

FG/CCHS NEWS

Preserve, Protect, Promote



FORT GAINES/ CLAY
COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:

- 93 Lifetime, new and renewed members strong.
- Annual Dinner Held
- 2024 Calendar
- 1st Saturdays
- Frontier Village Projects

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 4

Summer 2023

Annual Dinner Meeting A Success



Outgoing President Anne Lynn and speaker for the evening Mr. Ralph Bass

On Saturday June 24, 2023 at 6PM, the Fort Gaines/Clay County Historical Society held its Annual Dinner Meeting at the Women's Club in Fort Gaines, GA. We had a full house of 42 people and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

After a lively meet and greet, Rev. Jeff Hines said the blessing and Society members, family and friends enjoyed a buffet of fried chicken, ham, potato and broccoli salads, with apple cobbler and pound cake for dessert. The delicious meal was catered by West Foods.

After the meal, Anne Lynn introduced our speaker for the evening. Ralph Bass is currently writing a book about Warren Sutton (1808-1858) and graciously agreed to give the Society a

brief glimpse into Sutton's life and times in our part of the world. Mr. Bass has roots in Randolph County and is kin to the Sutttons through Augustus Baldwin and family. Mr. Bass painted a vivid picture of Warren Sutton and the men and women who settled our region during antebellum times. Those attending thoroughly enjoyed what he dubbed "The Saga of Warren Sutton".

President Anne Lynn then called our business meeting to order and asked board members to report on the past year as well as planned and ongoing projects of FG/CCHS.

First to report was Treasurer Bess Hartley who reported a current bank balance of \$34,847.44. Bess quipped that although that seemed like a great deal, members would soon find out we had big plans for the money. (continued page 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Annual Dinner | 1 |
| News and Notes | 2 |
| 2024 Calendar | 2 |
| Photo Collage | 3 |
| Annual Dinner cont. | 4 |
| | 5 |
| Out of the Past | 6 |
| | 7 |



In Memory

We have lost a valued and generous member of the Society.

Carol Coleman will be sincerely missed by family, friends and Society members. She cared deeply about the history of Fort Gaines and Clay County and was a knowledgeable and irreplaceable resource concerning that history.

News and Notes

- The next **Board Meeting** of FG/CCHS will be held at the Sutton’s Corner Museum at 4PM on **Monday August 7, 2023**. All meetings are open to the public and we invite you to attend.
- **Thanks to all** who promptly responded to the “gentle reminder” in the last newsletter and paid their 2023 dues.
- If you would like to schedule an individual or group tour of the **Sutton’s Corner Museum** please call **229-231-5498** or stop by the library and talk to Dustin.

GIFT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gail Hubbard Libby Neves Peter & Mary Ann Parham

2024 Birthday and Event Calendar

Enclosed with this issue is a mail order blank for members far away that want to order calendars and/or include birthdays . The deadline for mail orders this year is August 25, 2023. As always we will have a few extra copies on sale at Christmas at the Fort, the museum and Opera House Hardware.

Museum Exhibit June 1st Saturday



The Society presented an exhibit of American Art Pottery the first Saturday in June. The Museum was filled with examples of McCoy, Hull, Roseville, Robinson Ransbottom pottery and more dating from the late 1800’s all the way to the 1950’s. A man from Abbeville stopped by in hopes that we were selling pottery. We weren’t, but that could be a possibility next year if we have collectors who are interested.

Annual Meeting 2022/2023 Collage



Vice-President Cyndie Coleman reported that membership for 2023 stood at 92 members to date. That included 43 Lifetime members, 42 regular members and 7 complimentary memberships. She said that it usually takes until July (midyear) to get all the renewals and that 8 long time members had yet to renew.

Cyndie then reported that the 2024 Birthday and Event Calendar theme was going to be the public cemeteries in Fort Gaines. Local photographer Roxanne Simpson has been taking wonderful photographs of the Pioneer, Rosehill, and New Park cemeteries to illustrate the calendar for 2024. So far, everything is on schedule and board members will soon be turning in orders in July.

Cyndie continued next with the Museum report noting that the Clay County Commissioners had agreed to replace both heat and air units at the museum much to our delighted surprise. So far we are very pleased with the new units' performance and delighted that we get to spend the money saved on other projects. She also mentioned our museum friend and advisor Trent Tye had not only refaced the small shack on the side lot of the museum this year, but had begun work on coating the museum roof with elastomeric. Finally, a computer and brand new printer have been donated to the museum in the past few months. This means we can begin to computerize records and get some much needed signage done for exhibits as soon as we get the appropriate software.

