

# Jackson County Historical Society News

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SEPTEMBER 2012



The Jackson County Historical Society Annual Member's picnic will be held in the Mill building at Sells Mill Park, on September 13, 2012 at 6 p.m. Those interested in joining the Historical Society are welcome to attend.

*directions: Take highway I-85 to exit 129, turn on Hwy 53 towards Braselton/Hoschton, travel south to Jackson Trail, turn left, travel to the park entrance on the right, turn into the second entrance, not the pavillion entrance. The restrooms are located across the park near the pavilion. GPS: (latitude 34.084 N, Longitude 83.730 W)*

Jackson County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1234, Commerce, Georgia 30529

(706) 207-6889

**Newsletter**

The Historical Society’s collection of books, files and research materials are housed in the Heritage Room of the Commerce Public Library. The Library has begun an expansion and renovation and moved to 2319 N. Elm St (former Video Warehouse) for a period of 6 months. 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 Officers 2012-2013**

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

Newsletter editor: Tina Harris



*Sells Mill Pond and Dam*

## Sells Mill

The original property was purchased by Jonathon Sell about 1815. Jonathan married Rebecca Jones in 1812 and they had six sons. Son, James was born in 1814 and married Celia McMillan. They had nine children, Leonidus Franklin was the youngest, born in 1862. He and his brother, Robert were in the shoe business in Gainesville until he retired in 1885. He returned to the family farm and increased his holding from 510 acres to 1200 acres, growing timber, cotton, corn, wheat and oats. Frank operated a general store, sawmill, cotton ginn, grist mill, blacksmith shop, dairy and railroad depot and sold Model T automobiles. In 1894 he was elected a member of the State Legislature until 1896. He married Angie Maynard on December 27, 1900. The Grist Mill and Dam were built by Frank Sells in 1914. The large outcrop of granite rock throughout the park are part of the roots of Stone Mountain. They were members of Center Methodist Church, donating the land and lumber to move the church to it's present site near the house.

## Ralph Freeman Jr.,

*extract from The Paper, July 26, 2012*

Charter member of the Jackson County Historical Society, Ralph Freeman Jr. was honored by his fellow Masons on July 10, 2012. He was presented with his 75 year apron, plaque and mementoes by the Grand Master of Masons in Georgia. When Ralph was 21 years old his father passed away and Ralph had to drop out of Georgia Tech to head up the family. At the funeral he told an uncle that he wanted to be a Mason. He joined the fraternity on July 3, 1937. He also took his father's place on the city council and two years later became the youngest Mayor of any town in Georgia. In 1942 and 1943 he became Worshipful Master of Rockwell Lodge #91, Free and Accepted Masons.

His father, Ralph Freeman, Sr., was a prominent doctor and surgeon in Hoschton. He graduated from the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. His busy practice included delivering many of the babies in the surrounding areas. The obstetric fee for home delivery was \$20.00, however during the depression it was reduced to \$10.00. Many of his patients paid in produce or whatever they had to barter. He made calls to treat wounds, broken limbs and burns, sometimes very severe. One patient was visited daily to dress a burn and charged \$2.00-\$5.00 a



*Ralph Freeman, Jr, July 10, 2012*

visit. A large number of patients came to his office to pick up medicines. Dr. Freeman ordered his medicines from Atlanta and they arrived by train to Braselton. Dr. Freeman had one of the first cars in Hoschton and they also had a family car. Ralph Jr. remembers taking car loads of his friends to Stone Mountain in the family car when he was only 12 years old! There were no drivers licenses or age requirements in the 1920's! We consider Ralph Freeman the authority on life from those days in Jackson County and he is eager to tell another story about it.



*Dr. Ralph Freeman, Ralph Freeman Jr, Bertha Naomi Hosch*

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