

ETOWAH VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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P.O. Box 1886, Cartersville, GA 30120

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Lifetime Achievement Award Honors Mary Ellen Taff



Euharlee historian Mary Ellen Taff was the recipient of the first annual EVHS Lifetime Achievement Award, presented during the membership meeting on May 18, 2002. Pictured with Ms. Taff are Euharlee Mayor Steve Worthington and EVHS President Guy Parmenter.

It has been around for a long time, the idea that EVHS needed to recognize those individuals who have devoted a lifetime to preserving local history and heritage. That idea was made a reality on May 18, 2002, when Euharlee historian Mary Ellen Taff became the first recipient of the Etowah Valley Historical Society Lifetime Achievement Award.

"Mary Ellen Taff has always said preservation is a thankless job as she worked tirelessly to preserve and enhance the history of Euharlee," EVHS president Guy Parmenter said. "It's great that the EVHS can support the grass roots work of the Euharlee Historical Society and recognize the outstanding work of its founder, Mary Ellen Taff."

Spanning over two decades, Ms. Taff's contributions to the preservation of local history include founding the Euharlee Historical Society and establishing the Euharlee History Museum. She was instrumental in the publication of *The History of Euharlee*, and is directly linked to the preservation of the Euharlee Covered Bridge, one of the last remaining covered bridges in Georgia.

*See **Lifetime Achievement**, continued on page 2*

The Munford House Past & Present

Former Headquarters of EVHS
Finds New Purpose in Powder Springs

By Bill & Angela Birdsong

The story of how we found the Munford house is nothing short of a blessing in our lives. We had been married only two short months when we found ourselves casually touring the West Cobb area looking at properties. We had no idea what that afternoon ride would lead to. Initially, we were in no hurry to buy, until we found the house of our dreams. Actually, we felt as though the house found us.

As newlyweds, we were looking forward to getting settled and beginning our new lives together. Our out-

*See **Past & Present**, continued on page 4*



The Munford House, built by Zimri and Milton Jackson in 1859 for Lewis Martin Munford, was originally located on Atlantic Steel property near Cassville. From 1979 to 1982, the house served as the museum headquarters of the EVHS. Today it is located in Powder Springs and is the home of EVHS members Bill and Angela Birdsong. Photo from Historic Bartow County.



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The EVHS office and research facilities are located in the 1903 courthouse at

115 West Cherokee Avenue in downtown Cartersville.

Visit EVHS online at www.evhsonline.org

Email evhs@evhsonline.org

Stilesboro, Euharlee & Brandon Family History

Membership Meeting

May 18, 2002

The first EVHS dinner meeting of the year attracted a large group of members and guests to Belvedere, the Stilesboro home of Jody and Delean Brandon. The house, completed in 1997, is not historic, but the land surrounding it is, being Brandon family ancestral land dating back to its original settlement by Thomas Wiley Brandon in the 1830s. One of the first pioneers to brave what was then the western frontier, Brandon brought religion and education to the area with the establishment of Brandon's Chapel in 1834 and is closely associated with the early development of Stilesboro. Jody is the fifth generation of Brandons to remain on the land; his son Ivey (nick named for the Roman numerals which distinguish him as Joseph Brandon IV) now represents the sixth generation.

The evening's double-billed program also included Euharlee history presented by the president of the Euharlee Historical Society, Mary Ellen Taff. Originally settled by Nat Burge as Burge's Mill, the town boasted a three-story grist mill located just below the bridge. Until recently, the economy relied heavily on agriculture, and this is the heritage Taff hopes to preserve. To that end, plans are for a brick walkway from the store



Delean and Jody Brandon graciously hosted the May membership-dinner meeting at their home "Belvedere" in Stilesboro. Though not a historic home, the setting was classic Bartow County, set as it was on Brandon family ancestral land dating back to the 1830s.

to the bridge containing names of pioneers and modern-day preservationists.

The meeting concluded with the presentation of the EVHS Lifetime Achievement Award (story on page 1). ∞

Lifetime Achievement, continued from page 1

As president of the Euharlee Historical Society and a daily volunteer at the museum, Ms. Taff welcomes the opportunity to share her knowledge and love of the area with visitors who come from near and far.

"The historical society is here to preserve and protect what we have so that it will become an asset for Euharlee, now and in the future," Taff said, adding "I'm honored to be a part of Euharlee, and honored to receive this award."

