



# ETOWAH VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Promoting and enhancing the awareness and preservation of  
the heritage and traditions of Bartow County*



Volume 43, May 2002

P.O. Box 1886, Cartersville, GA 30120

Phone: 770-606-8862

## The Playground in Our Own Back Yard

### A Brief History of Red Top Mountain State Park

By Chantal Parker

One of the attractions at the Hills of Iron celebration at Red Top Mountain State Park in April was a tour of Iron Hill, site of a mining operation that closed down in the 1920s. The deep cuts into the mountain, now covered with thick vegetation, overlook a small cove of Lake Allatoona, creating one of the most spectacular settings in the park. Closed to visitors for more than two decades, Iron Hill might still be lost in obscurity if not for the recent efforts of EVHS and Red Top Mountain park officials to bring this scenic gem back into the public consciousness through its annual Hills of Iron celebration. That this once popular campsite was closed down at all and is now being reopened is part of the park's long history that all Bartow Countians can embrace and celebrate.

While the original intention of the damming of the Etowah River was to control flooding and provide electricity, the happy result was an unprecedented recreational area for Georgians, encompassing some 270 miles of shoreline. Before the completion of Allatoona Dam in 1950, the 1948 Corps of Engineers Master Plan called for the setting aside of almost 1,500 acres in the immediate vicinity for use as a state park. Two years later, in 1950, the state signed a twenty-five year agreement to lease the property, which would operate under the authority of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks, Historical Sites, and Monuments (now State Parks & Historic Sites). Just fifteen years into the original lease, with an optimistic eye to the future, the state renewed its lease in 1965, and leased an additional 96 acres.

Georgia's creation of Allatoona Dam and its adoption of Red Top as a state park served not only to preserve the area's history, which extends from the 20th century iron industry all the way back to the prehistoric Mississippian

*See Red Top, continued on page 4*



*Among the new additions to this year's Hills of Iron celebration at Red Top Mountain State Park was an interdisciplinary team of iron enthusiasts from Jacksonville State University, who built their own mini-furnace to smelt iron ore excavated from Iron Hill. Pictured left to right are historian Suzanne Marshall, independent archaeologist Chris Hill, geologist Kelly Gregg, ceramicist Steve Loucks, and medical student Mike Marvinney.*

## Hills of Iron Returns to Red Top

The Etowah Valley Historical Society and Red Top Mountain State Park were pleased to once again team up for the production of Hills of Iron, a day-long event celebrating the iron industry in Bartow County, on April 27, 2002.

Joining the hayride tour to Iron Hill was the park's special guest Francis Summey, an Iron Hill native who regaled visitors with stories of his youth spent growing up on the mountain. Mr. Summey's knowledge of the area has been invaluable to park officials as they attempt to gather and record the history of Red Top Mountain.

Returning for his second year with the program was

*See Hills of Iron, continued on page 2*





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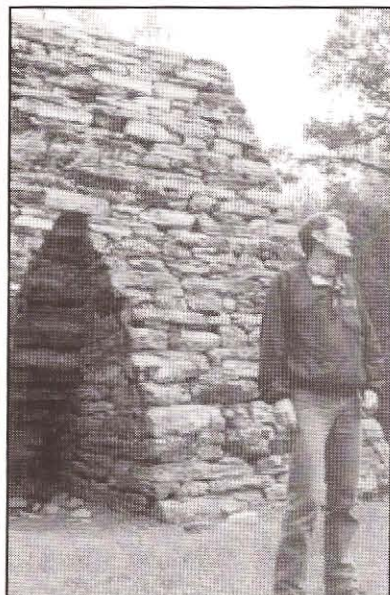
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The EVHS office and research facilities are located in the 1903 courthouse at 115 West Cherokee Avenue in downtown Cartersville.

