

Jackson County Historical Society News

VOLUME NINETEEN, NUMBER TWO

FEBRUARY 2012



McCorkle house, circa 1957

The Jackson County Historical Society will meet at the house on 1029 Elm Street in Commerce. Ricky Fritzpatrick will share with members his discovery of his grandfather, Bill Gillespie's audio tapes of the history of downtown Commerce buildings and how he was able to transfer these cassette tapes to CD. John McCorkle will then give us a tour of the home that he grew up in from 1940–1961 while his father was the Harmony Grove Mill Superintendent.

Directions: West side of the railroad track, directly to the left of Ivy Funeral home on Elm Street in Commerce, GA..

Jackson County Historical Society P.O. Box 1234, Commerce, Georgia 30529 (706) 335-5946

Newsletter

The Historical Society's collection of books, files and research materials are housed in the Heritage Room of the Commerce Public Library. The Commerce Library will begin an expansion in March 2012 and some research materials will be packed away. This could be for a period of 8 months to a year. A smaller collection of books, research material, microfilm and the microfilm reader will be kept available. The library will continue to be open and have internet access to genealogy web sites. If you need to view the complete collection, try to do your research before March 2012. As the date draws near, we can provide additional information. For information call Tina: 706-207-6889

Dues run from July to July and can be mailed to:

Jackson County Historical Society

P. O. Box 1234, Commerce, GA 30529:

Individual –\$15, Family –\$25, LIFE members –\$100

JCHS Meeting Schedule

May 20 – Jackson County Historic Courthouse tour



Bill Gillespie, 1979

Bill Gillespie was a historian whose contributions helped develop the Heritage Room at the Commerce Public Library. He compiled a detailed history of the buildings in Commerce from 1928-1987 and recorded it on cassette tapes. His grandson, Ricky Fitzpatrick has transferred these audio tapes to a CD. Two stories he wrote follow in this newsletter.

JCHS Officers 2011-2012

President:	Shirley Wilson
Vice-President:	Marie Parks
Recording Secretary:	Boniface McDaniel
Treasurer:	Tommy Benton
Directors:	James Mathis Ann Jarrett Jerry Legg
Past Presidents:	the late, Joyce Ethridge Ann A. Jarrett the late, Richard Chambers the late, Jean H. Booth Betty Ann Mathis James Mathis Ralph Freeman Carol Tanner Marie Parks Tina Harris Charlotte Mealor Caine Campbell Mary Lynn Bell

Peaches by Bill Gillespie

When the peaches ripened in the summer most of the farmers had “laid-by” their crops. Working in the peach orchards and packing sheds gave them a chance to earn extra money before harvest time.

Each year Mr. C. J. Hood would get a responsible person, from the various communities to organize a crew and bring them to Commerce and gather the peaches.

When we lived on Washington Street, I was about 12 years old and was a crew water boy for my father's uncle Mr. Bob Gober, who lived in Bushville Community. Most of his crew was made up of McCoys, Duncans, Eubanks, Purcells, Lewallens, etc.

The foreman of the crew carried a time book of hours worked by all in his crew and this had to check with records kept by Mr. Clyde Short at the office across from the packing shed. This office was a small green building that sat about where Shirley's Feed Store keeps posts. Each worker was issued a badge, with a number that he fastened to the bib of his overalls. This badge had a built-in safety pin on back side. The badge was used the entire season. Duplicates were available but “woe be” unto the person who lost his badge. The badge was white and the letters were in black print. They were slick and the outer covering was made out of something like the clear plastic we have today.

Each morning the workers would line up and walk by the window where Mr. Short sat inside with a big book. He would glance at your badge and make a check mark by your name. At the end of the day we had to report back to the shed and Mr. Short would look at our badge and record the hours worked beside our name and badge number. A crew was made up of a Foreman, empty basket boy, full basket boy, water boy and 16-20 pickers.

