

## Haddock Now and Then

In 2006, Haddock's deserted Main Street near the abandoned railroad tracks stirred to life again with the opening of Trish Ann's Antiques, Gifts and Tearoom on the corner of Hwy 22. The business, owned by Trish Jordan, occupies a turn-of-the-century general store operated in recent memory by Gus and Marie Pursley (1920-1956) and Brinson and Marian Cooper (1956-1965). Since Trish Ann's opening, hundreds of people from all over Georgia and beyond have visited Haddock to enjoy a meal, browse through the antiques, and perhaps wonder about the town that was.

The story of Haddock begins in 1870 when the Macon and Augusta Railroad (later the Georgia Railroad) opened its new tracks through Milbry Barnes Haddock's 1,300-acre plantation for the run from Macon to Milledgeville. Mrs. Haddock had donated land to the railroad for the right-of-way and depot. Just five years after Sherman's army had swept through the plantation on their march to seize the capital city of Milledgeville, Haddock's Station, with fuel and water facilities, opened for business.

The railroad brought hope to an area struggling to recover from the devastation of the Civil War. Eventually a thriving agricultural business center was to rise up around the tracks, populated in part by former residents of Fortville and Blountsville. These early towns, situated north of Haddock on stagecoach roads, faded away with the coming of the railroad.

A year or so after the railroad was completed, Milbry's husband, Caswell Haddock, opened a general store, and their daughter and son-in-law, Christiana and John D. Anchors, built the first residence on the old Milledgeville road (now Peachtree Rd, remains of the house are on the hill opposite Hardeman St). Following Milbry Haddock's death in 1885, a 10-acre town grid was plotted, and lots were sold at public auction, sparking an era of rapid growth. Some turn-of-the-century houses built on these lots can be seen on Hardeman Rd off Hwy 22.

In 1884, the Anchors had built a one-room school next to their home to educate their own and a few neighboring children. By 1892, the population was sufficient for the Jones County Board of Education to establish the first public elementary and high school (demolished, southeast intersection of Peachtree St. and Ethridge Rd).

In 1895, *The Jones County News* reported, "It is real enlivening to stand on Main St. on Saturday and see the bustle that is caused by the many wagons loaded and empty going from and to market, and the foot customers [sic] pouring in with their empty baskets on their arms." Customers bought peanuts and fish from street vendors and a myriad of household and farm goods from the several general mercantile stores. C. S. Morris's cotton gin was operating at top capacity, cutting 18 to 20 bales per day, and the farmers were demanding more cotton facilities. Cy Brown, a prominent black pioneer in the community, was busy at his forge in the first blacksmith shop.

By 1905, Haddock was incorporated and said to be the top business community in the county. Besides at least six general stores downtown, there were the E.W. Coleman

Wagon and Buggy Company, Haddock Gin & Milling Company, Jones & Keller's cotton and fertilizer dealership, the largest cotton warehouse in the county, and what probably was the first stand-alone post office building in the county. The Jones County Bank, the first bank in the county and a family-owned business for three generations, opened that year on Main Street. The residential area was expanding with six new houses being constructed by the Haddock Realty and Improvement Company and several being constructed by private citizens.

Four churches were established early on that remain a vital part of the community. Haddock Methodist, whose congregation moved to Haddock in 1900 from the nearby village of Fortville, continues to hold services in a church built in 1913 (117 North Oak St.). Haddock Baptist was organized in 1907, and the present church (180 Ethridge Rd.) incorporates the former Haddock Elementary and Junior High School, first constructed in 1908, remodeled and expanded in 1934, and closed in 1967. Adams Tabernacle C.M.E. Church (126 Haddock Drive) had its origins in the 1800s before Emancipation. Greater Jordan Chapel A.M.E. Church (1415 Hwy 22 East) began as a bush arbor gathering shortly after the Civil War, with services under the shelter of trees. The present c. 1904 church has been improved and expanded over the years.

