



THE TOWNS HISTORIAN



The NEWSLETTER of the TOWNS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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www.townscountyhistory.org

WINTER 2024

The Towns County Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich history of our area. We meet the second Monday of each month at the Towns County Civic Center

P.O. Box 1182
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Hiawassee, Georgia
(706) 781-8611

What a year! 2023 year in review

By Tyler Osborn, President



Looking back over the past year, I am not only amazed of the great things we have accomplished, but proud to be part of such a great organization that works together to achieve greatness. This year, we celebrated the county's 167th birthday, complete with a celebration and several additional programs throughout the community during the month of March. We also completed the Old Burch Cemetery (aka Cemetery Island) project started last year. This project cleaned up, identified, and placed markers on all of the graves and was started by former President, Sandra Green. Our biggest news is the acquisition of the Berrong-Oakley House. The city purchased this house in June and has asked the society to oversee its restoration and management as an event center and museum. I'll be honest, I was worried about raising that much money, but in 6 months, we have raised just shy of \$40K! Our goal (assuming no major increase in costs) is \$200K.

We have had many great programs this year, thanks to Jerry Taylor who plans these. The programs ranged from our historic homes, our beautiful Lake Chatuge, and closing out the year was John Cochran & Jerri Ann King bringing us a special performance of 'A Cowboy Christmas', complete with all of our favorite western inspired Christmas Songs.

Looking forward in the new year, I know we will have another great year. We will soon be starting to plan our celebration for the county's 168th birthday. We are also looking forward to the completion of the courthouse renovations, which will allow us to return to our normal meeting room as well as get the Old Rock Jail opened back up. I have already met with Commissioner Bradshaw, and he hopes to be moved back in within the first quarter of the year. We are also planning some much-needed maintenance on the Old Rock Jail.

I want to say a special thank you to all of our members and friends of the society who have worked hard this year. I personally could not have completed my first year as president without your support. I am blessed to have such amazing people surround me to help accomplish a common goal. Jerry, Brandy, Patti, & Mary Ann – I especially want to thank you for all of the hard work you have put in. I would be lost without y'all!

"May God send you good fortune, contentment, and peace. And may all your blessings forever increase" -Irish Blessing

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Jerry Taylor
County Historian

Jason Lee Edwards
Deputy Historian



Mary Ann Miller
Webmaster/Graphic Designer

Bart Lochaby - Builder

by Jason Lee Edwards

Francis Marion Bartow "Bart" Lochaby was born 27 March 1863 in Towns County, Georgia, to Henry Lochaby and Nancy Anna Gossett. He married Ava Caroline Gibson on 12 September 1884 in Towns County, Georgia. He later married Nettie Ann Braswell. He died 3 February 1931 in Polk County, Tennessee. He is buried in Zion Hill Baptist Church Cemetery, Polk County, Tennessee.



It is not clear when or from whom Bart Lochaby obtained his knowledge of carpentry and housebuilding. He seems to have been in the trade by 1887 when he was paid \$1.50 for constructing a gallows for the execution of Tilm-on C. Justice in Hiawassee, Towns County, Georgia. He was recorded as a carpenter and living in Towns County on the 1900 and 1910 census. In 1914, he and his family moved to Polk County, Tennessee, where he continued to engage in carpentry until late in life when he operated the Ducktown Hotel.

During his time in Hiawassee, Bart Lochaby was involved in the construction of several buildings, both public and private. Unfortunately, only two of his works are still standing: the J. M. Berrong House and the L. C. Brown house.

Below are some of the buildings known to have been built by Bart Lochaby between 1890 and 1914:



Berrong-Oakley House



Hiawassee Masonic Lodge



Dr. Johnson House



Dr. William T. Kimsey

Berrong-Oakley House Update

by Tyler Osborn



Since the City of Hiwassee purchased the historic Berrong-Oakley house in June 2023, I am proud to announce that in just 6 months, we have successfully raised just shy of \$40,000! This is a great accomplishment and I thank each and every person who has donated or reached out for donations. We are still raising funds, so if you are interested in donating, visit our website, www.townscountyhistory.org, to learn how.

