

ETOWAH VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

November 1992

P.O. Box 1886, Cartersville, Georgia 30120

Introducing your Officers and Directors:

Officers - J.B. Tate, President; Lance Barry, Vice President; Rosemary Clabo, Secretary; Denise Conner, Treasurer

Directors - Guy Parmenter, DiAnne Monroe, Emily Champion, Margaret Ragsdale, Susan Taylor, Larry Gregory, Michele Rodgers

SALTPETER CAVE

Imagine walking into a quiet fog and feeling the still air become rapidly cooler with every cautious footstep taken downward into the earth's darkness. This is how it feels to enter the old Saltpeter Cave near Kingston. Some of the earliest inhabitants of the cave were the now-extinct mastodon, long-nose peccary, jaguar and giant armadillo. Fossils of these creatures have been found in the cave as well as those of close to 100 other vertebrates, including humans, dating back to the last Ice Age. When the Cherokees occupied this cave, they mined saltpeter to use as a good preservative and as medicine. Legends abound about the Saltpeter Cave, including one about the battle of the Creeks and the Cherokees. According to the story, the Cherokees were forced to retreat into the cave during a particularly vehement clash with the Creek Indians. The Creeks pursued them deep into the cave and some were never heard from again. Perhaps the mysterious sing-song humming of a woman's voice often heard in and around the cave is really the spirit of one of the lost Indians.

Unaccountable footsteps have been heard inside the cave as well. It was during the War of 1812 and the U.S. Civil War that white men commercially mined saltpeter from the cave. The nitre-rich dirt from the cave's floor was boiled in large hoppers until saltpeter crystals formed. These crystals were mixed with charcoal and sulphur to make gunpowder. In excess of 1,000 pounds of saltpeter (Potassium nitrate) were extracted from the cave per day at a price

as high as 75 cents per pound.

In early 1810, a murder took place at the entrance to the cave. William Reed, the second white man to own the cave and operate the saltpeter mining operation, killed a



Photo Courtesy of Larry O. Blair

Continued on Following Page

Cherokee Indian named Henry McGahee. McGahee had come to claim the cave as his own and challenged Reed to fight him for it. Reed shot and killed McGahee with his gun when McGahee came after him with an ax. The Cherokee Council pardoned Reed of the crime three months later and permitted him to resume mining.

PEGGY (MARGARET) MITCHELL visited the cave in 1923 and wrote an article for *The Atlanta Journal* describing her experience. In her article, she recalled hearing the sound of a gushing river beneath the rock floor and described the congregation of a thousand "gibbering bats". She wrote, "The limestone walls rose sheer....disappearing into the darkness above". It must have been a much more beautiful sight compared to that which it has become today. Sadly, careless trespassers have done irreparable damage to the cave. The once crystal-white walls have become sooty black from the smoke of pitch torches and campfires. Most of the bats have since found the cave uninhabitable and there is neither sound nor sign of a gushing river. Graffiti vandals have smeared their names over the walls, using fluorescent paint. Cave formations which took centuries to develop have been broken off and stolen. And, countless truckloads of beer cans and litter have been hauled away. Out of necessity, the cave had to be fenced and gated off from the general public.

Thanks to the efforts of three locals members of the National Speleological Society, the cave is very slowly beginning to rejuvenate itself. In 1980, Larry Blair, Joel Sneed and James Henry formed the Kingston Saltpeter Cave Study Project. Shortly thereafter, they located a preservation foundation which would acquire the cave, plus 40 surrounding acres from the Georgia Kraft Company and sponsor their study and conservation efforts. It is their intent that the cave be partially reopened for use as a teaching laboratory once study of the cave is completed.

Two hundred and forty feet down, the cave opens up onto a huge maze of bulbous rooms. The first is called the Ballroom. The Cherokees once held their Green Corn Dance ceremony here. In the 1930's three young men equipped with fiddle, harmonica and banjo held public dances in this room. They constructed steps in the entrance to the cave and built a wooden platform for dancing. For a fee of 50 cents per person, people could dance the night away in the naturally air-conditioned ballroom. The dances became so popular that people began coming from surrounding counties to participate. They could take the train up from Atlanta, get off at what was then The Cave, a whistle stop, and ride out to Saltpeter Cave by buggy.

