian church, officiating, although he was a member of the Methodist church.

The large concourse of sorrowing friends that followed his remains to their last resting place testified to the tender affection and high regard in which he was held by his fellow citizens.

FEBRUARY 23rd MEETING MINUTES



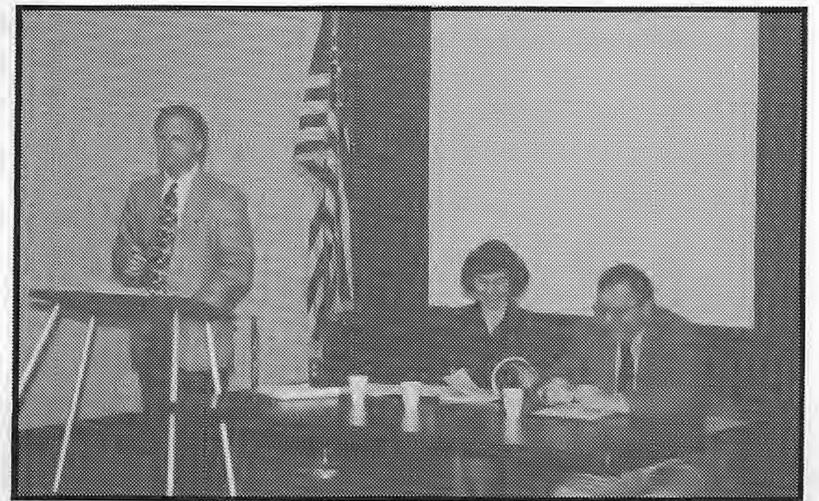
The Etowah Valley Historical Society's membership meeting was held at the Cartersville-Bartow County Library on Thursday, February 23, 1995 at 7:00 p.m.

President Larry Gregory welcomed members and guests. He also commended Guy and Linda Parmenter and Susan Taylor on the publication of the society's newsletter.

Guy Parmenter spoke of the success of the EVHS office in the 1903 Bartow County Historical Courthouse. The

office is open from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, and from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. He asked for anyone desiring to volunteer their time to help keep the office open to please let him know. Due to the heavy volume of people doing research,

he expressed the need for monetary donations as well. Even though a copy machine and microfilm have been purchased, more micro readers are needed.



The Preservation Committee has scheduled a tour of Newnan for Saturday, April 22, from ten to five o'clock. Members who are interested in participating should contact a committee member.

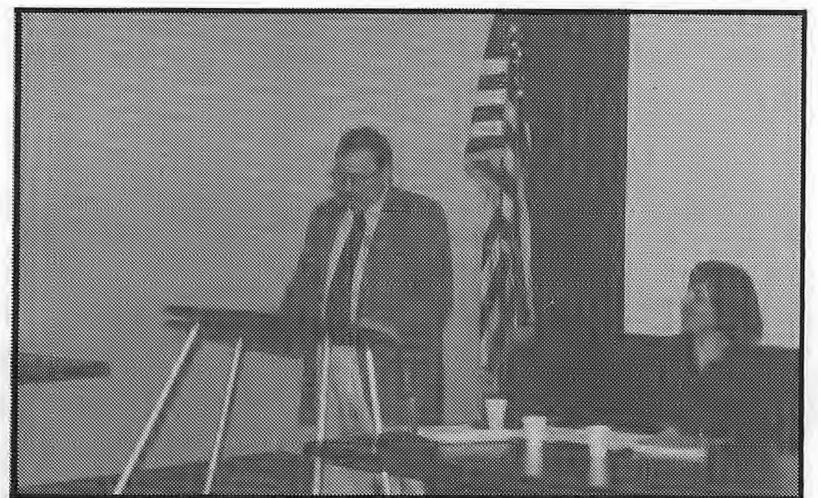
Joe Head, Vice President, introduced Dr. Robert Jeffrey and Dr. Christina Jeffrey, husband and wife team, who spoke on "Voting Rights." Dr. Robert Jeffrey is a political science faculty member at

Dalton College. He graduated from the University of Dallas and Stanford University. In addition to having been a Ford Fellow and studying in Innsbrook, Austria, he has also served on the U. S. Commission of Civil Rights under the Reagan Administration. Dr. Christina Jeffrey is a former U. S. House of Representatives' Historian and is presently an associate professor of political science at Kennesaw State College. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama.