Board member Linda Morgan stated for the record that our Cemocheechee Artifacts are now complete. State Archeologist Linda Black and helper installed the last vessels in the exhibit on September 7, 2022. She thanked the DNR and Gerald Greene for all the help they gave during the years long search to recover the replicas for Clay County. Linda then took the opportunity to thank President Anne Lynn for her service saying that in the last few years she not only served as FGCHS President, but was simultaneously also President of the Garden Club, and Chairman of the Downtown Development Authority. The assembled group gave Anne a well deserved round of applause.

Board member Tim Shaver gave an overview of the 1st Saturdays held at the Museum. He stated that since last July 4th the museum had been open to the public almost every first Saturday of the month. Many local artisans had been featured on those Saturdays including wood turners, flint knappers, blacksmiths, decoy makers and more as well as exhibits and a cane syrup maker. One event featuring the making of barn quilts resulted in a bigger movement with the establishment of Clay County's Red Clay Barn Quilt Chapter. To date people have put up more than 40 barn quilts throughout the county. Tim also plugged our knife fundraiser and brought an example for all to see.

Reports continued with Board member Douglas Williams outlining ongoing projects as well as the ones we are about to take on. Douglas stated that our concentration right now is on the Frontier Village Complex. We have accepted bids and contractors for multiple jobs. In May we had the cabins, Toll House and block house inspected for termites by Adams Exterminators. No evidence of active termite infestation was found, but the inspector did see damage from the past. We contracted with Adams to install Sentricon bait stations so we can monitor the buildings ongoing at a cost of \$1,290.00. It will cost \$500 annually to maintain the system. Earlier in the year, the Scout House had been inspected and termites were found. It was subsequently sprayed at a cost of \$800. The thresholds of the infected doors were also replaced.

Bobbie Spargo, owner of Custom Real Estate Enhancement, is going to replace the roofs on all the cabins, the blockhouse and the Scout House for just over \$12,000.00. The DDA (Downtown Development Authority) is contributing \$6,000 to help get this done.

Ronnie Crozier tells us the Clay County Visitor's Bureau is going to replace the name plaques on the cabins which are showing their age.

Kevin Baron, owner of Custom Real Estate Enhancement, is going to make safety repairs to the Ingram Cabin (the large dogtrot) before Christmas at the Fort this year. He will also make some repairs to the Toll House and work on the front and back porches of the house. His labor will come in at \$3,000. We won't have a figure for materials until he gets into the job.

Hud Gay is going to tackle the Scout House including replacing and shoring up logs, working on windows, and doing structural work. We are in negotiations about the costs for the project.

The Cane Mill is currently being rebuilt. We've spent about \$6,000 so far. Members Tim Shaver, Billy Darby and Jim Pope are in charge of this project.

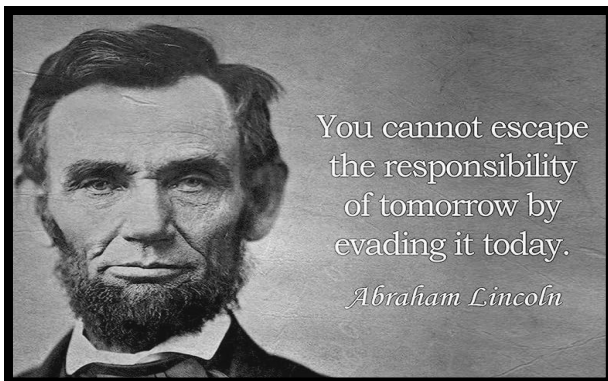
Next Anne Lynn called on Board member Dustin Holt to report on a bid for insurance coverage for the side lot, the shack on the side lot, the Saxena building and our artifacts in the museum proper. The Georgia Farm Bureau total policy bid was \$1,198.00. The board will be discussing and voting on this bid in the near future.

Anne called Douglas back up to the podium as Chairman of the nominating committee for officers to serve for the next two years. Douglas announced the slate of officers as follows: Linda Morgan—President, Cyndie Coleman—Vice President, Bess Hartley—Treasurer, Bobbie Brown—Secretary. Anne then asked for nominations from the floor. There were none. She then asked for a motion to accept the proposed slate of officers. A motion was made for acceptance and seconded from the floor. The slate was voted in unanimously.

There being no further business before the Society, Anne called the meeting to a close.