Other Rooms in the cave have such unusual names as Margaret Mitchell's Lost, Devil's Dungeon, Barbecue Room, Jug Room, Bat Room and Blair's Saltpeter Corridor. Time seems to stand still inside the cave. There is dead silence save the occasional flutter of a bat. It seems at first there is little to excite the senses; unless, of course you brought your flashlight. Light exposes a world apart from what is seen above. Alien-shaped walls and rocks etched over time by water and weather seem to dodge and sway between shadow and light. Little white blind centipedes squirm in the dirt in search of decaying matter on which to feed. Beyond the modern-day graffiti, the walls bear the beautiful script signatures of cave visitors dating as far back as 1776. The undisturbed charcoal autographs look as fresh as if they were drawn yesterday. Coming near the surface again where outside organisms and the faintest well of light float in, there grows a beautiful mushroom. Like the centipede, it is palest white and has a stem that ripples and swirls about like iridescent satin ribbon. Onward and upward the air suddenly smells of life again. The warm summer evening overwhelmingly envelopes with the sweet smell of honeysuckle and the noisy chatter of birds. As Dorothy said, "There's no place like home".

The Kingston Saltpeter Cave continues to be closed to the public, but an excellent cave exhibit can be viewed at the William Weinman Mineral Center and Museum in Cartersville. To prevent destruction of this cave and others, the Georgia Cave Protection Act was put into effect in 1977. In general, it states that it is illegal to break or remove mineral formations, write on or mar the walls of a cave in any way, litter or dispose of any refuse in a cave, disturb or harm bats or other living organisms, remove or disturb artifacts or tamper with any locks, gates or other obstructions, even if entrance is gained. Present administrators of the Kingston Saltpeter Cave, Larry Blair and Joel Sneed, are compiling data on all aspects of the cave with the help of scientists and other specialists. They plan to publish a detailed book about the cave which will be available in the near future.

Historic Saltpeter Cave is a well-known spot in Bartow County. Few people have explored the cave and at present, no one is allowed to do so. The author of this article received special permission to enter the cave and explore it.

By Terry Papproth
Kennesaw College Paper

Cemetery Committee Report

Since Lisa Ellis' request for help, the response has been fantastic. As a direct result of this publicity, several more cemeteries are complete. Not only were they recorded, but they were beautifully printed out on a word processor before they were presented to me. We now have seven of the fourteen quadrants complete, and approximately one half of the remaining seven are finished.

On a humorous note, I have to tell you about an experience Lisa and I encountered on September 16th. The day had begun as a gorgeous fall day and we were scheduled to record either Wofford's Crossroads or White Cemetery. I had this idea (bad mistake) to check out two cemeteries south of Gordon County. We had been told repeatedly that it would have to be done in good weather and with a four wheel drive vehicle. The weather had been perfect for several days. We did not have a four wheel drive, but we did have a truck. For future reference, if you are told to take a four wheel drive, please do it. We arrived at the designated point to leave 411, turned left, crossed a railroad track into a sort of no-mans land, drove up the only road visible to the left and searched all over a mountain. No cemetery. Having been told that there was also a family cemetery to the right at some point of designation on 411, we then pursued. According to our information, there would be three houses, which proved to be correct. We were pointed to the cemetery by a lovely little lady. As we were working to remove residue in order to read the markers, the grandson of the little lady appeared. In the course of conversation we told him that we have just been across the tracks and did not find the original cemetery. Yes, he knew exactly where the cemetery was, but that wasn't the way we should enter. We should get back onto 411 South, go about one-quarter mile to Dooley Springs Road (which is now closed). There would be three houses on the right, and at the last house we would cross a railroad track. The cemetery would be directly across the railroad tracks. Wrong again. There was no way two ladies in ordinary clothes and shoes could plow through this wilderness. Surveying the situation, I left Lisa, crossed the barricade that has closed the road for years. I embark upon another journey up this grown up road trying to see if perhaps it might cross a railroad track at some point, but no such luck. I returned to Lisa and got into the truck. On the way we saw a lady standing at the first of the three houses on the road. We stopped, and I approached the very apprehensive lady who has no doubt watched us from the time we entered the road some time before. I gave her my name and our purpose for being there. She knew exactly where the

cemetery was, but we have to go back north on 411 and cross the railroad tracks again. The road we should take to the left after crossing the tracks will run parallel to the track. We couldn't miss. Wrong for the 3rd time.