The gentleman began the presentation with the philosophical criteria for a citizen's right to vote dating from the ancient Greek civilization. His wife presented the historical development of voting rights in the United States, primarily in Georgia and Alabama. Following the formal lectures, the guest speakers answered questions about the program and their recent experiences in the nation's capital, both speaking quite candidly. Because she was the first

woman and served the shortest tenure ever as House Historian, Dr. Jeffrey has appeared on Good Morning America, interviewed by Charlie Gibson, The Tom Snyder Show and has further appearances on ABC, NBC and CNN.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Larry Gregory presented the couple with a copy of Dr. Joe Mahan's A History of Old Cassville which has been reprinted recently by EVHS.



COURT AND COURTHOUSE

EDITORS NOTE: This article appeared in The News and Courant on January 22, 1903. Part of Judge Milner's speech has been omitted.

The following interesting paper was read by Judge T. W. Milner at the dedicatory exercises at the new Bartow County Courthouse in 1903.

May it please the court and ladies and gentlemen:

Who is there in this large audience with philosophy so cold and whose poetical and patriotic sentiment is so dead as to have entered this beautiful edifice today without pleasant and profound emotion?

Bartow superior court convenes this morning in a temple of justice which fairly illustrates the glorious Christian civilization of our people.

A reminiscent mood is appropriate to this occasion. It would be unnatural for his honor Judge Fite, the members of this bar and the people of the county to turn away forever from the old temples in which the law has been upheld in its power and majesty for so many eventful years and enter upon the work of the superior court here in this magnificent court chamber without a thought of the past and its precious and glorious memories.

Indeed is it not true, my brethren of the bar, that we would love for a while, to commune as it were with the spirits of the noblemen of the past, members of our honorable profession, who in their day and generation did what they could to build the foundation of our civilization, and whose memorable achievements have made the history of grand old Bartow County as bright and glorious as any in the Empire State of the South.

This county was organized by the legislature in the year 1832. Its territory was taken from the territory of the old original county Cherokee, from which, at the time, ten counties were organized, and to give this county proper territorial limits, a part of old Murray County was added. But this territory was subsequently taken by the legislature to make the county of Gordon. Our county was given the name of Cass, and by the act of the legislature the town of Cassville was made the county site, and the public buildings erected there.

The courthouse was built in the center of a public square with the hotels and business houses and offices facing it from the four sides of the square.

Wide and beautifully shaded streets adorned by many old time southern homes led up to the court house from the north, south, east and west. On the hills, in the western

part of the city, glistened the domes of the colleges, a little distance in the east the cemetery, and in the east and south the churches.

Would that some of our older citizens would write up the history and tradition of these early days in the history of the county. Perhaps they would tell us how the people talked of the new tariff law of July, 1832, and discussed the harmful effects apprehended to southern interests as they gathered to select lots upon which to build their homes and business houses in the new town. Doubtless groups of the noble old pioneers, as they gathered to build the public buildings of the county for the future, talked of the nullification ordinance of South Carolina, which caused old Hickory Jackson, president of the United States, to send down to Charleston a part of the army and a ship of war to collect the tariff revenues, and how John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, resigned the office of vice-president of the United States on account of it all and the probabilities of war between the north and the south even at that early day.

Our grandmothers sitting at home doubtless looked out upon the growing little city with pride, and happily joined their sweet voices in the song of the spinning wheel and chanted "My Country 'Tis of Thee," for it was in that year this grand national anthem was written. The youngest lawyer in the county may have devoted more of his time to Whittier's "Moll Pritcher," or Irvings "Alabambra" (two new books just out) and which attracted the public attention. I do not know exactly how it was or what was said and done by those dear old grandfathers and mothers.

In the same year, 1832, the Cherokee circuit was organized, composed of the counties of Cass, Chattooga, Cherokee, Dade, Floyd, Forsyth, Gilmer, Lumpkin, Murray, Union and Walker.