Quarterly Quotes:

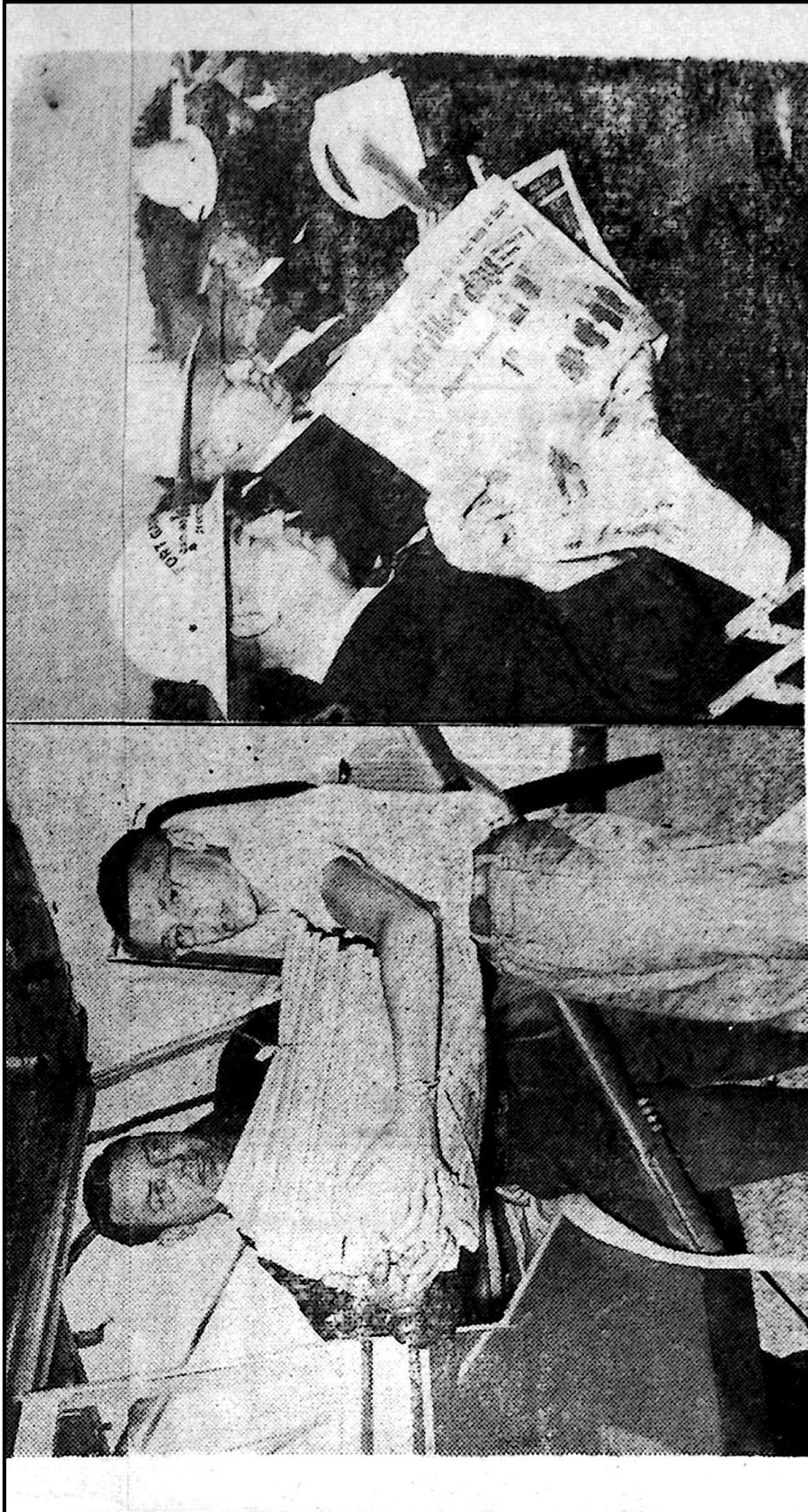


Genealogy Trivia:

If you figure there are 25 years between each generation, 500 years ago there were 1,048,576 people involved in creating you.

OUT OF THE PAST

1955 Walter F. George Lock and Dam Groundbreaking



WAYNE HAMRICK - local carrier for the Columbus Enquirer is shown unloading the special afternoon edition of the Columbus Ledger, containing pictures and accounts of the parade and float. Pilot Dean King flew the papers down from Columbus. A Ledger photograph shows some of the dignitaries present looking over the edition.

Last year the 2023 calendar theme was the making of the Walter F. George Lock and Dam. We had beautiful pictures from the Corps of Engineers to visually tell the tale. In researching, however, we came across many articles in the Fort Gaines News Record that didn't fit into the calendar but were nevertheless interesting in their own right. We thought they might be interesting, nostalgic and informative for members also.

The pictures and captions to the left were published in the October 13, 1955 News Record which chronicled groundbreaking day.

Groundbreaking Draws Crowd Near 7,000 Here

BY DICK GRUENWALD

"The new series of Chattahoochee River dams will stimulate industry and agriculture in the Valley," - Sen. George.

"Mankind will know a great investment will be made," - J. W. Woodruff, Sr.

"A great opportunity for power, commerce, navigation, industry," - Sparkman.

"The South is rising fast on a wave of prosperity," - Sen. Hill.

"Most important incompleting project in the Southeast," - Rep. Sikes.