We found the road after quite a search. Once we were on it, we thought this road was okay. About this time, we came to a 30 foot mud hole with 18 to 20 inch ridges. We thought we could ride on across. Wrong for still another time. About half-way through we slid off the ridge, and began what turned out to be about three and a half hours of limb breaking and bush pulling. We gathered anything we could put into the mud hole to try to get the truck to pull out. After exhausting all possibilities, Lisa went for help and I went ahead to find this cemetery. After another mile of walking and searching, I decided to return to the truck to wait for Lisa. About thirty minutes later, I saw a pick-up truck approaching. I prayed it was Lisa, since I did not relish the idea of being approached by a stranger in this remote area. Good luck has blessed us. Lisa had help.

A man quickly has us out of the mud hole, then told us we were on the right track. It was just up the road. He then inquired whether we had a hoe or any means to get through the underbrush. Of course, we do not. He went to his truck and came out with a 6 foot pole that had the worst looking ax I had ever seen attached to the end. Hoping this is a friend and not Jack the Ripper, we fell in behind him as he set about to get us right to the cemetery. About every 15 yards he said, "It is right here". In the midst of this, I got tangled up and fell flat on my face. He wanted to know whether I was hurt, and I told him no, just my ego deflated. I announced that someone could get seriously hurt in this undergrowth. He retorted that we need not worry about the undergrowth, that the whole place was infested with rattlesnake beds. This brought back the memory that we had walked through this mess all day. Well, you know the old cliché, God watches over fools and children. You know Lisa and I are not children. No, we never did find that cemetery whose location was known by everybody, but we were given some good advice by our farmer friend.

We should wait until after two good frosts before we began this search again. This sounds like good advice to me.

Please watch for the next newsletter and for our continued saga of the lost cemetery.

Mary Siniard, Chairman

HISTORY OF CARTERSVILLE DEPOT

With the completion of the Western and Atlantic Railroad and the passage of the first train through Cartersville in 1850, a need for a permanent depot in the city was observed. Arrangements were made in 1854 for the construction of a brick depot.

John E. Jordan, a trained brick mason, was selected as a builder for the depot, and slave labor supplied him with quality brick made from local clay. The bricks were fired in homemade kilns to an extreme hardness, though the texture was very rough.

The completed building was 40 feet in width and 124 feet in length. Large arches, one each on the north and south ends of the building and two each on the east and west sides, were special features of the construction. Large wooden sliding doors topped with glass covered the arches. Large pieces of quarried granite topped the smaller entrance doors. A bay window was built on the eastern side of the depot to give an unobstructed view of train movements. Inside the building was a passenger waiting room, followed by a combined baggage, ticket and freight office. Next was a large warehouse area. Fireplaces provided heat for the waiting room, office and baggage room.

During the Civil War the depot handled regular business as well as large numbers of troops and war supplies. As the war began to move nearer to Bartow County, more and more trains began to bring in wounded soldiers.

On the night of May 19, 1864, Confederate troops under General Joseph Johnston retreated from Cassville to Cartersville on their way to the Etowah River. Early in the morning of May 20, the Confederate rear guard began skirmishing with Federal troops under General W. T. Sherman, and by afternoon, the fighting had reached Cartersville. Confederate troops occupied the depot and knocked out bricks to make gun ports. During the fighting, the depot was hit by a number of shells. The Confederates withdrew and by nightfall, Cartersville was occupied by Federal troops.

Although most of the Federal troops left Cartersville by May 23, some were left to protect the railroad, since supplies for Sherman's army had to travel these rails. In November of 1864, as Sherman prepared to leave for his march to the sea, his men set fire to the Cartersville depot, burning its roof and floor. The strong brick walls, though



Photo Courtesy of Downtown Development Authority

blackened, remained intact.

After the war ended and the people of Georgia began putting their lives back together, a priority was placed on restoring the badly damaged rail system. Late in 1865 a new depot agent was hired and repairs were made to the depot. Brick was added to the inside walls and a new roof and floor were constructed. The port holes made by Confederate gunners were plugged and the damaged exterior brick was patched.