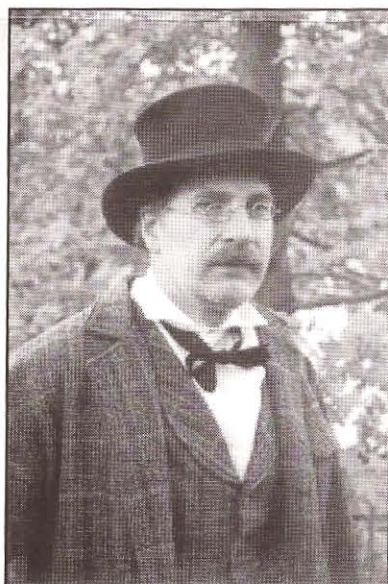
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Above: Dr. Nicholas Honerkamp, an archaeologist at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, was among those returning to Red Top for the second annual Hills of Iron celebration.

Below: Historical impressionist Phillip Whiteman delighted visitors who participated in a boat tour to the ruins of Glen Holly with his portrayal of iron industrialist Mark Anthony Cooper.



Right: One of the highlights of the day-long celebration was Alabama Art Casting, whose incredible demonstration of iron pouring wowed the audience. That's James Hamilton on the far right, Red Top Mountain State Park's superintendent.

## Hills of Iron, continued from page 1

Dr. Nicholas Honerkamp, an archaeologist and director of the Jeffrey L. Brown Institute of Archaeology at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Dr. Honerkamp has extensive knowledge of the operation of iron furnaces, having excavated Bluff Furnace in Tennessee, and shared that knowledge with an exciting lecture delivered to an enthusiastic audience at Cooper's Furnace.

Also returning this year, following their success in the inaugural Hills of Iron program in 2001, was Alabama Art Casting, who fired up the audience right along with their coupola in another incredible demonstration of iron melting and pouring. Reprising his hands-on approach to the program, Red Top park superintendent James Hamilton once again donned the gear of the iron masters to participate in the demonstration. Many visitors showed up early to create their own design on scratch boxes sold by the guild and went home with one-of-a-kind mementos. One of those taking home a memento was EVHS. The cast iron plaque with the society's name and "Hills of Iron 2002" may be viewed at the EVHS office in the 1903 gold-domed courthouse.

A new feature to this year's program was a pontoon boat ride to the ruins of Glen Holly, Mark Anthony Cooper's Etowah home. The caravan of six boats left the dock behind the lodge, following a route that took them over the submerged ruins of the town of Etowah before arriving at the tiny island (once a mountain top) where the remains of Glen Holly can still be viewed. Greeting visitors on their arrival was Cooper himself portrayed by historical impressionist Phillip Whiteman. Whiteman's thoughtful and realistic portrayal of "the Iron Man of Georgia" succeeded in giving life and personality to the otherwise remote historical figure and was thoroughly entertaining.

See *Hills*, continued on page 6



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"A morsel of genuine history is a thing so rare as to always be valuable."  
—Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Adams, 1817



# Cassville Before the War

## Membership Meeting

### April 15, 2002

*"In the sweet by and by may we not hope to meet and live again with the sweet roses of the past with all the thorns left off. Who was the one writing of old Cassville, and the Locust trees and the Mothers graves. I tried but failed to recognize the voice. I would like so much to go back there..."—letter to Jane & Lizzie Cobb from E.S. Candler, Iuka Ms., May 27, 1885*

A record turn out of forty to fifty people attended the EVHS April membership meeting featuring historian Jim Rongers and the unveiling of his map reconstructing Cassville, the former Bartow County capital destroyed by Union forces in 1864.

Mr. Rongers's interest in Cassville began four years ago, when he obtained some Civil War era letters that included correspondence from Cassville. Rongers's curiosity about the people mentioned in the letters and the town led him to the offices of EVHS, where he found Joseph Mahan's *A History of Old Cassville 1833-1864*. His research took him next to Columbus State University, where Mahan's personal papers are archived. (Mahan's research included two interviews, conducted in the 1930s, with Cassville residents who had lived through the war, one a former slave.)

