

# Jackson County Historical Society News

VOLUME FIFTEEN, NUMBER FOUR

JULY 2008



*Talmo Depot, circa 1900. Photograph by Cicero Simmons*

The Jackson County Historical Society will meet at Talmo on July 17 at 6:00 p.m. Bring folding chairs for a picnic on the grounds of City Hall. Carol Murphy Holzhalb will do a short presentation on "How Trains Have Affected Life in Jackson County" at 6:45 p.m. at the Talmo Depot. Several men who worked on the Gainesville Midland Railroad will be available to talk and answer questions. Jim Baughman will have a fine display of railroad memorabilia to enjoy. For information call Tina at 706-757-3750.

*Directions:*

*From I-85, take Exit 137 (SR 129) North. Go five miles and turn left on 332 (at City of Talmo sign). Go almost one mile into Talmo. Turn left at Talmo City Hall sign for the Picnic, starting at 6 PM.*

*Jackson County Historical Society*

*P.O. Box 1234, Commerce, Georgia 30529*

*(706) 335-5946*

## Newsletter

The Jackson County Historical Society News is published quarterly and mailed before the next meeting. Back issues can be obtained for \$3.50 each plus postage. Some of the past newsletters can be viewed online at: [rootsweb.com/~gajackso/](http://rootsweb.com/~gajackso/)

The Historical Society's collection of books, files and research materials are housed in the Heritage Room of the Commerce Public Library.

Queries will be published in the next issue. Please send by September 15, 2008.

## Dues for 2007–2008 year

The dues year runs from July to July. Checks can be mailed to:

Jackson County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 1234, Commerce, GA 30529:

Individual –\$15  
Family –\$25  
LIFE member –\$100

## JCHS Officers 2007-2008

President:	Charlotte Mealor
Vice-President:	Shirley Wilson
Recording Secretary:	Nora Tolbert
Corresponding Secretary:	Boniface McDaniel
Treasurer:	Tommy Benton
Directors:	James Mathis Ann Jarrett
Past Presidents:	Joyce Ethridge Ann A. Jarrett Richard Chambers Jean H. Booth Betty Ann Mathis James Mathis Ralph Freeman Carol Tanner Marie Parks Tina Harris Tina Harris
Newsletter Editor:	Tina Harris

## In Memory

Jean Hood Booth, 83, of Commerce, died Feb. 3, 2008.

She was the daughter of the late John and Norma Alexander Hood. An active Presbyterian, she served on the then Athens Presbyterian Youth Council as moderator. After graduating from Agnes Scott College, she began working at Langley Fields Virginia, now NASA's oldest wind tunnel. In an effort to get closer to home, she took a job as youth director at a Presbyterian Church in Greenville, S.C. She married the late William Howard Booth and moved to Apple Valley, where she lived out her life.

She was a faithful member of Apple Valley Baptist Church, where she played the piano for worship, taught Sunday School, and worked many Vacation Bible Schools. Returning to her Presbyterian roots, she again became active in Commerce Presbyterian, where she served as elder, taught the ladies Sunday School class, was moderator of Women's Circle many times, led a circle at Northminster (Bentley) Homes, served as a moderator of Presbyterian Women and was honored for her work in the church by receiving an honorary lifetime membership in Presbyterian Women.

Mrs. Booth was in love with history, especially that of her community and her family. She was an avid genealogist, assisted innumerable women with DAR papers, and was the go-to-person for countless who were searching family lines. She was an enthusiastic member of the DAR, Jackson County Historical Society, and Crawford Long Museum Board.

Survivors include children, William Howard and Jacquelynne Simpson Booth, Athens; John Thomas Booth; Joseph Henry and Susan Allen Booth, all of Commerce; Alexander Hood and Fran Spiva Booth, Atlanta; six grandchildren: Leigh Booth Paoletti, Greenville, S.C.; Kate Booth Greene, Wigham; Annie Lauren Booth, Athens; Whitney Olivia Booth, Nashville, Tenn.; Christina Culver Booth, Durham, N.C.; and William Alexander Booth, Atlanta; and one great-grandchild, Robert William Greene.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, February 6, at the Commerce Presbyterian Church. Burial was in Apple Valley Baptist Church cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Commerce Presbyterian Church, the Commerce Library Heritage Room, the William H. Booth Scholarship (UGA College of Agriculture) or to a charity of your choice.