After much discussion with the GA Dept of Community Affairs – Historic Registry Division, we have settled on an architectural shingle that is appropriate for the house and does not misinterpret its history. This was an important step because we are applying for a spot on the historic registry and placing the wrong roof on the house would quickly disqualify us. We hope to have the new roof on by next summer.

We are also eagerly awaiting approval to apply for two grants from the Georgia Trust of Historic Places. We have submitted a letter of inquiry to apply and will hopefully know if we are eligible to apply by the end of the year. These two grants, totaling \$15,000, will go towards restoring the exterior of the house, including replacing rotten wood, reinstalling architectural details that were removed, and repainting the house.

Since we are fundraising for the entire project, work can only be completed as we have the funds to do so. We have several naming opportunities available, ranging from \$250-\$8,000 to help us restore this historic beauty. However, any donation is appreciated. If you have questions or want to know more about the house, please email us at townscountyhistory@gmail.com.

We look forward to what 2024 brings to help us in restoring a piece of Towns County history!

Saved or Grazed

By Tyler Osborn and Jerry Taylor

In doing research for the Berrong-Oakley House, we discovered a list compiled by a survey in 1977 of places that were, at the time, eligible for placement on the historic registry. Below are some of those on that list and if they were saved or razed.

- Old Bank of Hiawasse Building, built in 1909, was razed and replaced with what is now the Hiawasse Dental office at the corner of River Street and Main Street
- The Sparks Ford building, built in 1922, was razed and replaced with what is now Hiawasse City Hall on the corner of Mathis St. and Berrong Street.
- The Stoinoff Log Cabins, built in 1800's and moved to Hiawasse (one from Dalton, GA & one from Tennessee) were saved and located on Main Street.
- The Old Rock Jail built in 1936 was saved and is now used by the Historical Society as a museum, located off of Berrong Street. next to the court house.
- The Berrong house, built in 1905, and was saved by the City of Hiawasse in 2023 and is located off of Oakmont Drive.
- Boarding houses, built in 1900, were saved and are currently private residences on River Street below the courthouse.
- Hedden/Barnard/Gibson house, built in 1890 and joined with another home in 1920, was saved and is currently a private residence on River Street.
- The Berrong/Wood house, built in 1900, was razed due to it's unsafe condition and is now an empty lot on Berrong Street.
- The Burrell/Sims house, built in 1895, was razed and is now the location of Daniels Steak House.
- The Benson/Sparks/Denton House, built in 1902, was razed and is now the location of Ingles Market.
- The two storefronts on the square, once housing the first consolidated post office and the other Denton & Sons Insurance, were saved and locate on West Bell Street.
- The Hiawasse Service Station, built in 1950's, was razed and replaced with Hiawasse Hardware garden center.
- The old Towns County High School (1939) and Girls Dormitory building (1939) were razed and replaced with businesses on Church Street.
- The Brown/Wood House, built in 1910, was saved and is on Bell Street.
- Friendship Baptist Church, built in 1880 and façade covered in rock in 1932, was saved and is on Highway 76.
- The Kimsey/Denton House, built 1875, was saved and is on Highway 76.
- Union Hill Methodist Church, built 1895, was saved and is at the corner of Hog Creek Rd. and Highway 288.
- Abley's Store, built 1942, was razed and is an empty lot on Highway 76
- Wood Grove Church, built 1890, was razed and replaced with a newer structure in the early 2000's.
- The Ella Parker house, built in the late 1800s, was razed and is now an empty lot on Crooked Creek Road.
- Hunt/Alexander/Campbell Mill, built 1880, was saved and is at the corner of Crooked Creek Road. and Highway 66.
- The Hunt/Barnard House, built 1880, was saved (but in peril) and is at the corner of Gumlog Road. and Barnard Road.
- The Stephens House, built 1900, was saved and is on the corner of Main Street & Highway 66.
- The Miller House, built in 1930, was saved and is on the corner of Miller Street. & Main Street.
- The Stephens/Adams House, built 1860, was saved and is on the corner of Main Street. and College St.
- The Evans Green House, built 1880, was saved and is on Plott Town Road.
- The Stephens/Townsend/Seabolt House, built in 1837, was saved and is on Townsend Mill Road.
- Stephens/Townsend Mill, built 1865, was left in disrepair and has fallen down, located on Townsend Mill Road.
- The Frank Lloyd House, built in 1865, was razed and is now the location of Hiawasse Brew.
- The Harvey Brown House, built 1902, is in peril and located on Fodder Creek Road.
- The Harmon/Elisha Brown House, built 1875, was razed and is now an empty lot on Fodder Creek Road.
- The Berry Woodring Home, built 1872, was saved and moved to GA Mtn. Fairgrounds.
- The Wyly/Brown house, built 1815, was razed after catching fire and is now an empty lot on Highway 17.
- The Kelley House, built in 1880, is in peril and located at the corner of Kelley Rd. & Streak Hill Rd.
- The House of 7 Gables, built in 1890, was razed

