

# ETOWAH VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July 1993

P.O. Box 1886, Cartersville, Georgia 30120

## ROGERS MILL (FORMERLY JONES MILL)

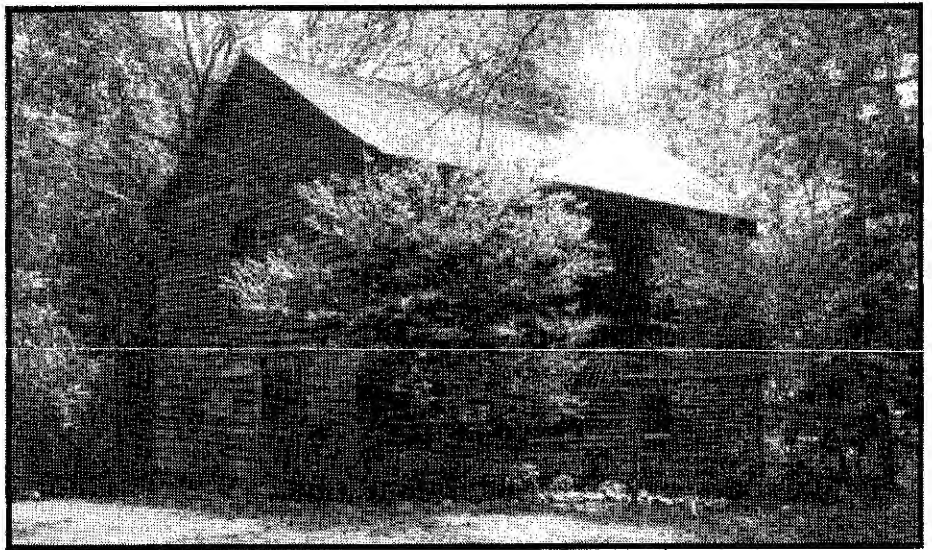
Many men's dreams in the Rainbow Division of World War I lie buried with them in the fields of France but Clark Rogers is an exception....he's presently living out his dream here in Bartow County where he operates the century old Jones Mill.

Rogers, a retired U. S. Deputy Marshal, in recounting the fulfillment of his war time dream said, "While lying in the trenches of France, the picture of this old mill came to mind often. I could see the creek waters flowing down to the mill and the picture was so serene."

"I told myself that if I lived to come back to the United States I was going to buy the Jones Mill if it were at all possible. I sometimes thought I would never make it but I did. I was one of the lucky ones."

It was 1934 before Rogers was able to purchase the old mill which had been out of operation for approximately 26 years at that time. "It was in bad shape when I got it," Rogers admits. But he put it back into working order and has been operating it as a sideline since that time.

Rogers says he has no idea how old the mill actually is, but most educated guesses have estimated that it was there long before 1875. Charlie Jones, brother of the famous evangelist Sam Jones, operated the mill back during the turn of the century and it was then that the present concrete dam was built on the property. Before the concrete dam was constructed, a wooden dam held back the water of Pettit Creek. During the wooden dam era, the mill was operated by O. R. McElroy and W. T.



*Photo by Guy Parmenter  
Rogers Mill as seen today. Circa 1879.*

Burton....perhaps others.

Rogers makes his home at the mill site with his sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Word. The three of them have put the old Jones house back into fine shape and live as comfortable as any family in the country.

Word also is retired and he, Mrs. Word and Rogers share the work load at the mill site. Rogers does the mechanical work and the farming at the mill and Word takes care of the buying and selling of corn and meal. Arthur Dickson operates the mill for the owners. Dickson says he has been in the mill profession all of his life. He has been working for Rogers and Word for the past 13 years and is most cooperative in showing visitors around the mill which is one of the few remaining in America today.

Rogers says he doesn't know where there is another

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*Phillip Word busy grinding grain. Photo courtesy of Butch Walker.*

grist mill in operation at the present time. No doubt there is a strong economical factor behind the passing of the mill scene.

"A man would be up against it if he depended on the old fashioned grist mill to earn him a living," Rogers confided. He said he is just keeping it open as a hobby and a love more than anything else. Rogers' family were in the mill business during his youth.