Ms. Taff was presented the EVHS Lifetime Achievement Award during the May Membership-Dinner Meeting. EVHS president Guy Parmenter and Cemetery Preservation Committee Chairman Carl Etheridge spoke glowingly of Ms. Taff as they remarked on her many efforts to pre-

serve the history of Euharlee. Also present for the ceremony was Euharlee Mayor Steve Worthington, who presented Ms. Taff with an award announcing a resolution by the City of Euharlee declaring May 18th as Mary Ellen Taff Day.

The Etowah Valley Historical Society Lifetime Achievement Award will continue to annually recognize those individuals who best represent and achieve the society's mission of "promoting and enhancing the awareness and preservation of the heritage and traditions of Bartow County." Only those individuals whose contributions span twenty years or more will be considered as candidates. They need not be a member of EVHS to be eligible. For more information about the award's guidelines and nomination process, contact a board member. ∞

Historic Preservation Week May 12-18

Collaboration Unites County Resources to Promote Local History



Numerous volunteers from EVHS and the Cartersville Historic Preservation Commission braved the unfriendly elements to take turns manning the preservation booth at Mayfest on Saturday, May 4, 2002. Pictured left to right are vice-chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission Masie Underwood, and EVHS members Frank Entwistle, Tricia Simmons, Lizette Entwistle, and Jerry Simmons.

Kicking off National Historic Preservation Month, EVHS teamed up with the Bartow History Center and the Cartersville Historic Preservation Commission to sponsor a "preservation booth" at the annual Mayfest in downtown Cartersville on Saturday, May 4th. The idea was to take advantage of the community event to actively promote preservation and to advertise the county's local observance of Historic Preservation Week in Bartow County, May 12-18.

"This was an EVHS first," president Guy Parmenter said, "It is a good way to get the EVHS name out to the public and to let the public know what we do, not to mention inviting them to join."

Wind, rain, and a bitter chill could not deter the many volunteers who took shifts minding the booth from early morning until 6 p.m., nor could it stop the hundreds of visitors to the event, a large number of whom stopped by

the preservation booth. Most of the material offered at the booth consisted of handouts and brochures advertising the organizations, local history, and upcoming events. The most popular items were pencils inscribed with "The History Center" and a bottomless bowl of old-fashioned salt water taffy from which visitors helped themselves. The event concluded with a double drawing for two books (*History of Bartow County* and *The Iron Man of Georgia*), donated by EVHS.

With the preliminaries out of the way, Historic Preservation Week got underway on Monday, May 13, when Bartow County Commissioner Clarence Brown and Cartersville Mayor Mike Fields signed a proclamation making it official. Many of the week's activities were sponsored by the Bartow History Center and included a lecture, a workshop, and a vintage plant sale and seed swap.

The grandest effort of the week's events occurred on Thursday, May 16th, when EVHS coordinated with other organizations to sponsor a county wide "Sample Our History Open House." Participating in the day-long event were the Bartow History Center, the Cartersville Historic Preservation Commission, Cartersville Downtown Development Authority, Cartersville-Bartow Convention & Visitor's Bureau, Euharlee Historical Society, Kingston

See Preservation Week, continued on page 6



Above: The EVHS Open House on Thursday, May 16th, attracted about 30 to 40 people to the society's headquarters, where volunteers served refreshments and led tours of the office and research facility.

Left: On Monday, May 13, Bartow County Commissioner Clarence Brown and Cartersville Mayor Mike Fields signed a proclamation officially declaring the observance of Historic Preservation Week in Bartow County. Witnessing the signing were (left to right) director of the Bartow History Center Michele Rodgers, chairman and vice-chair of the Cartersville Historic Preservation Commission Joel Adams and Masie Underwood, president of EVHS Guy Parmenter, and History Center staff members Trey Gaines and Tina Shadden.



standing real estate agent, John Stone with Coldwell Banker, assisted us in our search for a new home. We wanted a small amount of land if possible but had our doubts about finding anything we could seriously attain.

The day with our agent yielded viewing three mediocre homes when we were ready to call it a day. The last listing was a vague description of a 142 year old 3 bedroom 2 bath Victorian house on five acres. Our initial reaction was that we had no intentions of getting involved in the renovation of an old house, especially since we had only been married two months. My husband was not interested and neither was I, but we were still curious about this strange nondescript listing.

We decided to view the house out of curiosity, expecting a dilapidated structure needing bulldozing to utilize the acreage. We had no idea what we were about to stumble upon.

As we turned into the overgrown, barely visible gravel driveway, we saw a yellow house peeking through the pine trees at the end of the lane about 600 feet off the road. We both gasped at the unexpected beauty of the old house. What a surprise and rare find in such a private setting. It was like stepping back into time. As we got out of the car, our realtor was as shocked as we were. We began to explore the grounds and tour the house. Our realtor also fell in love with the stately home and considered it a very unique property, despite the much-needed TLC. The house's charm was overwhelming nonetheless.