and is now a newer construction home on Highway 76.

- The Rogers/Nicholson House, built in the early 1900s, was razed and is now an empty lot on Streak Hill Road.
- The WS Brown House, built in 1892, was saved and located on Highway 17
- The Arrendale McKinney Home, built 1880, was razed and replaced with a new home on Bearmeat Road.
- The Wood/Coleman House, built 1880, was razed and is an empty lot on Bearmeat Road.
- The John Corn Home, built 1852, was razed and is now an empty lot on Highway 76.

These are just some of the 73 homes that were surveyed in 1977 that were eligible. Out of that list, 39 are still standing, 34 have been lost to time, and 10 of these are in peril. "There may have been a time when preservation was about saving an old building here or there, but those days are gone. Preservation is in the business of saving communities and the values they embody." – Richard More



Stephens/Adams House



Bank of Hiawasse



Benson/Sparks/Denton House



Stephens/Townsend Mill



The Jameson-Rogers House

Oldest house standing in Hiawassee River Valley

by Jerry Taylor and Jason L. Edwards



People often ask me, "What is the oldest house in Towns County?" If the old Wyly house on the River were still standing, that would be an easy question to answer; however, since it burned, that makes the answer more difficult. Researching the question with the assistance of Jason L. Edwards, Towns County Deputy historian, we can now pinpoint the date of the Jameson-Rogers house in Macedonia to c. 1840.

If the old walls of that house could talk, they could tell the story? The story would begin with Samuel Young Jameson II (1806-1879) who left his home in Sweetwater, Tennessee, in 1838 following the removal of the Cherokees. He traveled south on the Unicoy Turnpike selling clocks along the way, until he came to the Hiawassee River Valley area of Union, but now Towns County. Here he acquired property by 1839 and built his house. He was enumerated there on the 1840 and 1850 census. His household soon consisted of his mother Rebecca Reece Jameson (1769-1850), his sister Rebecca Jameson Howell (1808-1881), his nephews Thomas Pope Jameson (1825-1858) and Samuel Young Jameson III (1830-1863), and his niece Jane Christine Jameson McConnell (1828-1911).

On Sept. 15, 1850, Mr. Jameson married Mary Adeline Kelley, daughter of John L. Kelley and Margaret Pinson who lived near the forks of Hightower Creek and Hiawassee River. The marriage was a short one because Mary Adaline died in less than a year, Aug. 7, 1851, just a little over two weeks after giving birth to a daughter, Margaret Adaline Jameson, on July 19, 1851. The daughter, Margaret Adaline Jameson, died a few days before her fourth birthday, July 16, 1855.

Mr. Jameson acquired extensive land holdings, pursued mining interests, was a blacksmith, and was active on the political front. Jameson and his slaves built the first Towns County courthouse in 1856. He represented Union County in the Georgia Senate 1840-1843, 1853-1856, and represented Towns County from 1861 to 1863. He also represented Towns County in the Georgia House of

Representatives 1875-1876, 1878, and was serving at his death in 1879. Due to his efforts a special act of the legislature passed annexing to Towns County that portion of Rabun County east of the Blair Line, known as the Tate City District.