"And, too, I like to have it here so the younger generation can see how their ancestors had to fight for their livelihood."

Rogers admitted that the world was making "tremendous" strides forward but his conversation hinted strongly that the individual was losing his self sufficiency. He spelled his theory out by explaining the back breaking task of shaping the mill stone with the crude tools of yesterday.

He said a man would go deep in the woods and find the necessary stone, bring it back by oxen and then spend three to four months chiseling the rock into perfect balance and shape. He was quick to remind this reporter that this was before the days of pneumatic drills and other such instruments which make stone cutting simpler. It was man against nature with but crude tools consisting of a chisel and a hammer to aid his cause.

When asked if he thought there was a man in this part of the country who could get the job done under the conditions which existed during the 1800's, he answered in the negative.

"I don't think there is a man in the county who could shape a mill stone like these," and he pointed to the ones in his yard. Those stones, he said, were cut before the

Civil War.

"There is only one man in the country that I know of who would even know how to begin shaping a mill stone and that would be Willie Pinnon. He helped my Uncle Jim Rogers cut some stones."

Although the mill days have played out and no longer is it possible to make a living at it, it hasn't always been that way. Back in the 1800's the miller was an important man in the community.

There are laws which attest to this fact. The miller was so important to the communities well-being that laws were enacted which excused him from jury duty and road work. The road work was a necessary evil back in the early days of the country. Every citizen had to serve

on the road crews to keep the routes of the time passable. The oldest laws of the land, according to Rogers, protect the miller.

Concerning mill stones, apparently there were few men who could cut mill stones back in the days of strong backs and inferior tools because Rogers said his grandfather, John Rogers cut a couple of stones for an Indian Chief who owned a plantation at the time in Bartow County. For his services John Rogers was paid \$500 by the Indian Chief. "And \$500 was a lot of money in those days," he attested.

Rogers' partner, Word, has vivid memories of the old Jones Mill from his childhood. He said he remembered coming to the mill on a Sunday School picnic with Mrs. A. O. Grander when he was about 10 years old.

Word went on to graduate from Georgia Tech and has spent 35 years in the coal mines.

A trip to the Jones Mill is as a voyage into the American past. This reporter, dreaming in the shadows of by gone years, was brought back to the present by the roar of a jet overhead. Rogers, Word, and myself looked up to see a F-86 doing rolls through the sky.

Rogers spoke up. "That's his job and he can have it. I'm going to stay here and let the world go by."

Harris Dalton

*Reprinted with permission of The Bartow Herald. This article was originally printed under the title "Rogers, Word Operate Last Water Mill In this Area; All Part of Army Dream".*

# OOTHCALOOGA CHURCH

**EDITORS NOTE:** We thank The Tribune News for allowing us to reprint this June 23, 1927 article, originally published under the title "Bayless E. Lewis Tells History of Early Church". Bayless Earle Lewis, who tells the history of Oothcalooga Church in the article, was one of the five children born to Bayless Washington and Frances Gaines Lewis in Bartow County. This Family and descendents have been a prominent part of the county's history from its earliest days, continuing to the present. You will find an account of this family in the Early Settlers section of Lucy J. Cunyus' book, History of Bartow, County, Georgia. Refer also to the article "Historic Lewis Home" in the March, 1993 Society Newsletter.

