

Article about Newnan to be put in the time capsule April 1978

My Mother died five years ago at the age of ninety-eight, After her death, looking through her files, which were many, I found many interesting things. Mother had kept a diary most of her life, kept records of all descriptions, marriages births, deaths, scrapbooks, filing cabinets etc. She had one folder giving facts about Newnan churches, people, education, industries etc., So today the things I will tell you will be things I (now seventy -two years old) remember, and have heard, things My husband has told me and things I have gleaned from Mother's papers.

General McIntosh, and Indian leader, signed a treaty on Feb. 12, 1825 giving lands west of the Flint River to Georgia. The McIntosh train passes through Coweta Co. and goes as far as Talladega, Ala. In 1847 there was a daily stage coach traveling between West Point and Atlanta for a year or more until a charter for a railroad could be obtained Later we did have two railroads going through Newnan One of the trains called the Goober, and also the shopper's train, came to Newnan by Central of Georgia and then to Atlanta on the A and WP. This train returned late in the afternoon. There were two cars, one half of one for baggage and the rest for passengers. The other train the Central of Ga. came from Columbus to Newnan. Our nice depot was torn down several years ago. It was at the foot of Savannah St.

At the time before the road to Atlanta became highway 29 the roads were unpaved, unsoiled, very curvy and dangerous since one had to cross the railroad thirteen times between Newnan and Atlanta. Our first paved roads were six miles to Madras and six miles to Moreland. This was about the year 1921. Until 1906, the year I was born there were no cars in Newnan. Dr. Peniston and Dr. Barge probably had the first cars. It was quite a thrill to ride in one. For a long time there was no pavement in Newnan. Later the court square was paved with wooden blocks which was the only pavement in Newnan at that time.

Let's look at a few of the new inventions and some facts about Newnan. Telephones were first installed when Dr, Reese connected his drug store to his home. Telephones were attached to the walls rather high. I'm sure if that kind of phone was used now, the teenagers would not talk so long at a time.

In 1889 Mr. Tom Jones installed water works in his home, probably the first in Newnan. In 1881 telegraph lines from Newnan to Carrollton were completed

In 1686 the Newnan Herald was published.

In 1888 stones were laid for two important buildings, Newnan Cotton Mills and the public school.

The first baby born in Newnan was William Potts Nimmons (All prominent local names).

The first jail was in a hollow tree.

In 1889 Newnan Cotton Mills installed electric lights. The mill was working two shifts, twelve hours each, The only light was from kerosene lamps which were very dangerous, especially around so much lint. The lamps were constantly getting broken and catching fire to the mill that something had to be done for safety's sake. Someone heard that a man in Palmetto had electric lights in his house.

This was investigated and as a result, Newnan Cotton Mills installed electric lights. People in town, who had never seen electric lights were so fascinated that they went in droves to the mill to see them, Finally the mill set up two nights a week with a director present for visits.

My mother used to say that she cleaned so many lamp chimneys when she was a girl that when electric lights came to Newnan, she was going to have all the light she wanted. You could ride by my home most any time up to two A.M. and see lights burning all over the house

In 1887 the cemetery was named Oak Hill by vote of the readers of the Newnan Herald. Mother was eight years old when Confederate president, Jefferson Davis and Miss Winnie came through Newnan and a train to Alabama. Mother remembered the beautiful floral arrangement given to them. In 1930 Natural gas came to town. The lines were laid on the bottom of the Chattahoochee river. After a big rain, the pipe broke and we had no gas to cook with or heat water with. There was a big wedding in town at that time. The groom, a friend of my brother Tom's, stayed at our home. It was a job getting ready for the wedding without gas,

Let's look briefly at education, Newnan was an outstanding educational center. In 1827 the first school was taught in a log house which was the court house. The first public school came in 1888

In 1828 when lots were sold for the new town, the judges of the Inferior Court reserved the land where the Temple Ave, school was for a school. This is now a park. Until public schools came in vogue, there were private schools which provided splendid education for young people, We even had a college--College Temple-- Two buildings of this college are still standing on College St. This was the first college to confer on a woman the MA degree. Temple Ave, School, where I attended was a pleasant school building with the exception of the rest rooms which were in the basement, were very dark, like a dungeon, very scary. After seven grades, there were graduation exercises. I attended High School in the building on Jackson St., which had recently been torn down. It was next to McKoon's Funeral Home. We had some good superintendents but one especially efficient one stands out in my mind, Mr. B.F. Pickett. Mr. Pickett was strict and believed in students staying home on school nights, Many students were afraid of him. If a crowd of boys were hanging around a drug store at night and saw Mr. Pickett coming, they scattered like the wind, He had all the pupils memorize certain Psalms, some of which we still remember. Mr. Pickett had been a track man in college and believed in boys running. He would have cross country runs beginning at Hospital road to the court square. There was not much traffic -so the police cleared the way for the runners. Every boy in school unless he had a doctor's excuse had to participate. At one of these runs, my husband, Karl Nixon won, receiving a Diamond stickpin from Mr. Ellis Mansour, Taft's father.