The deaths of his mother, wife, and daughter between 1850 and 1855, and the marriage of his niece and nephew brought an emptiness to the Jameson household. Nevertheless, Samuel Young Jameson II continued to play an active part in the affairs of the community. He was one of the original trustees of Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Serving as a senator during the Civil War, he wrote letters urging Gov. Joseph E. Brown to honor Towns County Ordinary John W. Holmes' request for arms.

Sometime in the early 1870s, his great-niece, Virginia Caroline Pope Jameson, came to live with him and care for him in his old age. While living there she met and married Andrew Absalom Nicholson of Fodder Creek. Some of their descendants still live in the area.

On Dec. 3, 1878, three months prior to his death, Samuel Young Jameson II deeded the land now known as the Mont Wilson farm to his housekeeper Rebecca Coates for the support and maintenance of herself and minor child Linton Jameson (1866-1943).

While serving in the Georgia House of Representatives, Samuel Young Jameson II became ill. He died Feb. 22, 1879, and was buried in the Jameson Family Cemetery, now known as Macedonia Cemetery.

With the passing of Samuel Young Jameson II and the disappearance of his son Linton Jameson in the 1890s, so passed the name of Jameson from Towns County; however, five large old tombstones perching vicariously in the Macedonia Cemetery bear mute witness to this prominent family of more than a century ago.



NOTE: The Macedonia Cemetery began as the Jameson Family Cemetery and was known by that name as late as the 1930s. Rebecca Reece Jameson's tombstone there has the oldest birthdate of any grave in Towns County – Dec. 2, 1769.

NOTE: Through the years the property fell into the hands of Edd and Leona Rogers and most folks today remember it as the Edd Rogers place.

History in Pruning

by Jeff King

Here it is February. The weather outside isn't so inviting when it comes to working in the yard. Many of us tend to think this is a period of time to relax and plan for the year ahead. We have worked hard to put the garden to sleep for the winter season, but there are always chores to be done in the yard.

History has taught us a lot over the years. Pruning is one of the chores we typically don't think to do at this time of year because it is so cold. That's where we lean on history to guide us in when, what, and how to prune, all of which depends largely on the type of plant in question.

For most people pruning is done to achieve an aesthetically pleasing landscape, second to the health and structure of the plants. Either of these reasons to prune should be done at the best time for the life of the plant. Always do a little research to choose the right time to prune your prized plants. Let history be your guide. The graphic to the right is a quick guide on pruning.



DONATIONS

Thank you to the following people for their generous donations to the historical society.

Don Berry

Tracy Langley

Berrong-Oakley House

Tyler Osborn

Berrong-Oakley House

Pete and Jounida Bradley

In Honor of

Towns County Historical Society Officers 2024

Susan Starr

Berrong-Oakley House

Steve Eller

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Linda Davis

Berrong-Oakley House

Frank Kulbertis & Jeanne Winter

Old Rock Jail

Brown Haven Homes

Berrong-Oakley House

Alvin Burrell

Berrong-Oakley House Donor Wall

Marion Drinko and Jennifer Pokomy

In Memory of Susan Elizabeth Oakley

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Gottlieb

In Memory of John Plankey

Patricia Hunt

Pamela Sawyer

Berrong-Oakley House

In Memory of Pauline Taylor Funderburk

Sybil Blackstock

Berrong-Oakley House

In Honor of Bart Lochaby and

In Memory of Her Sister Mona Plott Hood,

Her Mother Ruth Lochaby Plott and

her grandfather Venlo Lochaby



Towns County Historical Society
P.O. Box 1182
Hiawassee, Georgia 30546

Membership Form

Date: _____ New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

Yearly Individual (\$15) _____ Yearly Household (\$20) _____ Life Individual (\$250) _____

Member Name(s): _____

Address _____
City, State, Zip _____

Phone Number: _____
E-mail: _____

I would like to receive reminder calls about meetings via phone/email: _____ Yes _____ No

Please send in this form with your check made payable to: Towns County Historical Society,
PO Box 1182, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Be sure to check out our website: www.townscountyhistory.org.

I would like to make an additional contribution to:

_____ TC Historical Society _____ The Old Rock Jail _____ Berrong-Oakley House

- in the amount of \$ _____

In honor of: _____

In memory of: _____