The house was in incredible shape and appeared to need only cosmetic work and updating. However, it was listed as a foreclosure with an "as is" stipulation. We feared that the house had major structural damage or some other unforeseen problems that had deterred buyers. This was the beginning of a research project to find out the history of this magnificent house.

Our search revealed that the house had been on the market 2 years earlier, before the bank had taken ownership. It had only been back on the market for one week. It was as if the house had sat vacant for two years waiting on us. During that time, many people had toured the house, but due to the out of state complications the house had been

unattainable. We are still amazed at the amount of onlookers and interest the house generates even now. Fortunately we were the first people to view the house since it had been listed again, but the secret would not last long. A

previous agent was able to tell us some details and give us the name of Guy Parmenter for inquiries. Mr. Parmenter was very helpful in filling in the gaps and providing us with history on the house, photographs, articles, and previous EVHS notes from historical society meetings. We truly appreciate his support with our ongoing research.

The house was built in 1859 by Zimri and Milton Jackson, well-known architects and builders of early Victorian homes in the area

(see *The Jackson Brothers "Builders of Cartersville"*, EVHS Newsletter, May 1994). The house was constructed several miles north of Cartersville, near Cassville, Georgia, in an area today known as Peoples Valley. The house belonged to the Munford family for several generations, the original owner being Lewis Martin Munford of Cass (Bartow) County. The house was handed down from Lewis Martin Munford to his son, Lewis Sims Munford, and from Lewis

Sims Munford to his daughter, Mrs. Louise Munford Peoples, and from Mrs. Peoples to her children, Lewis Munford Peoples and Mary Peoples Daves. The Munford house in later years was known as the Peoples house and was located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Old Grassdale Road and Peoples Valley Road.

The original house had five rooms and a detached kitchen. Today, the house has seven rooms, which include 3 bedrooms, living room, dining room, grand foyer, two baths, a library, and a kitchen. The windows in the front rooms have three tiered nine-foot sections with hand-blown glass of that period. Most of the walls are original plaster and the floors are wideboard heart pine planks. The ceilings are original wood planks and the house has 6 fireplaces. The 3,200 sq. foot Victorian has a large front

porch and a porch off the kitchen in the back of the house. A magnificent semi-free standing staircase dominates the entrance foyer.

Before the Munford house was moved, it was last oc-



The Munford-Birdsong House in Powder Springs



The grand foyer



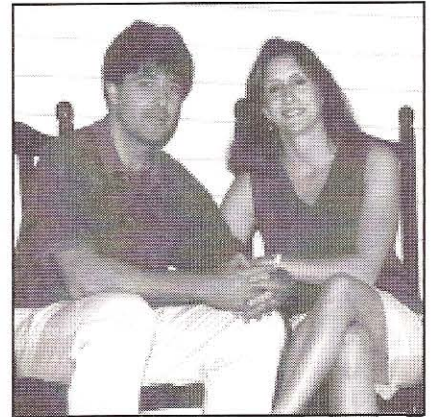
An upstairs bedroom showcases the creative talents of builders Zimri and Milton Jackson, whose angled windows and curved walls create visual excitement.

cupied by the Etowah Valley Historical Society (1979-1982) on the Atlantic Steel property located in Peoples Valley. The Etowah Valley Historical Society had utilized the home for their headquarters and a museum for public tours. The house was later sold in 1983 and moved to 5495 Wright Road, Powder Springs in Cobb County where it remains today. The family that purchased the home in 1983 had it moved from Cassville to the present location and occupied the home until 1999. It appeared that the house had been under renovations since the EVHS began improvements in 1979. The previous owners had done major reconstruction and structural projects upon moving the house. We submitted a contract on the house contingent upon an inspection. Much to our surprise, the inspector reported that the house was in excellent shape with no major hidden problems. We were ecstatic at the great inspection report and praying for a successful and uneventful contract to purchase.

We had recently spent our honeymoon in Charleston, South Carolina, which gave us fresh vision and motivation to take on such a big project. We both love antiques and historic places and events. It seemed an ambitious venture for newlyweds, but great opportunities only come along every now and then. The question wasn't should we go for it, but rather how can we not go for it. We put in the first bid, but soon found ourselves in a bidding war with two other families. We prayerfully submitted our bid and hoped for the best. After a very long week of anxiously awaiting a decision, John Stone called with good news. The bank had accepted our offer and we closed in 3 short weeks. Now the work was really beginning.