Mahan's reconstruction of pre-Civil War Cassville included only fifty-six people. "But there were thousands of people in Cassville before the war," Rongers said. Thus began his search for the rest of the population that led to the reconstructed map and the preparation of a manuscript.

Piecing together information gleaned from Mahan's records, surviving deed records, census, and personal letters, including the Civil War correspondence of William and Lila Chunn (see EVHS Newsletter, Vol. 42, *An Extraordinary Life*), Rongers logically deduced a system of town lot numbers that accurately reconstructed the layout of the town and many of its residents. Lila Chunn's letters were especially helpful, as they were written from the portico of her home on a hill overlooking the town of Cassville, "and were full of descriptions of the town and the people," Rongers said.

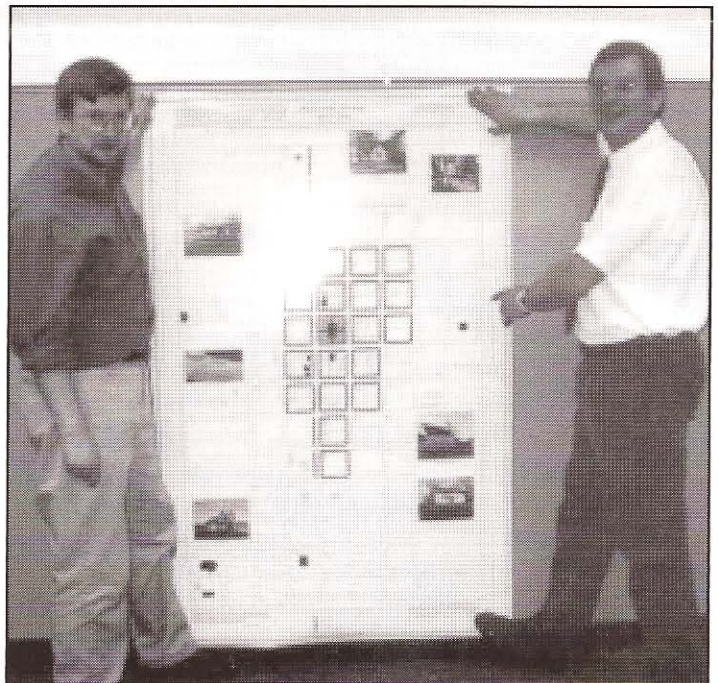
Rongers has hundreds of names that are not on the map because he couldn't definitively place them. "But I know they were there," he said. Among them are the many slaves known to have lived in Cassville. "I know how many slaves were with who," he reported, "but I don't know how they lived with them" [in the owner's homes or in separate quarters].

Rongers has quite a collection of Cassville memorabilia, some of which (war correspondence) is slated for loan to Kennesaw Museum in Cobb County. Items he displayed at the meeting included a signed letter by Lewis Cass, for whom the town and the county were originally named; letters postmarked Cassville; and a brick from the

Cassville Female College. Rongers's research has revealed that bricks from destroyed Cassville structures were used in much of Bartow County's post-war construction, including the 1871 sheriff's house in Cartersville, which is where the historian acquired his brick when the building was razed in 2000. Remarking on his collection, Rongers said, "It's like a puzzle I'm trying to piece together. Eventually all these things (except the Kennesaw collection) will be displayed up here in Cassville. It's very appropriate that they all stay here."

Constantly fueling Rongers's enthusiasm for the project has been his respect and admiration for these early Georgia pioneers who built a town with not one, but two colleges, and, as he later discovered, four hospitals. "These people need to be remembered," he said.

"This project was ultimately done with the idea of giving it back to the people from where it came," Rongers said, adding that he hoped the computerized version of his map might one day become an interactive tool for interpreting local history that could be added to as more discoveries of the once prosperous town of Cassville are made. "I hope I've given a little something of myself to build upon what Mahan started, and maybe one day, someone will build upon what we've started here tonight." ☺



Jim Rongers (right) and EVHS vice-president David Parker display the 4'x5' reconstructed map of Cassville unveiled at the EVHS April membership meeting. Rongers, who came from Indiana to Georgia eight years ago, has a Culinary Arts degree from Indiana Technical College (1986) and a degree in Social Science Education from Kennesaw State University (2002). He owns a design and build woodworking company and is currently wrapping up his student teaching at North Cobb High School.