I do not know the name of the judge who presided at the first term of the superior court in Cass County. A few years afterwards Judge A. R. Wright was made judge. It was during his term of office that the supreme court of Georgia was established, and by the terms of the act creating the court, an annual term of that court was held at Cassville.

Let us draw a picture in imagination not copied from one hanging upon memory's walls, for I am not so old a man. Look, there goes out from the courthouse door an elegant and distinguished young gentleman to meet three staid and dignified men, not clothed in gowns of

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"Courthouse" Continued

silk, but walking with the steps of nature's noblemen from Latimer's hotel. It is Judge A. R. Wright, the eloquent orator and able judge of the Cherokee circuit, conducting the judge of the supreme court to the bench. Judge Lumpkin, the chief justice sits in the center with his associating Judges, Nisbet and Warner on his right and left. The gentlemen of the bar, with brief in hand and ready for work sit and look with interest upon the scenes. There sits Judge A. R. Wright; John W. Hooper, who was afterwards Judge of the superior court; Turner A. Trippe, who was afterwards also judge of the superior court; Warren Akin, then the leader of the Cherokee circuit and afterwards speaker of the house of representatives of Georgia, and member of the congress of the Confederate States; John Word, solicitor-general and wit of the circuit; Wm. T. Wofford, a young attorney who was preparing to go to the Mexican War, who did volunteer and serve his country nobly on the fields of Mexico; returned and practiced law at Cassville until the civil war, at which time he laid aside his briefs and took up his sword-coming back to his home a brigadier-general. A circle of still younger men gathered there—James Milner, who was afterwards judge of the superior court; Jesse R. Wikle, who was afterwards made judge of the county court; Abda Johnson, who left his law office in 1860 for the front and came home at the end of the war, a colonel, and for years the senior officer and commander of his brigade; W. W. Rich, who left his office with Gen. Wofford for the Mexican War, and again in the Civil War; and returned to his home known as one of the bravest and most dashing colonels of cavalry in the confederate army. There was Jack Crawford, an able and eloquent advocate who served his country during the Civil War, with distinguished courage as captain and commanding his regiment in many engagements; J. R. Parrott, who was afterward judge of the superior court, B. O. Crawford, Col. R. C. Saxon, J. A. Howard, J. G. Ryals, H. P. Farrow, P. H. Larey, W. P. Kramer, G. W. Warwick and others whose names I do not now recall.

Who among us, of this generation, could write the history and tradition of the bar in our county and of the trials with all their exciting incidents which transpired in that old court house at Cassville?

During the Civil War the name of the county was changed from Cass to Bartow, in honor of that gallant son of Georgia, the peer of any among the orators and soldiers of the sixties; who gave his life for his country on the fields of Manassas, Virginia, in 1861, and the name of Cassville was changed to Manassas.

Cassville was destroyed and the courthouse burned

during the war. After the war by an election of the people the county site was changed from Cassville to Cartersville.

I was present at Cassville when the last superior court was held there in 1865. I was just beginning the study of law. Judge Dawson A. Walker presided. He was at the time the judge of the Cherokee circuit.

Our next court was held at Cartersville in the second story of the building on Puckett's corner, Judge James Milner then judge of the circuit presiding. We held court there about three years, when the new, (now the old) court house on the other side of the railroad was then finished. Judge Parrot presided as Judge.

The bar was composed of Col. Warren Akin, Gen. Wofford, Judge James Milner, Col. Abda Johnson, Col. J. W. Harris, Sr., Col. John W. Wofford, Col. John J. Jones, Col. Richard Maltbie, W. J. Conyers, W. L. Pritchett, Thomas W. Dodd, Thomas W. Milner, A. M. Foute, John H. Wikle, John Coxe, A. P. Wofford, J. B. Conyers, T. H. Milner, S. P. Jones, James M. Neel, R. W. Murphy, T. W. Hooper, J. C. Branson, J. A. Howard, Col. M. R. Stansell and Col. Ed D. Graham. Then others in later days were admitted to our bar: John W. Akin, W. J. Neel, T. J. Lyon, F. P. Gray, T. W. H. Harris, K. S. Anderson, James W. Harris, Jr. and later Albert Johnson, Douglas Wikle, W. M. Graham, Paul F. Akin, John T. Norris, Watt Harris Milner, Thomas H. Milner, Col. Thomas C. Milner though born and raised in our county first settled in Gordon County, but came back to his first love and is now one of us. There are others whose names are not recalled.