The summer of 2001 was spent cleaning, painting, caulking, refinishing floors, installing molding, and many other projects too numerous to list. We worked practically around the clock for two months and finally moved into the old Munford house in September and proceeded to work diligently nights and weekends for the next year. The colors used are warm and vibrant historic colors. In that year, my husband and his coworkers spent extensive hours

doing renovations and various projects to attain our visions for this wonderful old mansion. We completely renovated both bathrooms preserving the lovely original clawfoot bathtub. We both wanted a grand dining room, so we completely renovated it, installing elaborate crown molding and wainscoting authentic to the era. He built a grand mantel, matching the others in the house, to encase the dining room fireplace. He was extremely talented and artistic in his endeavors, going to great extremes to preserve the authentic and historic qualities of this unique old mansion.



Bill and Angela Birdsong

Restoring the Munford Place is an ongoing journey that we very much enjoy. Bill and I truly treasure our new home and plan to live here the rest of our lives. We feel very blessed. It's funny how sometimes the best things in life seem to find you when you least expect it. ☺

138th Anniversary of the Battle of Allatoona Pass Celebration Features Dedication of Texas Monument

The Georgia Division of Reenactors will celebrate the 138th anniversary of the Battle of Allatoona Pass, Saturday and Sunday, October 5th & 6th, with a Civil War Encampment featuring infantry, artillery, and signal corps demonstrations. Tours will be conducted throughout the day on Saturday, and on Sunday morning. Sunday will include the traditional "free lunch," sponsored by EVHS, on the front porch of the Clayton Mooney House, which will also be open for tours. Saturday's highlight will be the unveiling of a monument honoring Texans who fought in the battle. The keynote speaker will be Chuck Carlock, author of *The Tenth Texas Regiment in the Civil War 1861-1865*.

Donations for the Texas monument continue to come in, with \$3805 raised to date. A total of \$6,400 is needed, and donations will continue to be collected. Anyone interested in contributing should make their check payable to the Etowah Valley Historical Society, and mail it to PO Box 1886, Cartersville, Georgia 30120. ☺

Family Tree Climbers Genealogy Workshops Benefit Researchers



Trey Gaines and Tina Shadden (at opposite ends of the table) were among those who signed up for a two-part beginners genealogy workshop in June, led by EVHS Family Tree Climber Chairperson, Linda Cochran (second from left). Assisting Linda with the class was Megan Gravelly.

One of the most popular ways to enjoy history is through genealogy, the study of family ancestry and lineage. Researchers who have been at it for a while will tell you it's fun and exciting learning about the people who came before you, and it's not all that difficult to do. But for those who have never taken that first step into their past, getting started might be the biggest hurdle to overcome.

That's where Linda Chochran can help. Linda is a professional genealogist, with over twenty years experience, and chairperson of the EVHS Family Tree Climbers. Besides bringing in guest speakers for the FTC's monthly meetings, Linda offers beginning, intermediate, and advanced genealogy workshops throughout the year. She also offers ethnic and other specific research classes, such as Native American genealogy and Ellis Island research.

Linda's most recent class was a two-day workshop taught on June 8th and 22nd for beginning genealogists. Classes and workshops are always free of charge, as are workbooks and other materials necessary for the class.

If you would be interested in taking a genealogy workshop, or would like more information about the Family Tree Climbers, contact Linda through the EVHS office at 770-606-8862, or email her at lindagenealogy@yahoo.com. The Family Tree Climbers meet the second Thursday of every month in the EVHS office in the 1903 courthouse. Meeting times vary, depending on the time of year. ☺

Preservation Week, continued from page 3

Women's History Club, Adairsville Historical Society, and Rose Lawn, all of which offered refreshments and free admission to their museums and archives. EVHS shared its reception with the Cartersville Historic Preservation Commission, whose office is upstairs in the 1903 courthouse. The reception and open house, held between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., was attended by thirty to forty people, some of whom had visited the society headquarters before, and some who had never even been inside the courthouse.

Downtown Cartersville has long been an important aspect of the county's history, and in an effort to promote that history, and to reward those who support downtown shops and restaurants, EVHS sponsored "An Evening Downtown" with live music on the square from 6 to 8 p.m., on Friday, May 17th. The CVB and DDA, whose new offices were recently relocated to the renovated Depot, also participated in the Evening Downtown by keeping their offices open for visitors who are unable to visit the facilities during regular business hours. Music was provided by Polly Todd and friends, whose selection of tunes featured old-country, gospel, and Civil War music.