Cotton dominated the earliest decades of the town until the arrival of the boll weevil in the 1920s ended wide-scale cotton farming. By the early 1930s, peach orchards had replaced cotton fields, and the trees surrounded the town and extended far out into the countryside. There were at least two peach packing sheds near the depot, and many others in outlying orchards. During the harvest, men, women, and children worked at top speed to sort and pack the fragile peaches in thousands of crates for shipment in refrigerated train cars to markets in the Northeast. Gus Pursley, Jr., who was a teenager at the time, remembers a time in the 1930s when the railroad had to send an additional 13-car train to handle an especially large harvest.

In 1938, brothers Albert, Ernest, and Logan Bloodworth opened Cherokee Products Company, a fruit and vegetable cannery under the Osage label, just east of Haddock on Hwy 22. During World War II, they provided peaches, peanut butter, and orange and grapefruit juice to the USDA for shipment to the troops. For 71 years, until its closing in 2000, the cannery was a vital part of the community, providing employment as well as a market for local peach and pimento growers.

The peak years of the peach industry extended from the early 1930s into the early 1940s. Growing peaches proved to be a perilous way to make a living. Cultivation and harvesting was demanding, and too often a late frost nipped the flower buds and spoiled the peach crop. By the 1940s, lumber had replaced peaches as the leading commodity, and the buzz of saws filled the air for miles around the town. The planing mill by the railroad tracks ran two shifts to meet the demands created by World War II. The lumber mill continued in business into the 1950s.

By the mid-century, the railroad and downtown Haddock had begun to decline with the rise of truck and car transportation. Local shopping and services dwindled now that customers could easily drive to larger towns with their wider array of services and goods.

Nearby dairy and cattle farmers replaced local labor with modern farm machinery, and traveled to other towns for farm services. Many of the town's young adults left because of lack of employment. The downtown area shrank to three general stores, a bank, post office, barbershop, auto garage, and sawmill, now largely demolished.

In 1965, the bank and post office moved from the old Main Street to their present location on Hwy 22. Cooper's Grocery Store with Bud's Wrecker Service (still in business nearby on Hwy 22) behind it moved into a new building (now K & A Citgo) beside the post office. Today the bank, post office, grocery store, and C & M Stop & Shop down from Trish Ann's constitute the downtown.

Little is left of downtown Haddock's early buildings. The town's original wood frame buildings burned in the early 1900s, and other brick buildings have been demolished. The brick walls down the block from Trish Ann's are the remains of Haddock's second post office building (early 1900s). Beside it was a two-story building with a general store below (last run by Grady Blasingame in the 1950s) and the telephone exchange of 1910 and living quarters above. In the early 1900s, Haddock boasted a hotel in this building. The mid-1900s building (for sale) opposite Trish Ann's was Finney's and then Haddock's General Store. The building down the street with the Volunteer Fire Department sign was the original 1905 Jones County Bank. Middlebrooks' General Store building and Haddock's third post office were adjacent to it until 1965.

In 2007, the Haddock Revitalization Committee formed to develop and improve the downtown area to foster new businesses and customers. The County Commission (Commissioner David Gault, Chairman Preston Hawkins, Administrator Mike Underwood) and state legislators (Representative Jim Cole, Senator Johnny Grant) are supporting these efforts. About 10,000 cars and trucks zoom through Haddock every 48 hours, according to a recent traffic study by the Jones County Sheriff's Department. The Committee reasons that if they can attract new businesses and create enticing opportunities for relaxing, shopping, and dining in a village setting, those potential customers will pull off the road.

A start in that direction is the new crosswalk and caution light on Hwy 22 and public trashcans. A Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for street lights is currently under review, and fundraisers for other projects are being planned. Possibilities ahead include placing crepe myrtles, benches, and welcome signs along Hwy 22. In addition, Haddock has received federal CDBG grants for improvements in the water system, housing, residential drainage and street improvement. A neighborhood park with ball fields and a playground has been developed at the corner of Ash and Peach Tree.

Haddock's downtown may once again become the lively place it once was. If you would like to help make this come true, contact Trish Ann at 478-932-5885, or stop by the store (Tues-Friday 10-5, Saturday 9-5). The Revitalization Committee would welcome your support.