## *Red Top, continued from page 1*

mound builders, but also boosted Bartow County's stagnant population growth and depressed agricultural economy. Popular from day one, the new park initially offered five picnic areas, three comfort stations (bathrooms), thirteen rental mobile homes, seventy-five tent campsites, seven boat docks, two boat launch ramps, a beach and bathhouse, a concession stand, and a miniature golf course—substantial offerings by 1950 Georgia standards, that transformed Bartow County's backyard into a family playground to which depression- and war-weary Georgians flocked.

Another 345 acres were leased for "blacks only," and was named George Washington Carver State Park, after the agricultural researcher who spurred the South's peanut industry. It is perhaps no coincidence that just seven years earlier, in 1943, Carver had been honored with a national monument and park which preserved his childhood home near Diamond Grove, Missouri; the original George Washington Carver State Park was the first designated national monument to an African American in the United States.

Atlanta resident and former Tuskegee Airman John Loyd Atkinson was instrumental in helping establish Carver as the first "Negro" State Park in the state of Georgia. Returning from World War II, Atkinson found there were no state park facilities for blacks and set about trying to correct the oversight. After his requests for local permits were repeatedly turned down, the State Park system stepped in, leasing land adjoining Red Top and appointing Atkinson as Carver's park manager, the first African-American park manager in the state. Atkinson, with his wife Bessie Evans and children Charles, John Jr., George, William, and Emma, are credited with early development of the park's facilities, even going so far as hauling in hundreds of tons of sand to the lakeshore to create a sandy beach for visitors.

Though established under the umbrella of Red Top Mountain, Georgia's George Washington Carver Park was maintained and operated separately as one of the state's three "Negro" state parks. Not quite as substantial as Red Top, the park offered a picnic area, a "rough" tent camp-

ing area, a boat ramp, a dock, a sand beach, a playground, and a clubhouse with an attached porch "overlooking one of the most beautiful views on Lake Allatoona." The popular park attracted hundreds of daily visitors year-round from as far away as Tennessee, partly due to the lack of "black only" park facilities. Perhaps especially attractive to park visitors were the entertainment dignitaries, including Ray Charles and Little Richard, who performed at Carver.

Following Atkinson's tenure as park manager from 1950 to 1958, Clarence Benham, father of the current State Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham, became

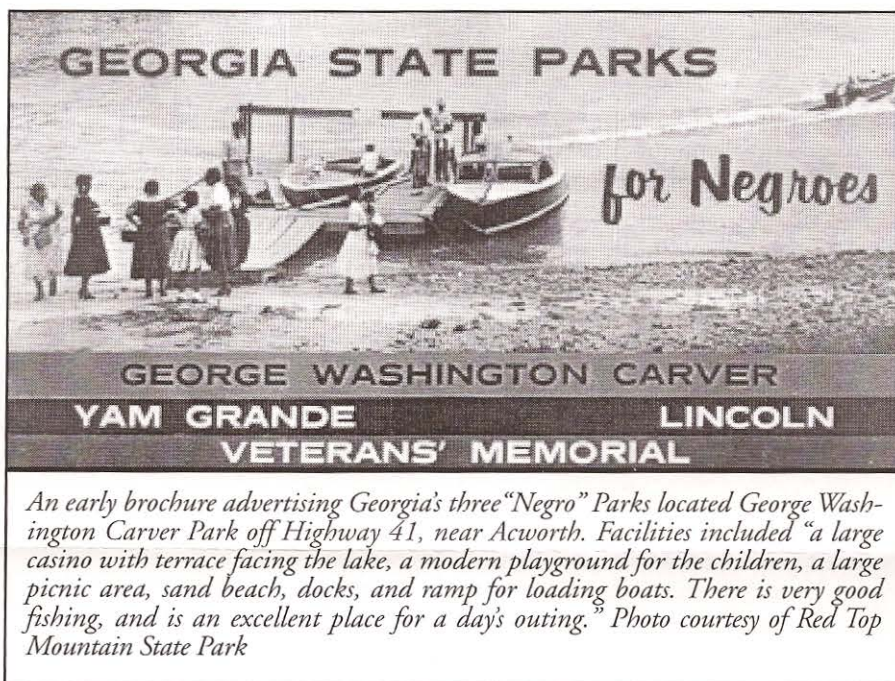
Carver's Park Manager, serving in that capacity for three years. Despite the eradication of Jim Crow laws with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, African Americans continued to favor Carver over Red Top, while Red Top continued to attract mostly whites.