*Commerce Depot, circa 1890. Courtesy of Gary Doster*

### **Jefferson & Southern Railroad**

*July 24, 1875, Forest News*

Harmony Grove presents quite a different appearance since the location of the Northeastern Railroad. The citizens have awakened to a new store, built two new and elegant churches, several new store houses, and Mr. Hood has erected perhaps the finest dwelling in Jackson County, upon a beautiful site near his store.

The people are hopeful that the echoes of the iron horse will soon reverberate through the pleasant little village and we shall rejoice with them in the consummation of this long looked for event.

*October 2, 1875, Forest News*

“The Athens Georgian” has this to say in regard to this enterprise:

The present length of the line from Athens to Lula, in all thirtynine miles, has been graded and is now ready for the road proper. So far, only nine miles of the iron have been laid but the cross-ties have been provided for the whole distance.

Two hundred and forty thousand dollars in all, have

been expended, and it is estimated that about two hundred thousand dollars would equip and furnish the road. The company is now out of debt, and the first mortgage bonds have been limited to nine thousand dollars of graded road per mile, a first class security. Arrangements, we are informed, will soon be made from borrowing the necessary means to complete the road as the Directors, very justly, are unwilling to sacrifice their stock at present. Mr. Johnson, the Secretary and Treasurer, thinks that from the present outlook the road will be completed this winter.

*October 30, 1875, Forest News*

John Nicholson, Esq, has been elected President, and John Calvin Johnson re-elected Secretary and Treasurer of the N. E. R. R. Company. Speaking of the road, the “Athens Georgian” remarks:

The Directors are awaiting for further advice from the North before they proceed to anything definite. In conversation with Mr. R. L. Moss upon the subject, this gentleman stated that could they obtain \$20,000 more, the road would undoubtedly be completed. We hope that this will soon be done.”

*April 8, 1876, Forest News*

The Athens papers informs us that R. L. Moss, Esq., has been elected General Superintendent, that he has recently returned from Chattanooga, where he purchased some flat cars for the Company. Eight box cars have been bought from Louisville, Kentucky, and Mr. Moss will contract for the engine, passenger, baggage and mail coaches in a short time.

Fourteen miles of the road have already been finished, and with an increase in hands which have been put upon the force, the entire route will be completed by the middle of July or the first of August.

*May 12, 1876, Forest News*

It is now pretty generally understood that the citizens of Harmony Grove will celebrate the completion of the Northeastern Railroad this summer by a grand barbecue, in the good old style. A committee has already been appointed to make preliminary arrangements. Everybody in Jefferson will be invited, and the "head of the dog" will be muzzled that day! John Ray and Bill Goss say they will guarantee safety to all if the rail doesn't come out. The iron is now laid on the road within one mile of our town.

*May 27, 1876, Forest News*

We have been informed that trains are now running from Lula to Harmony Grove. Track laying is now progressing, and the Athenians are now "hope up" very much in anticipation of a "shout" from the "iron horse".

*June 24, 1876, Forest News*

The N. E. Railroad was cut in two by the accumulation of a large body of water at a point on what is known as the "Widow Park Place", which is thought contributed to the overflow of lands on Cabin Creek.

*June 27, 1876, the Athens Georgian*

From Capt. Beusse, just returned from the terminus of this road, we learn that the road is now a little less than eleven miles from our city, being at Tuck's place in Jackson County. Work will commence next week upon the Oconee bridge, Grant, Wilkins & Post, first class contractors, who will put it through in a short time. Superintendent Moss has gone to Atlanta to procure two turntables and to secure extra force upon the road. The locomotive "R. L. Moss", with passenger and baggage car,

will be finished by July 1st.

From Athens: "Center" (6 miles) named for the late George W. Center, "Nicholson" (11.5 miles at the Benton place,) named for the President of the railroad, Harmony Grove (18 miles), Maysville (24 miles), Gillsville (32 miles) and Lula City (40 miles) named for the charming daughter of one of the Directors. Next Saturday will find the road about midway between Athens and Harmony Grove.

*August 19, 1876, Forest News*

The N. E. Railroad bridge across the Oconee, 2.5 miles from Athens, is nearly completed and trains are expected to run through by the 1st of September.

*September 30, 1876, Forest News*

Butchering has commenced on the N. E. Railroad. Six beeves killed in one trip, if the weather is suitable, is considered an average evening work. Trade supplied in bulk!