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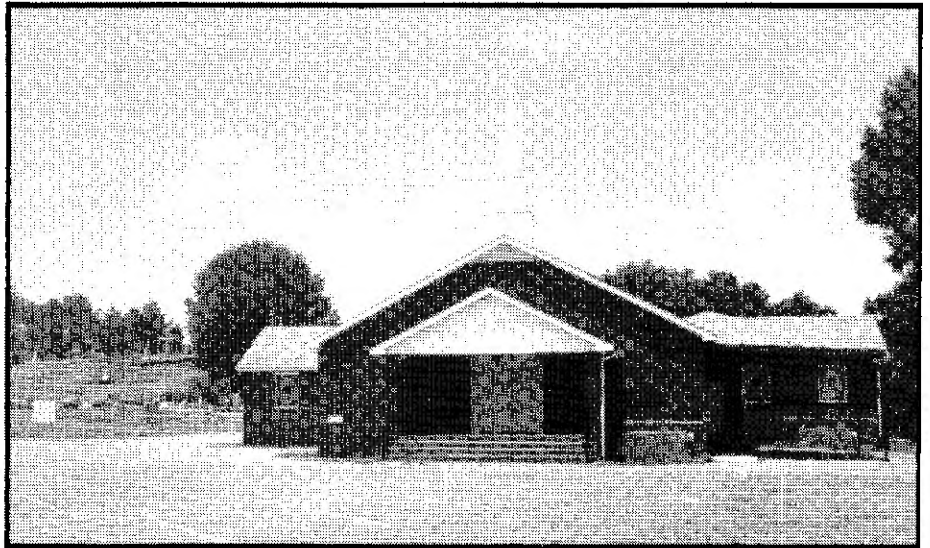
By special request, Mr. Bayless Earle Lewis gave the Tribune News the following resume of the history of the Oothcalooga Church, which he also gave at the recent homecoming day celebration, held in that church, which stands a mile and a half from Adairsville.

Mr. Lewis not only spoke from his own recollection, but told incidents and bits of history which he remembered hearing from his father, Mr. Bayless Washington Lewis, and his mother, Frances Gaines, who were early comers to this section. Mr. Lewis' grandfather, Major John Lewis, a soldier in the Revolution, is buried in Oothcalooga cemetery.

Oothcalooga Church is the oldest place of worship in North Georgia, having been first an Indian mission station. The land was given by Noah Whittsides and, according to deeds, reverts to his heirs, the King family, if ever it ceases to be used for church purposes.

The first building, of logs, with puncheon seats and hand hewn pulpit, was across the road from where the present church now stands. In it the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterians joined in worship. Later the Methodist withdrew and built a church at Poplar Springs, and the Presbyterians, few in number, disbanded, leaving the Baptist to continue their organization.

They outgrew the original church, so built another



*Photo by Guy Parmenter*

*Oothcalooga Church as seen today. Established in 1835.*

across the road and the log building was torn down by L. F. Mooney and rebuilt as a dwelling house where the brick yard is now located.

The new church stood till Sherman's army came and tore it down to make tents, as they expected to remain there for some time, but only stayed twenty four hours.

A few years after the Civil War a third church was erected, the present structure, which was repaired and improved last year through the gift of \$1,000 by the Tatum brothers of Miami, Florida, whose forebears were among the early members and are buried in the adjoining cemetery. Until that time the Baptist worshiped in the neighborhood school house. The old pews, rebuilt, are still in use.

Among the early preachers, according to Mr. Lewis' recollection, were Reverends R. H. Headden, P. F. Hawkins, Clemmons D. K. Moreland, J. A. McMurray, George Harris, G. S. Tumlin, D. B. Hamilton, John Crawford Clore and Pinkney Blanton. The last was among those who entered the gold rush to California, but returned to Georgia.

Some of the deacons were: Jesse Swain, David Crawford and Larkin Towers. Mr. Lewis did not have the church books to refer to when giving this interview, so merely mentioned a few who came to his mind.

The first grave dug in the old cemetery, according to Mr. Lewis' father's remembrance was that of a man named Polhill who was injured on the railroad; though

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### *Oothcalooga Church Continued*

some say the first buried was that of a Negro child. Mr. Polhill's brother came a few years later and marked the grave with a rough rock on which he cut the name and date with a chisel. Col. John N. Gray, then a boy, "struck" for him.

There are people today who remember the crowds who used to attend services in this old church, 'til they overflowed to arbors built in the yard: the associations, general meetings, especially the protracted meetings and many were converts to religion.

One of the most picturesque characters who professed at this alter was Bob Rogers, though there were others quite original in temperament.

The history of Oothcalooga contains, naturally, the whole gambit of human experience, and a complete record of membership, especially of those who rest in ancient burying ground, would be of value to Bartow County and the state of Georgia, as their descendants have gone forth, some to show the same courage, initiative and pioneer spirit in modern times, that were displayed by their ancestors who ventured into the Cherokee country before the departure of the Indians, and made for themselves, their children and great grandchildren, homes that will stand almost within the shadow of old Oothcalooga Church.