In 1970, Georgia's budgetary constraints required severe cost cuts, and because it was no longer mandated by law, Carver was deemed expend-

able. But an agreement between the state and Bartow County saved portions of the park when the county was allowed to take over the lease of some of the park's acreage. Bartow-Carver Park continues to operate under the Bartow County government and is open by reservation. Earlier, in 1962, the Atlanta Girl Scout Council had subleased portions of Carver for Pine Acres, an outdoor activity area reserved for African-American members of the Girl Scouts, which was later integrated.

By the mid- to late-1970s, the DNR's Division of State Parks began concentrating its efforts on the remaining core sector of Red Top Mountain State Park, with an eye to improving its facilities and bringing its fiscal management under tighter control. Since its creation in 1950, Red Top had experienced erratic growth, until the number of campsites far exceeded occupancy. The drain of these extra facilities on the park's financial resources was considerable, and the decision was made to shut down the popular, but remote, Iron Hill. Doing so set the wheels in motion for development of Red Top into an improved and much more modern state park.

By shutting down Iron Hill, Red Top reduced the num-





ber of campsites by half, which in turn slashed operational costs and brought the available sites more in line with occupancy. The improvement and development of twelve miles of nature trails in the early 1980s was followed by the building of two tennis courts in 1986. Other improvements included the construction of rental cottages and group shelters, and the implementation of educational programs for children and adults. Plans drawn up at that time for future additions included an 18-hole golf course. In 1989, the construction of a 33-room lodge, conference center, and full-service restaurant placed Red Top in a category shared by only five other state parks, that of State Lodge Park.

Enter the Etowah Valley Historical Society.

No man is an island, and no state park can exist in isolation without community support. Red Top and EVHS, once they met, found they had much in common—home, history, preservation—and the partnership forged between them sought to perpetuate those shared interests.

By the early 1990s, Red Top was looking to expand their offerings with the addition of interpretive history programs. What they dreamed of was a log cabin to center the activities around. EVHS was just coming into its own at the time, becoming a considerable force in the community, and, in a remarkable case of serendipity, it just happened to have a log cabin it was hoping to relocate.

The Vaughan Cabin Relocation Project, begun in 1993, sought to preserve a circa 1870s log cabin by relocating it from private property slated for development to Red Top Mountain. Taking more than four years and thousands of man-hours to complete, the ambitious project succeeded in uniting state and county governments, large and small business concerns, and individuals from the private sector in a true community effort. Today, Vaughan Cabin, located on the lake behind the lodge, is the center of numerous year-long activities ranging from pioneer days

and Civil War encampments to mountain music and folk-storytelling.