By 1902, the depot was too small to handle the volume of business. Ground was broken on April 21st of that year to expand the existing facility to include a new passenger station, remodeling of the present office and an addition to the south end of the existing structure. The building contractor selected was Mr. Eugene Smith of R. W. Smith & Son. Cartersville's new passenger station of the Western and Atlantic railroad opened to the public on September 9, 1902.

The new passenger station filled the 40 foot space between the existing depot and Market Street (now Cherokee Avenue). It was built of red pressed brick, stone trimmings and a roof of tin and slate. The new space was occupied by a white (21' X 25') and a colored (15' X 25') waiting room. The entrance to the white waiting room was from the east and next to the railroad tracks, while that for the colored waiting room was from the north end of the depot. Toilet rooms were connected with each department. The waiting rooms were connected with the ticket office through windows. The interior finish was in dark colors. Furnishings were of a

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UNKNOWN HEROS OF ALLATOONA PASS

According to Mr. Robert White, former station master of the Cartersville Depot, and the late Colonel Thomas Spencer, journalist and historian, there are actually two unknown graves in the Allatoona Pass area. Both were originally located by the former track bed, but on opposite sides and within the same vicinity. Each are thought to be confederate soldiers and have been a topic of documented confusion for a century regarding identity and location.

The less known grave lies within the pass on the east side of the original track bed and has no marker. It is assumed this confederate was buried a few days following the Battle of Allatoona. According to records a body was shipped to the depot via the W&A.R.R. and tagged "Allatoona, Georgia," but with no name or message regarding its origin of shipment. The body was not claimed and in a bad state of decay. After two days six ladies from the community buried the body considerably north of the depot, about two-thirds of the pass distance off the east side of the tracks approximately 100 yards down a wide drainage ditch on the high southernly bank. The Abernathy family of Cartersville is cred-

ited with the lesser known burial. Unfortunately, this grave has practically been lost to the countryside because it is not maintained by the railroad and has been repeatedly disturbed by relic hunters. (The author is a relative of the Abernathy family.)

The more visible grave was originally dug exactly where the soldier died toward the northern entrance and a few feet west of the tracks. Local historians believe this is the grave site of Private Andrew Jackson Houston of Co. I 35th Mississippi Regiment who fell during the Battle of Allatoona. In 1950 the railroad relocated and marked the grave approximately one-half mile south of the pass a few yards west of the existing tracks. Relocation was considered necessary in anticipation of the lake construction. This grave is maintained by the railroad and is the best known of the two unknown heroes. ***LAST QUARTER WE PUBLISHED "EXPLAINS COUNTY'S "UNKNOWN SOLDIER" BY J. P. ABERNATHY. THIS IS A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE WRITTEN BY JOE F. HEAD.

Train Depot Continued From Previous Page

dark oak finish. Even a few rocking chairs were set out for the convenience of the elderly and ladies with small children. Remodeling of the existing depot included changes for a better workflow of the telegraph and express offices presided over by W. F. Baker. In the rear of the office, an express room was partitioned off on one side and a baggage room on the other. A hall between lead to an enlarged freight room. The southern addition was a covered platform extending 40 feet toward Main Street. The platform provided ample room for handling freight with easy access to the freight room.

The ticket agent at the depot in 1902 was J. C. Wofford. Others who assisted in the various departments were Frank Wallace and James Wofford in the freight office and Luther Lawborn in the express office. In 1972, a portion of the original depot was demolished including the freight platform. Remaining today is the passenger station addition and a 25'X 40' section of the original depot.

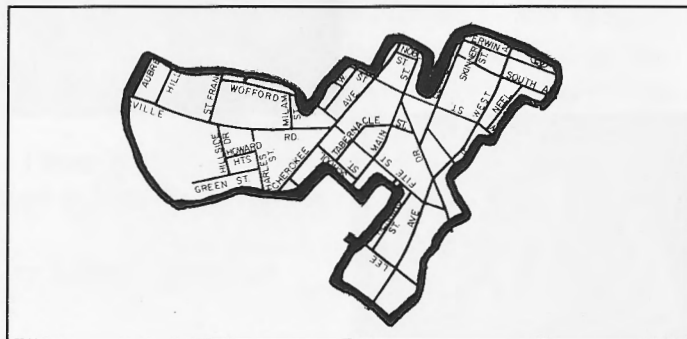
Michele Rodgers
Guy Parmenter

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The map below shows the preliminary boundaries of the proposed historic district for Cartersville. This is a large area and will take an extensive amount of work to complete.