Submitted by DiAnne Smith Monroe

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Especially enjoyed the current issue of the Society's newsletter with the fine article on "The Oaks". Have been there several times and once with Mr. Kurtz and so good to see all this in print. Too bad someone has not come along willing to restore this beautiful home.

Also found the article about the "Kingston Methodist Church" to be most interesting. Have been there in times past on several occasions for the Annual Homecoming Confederate Memorial Day services. This nice article contains an error and one that I have also seen presented in other publications recently. It has to do with the naming of Kingston. John Pendleton King was never president of the Western & Atlantic Railroad. He was President of the Georgia RR and Banking Company from 1841 to 1878 and President of the Atlanta & La Grange RR and the Atlanta & West Point RR from 1849 to 1880. Certainly a railroad pioneer for Georgia. The W&A RR never had a president as it was an agency of the State government until 1870 and then was under lease to the present day. The company that first leased the W&A in 1870 was the W&A RR Company and it's president was war-time Governor Joseph M. Brown. Mr. King was on his board and a stockholder in the company.

Colonel James G. Bogle

## NEED A PROGRAM?

Guy Parmenter and Dianne Tate are traveling to various clubs and organizations spreading the word about our Society. Guy describes the various activities of the Society and Dianne talks about the Historic Awareness Sign program. To date, they have addressed the Cartersville Rotary Club, the Bartow County Rotary Club the First Brands/Union Carbide Retirees, the Euharlee Narcissus Club, the Adairsville San Souci Club and the Stilesboro Improvement Club. Many new members have joined the Society as a result of their endeavors. Need a program for your club? Call Guy at 382-5371 or Dianne at 386-7944.

## TROLLEY TOUR

On August 28th, the EVHS in conjunction with the Cartersville-Bartow County Tourism Council is sponsoring a Trolley Tour of Cartersville during the Downtown Hoedown. Society members will be presenting historical information about Cartersville during the tour.

## HISTORIC AWARENESS SIGNS

Dianne Tate, Chairman, reports that a push is on to finalize research in Cartersville. If you are in the process of researching your sign, please hurry in order to have your sign up for the August 28th Trolley Tour.



# HISTORIC CASSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

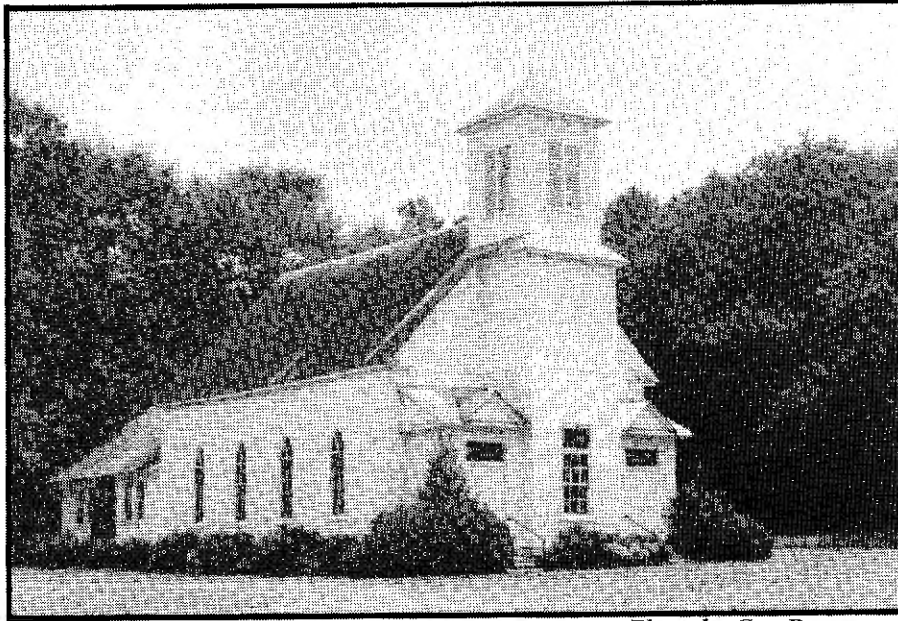


Photo by Guy Parmenter

*Founded in 1836, the Cassville United Methodist Church was burned during the Civil War, and the present church was rebuilt on the original foundation.*

**EDITORS NOTE:** This article was written in 1981 by Harold Gilreath, the great-grandson of George Holton Gilreath, an early settler of Bartow County. This article is a series of recollections by a long-standing member and is a significant contribution to the history of this church. It was contributed by DiAnne Smith Monroe, and was given to her by Jean Bishop Cochran.