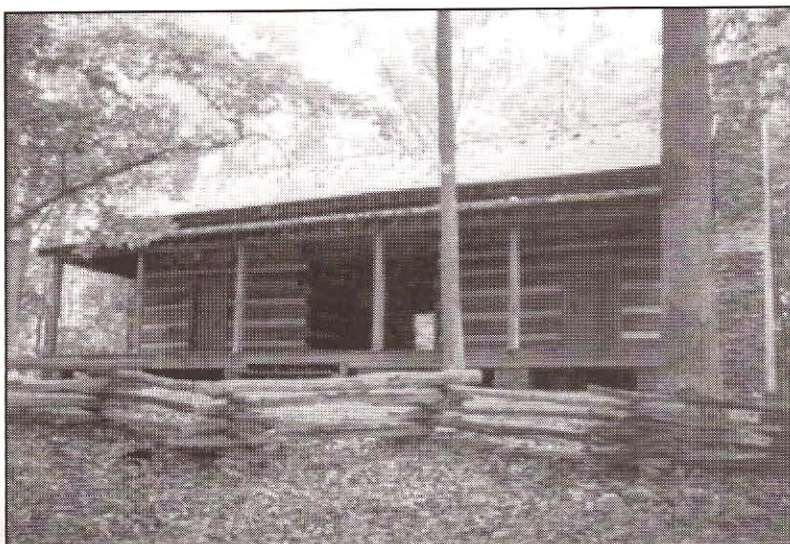
With one hugely successful project under their belts, Red Top and EVHS looked forward to future opportunities in which they could work together, which included programs at Allatoona Pass Battlefield. The next big opportunity presented itself in the first year of the new millennium, when the two partnered together in 2001 to present the inaugural program of Hills of Iron.

Hills of Iron featured a first class display and program guide, tours, lecture presentations, and a live furnace demonstration that all

combined to win Red Top the State Parks & Historic Sites' competitive and highly coveted Park Program of the Year award. As with the Vaughan Cabin, EVHS's cooperative and financial support was essential to the project's success. Hills of Iron succeeded, not only in celebrating the history of the iron industry in Bartow County and attracting new visitors to the park, but in reintroducing that all-but-forgotten section of the park that earlier park officials had shut down—Iron Hill. As the park continues to grow, Iron Hill promises to remain in the picture,

becoming more and more a prominent focus among the park's many attractions. Already slated for development is a 12-mile bike trail that will end in an overlook of the deep cut mine that is the focus of the annual tour.

The project's greatest success, however, was in strengthening the park's ties to and solidifying its place in the community. From a segregated beginning to a unifying presence, the history of Red Top Mountain State Park is intimately entwined with the history of Bartow County. By continuing to partner with the community to bring interpretive history to Bartow County, Red Top continues to increase awareness and appreciation for the cultural, natural, and historical resources in our own back yard and greatly improves our quality of life. ☺

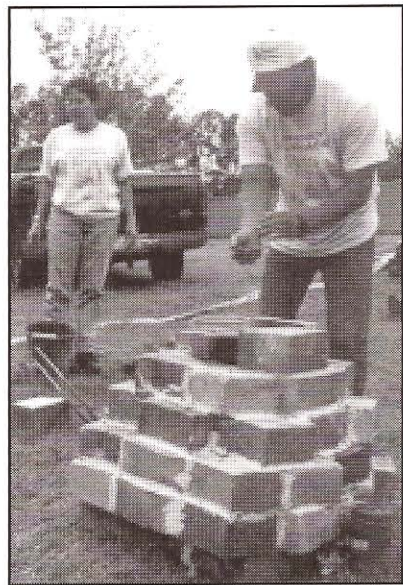


*The relocation of Vaughan Cabin from private property slated for development to Red Top Mountain State Park was the first project in which Red Top and EVHS teamed up to bring interpretive history to the park. Accomplishing the move took more than four years and thousands of man hours, and continues to be a source of pride for the community. For more information about the Vaughan Cabin Relocation Project, visit the EVHS website at [www.evhsonline.org/projects](http://www.evhsonline.org/projects).*

*"There is nothing that solidifies and strengthens a nation like reading the nation's history, whether that history is recorded in books, or embodied in customs, institutions, and monuments."—Joseph Anderson, 1836-1916*



An unexpected bonus to the boat tour was the presence of Carl Etheridge, chief engineer and historian with the Lake Allatoona Corps of Engineers and a valued member of EVHS, where he chairs the Cemetery Preservation



After Suzanne Marshall (left) pounded chunks of iron ore into smaller pieces, Chris Hill added it to the mini-furnace which, fueled with coke, reached and maintained a temperature of about 2,600 degrees. Coke is made by preheating coal, and is preferred over charcoal and coal for its fewer impurities and its ability to sustain high temperatures.

duce cast iron, which they poured on Sunday.