The auditorium was over the Library, The night my class graduated, we had a speaker, the Salutatorian, the Valedictorian, the Senior play, giving out of diplomas with remarks by Mr. Atkinson, Another time the auditorium was used for school was on Memorial Day. The girls put on their middie blouses and skirts, took the wreath made of greenery, or a spray of greens and marched with all the school children to the auditorium to hear a speech. Every one, boys and girl were supposed to have a wreath or bouquet. Then we marched to the cemetery to the Confederate Soldier's section and laid our greenery on the graves. The football field was just off Jefferson St., back of the first, section of the cemetery, right where the housing authority now is. Baseball- the Ga.-Ala. League played here to until later when it moved to Pickett field on Wesley St. When I was in school, we went home for lunch if you lived close enough.. On the way back we were always munching on something, crab apples, apples or goobers or my favorite sandwich, which you couldn't guess in a hundred years what kind it was- it was a biscuit with black eyed peas in it.

Newnan schools have had an excellent reputation through the years for which we are justly proud.

Let's look now at the Court Square and a few things about the town.

Over Avery's store was the Opera House On the second floor was a fine telegraphy school, where people came from out of town to learn about this important work. They also taught typing and this is where I learned the little typing I know. I did not attend very regularly as part of the time, I was teaching school, and I visited out

of town often. There was no hospital in Newnan except a little green wooden house which stood where the First Baptist Parking lot now is. The kitchen was the operating room. We did not have refrigerators but used ice boxes. The children looked forward to seeing the icewagon come by. The driver on our street was Robert Calhoun, who was so good to all of us children, giving us slivers of ice. People bought ten, twenty or fifty pounds as they needed.

Robert had big tongs to lift the ice in the house. People were allowed to have cows, horses, chickens, ducks, dogs, cats, animals in town. When I was a little girl, Daddy bought us a donkey but we didn't enjoy it much, for every time we got on him to ride, he would lie down and not move,

Then Daddy got us a billy goat to pull a wagon. Daddy was disgusted with us because we were afraid of the goat until he went into the lot himself and the goat with horns down rushed him. One time we even had a skunk but not for a pet. In fact we didn't know where he came from and we were glad to see him go.

We had to move out of the kitchen for a while,

There was a livery stable on the corner of Jackson and Madison Sts. Here they rented horses and buggies. Since there were so few cars and unpaved streets and a big hanging light on the corner, we children in the neighborhood played on the streets at night. It was so much fun but I don't advise you to do this as you would get killed. The Halcyon Theater (we called it picture show) was about where Reynold's store now is. Of course we had silent pictures but the piano player made the picture come alive for us, She knew just what kind of music to play, love music, Indian war music or -what have you. It was quite exciting.

There were few places to swim--one swimming pool on McKoy place (now Alpine Dr.) which had extremely cold water. Pearl lake was our favorite place. There was a dressing room and a place to buy drinks etc. Across the lake was a huge open air pavilion . People camped near the pavilion. Across the road was very large spring . Here Sunday School picnics were held, Pearl Lake is where Mr. William Banks lives on Greenville St. Ext.

Ray Park or Mineral Springs was another good place to have parties. This was where the city tennis courts are. There was a pavilion there too. Later Warm Springs was a real treat for picnics,

Two kinds of parties we had which you may not know about--prom parties. A girl had a tally card and boys would ask for a date to walk and talk until the bell rang for next prom, The other kind of party was a pound party where every brought something to eat.. if not a pound, at least a sack of something.

In the old auditorium there would be plays, conventions, programs etc. Mrs. Sewell and Mrs. Marjorie Hatchett wrote plays and musicals which Mr. Sewell (quite a showman) produced. Mr. Sewell had his own sewing rooms for making costumes, places to train directors. These musicals were put on in forty eight states.

Now, let us look at some churches.

In 1828 a Presbyterian church was formed with sixteen members at Bullsboro. A Baptist church was on the land where my house on 88 East Broad St. now stands. It later moved to Jackson St. to the site of Mrs. Emil Mann's home. Of course these churches started out in log houses. The first Methodist church was near the Oak Hill cemetery and later moved to Wesley St. Then it moved to Jackson St. where Matthews furniture store now is. Now the beautiful church, the architect being none other than the preacher, C.M. Lipham, is on Greenville St. When it was being built, the Preacher passed around a gourd to the other churches for help which they gladly gave.

Newnan can be called the Mother of Senators, Congressmen, Governors, Attorney Generals, and many distinguished citizens. Our Governors were Gov. W.Y. Atkinson, Gov. Alfred Colquit and Gov. Ellis Arnall, who still lives in Newnan on Jackson St. Judge Hugh Buchanan was a member of Congress and a member of the States Rights Convention in 1860.