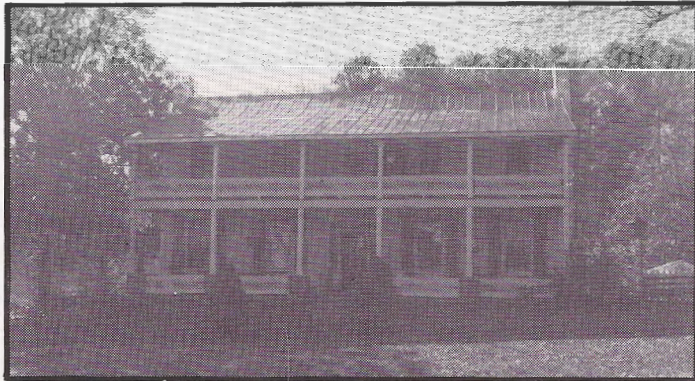
Anyone having any information about the homes in this area or interested in helping with this project can contact me at 382- 8565 (home) or 382-8087 (business).

Larry Gregory, Chairman



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

AUGUST 15, 1992



The Etowah Valley Historical Society enjoyed a summer cookout on the west lawn of the "John Clayton House" in historic Allatoona. The lovely pre Civil War house is the home of Dennis and Dianne Mooney who welcomed the EVHS members and guests with a tour of their home, sharing information about the house and the original owners.

The meeting was planned for the east lawn, but due to a sudden rain shower was held on the spacious front porch. J. B. Tate, president, presided. J. B. acknowledged our new members and welcomed all members and guests. Among our guests were our speaker, Dr. Phil Secrist and his wife Kaye. They are previous members of EVHS and had restored a house in nearby Kingston. They now live in Cobb County where Dr. Secrist is

Chairman of the Cobb County Commission. Dr. Secrist is very interested in historic events and spoke on the Battle of Allatoona. After the battle of Atlanta, Allatoona became the scene of one of the most sanguinary battles of the Atlanta Campaign. A million rations of bread were stored here for the Federal Army and the railroad was of the utmost importance for transporting troops and supplies. This battle occurred October 5, 1864 with 5,413 troops involved fighting a day battle with a loss of 1,505 lives recorded including many officers. The "John Clayton House" was used as a field hospital and still bears the scars of that battle including bullet holes still visible in the weather boarding of the east gable. General Sherman communicated messages from his signal station on Kennesaw Mountain to Allatoona. One of the messages was to "Hold fort, we are coming." This message and circumstances were the inspiration for the gospel song, "Hold the Fort for I am Coming", by P. P. Bliss years afterwards. Dr. Secrist is interested in preserving a historic route from Catoosa County to Clayton County showing specific land marks related to the march taken during the Civil War. On completion of the program, which was video taped by Channel 4 and will be shown on our local station, the EVHS enjoyed grilled hamburgers and locally grown watermelon.

**Christmas Party to be held
Thursday December 17, 1992 at Roselawn.
Invitations will be mailed. Pictures show scenes of
last year's party.**



Welcome New Members:

Mr. and Mrs. James O. Alexander
Mr. and Mrs. Steven DeArmoun
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Head
Mr. Ray Thacker
Mr. and Mrs. Norton Tumlin

Crossroads -

Don't miss our next program featuring "Atco" on Cartersville Cable Channel 4. Please check your local listing for the dates and time schedules. This program is sponsored by your *Etowah Valley Historical Society* in conjunction with the *Cartersville-Bartow County Tourism Council* and the *Bartow History Center*.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

OCTOBER 3, 1992



The annual meeting of the EVHS was held at the lovely home of Frank and Lizette Entwisle. President J. B. Tate called the meeting to order. J. B. welcomed and recognized new members and guests. Lizette Entwisle then welcomed us to her home and invited us to tour after dinner. The reading of the last minutes were waived. Denise Conner gave the treasurer's report.

Larry Gregory gave an update on his preservation committee. He advised that forms and maps had been established in order to aid workers obtaining information for a new historic district on the west end of Cartersville. These forms will be passed out to volunteers beginning next week.