Team members joked about the small amount of cast iron ("a half-circle about 3" across") produced with \$100 of coke over two days, but what these novice ironmasters accomplished was immeasurable. What had begun as an attempt to understand how the Janney Furnace in Alabama (being excavated by team member Chris Hill) operated has come "full-circle," as the team continues to explore 19th century furnace operations.

"Mining and the iron industry have been a huge part of Bartow County's history," said EVHS vice president David Parker, who represented the society in the president's absence. "With Hills of Iron, we celebrate that history, even as we continue to learn more about it. This second edition of the program was an even greater success than the first, and the only people who weren't impressed were those people who weren't there." ☺

committee. Carl's extensive knowledge of the archaeology of Etowah and Glen Holly, generously applied, helped visitors to appreciate, even more, the history of the area and the legend of Mark Anthony Cooper.

Another interesting new addition to the Hills of Iron program was an interdisciplinary team of iron enthusiasts from Jacksonville State University in Alabama. Whereas Alabama Art Casting melted iron scraps for pouring, this team actually smelted ore, to extract the iron, in a mini-furnace they constructed on site. And, while they had done this many times before, this was the first time the team then took the extracted iron and melted it to pro-

## We Are Not Alone

### Early Preservationists Had It Just As Tough

*In Honor of National Historic Preservation Month*

Historic preservation is not a modern phenomenon. History itself records that even while whole civilizations were being wiped out, there were individuals inside and outside those cultures working to record and preserve their histories. So, we're not alone in our efforts to preserve history, and as this excerpt in honor of Preservation Month reveals, the need to preserve our history is, indeed, as old as our history itself.

Excerpted from Richard Shenkman's *Legends, Lies, & Cherished Myths of American History* (1988)

"Over the years Americans have shown an astonishing indifference to the relics of the past... During the War of 1812 the room in which the Declaration of Independence was signed was slated for demolition and partly torn down. Preservationists managed to save the edifice, but only after two great wings of Independence Hall had already been destroyed. In 1853 a syndicate of enterprising Virginia businessmen attempted to turn Mount Vernon into a hotel. Appalled, the governor of Virginia sought to buy Washington's home, but when the owner demanded to be paid the going market rate of two hundred thousand dollars, the legislature refused to go along. Only the concentrated efforts of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association saved the building from commercial exploitation.

"The homes of less famous patriots were not similarly spared. During the Civil War the John Hancock mansion was demolished so a developer could put to more profitable purpose the land underneath, which had grown in value to more than a hundred thousand dollars." ☺

### June Dinner Meeting at Old Mill Farm

6:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 22

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"History is the glass through which we may behold, with ancestral eyes, not only the various deeds of past ages and the old accidents that attend them, but also discern the different humors of men." —unknown



# Confederate Memorial Day

## Triple Ceremonies Mark Annual Observance in Bartow County

Among the many traditions preserved throughout Bartow County's history, none is more controversial than the observance of Confederate Memorial Day, and none more stirring. Gathering in those same places where our ancestors gathered, singing the same songs, remembering the same fallen, history is reborn into the present.

### Cassville

"They're not just stones in the ground," Lt. Commander Mike Wennin of the Stiles-Akin Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans told attendants at Cassville ceremonies. "And today we remember their names, and honor their lives and their sacrifice."

The first of three observances held in the county, on April 20, 2002, the ceremony at Cassville Confederate Cemetery included the reading of the names of 153 soldiers known to rest among the three hundred unknown Confederate dead. Familiar among them were the names William T. Wofford, Warren Akin, and William Chunn.