*December 16, 1876, Forest News*

Around Town...Among other places visited, was the depot of the Northeastern Railroad. Here we received a cordial welcome through the urbane Agent, R. S. Cheney, Esq., from whom we were gratified to learn the road was doing a good business – which however, had been a little marred by the recent burning of 69 bales of cotton and two cars at Lula – entailing a loss on the company of some \$4000. and while speaking of the railroad, it may not be out of place to mention that there is now an Express Agency at the depot, under charge of Mr. Cheney. This fact is alluded to simply because it is, we think, not generally known, and the information may be of service to the public at large.

*November 10, 1877, Forest News*

### **Death of Col. Thomas T. Dorough**

Many of our readers were, doubtless, acquainted with the gentleman whose name appears at the "head" of this short epistle and they will, we feel well assured, mingle their heartfelt regret with ours in chronicling his sad and untimely demise on Saturday night last. He was, we learn, runover and horribly mangled, on the night above mentioned, by the train on the N. E. Railroad, some two miles above Harmony Grove. His head, or at least a portion of it, was severed entirely from the body, and was

found some distance from the lifeless remains. The engineer in charge of the locomotive saw him – but too late to stop his engine before running over him. Col. Dorough was in the prime of life-being only about 40 years of age and leaves a wife and some half-dozen children to weep over his tragic death. He was an officer in the Confederate army during the late war, and is said to have been an excellent and worthy soldier.

*October 8, 1880, Forest News*

The Northeastern has commenced running four trains per day, which is much better for our people that wish to visit Athens or Atlanta. They can visit Atlanta and spend a few hours and return the same day.

### **Gainesville, Jefferson & Southern Railroad**

*July 15, 1881, Jackson Herald*

NOTICE - Is hereby given that I shall apply to the Legislature of Georgia at its July session, 1881, for the pas-

sage of a bill to be entitled “An Act to amend an Act entitled an Act to incorporate the Gainesville, Jefferson, and Southern Railroad Company” and for other purpose therewith connected, approved August 23rd 1872, so as to authorize said Railroad Company to proceed at once to build a branch of their road from a point near the line between the counties of Hall and Jackson to Monroe in Walton County, or Covington, in Newton County, or some other point on the Georgia Railroad, to be selected by the President and Directors of said Company, and to issue and sell bonds of said Railroad Company to raise money to iron and equip the said road and the branch herein authorized. –A.D. Candler

The Gainesville & Jefferson Railroad Company is suing its stockholders who have refused to pay in their assessments.

**Jefferson Railroad Facts Carved in the Hills:** We paid a long comtemplated vist, last Friday, to where Mr. Blackstock is at work on the Jefferson end of the railroad that



*Railroad Station platform, Talmo, circa 1900. Photograph by Cicero Simmons*

has been projected from this place to Gainesville...Mr. Blackstock, the contractor, is at present at work near the upper end of his section, close to the Hall County line. When we visited the works he was nearly half through one of the deepest cuts of the road. He was working about eighteen hands, and had started the week with about thirty...The work has been very severe during the hot weather just past, and only those who were old hands at the business could stand the exhaustion...With the completion of the above mentioned cut and the adjoining fill he will have two miles finished up ready for the crushes...He will then move down below his shanties and commence work on the river.

Capt. Collier, Engineer of the G. J. & S Railroad, arrived yesterday evening in our town, and will locate our depot before he leaves.

*December 8, 1881, Jackson Herald*

Mr. Blackstock will commence grading at this end of the line next week. The engine of the Gainesville and Jefferson railroad now on the track at Gainesville, has been named "A. D. Candler" and cost seven thousand dollars.

*February 17, 1882, Jackson Herald*

On the 4th instant Mr. Christopher Bell, who lives on the line of the G & J Railroad, shipped a bale of cotton to Gainesville on the road, making it the first one ever carried by the road.

*March 17, 1882, Jackson Herald*

W. T. Harrison & Co. were the first to ship good over the railroad for this place, and they broke down two wagons getting them here from the end of the track.

The depot here has been located and the land deeded for the same. It will be on the site first chosen by Capt. Collier - on James E. Randolph's land. All the right of way has been secured except through Mrs. Turner's land, which it is to be hoped will soon be settled to the satisfaction of all parties...it is astonishing to think how much business in freight and passengers, the road is now doing, in its imperfect condition. It overpaid its running expenses last month, and one day last week hauled over seventy dollars worth of freight and the passenger traffic is considerable.