Gentlemen of the bar and fellow citizens, we have labored for many years to administer the law in that old court house across the way, which is now abandoned forever. The walls have resounded with our eloquence for the last time, and the noise of whistling moving steam engines will no more disturb you, the court or the jury. The old edifice will be torn down or converted into some kind of a manufacturing plant. I could not see it torn down. May it stand as a memorial.

Today, we enter these walls for the first time, with our briefs and clients.

We do not, we will not forget the past and all its precious memories but we appreciate the present moment, and all that the dedication of this magnificent temple of justice angers for the future of our grand old county.

To the county officers of Bartow who planned and built this beautiful temple, you have honored the men and women who as pioneers of our Christian civiliza-

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"Courthouse" Continued

tion, laid so well and so deep, the foundations of the future for their children in the erection of this magnificent courthouse. The day will come, the age is already here when their children and children's children will honor you for your noble work.

Fellow citizens, these men have been at work for the good of their country. The result of their labor is ready for our use and enjoyment. They are entitled to our highest honor. It was Bolingbroke who said these words: "Neither Montaigne in writing his essays nor Descartes in building new worlds nor Burnet in framing an ante deluvian earth, no, nor Newton in discovering and establishing the true laws of nature on experience and a sublime geometry, felt more intellectual joys than he feels who is a real patriot, and bends all the force of his un-

derstanding, and directs all his thoughts and actions to the good of his country."

In some measure these good men who have planned and built for us, surely feel this joy, and their constituents rejoice with them.

But I have talked over my time. I wish the audience could join me in singing that grand old national anthem.

"My country 'tis of thee,....."

Article Submitted by Guy Parmenter



VAUGHAN CABIN

Red Top officials have set an October 4th deadline for completion of the cabin. As you can see in the photographs, the cabin is well on its way towards meeting that goal.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mr. & Mrs. Tom Akin, Smyrna, GA
Mr. Robert Wayne Smith, Cassville, GA
Judge & Mrs. Robert Benham, Cartersville, GA
Mr. Guy Roberson, Dallas, GA
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Twilling, Cartersville, GA

Mr. & Mrs. Danny Gibbs, Cartersville, GA
Ms. Faye S. Brow, Cartersville, GA
Mr. & Mrs. J. Albert Minish, Commerce, GA
Mr. Wayne B. Reeves, Marietta, GA
Ms. Dollie Curtis, Marietta, GA

ALLATOONA PASS

We are now excited to report that the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Historical Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources have approved our plans to highlight the history of Allatoona Pass. Corps of Engineers Ranger and EVHS member, Carl Etheridge, is currently flagging the trails and marking the small trees which can be removed.

This will be a very large undertaking for our Society. Our plan to develop trails and interpretive signs are drawings lots of attention both locally and throughout the country.

Richard Cloues, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer writes: "HPD would like to commend the Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, the Etowah Valley Historical Society and Mr. David Grabensteder and the staff at Allatoona Lake for their work in creating and implementing this agreement. We feel that this project is an important and practical example of the ways in which a federal agency, our office, and the interested public can work together to preserve and enhance historic and cultural resources".

EVHS members Diane Mooney, Guy Parmenter, Larry Gregory, J. B. Tate and Carl Etheridge are to be commended for a job well done for preparing and finalizing an agreement which will preserve a large piece of Bartow County's history. Many volunteers will be needed to clear brush and construct the trails. Please call Guy Parmenter at 382-0500 (work) or 382-5371 (home) if you would like to assist in this project.

*This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of
Mr. Joe L. Myers and Mrs. Eloine G. "Jimmie" Davis.*

ETOWAH VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Cartersville, Georgia 30120

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