In a tribute to Southern patriotism, the song of Dixie was sung in remembrance of those who have carried the battle flag into every war since the Civil War. The ceremony also included a performance of "America the Beautiful" by Amelia DeRamus and readings of "Letters from Cassville" by Mike Wennin and Bill Arp impressionist Buddy Autry. The service concluded with infantry and artillery salutes, and the playing of Taps by bugler C. J. Shields.

### Cartersville

At the 1903 courthouse on April 27, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, P.M.B. Young chapter, sponsored a ceremony featuring guest speaker Daniel M. Roper, who spoke about Judge Augustus R. Wright, a preacher, lawyer, and judge who served two terms in the U. S. Congress and later in the Confederate Congress, and who, for a short time, owned the Chieftans in Rome.

Ceremonies included the awarding of two medals: the Cross of Military Service to Sgt. Steven Rood, U.S. Army; and the National Defense Medal to Rood's brother, Sp-4 Bruce Rood, U.S. Army.

### Kingston

The oldest continuous observance of Confederate Memorial Day in Bartow County is also the oldest in the



*Cassville Confederate Cemetery is the site of 300 unknown and 153 known Confederate soldiers and is maintained by the Cassville Heritage Association.*

nation. For 138 years, the Kingston Confederate Memorial Day service has paid tribute to 252 unknown Confederate and Union soldiers who never made it home from the war. This year, in response to events of September 11, 2001, the service on April 28th was extended to include all heroes, past and present, and honored the service of those others among us who wear uniforms, firefighters and law enforcement officers in Bartow County.

Moving from the church service to the cemetery, the tradition of decorating the graves with flowers was observed, followed by an artillery salute by members of the Carl Boyd Post 42 of the American Legion. The Kingston service is sponsored annually by the Kingston Women's History Club. ☺

## EVHS Welcomes New Members

Allen County Public Library—Fort Wayne, IN  
 Bill & Angela Birdsong—Powder Springs, GA  
 Steve & Kate Dougherty—Cartersville, GA  
 Margaret Farmer—Cartersville, GA  
 Judy M. Ferguson—Acworth, GA  
 Samuel C. Graham—Cartersville, GA  
 Joy B. Harlin—Cartersville, GA  
 Mary C. Holmes—Acworth, GA  
 Christina R. Jenkins—Cartersville, GA  
 Mark J. Kimball—Cartersville, GA  
 Wayne Steed—Atlanta, GA  
 Katherine Taheri—Cartersville, GA  
 Malvin & Gail Underwood—Cartersville, GA  
 Gary Wehner—Smyrna, GA  
 Virginia Yates—Cartersville, GA

### Change in EVHS Office Hours

The EVHS office is now open on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month. Weekly hours remain Monday-Friday, 1:30-4:30.



## Allatoona Texas Monument

The Etowah Valley Historical Society is teaming up with the Allatoona Texas Monument Campaign (ATMC), headed by Clay Williams of Abilene, Texas, to raise funds for a monument "to honor the brave Texans of Young's/Ector's Brigade." The granite monument is scheduled for dedication on Saturday, October 5, 2002 as part of the annual celebration of the anniversary of the battle at Allatoona Pass. It will be the second monument erected at Allatoona, joining the monument dedicated last year to the Missouri Brigade.

Individuals and organizations wishing to contribute to the ATMC may send their check, made payable to: EVHS, P.O. Box 1886, Cartersville, Georgia 30120. (Please mark your check "for Texas Monument.") We'll have more information about the campaign in a future publication.

May is

## National Historic Preservation Month

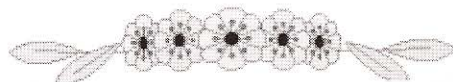
"In great deeds something abides.

On great fields something stays.

Forms change and pass; bodies disappear,  
but spirits linger, to consecrate ground  
for the vision-place of souls."

Major General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain  
October 3, 1889, Gettysburg

Celebrate Your History & Heritage  
The Past Belongs to All of Us



*This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of  
Mildred Pierce & Menta Ward*

Etowah Valley Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1886  
Cartersville, Georgia 30120  
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