The land was given to the Cassville Methodist Church by the Myers family.

There is not much that can be said about the early history of the Church, as there has never been any records found, and all we have is what has been handed down to us by the early members of the church.

The first Methodist Conference for the Cherokee District was held in Macon, Georgia on January 15, 1836. T. H. Thomas was appointed pastor and he served most of that year.

About the time the organ came into use some of the members got crossed up, as some members wanted an organ in the church and others did not. They finally got the conflict settled and the church got an organ in the early 1890's.

My great grandfather, George Gilreath, helped build

the church, supported it, and attended church as long as he was able.

My grandfather, J. K. Gilreath, was in charge of the music for years. There wasn't any musical instruments in the churches in those days. All they had was the tuning fork and hymn book. My father, S. A. Gilreath, was also in charge of the music for many years. He attended church as long as he was able.

The church building we see today still has the original hewn foundation. Before the Civil War there was a balcony for the black people with the stairway on the south end. During the war the soldiers took some of the pews from the church and turned them together to make a feeding place for their horses. There was a shell hole in the church wall that was made during the war

from the fighting around the church. It was covered when the church was redone after the war.

About the turn of the century three nice pulpit chairs were given to the church by Judge John Akin. During those days when there was a revival meeting the church would be full and lots of people would have to stand outside at the windows to hear the preacher.

We have had many good preachers in the years gone by, and we have one of the best now. I would not know which way to turn to find a better one than S. A. Wesley. We are glad to have him with us.

Herman Henderson was Superintendent of Sunday School for years. He spent much of his time and money on the church. He did so much for the church, that he has surely been missed since his passing.

Uncle Billy Gaines attended church for years, and he lived his religion every day of his life. Brother Myers attended church as long as he was able. During revivals he had a certain time in the evenings to ring the church bell, calling all the people to worship. In his will, he gave the church a nice sum of money.

I joined the church in 1911 and my first Sunday School teacher was Mrs. Bill Chum. She was a grand lady and I have many memories of her.

After 145 years it is still a grand old church.

# CORRA HARRIS



*Picture taken from  
Prominent Women of Georgia.*

Bartow County can claim two nationally-known writers. One is Major Charles Henry Smith, the post-Civil War humorist known as "Bill Arp". The other was a strong willed, independent lady who spend the last twentytwo years of her life in nearby Pine Log, Georgia. Her rural neighbors knew her as a reclusive, somewhat eccentric person who was afraid of nothing and no one. Her thousands of readers knew her as Corra Harris--the author of "A Circuit Rider's Wife".

Today, Mrs. Harris is still best known for that book, mainly because it was made into a movie which starred Susan Hayward entitled "I'd Climb the Highest Mountain". Few people remember her other books and her writings are usually not included in classes in Southern literature. Mrs. Harris, however, maintains a place in local history that will remain.

Mrs. Harris was born Corra May White on March 17, 1869 in Elbert County. Her father, Tinsley R. White, was a Confederate veteran and her mother, the former Mary Elizabeth Matthews, was descended from a distinguished family. Corra grew up to be very aware of her heritage.

Although her formal education only lasted for 36 months, Corra's natural curiosity and her mother's constant tutoring gradually turned her into a very cultured and literary-minded young lady. At the age of 16, she received a license to teach first grade and began the only career that a "respectable" woman could have at that time.