Dr. A.W. Calhoun was a famous eye, ear and nose specialist --and the father of Dr Phinizy Calhoun, a prominent doctor in Atlanta, -He built a beautiful pink castle on Paces Ferry Road. The house still stands but the grounds have been divided into lots. Newnan has had many fine doctors,

Charles Thompson, a member of a very prominent family in Newnan, though crippled was able to attend Carnegie Tech where he roomed with the son of Mr. Andrew Carnegie. The son came to Newnan to visit Charles and was so delighted that he stayed an extra week. Mr. Carnegie was a multi millionaire who was extremely generous with his money. Among other things he gave many libraries, especially to large cities such as New York. The son told his father that Newnan did not have a library and that he ought to give them one. Mr. Carnegie did just that. Mrs. Carnegie came to the dedication and said that Newnan was the only city to whom a library had been given by her husband which had invited her to come to the dedication. We are so proud of our Carnegie library. You will find a Picture of Charles Thompson and one of Mr. Carnegie in the library.

No town could have had more noted lawyers, doctors, authors, and teachers. A Mr. Philip Simms from Grantville was an outstanding journalist who won many honors and was named in who's 'Who in America. He was the foreign editor of twenty six newspapers of the Scripps Howard chain, headquarters in Washington, D.C. One late Mrs. Nellie Favors - was a poet at the age of Sixteen. One time she played and sang Kathleen Mavoureen for Sidney Lanier.

Through the years here have been many clubs in our city. Some are Reading Circle (1909), Benevolent Union, DAR, UDC, Pilot Club, 4-H clubs, History classes, Historical Society, Kiwanis, Rotary, Civitan, Jr. Chamber, Optimist, Secretary's Club, Civic League, American Legion, bridge clubs, Salamagundi clubs Elk's Club, Moose club, Woman's Club, Junior Welfare League (1928), Masonic Lodge and no doubt many more.

In 1880 there were thirty one, mills and factories in Coweta Co. including R.D. Cole Mfg Co., Cotton gins, Furniture and Carriage shops, Harness and Collar factories, Saw mills, a Shoe factory, and blanket mill in Sargent. Today during my lifetime there are many fine industries and businesses: Brown Steel, Royal Seat, International Latex, William Bonnell Co., Newnan Frozen Foods, Bibb Mfg, West Point Mfg., American Can Co., Southern Mills, General Tire Co, Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola - Bottling Co.s, Coweta Dairies, Plant Yates (Georgia Power Co.), American Service Co., Mt. Vernon Mills, formerly Newnan Cotton Mills, no longer in operation here. Then there were two radio stations WCOH and WNEA, three banks, First National in Newnan, Citizens and Southern, Bank of Coweta, Newnan Federal Savings and Loan Assn., Atlanta Fed. Savings and Loan Assoc., two fine hospitals, Newnan on Jackson St. and Coweta General on Hospital Road, three Nursing Homes. There are too many attractive stores to name. Some of our industries are nationally and internationally known.

One of the newest discoveries which came to our vicinity in 1977 was a building heated by solar energy - yes, by the sun. Solar Energy will also be used for air conditioning. This building also houses our first ice skating rink and is located in Shenandoah, the new planned city adjoining Newnan. The new city is a fast growing community.

Newnan is known as the City of Homes. As far back as 1840 and 1850 there have been imposing homes in Newnan. The Willcoxons, Berrys, Bigbys, Dent, Calhouns, Coles, Halls, Rays, Robinsons, Hardaways,

Sargents, Welchs, Stacys and many others have had lovely homes, many of them colonial with boxwood gardens, mostly designed by Buckman of Augusta and all had homes before 1885. Today some of the loveliest homes in Newnan . belong to or have been owned by the Mangets, the Millard Farmers, Tom. Glover, Hamilton Arnall, Jr., Ellis Arnall, Mrs. Joe Arnall, Mrs. Eugene Manget, Dr. Jack Powell, Glenn Ware, J . L. Glover, Howard Glover, Millard Camp, Miss Mary Freeman, Dr. Ernest Barron, Henry Sargent, Charles Woodroof, Cap Goodrum, Walter Sanders, Guy Arnall, Mrs. Tolleson Kirby, Mrs. Leila Powell, William Banks, Dr. Jim Arnold, Bam Banks, Dr. Chapman, Robert McKoon, Dr. Pat Yancey, Nat Glover, Littleton Glover, Jr., Dr. Joe Parks, Dr. C.M. Barron, Robert Campbell, Lindsey Barron, and oh so many more. There are a number built in modern architecture. The R.D. Cole is an interesting house too. Florine Craine's azalea garden is beautiful.

Newnan had the reputation of being the richest city per capita in the South.

In 1928, Newnan celebrated its Centennial in an exciting way. More than sixty floats, carriages made the parade. There were horseback riders and a queen's float. The queen was Miss Susan Cole. There were beautiful displays depicting the history of Newnan.

This Sesquicentennialis even has a more elaborate celebration than the Centennial. There are interesting plans for a week, something special each day. For five nights there will be a pageant depicting the history of Newnan. I am enclosing a program for the week. I hope you have gleaned a little insight into the history of our little city from this paper.

Mary Glover Nixon (Mrs. Karl) April, 1978