Mary Siniard, chairperson for the cemetery committee advised that Oakhill Cemetery had been completed by using index cards provided by the Oak Hill Cemetery. However, the date of birth was not available on all the index cards. In order to obtain this information, a manual survey would have to be done on the entire cemetery. After a question and answer session, it was voted to continue on the present basis using only the information provided on the index cards. Individuals desiring more information than was available on the index card could then do their own manual search.

Susan Taylor discussed the newsletter. We are considering going to six publications annually, having a newsletter published in each of the months that we do not have a membership meeting. Susan asked for any

family histories or information that might be published in future editions.

J. B. Tate discussed the new television program, "Crossroads". The first program has already been taped and will be shown on the evening of October 7 and again on the morning of October 8.

The new heritage sign was presented by Dianne Tate. The sign presented needed a few improvements but would be available soon. Homes and businesses over 50 years old would be eligible to purchase the sign for somewhere around \$12.

Our president then announced that we had been asked to help get the Cartersville Depot on the National Register. J. B. Tate had agreed to help and had started the research in order to get this project completed.

J. B. explained that the Board of Director's terms for Guy Parmenter, Helen Miller and Helen Collins were expiring. J. B. received three nominations by mail and had contacted these people and they had agreed to serve, if elected. The nominees were Guy Parmenter, Jean Belew and Lawrence Hyde. Susan Taylor, chairperson for the nominating committee, announced that the committee existed of herself, Denise Conner and Francis Maxwell. The committee's nominees were Guy Parmenter, DiAnne Monroe and Emily Champion. Ballots were passed out.

J. B. Tate gave his president's report. He gave a synopsis of last year's accomplishments and hopeful goals for the upcoming year.

Guy Parmenter gave his Board Chairman's report, introducing and thanking each of the officers and board members for their service.

The meeting was adjourned and everyone enjoyed a wonderful meal prepared by Unique Catering. The election results were calculated and announced while everyone served their food. Our new board members will be Guy Parmenter, DiAnne Monroe and Emily Champion.

After dinner everyone enjoyed a tour of the beautiful Entwisle home with all the lovely antiques.

We hope you enjoy the new look to our newsletter. Look for a new issue every other month. We would appreciate your input. Please contact J.B. Tate or Guy Parmenter.

Genealogy

Information needed concerning the following:

Isaac, John and Sellers, R.L.

Contact Harwell Stovall, 345 Laurel Road, Southern Pines, N.C. 28287

Cox, Vincent and Cox, John W. (c. 1850/1860)

Contact Ray Cox, 144 Virginia Ave., Rossville, Ga. 30741

Bishop, Maury M.

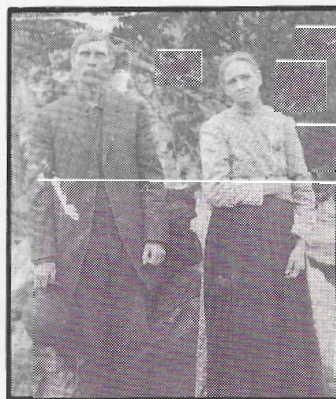
Married in Anniston, Ala. on Dec. 27, 1899

Died in Anniston, Ala. Jan. 10, 1901 and was originally from Cartersville. He had a sister living in Cartersville at that time. Contact Gail Tueche, 1605 Thoreau Street, Titusville, Fla. 32780

Carter, George Washington (born July 23, 1840)

His father was Thomas Carter (born 1801 in N.C.), his mother was June Irvin (born 1803 in N.C.), sister Lavina (born 1830 in TN), Brothers Alfred (born 1833 in TN or

GA), William (born 1838 in GA), George Washington (born 1840 in GA), Thomas Jr. (born 1843 in GA) Contact Etowah Valley Historical Society, P.O. Box 1886, Cartersville, Ga. 30120



Costner, D.G and Dulcina

Hoping this is a picture of this couple. Both born circa 1825 in N.C. In 1850 they lived in Cherokee Co., Ga. and had 3 sons: Julius A. (6 years), Henry T. (3 years), Thomas J. (1 year). Contact Audrey Dooley, 5005 Avenue 272, Visalia, CA 93277

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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