Reporting on the event, President Parmenter said, "Preservation Week proved a great way to interact with other historical organizations throughout the county. We all felt a real sense of cooperation, coming together to show Bartow Countians how much effort goes into preserving our historical resources and actually showing off our abundance of resources.

"Next year's Preservation Week should be even bigger and better in the continuing struggle of promoting historic awareness throughout the County. Collaborating with other historical organizations helps us fulfill our goals and ambitions beyond our resource capabilities. Many of the smaller historic communities take great pride in their heritage and work very hard to preserve what they have. These small grass roots, so to speak, efforts are far beyond the scope of what EVHS can offer. The best use of our resources is to support these efforts wherever they are found and work hard ourselves everywhere between and beyond." ☺

October Elections

The EVHS board of directors is now accepting nominations for the election of three new directors, to be held during the annual business meeting, October 5, 2002 at Valley View. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. A nominating committee has been appointed by the president to receive nominations. Members may submit their nominations in writing to president Guy Parmenter on or before September 5, 2002.



History & Horses

Membership Meeting

June 22, 2002

About eighty members and their guests attended the June dinner meeting at Old Mill Farm, the twenty-six acre thoroughbred racehorse training facility tucked away within the city limits of Cartersville. Owner Billy Wright was delighted with the turnout. "We don't get that many visitors out here. It's great that you came."

The farm is the family estate of William J. Weinman, who came to Bartow County, in 1915, pursuing mineral interests. A philanthropist, Weinman contributed much to the community during the Depression and throughout his lifetime, and donated the Weinman Memorial Stadium at Cartersville High School in 1956.

"He was always doing wonderful things," said Virginia Yates, who has been with the farm, in one capacity or another, for forty-six years. "He was very community oriented."

Following Weinman's death in 1966, the family established the Weinman Mineral Museum to educate youth about minerals in Bartow County and Northwest Georgia. His widow, Frances Weinman, Wright's grandmother and a horse enthusiast, remarried Argentinian horse trainer Huratio Luro, and little by little the estate became a racehorse farm.

Perhaps the most enjoyable part of the evening was when Old Mill Farm's trainer Frank Lewis introduced a number of horses to the group and spoke about their training and daily routine on the farm. Also interesting was his explanation of the great skill required to win the Triple Crown, the rare prize given to horses who succeed in winning the three legs of the Crown, the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, and the Belmont Stakes.

"The horse that wins the Triple Crown is indeed a superhorse," Lewis remarked. That said, it becomes an even greater source of community pride to learn that Northern Dancer, trained by Huratio Luro at Old Mill, came within six lengths of sweeping the Triple Crown after winning the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness in 1964. ∞



Above: Weinman descendant and owner of Old Mill Farm Billy Wright (left) graciously hosted the EVHS June dinner meeting on the historic horse farm. Trainer Frank Lewis (right) led a tour of the stables, showed off some of the horses, and shared the wealth of his vast knowledge and "horse sense" with the group. Below: Long-time business associate Virginia Yates (left) spoke about the Weinmans and shared her memories of the family. Pictured with Virginia is Cathy Lewis, a farm associate and wife of Frank Lewis.



Don't Miss A Thing!

Mark Your Calendar For Upcoming Events

Saturday, August 31

Membership-Dinner Meeting

5:00 p.m., Munford-Birdsong House

EVHS gets back to its roots with a visit to its former headquarters, now the home of members Angela and Bill Birdsong in Powder Springs. Dinner \$12. Reservations Requested.

Coming in September

EVHS Ramble Through Bartow County

Keep your weekends free, as planning is still underway for a mini-tour of selected outdoor sites in Bartow County that will include lunch or dinner. An announcement will be made when plans are finalized.

Saturday, October 5

EVHS Annual Business-Dinner Meeting

5:30 p.m., Valley View

Celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of EVHS where it began, at historic Valley View, home of Bob and Mary Norton. The evening will include some history of Valley View, a look back at the past year, the election of directors, and award presentations. Dinner \$12. Reservations requested.

Monday, November 4

Membership Meeting

7:00 p.m., Bartow County Library, Main Branch

Historian Lisa Crawford and archaeologist Terri Lotti will discuss their roles with the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Saturday, December 7

Christmas at Rose Lawn

7:00 p.m.

Join us for an evening of fellowship and merriment as we celebrate the holidays at the former home of evangelist Sam Jones, now a Victorian house museum.

Thank you to Joanne Smith for the cooler of bottled water enjoyed by guests at the June membership meeting at Old Mill Farm and for the new office filing cabinets!

Etowah Valley Historical Society

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www.evhsonline.org

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