Corra's term as a schoolteacher was cut short, however, by her marriage in 1887 to Lundy Howard Harris, a young Methodist minister who had recently graduated from Emory University. The Rev. Harris had been assigned as a circuit riding preacher in the north Georgia mountains, so Corra spent her first year of marriage traveling from one rural church to another while her husband

preached the gospel. Later, she would use this experience for the basis of her most famous book "A Circuit Rider's Wife".

Contrary to popular belief, Lundy Harris soon left the preaching circuit to take a position as a professor of Greek at Emory's School of Theology. Things went well for the Harris' until Lundy, who had always been prone to nervous disorders, began to develop mental problems. Convinced that he had somewhat lost his salvation, Lundy left his wife and daughter in 1898 to go to Texas in search of "a man who has the Spirit". Although he eventually returned, his condition prevented him from holding any steady job.

It was then that Corra began to write. Her career started with a letter to the editor of "Independent" magazine protesting a derogatory article on the South which the magazine had published.

The editors were impressed with her writing skills and Corra soon found herself with royalty checks and demands for her articles and stories. From the "Independent" she advanced to the "Saturday Evening Post", "Harper's", "Ladies Home Journal" and "The Country Gentlemen", doing columns, book reviews, short stories and serialized novels.

Just when financial worries seemed behind her, tragedy struck Corra's life. While visiting friends near the community of Pine Log, Lundy Harris suddenly became despondent and apparently committed suicide by taking



*Photo by Guy Parmenter  
Corra Harris Home "In the Valley".*

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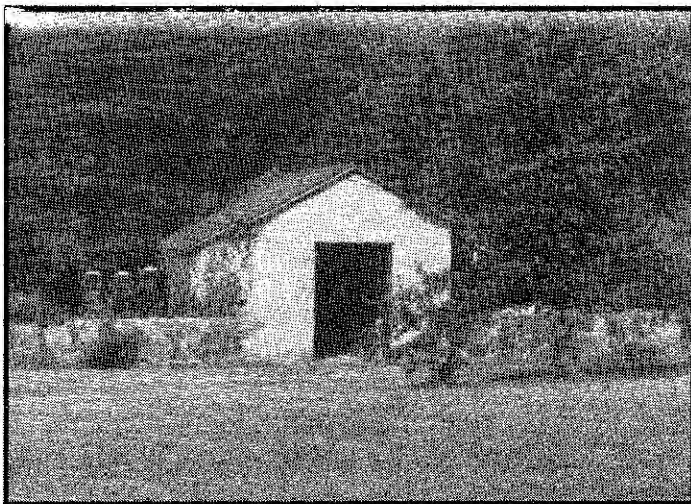
### *Corra Harris Continued*

an overdose of morphine. In 1913 three years after his death, Mrs. Harris moved to Bartow County to be "near his spirit".

With a substantial income from her writing, Mrs. Harris bought 300 acres near Rydal. On her property she found the ruins of an old log cabin which had once belonged to a Cherokee Indian Chief. Feeling somehow "drawn" to the sight, she had her house built around the ruins. She called her new home "In the Valley".

Mrs. Harris continued her writing. In 1914, she went overseas for the "Saturday Evening Post" as the first female war correspondent. Later, she published not one but two autobiographies, and lectured at various colleges. She received three honorary degrees, including a doctorate in literature, even though she had never even graduated from a high school.

Tragedy came again in 1919 when Corra's daughter, Faith Harris Leech, died unexpectedly. Saddened by the loss of her only child, Mrs. Harris buried herself in her work and traveled extensively. Her remaining years were divided between her old friends, her writing and her beloved home "In the Valley."



*Photo by Guy Parmenter*

*Chapel and final resting place of Corra Harris.*

Corra Harris passed away on February 7, 1935 following a severe heart attack. In accordance with her wishes, she was buried at her homeplace. A small masonry chapel, originally designed by Mrs. Harris as a museum to house her manuscripts and mementos, was built over her grave the following year.

Few people in the literary world remember Corra

Harris today and fewer still read her books. In Bartow County, however, residents will remember her for years to come, not as a great author but as "The Circuit Rider's Wife."