With statements such as these from Georgia, Alabama and Florida officials, 7,000 Chattahoochee Valley leaders and citizens participated in the birth of a new era . . . the groundbreaking ceremonies of the \$86 million Fort Gaines dam here and across the river Thursday.

And while eulogies poured forth over the hard work that made the first phase of the dam possible plans were in the making for the new Columbia dam and Sen. George spoke of another future dam site at West Point.

The Columbia dam, George said, will probably be built in two or three years and is expected to be completed by the time the Fort Gaines dam is finished, thus providing navigation to Columbus, Phenix City in 1962 or 1963.

Woodruff, Sr., chairman of the Georgia Waterways Commission, told the gathering that this was the third groundbreaking ceremony

he had attended. He said now the dam that bears his name is nearing completion and the Buford dam is 60 percent complete.

"As this magnificent structure at Fort Gaines harnesses the waters of the Chattahoochee and as it puts these resources to greater use, all mankind will know a great investment will be made," the pioneer river developer said.

Woodruff's son, J. W. Woodruff Jr., executive vice president of the Three Rivers Development Assn., was master of ceremonies for the program.

Fort Gaines' biggest day started off with a 45-minute parade thru the heart of the city which featured floats and bands from all over the Valley. During the parade flights of jets roared through cloudless skies.

In the parade Columbus won the civic division's first place ribbon while Kirven's of Columbus won first in the commercial portion.

Columbus' float of the USS Columbus with sailors, girls and city dignitaries received the loudest applause by the thousands who dotted the streets. In the civic division Fort Gaines won second place and Eufaula took third. Edison's "Salute to Progress" won honorable mention.

Colonial Baking Company of Columbus won second in the commercial floats with the Covington Planter Company of Dothan third.

After a giant barbecue Fort Gaines was deserted as the cele-

bration moved across the river to the former property of Clay County School Superintendent W. W. King. Today huge earth-moving machines are at work on the property building the first phase of the tremendous dam, the main link in the tri-rivers project.

The groundbreaking ceremony was highlighted by speeches and remarks by senators, and congressmen from the three state, mayors, county commissioners, military officials, river developers, and civic leaders.

Each speaker painted a rosy future for the Chattahoochee Valley.

Not present at the ceremony were Alabama governor James Folsom, who was represented by Lt. Gov. Guy Hardwick, Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin who was represented by his executive secretary, Ben Wiggins, and Georgia Third Dist. Rep. E. L. (Tic) Forrester, who became ill during the morning program.

Senators and congressmen were unanimous in their belief that the biggest fight for appropriations is over. Although only a small portion of the funds has been appropriated, both Sen. George and Sen. Sparkman said that Congress usually approves funds on year to year basis for projects already started.

At the groundbreaking ceremony officials lauded the efforts of Rep. Andrews in the House and Senator George in the Senate for leading the fight for the dam through

Congress last summer.

Colleagues said Andrews introduced the resolution that carried in the House Appropriation Committee and Andrews told the huge gathering that the construction start was made possible by only one vote . . . it was that close in the committee.

U. S. Army Engineer officers revealed their intense interest in the Fort Gaines link of the tri-rivers project. Col. Harold E. Bisbort, Mobile District Engineer, called the project a great one. Brig. Gen. Henry J. Hoeffler, South Atlantic Division Engineer, said it "is gratifying to the perseverance and hard work pay off." Maj. Gen. Charles G. Holle, Deputy Chief of Engineers, said the dam gives the Valley a promise of a great future. He stated that primary purpose was to return navigation to rivers and that the tri-rivers waterway was part of the greatest inland waterway in the world.

The Alabama delegation and several of the engineers came to Fort Gaines after taking part in the Demopolis Lock and Dam dedication on Thursday on the other side of Alabama. After the Fort Gaines observance Senators Hills, and Sparkman left for Fort Rucker for a tour of the new Army Aviation School.

The historic ground-breaking ceremony came to a close shortly after 4 P. M. when eight officials pushed the detonation lever setting off 60 pounds of dynamite.

Trailer Park Built By Albany Man Here

L. D. Acker of Albany, Ga., is placing fifteen trailers here and making them available for rent by construction workers for the Fort Gaines Lock and Dam. Part of the trailers have already been moved here.

The trailers will be located just north of town near Tatum's Grocery. James Hobbs will be in charge of the trailer camp.

The article above from the October 13, 1955 News Record outlines the events of groundbreaking day. Get out your magnifying glass and enjoy.

The small notice to the left was in the October 17, 1955 News Record and illustrates the mad scramble Fort Gaines and Clay County went through to house the workers for the dam. If any of you out there know exactly where Tatum's Grocery was, drop us a note and let us know.

Fort Gaines/Clay County Historical Society, Inc.

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159 Wilson St. Suite 7

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This membership will entitle you to the following:

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FYI: If you join as a new member in October, November or December of a given year, your dues cover the following year as well.