*Narrow Gauge railroad steam engine, Gainesville Midland No. 23. Photograph by Cicero Simmons*



*George Burke Matthews, with umbrellas, came out to pose with railroad workers. Photograph by Cicero Simmons*

*May 26, 1882, Jackson Herald*

On last Friday evening we visited Mr. Blackstock's force up on the railroad. The hands (about thirty in number) were at work on a heavy fill on the branch between Mr. Roberts house and Mr. Newt Pinson's. It was really a fine sight to see them at work, and it made us feel as if the road was coming right along...Dr. Watson will run a team to the railroad and make regular trips in a few days.

*September 8, 1882, Jackson Herald*

We look for the iron horse to make his first visit to Jefferson about the first of November...Mr. Blackstock finished up the grading on this end of the G. J. & S. Railroad on yesterday. The citizens of our town gave the hands a big dinner...Judge Howard brought the news from Gainesville last Friday night that Col. Candler has secured enough iron and material to finish our railroad, and that matters would be pushed right ahead as fast as possible.

*November 25, 1882, Jackson Herald*

On Wednesday evening 16th inst., at Gillsville, a wedding in Railroad circles took place, which was one of the

most elegant of the season. The contracting parties were Mr. W. W. Foreacre, assistant road master on the Northeastern railroad and son of President G. J. Foreacre and Miss Eula, daughter of Mr. J. N. Garrison, agent of the road at Gillsville. The ceremony was performed by Rev. H. R. Bernard, superintendent of the Northeastern.

A special car with a large party consisting of Col. Foreacre and family and number of special friends came up to Lula on Wednesday afternoon when it was taken by an engine sent up from Athens for the purpose and brought to Gillsville, where the marriage took place soon after its arrival.

After the ceremony a delightful supper was partaken of by the assembled guest and mirth and happiness ruled the hour. Mr. Foreacre, the groom is young gentleman of sterling qualities and occupies a responsible position with credit to himself. The bride is quite young but is a lady of rare talents and possesses all these accomplishments which fit her to fulfill the new duties she has assumed as help mate to her husband. Both the young people are very popular and received the hearty congratulation of their assembled friends.

Dear Members:

Since becoming your president in 2005, my understanding and appreciation of the commitment and work of those who founded and continued the Jackson County Historical Society have been greatly, greatly enhanced. This past February, we mourned the “sudden” passing of Mrs. Jean Booth, a founding member and a consistent reference for those interested in genealogy and the history of Jackson County. For me personally, she was always an encourager, constant supporter, and a strong gracious Southern Lady. A young woman from Texas called me the other day and told me how much Jean had helped when she was researching her Georgia ancestors. Hardly a week passes in the “document-recovery workroom” that we don’t mention Jean’s name. In this issue, we pay tribute to Mrs. Booth. I would like to also recognize other charter members of JCHS who are living (as best we can determine) and to publicly thank them for supporting the start of a great organization. They are:

Mr. Thomas H. Benton, Mrs. Doris Brown, Mrs. Herman Buffington, Mrs. Susan E. Chaisson, Mrs. Anna Chambers, Mr. Richard J. Chambers, Mrs. Joy Cook, Mr. Russell Cook, Mr. Joe Davis, Mrs. Doris Elrod, Mr. John M. Elrod, Mr. Tommy Elrod, Mr. Burton R. (Bob) Evans, Mrs. Ann A. Jarrett, Mr. J. S. Johnson, Mrs. J. S. Johnson, Dr. William S. Kelly, Mr. Robert Lacey, Mrs. Carlene Loggins, Mr. Mike McEver, Mrs. Robert McEver, Mrs. Betty Ann Mathis, Mr. James Mathis, Mrs. Ann Rogers, Mrs. Jennie Snare, Mrs. J. T. Stovall, Mrs. Margaret Ward, Mrs. Jacquelyn H. Wilkes, Mr. J. T. Wilkes. When you see these good folks out and about, please tell them how much you appreciate their foresight. Thank you all for the opportunity to be president these past three years and for your support as we’ve tackled and accomplished many “historic” projects.

Respectfully,

Charlotte Mealor

**Jackson County Historical Society**

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P.O. Box 1234 Commerce, Georgia 30529