Submitted by Lizette Entwisle

*Reprinted with permission of The North Bartow News. Originally printed in their April 16, 1981 edition under the title "Corra Harris was Nationally Known Writer".*

## **NOTICE!**

The annual meeting of the Society will be held on Saturday, October 2, 1993, in accordance with the By-Laws. Business will include the election of three members to the Board of Directors. Board members whose three year terms are expiring are Margaret Ragsdale, Larry Gregory and Susan Taylor. A nominating committee will be appointed by Board Chairman, Guy Parmenter. Members may make their own nominations by notifying President, J. B. Tate in writing on or before September 3, 1993.

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Mr. & Mrs. William Dysart  
Ms. Louise Gilliam  
Dr. & Mrs. Fareed Kadum  
Mr. & Mrs. Walter R. New  
Dr. & Mrs. Hugo Ribot  
Mr. & Mrs. LeeRoy Shepherd  
Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Swan  
Mr. Ralph Taylor

## **CROSSROADS**

Shows on Rogers Mill and Corra Harris are almost complete. We would appreciate your ideas for new episodes. Give J. B. Tate a call at 386-7944.

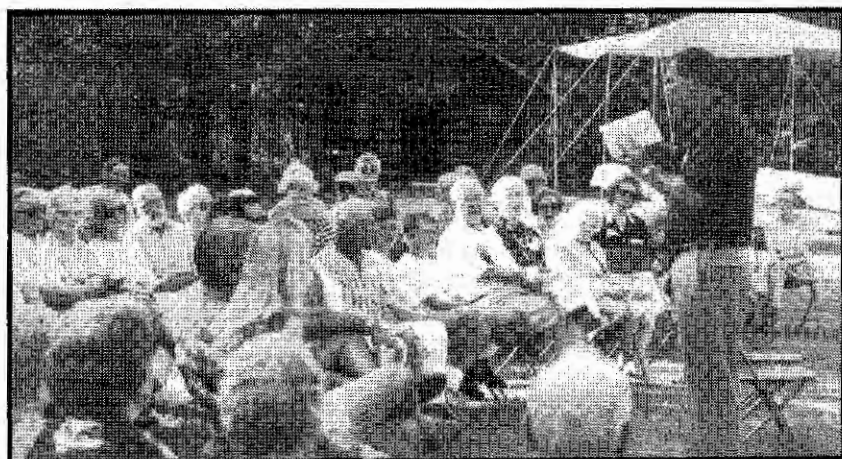
Be sure to watch for existing "CROSSROADS" shows on both Tuesday evenings and Wednesday mornings.

If you enjoy the show, please do not hesitate to thank Cartersville Cable Channel 4 by calling them at 382-3000. They appreciate hearing from viewers.

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## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

June 26, 1993



*J.B. Tate addresses EVHS members in front of Corra Harris Library.*

It was a warm summer afternoon when the EVHS held its membership meeting June 26, 1993 at 5:30 p.m. at the former home and final resting place of the famous author, Corra Harris, now the current home of Lynn Archer.

J. B. Tate, president, presided over the meeting welcoming 87 members and guests. Special thanks was given to Lynn Archer for inviting the EVHS to his home. Special Acknowledgment was given to Mr. Bill Raines who served as chauffeur

to Corra Harris for several years. Mr. Raines is also presenting her will to the EVHS. J. B. announced the filming of CROSSROADS episodes on Corra Harris and Rogers Mill are near completion. J. B. also asked that anyone who may have information for future newsletters to please share it. The cemetery book is almost ready for publication and more historical signs are in place.

Dinner was served after the meeting and everyone was invited to stroll the grounds and visit the house that was originally an Indian Chief's log cabin. Corra Harris bought her home "In the Valley" in 1913 which included 300 acres. A small log cabin, several yards from the main house, was used as a studio where Mrs. Harris wrote six of her books. After her death in 1935 a stone Chapel was

built over her grave not far from the house. Corra Harris wrote several articles for the Saturday Evening Post and a Candlelit Column in The Atlanta Journal. She was author of 19 books, the movie, "I'd Climb the Highest Mountain", filmed in 1951 was based on her book "A Circuit Rider's Wife" written in 1910. The house and buildings have been maintained and preserved as she left them.

Rosemary Clabo, Secretary

ETOWAH VALLEY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 1886  
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