All the pickers were issued a bundle of cards with a number on them that corresponded with a number on his badge. Each morning, at that time, peaches were picked in baskets and pickers place a ticket in the bottom of the basket and picked the peaches and piled them on top of the ticket. This ticket served a two fold purpose. (1) It was record of baskets picked each day (2) Also who was turning in green peaches.

Competition was keen among the various crews because the tickets were counted at night and that next day totals were posted beside each man's name and number. This was a large board that was posted on the outside wall of the office for all to see.

The season was short for a picker who turned in few baskets each day or too many "green" peaches.

The empty basket boy supplied the pickers with baskets. The full basket boy carried the full baskets to the road where they were picked by the wagons that carried them to the packing shed.

Mr. Hood had 10 or 15 special built bodies that fit a standard two horse wagon. They were double deck and were fashioned out of 1x6 inch planks. When the bottom layer was filled with full baskets two planks were pushed to the center and the top layer was filled with baskets.

Once the driver and his helper had loaded the wagon it was off to the shed to be unloaded. On the return trip they brought back empty baskets.

The wagons, mules, and drivers were recruited by Mr. Hood and he furnished a helper. The man who furnished a wagon was paid by the day for his wagon and mules and he was paid by the hour for his work. The wagon and mules were kept at the barn at night. The barn was on Hood Street. One or two carried their wagons home at night because they lived nearby.

Ice water was available at a shed that stood where Peach Street and Brookwood intersect, this would be the upper end of Shirley's Feed Store now.

Mr. Evans was in charge of ice water and usually kept four or five #2 work tubs full of water ready at all times.

Most of the workers in the orchard preferred well water and several wells were close by, unless the crew was picking near the shed. There was a well on top of the hill at the house that stood close to where Padden Hendricks now lives. Another well was in the orchard at a house that would be on Roosevelt Drive now. A well was at the house where Wimp Hill now lives on the Maysville Road and Brookwood Drive. This house stood just above Wendell Gee's car lot where trucks and trailers are parked.

Peach season lasted four to six weeks for some. We were paid at the end of the season by check. We endorsed the check and turned it back in. Mr. Short gave us our cash in a brown envelope with our name and number on it; The checks and money in the envelopes were prepared at the bank and brought to the office at the shed.

This was a big day. One year I took part of my pay and ordered a wagon from "Sears and Roebuck. When the wagon finally arrived, I quickly noted that they had failed to send the bolts to assemble it. We wrote back and forth several times and finally gave up and bought some bolts, nuts and washers from Charlie Truitt's hardware store.

Alhambra House by Bill Gillespie

In 1910 Commerce had an electric plant that was operated by a steam boiler and coal was used in the boiler to fire it. The coal was hauled to the water works, where the plant was located, from town in wagons.

Mr. B. C. Dillshunt ran the electric plant. He and his wife were natives of North Carolina and her name was Nellie. They lived in a house or hotel that was evidently located across from the Post Office on North Broad Street at the corner of Sycamore. It burned in 1915.

They had a son and daughter 2 years old in April 1910. They kept boarders in their house and according to the 1910 census the following boarded with them; J. C. Little, age 40 was in wholesale grocery business, Tom Syfan, age 22 was a telegraph operator, R. G. Berry was a plumber at the waterworks, Clifford Ward was a salesman at a drugstore, born in Alabama, Henry Williamson, age 35 was a plumber, L. P. Sawtell, age 50 and J. C. Avery, age 32 were insurance agents. Mr. Avery was born in Florida. Clifford Ward's stepfather was born in Alabama and his mother was born in Georgia. Clifford Ward's stepfather was a Presbyterian preacher named McPhail. Clifford Ward and T. C. Little bought out J. J. Shepherd and formed Little Ward Furniture Company. Billy Allen's Furniture and Antique shop has a good picture of it.

Jackson County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1234 Commerce, Georgia 30529



Left to right: Mary Elizabeth McCorkle Scoggins, Johnston McCorkle, Helen Magill McCorkle, John McCorkle



Mary Elizabeth and John McCorkle