

HISTORY NOTES

Jones County History & Heritage, Inc.

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Spring 2004

About the Newsletter

This second of two newsletters about the Round Oak, Georgia area features Woodmen of the World Lodge 358 in Round Oak, White Chapel AME on its outskirts, and the now-vanished Caney Creek community and New Hope Primitive Baptist Church deep in the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge. The driving tour runs from Hwy 11 to Juliette Rd, Caney Creek Rd, and Pippin Rd.

Under the leadership of Master Gardeners Mary Musselman and Ronnie Crutchfield, Round Oak is continuing to develop "Miss Lillie Gordon's Store," their visitor/history center at the railroad crossing. A current project is the Elders' Memorial Garden next to the center, on land belonging to Pat and Travis Jackson. Larry Jackson has cleared the land, grass has been planted, and residents are contributing shrubs from homeplaces in memory of their elders. Stepping stones with the names of the honored ones are being placed around the garden. Next on the list is to set up the old syrup mill donated by Dolly Gordon Schubert. The Keep Jones Beautiful Commission recently honored the community with their "Most Extreme Makeover" award.

The fall 2004 newsletter will feature the Juliette community. ❖

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Woodmen of the World Lodge 358

Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Society (WOW) was established in 1890 in Omaha, Nebraska, to offer insurance protection and other benefits to its members. Round Oak's WOW Lodge 358 was founded in 1909, and today boasts about 900 members! Meetings are held the first Saturday of the month in their nearly century-old, 2-story, white frame building across the railroad crossing in the center of Round Oak. Members participate in civic projects such as Red Cross disaster relief and donations of flags, police, and fire equipment. The WOW insurance office is located in Gray.

In the early 1900s, the ground floor of the Lodge housed a general store, and the 2nd floor was a meeting and dance hall. The Lodge was an important center of social life in the community. Meetings were well-attended, and dances drew countywide crowds. The Lodge became inactive in the late 40s and early 50s. During this time the local Home Demonstration Club renovated it, and held their meetings and wonderful community barbecues there.

The Lodge is rented for special occasions, and remains a center of life for Round Oak residents. There are happy memories in the community of the many receptions, showers, reunions, and parties held there. ❖ *Information contributed by Lodge Member Charlotte Wilson.*

White Chapel AME

In 1787, a former Delaware slave named Richard Allen established the Free African Society in Philadelphia (African Americans were known as Africans at that time). The racial discrimination Society members encountered at the white Methodist Episcopal Church they attended led them to form a separate congregation. Thus was begun the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). Allen, a man of courage and passionate faith, was the first Bishop. The separation offered opportunities for worship, fellowship, and education which fostered dignity and self-respect. AME is the first major religious denomination in the Western world that had its origin in sociological rather than theological differences.

The AME Church is a member of the family of Methodist Churches and follows Methodist doctrines. The early emphasis on self-help and education continues, and the church operates 11 institutions of higher education. There are 10 AME churches in Jones County, and more than a million members worldwide.

In 2003, Round Oak's White Chapel AME, celebrated its 120th birthday. The church is located at 2370 Old Hwy 11 (first right after Juliette Rd), on the acre of land that Trustees Tillman White, Buck Clark, and Aleck Johnson purchased from George B. White in 1893 for \$20. The original deed is still in the church's possession.

The first church on the site was also used as a school. In the 1920s, a separate school was built near the church, and it was in existence until 1954. The church was rebuilt in 1957 (under Rev. Albert Sands), and

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Jones County History & Heritage, Inc.
(JCHH)
PO Box 2605
Gray GA 31032

JCHH is a private, non-profit organization formed in 2002 to promote an appreciation of Jones County's historic resources and foster their preservation, restoration, and revitalization.

If you are not currently a member, we invite you to join us by sending a check payable to JCHH to the address above. Membership levels are:

Individual	\$ 25.00
Family	\$ 35.00
Patron	\$ 75.00
Bronze	\$ 125.00
Silver	\$ 300.00
Gold	\$ 600.00
Platinum	\$1000.00

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remodeled in 1969 (under Rev. Salonia Daniel). In 1985, a fellowship hall was added under Rev. Jeff D. Germany, Jr. The most recent pastor is Rev. Willie Bundridge. Services are held at 11 am every Sunday (Sunday School at 10 am). ❖
Information contributed by White Chapel Secretary Louise Goolsby.

Caney Creek Community

From the 1800s into the 1930s, the Caney Creek settlement lay between Round Oak and Juliette, in the steep hills around Juliette Rd, Caney Creek Rd and Pippin Rd. Caney Creek meanders through its hollows, crossing under Pippin Rd; Falling Creek is on its western border. Self-sufficient farms dotted the area, with rambling farmhouses and many outbuildings. Fields of cotton, peanuts, pimentos, peaches, and other crops stretched for miles. There was a grammar school, a post office with attached general store, and New Hope Primitive Baptist Church. Some of the families here were the Childs, Coulters, Crains, Crutchfields, Gordons, Greenes, Greshams, Hammocks, Jacksons, Jarrells, Maynards, Middlebrooks, and Pippins, many with 10-12 children.

Today the area is part of the 35,000-acre Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, and dense forests blanket the former cropland. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Refuge in 1939, the eroded and worn-out land was largely abandoned. The cumulative effects of the Civil War, boll weevil, and Depression had devastated the farmers. The Government purchased most of the land for \$1 to \$2 an acre, and dismantled the houses. The old way of life has disappeared here, with one proud exception. New Hope Church has not closed its door since 1813, and some Caney Creek family members still return home to worship. ❖

New Hope Primitive Baptist Church

Primitive Baptists follow the religious doctrines and practices of the early (original) Baptist Church. The name arose in the early 1800s, when the word *primitive* meant *original*. The term also refers to the Church's ideal of simplicity in worship. The scriptures are the sole rule of faith and practices. There are no seminaries, no musical instruments, no religious symbolism, and no Sunday School. Worthy men with the gift to preach are chosen from the congregation, and ordained as elders (pastors) after a trial period. There is line-out singing, with a leader reading a song line, followed by the congregation singing it. Baptism (for adults only) is by immersion, and the foot washing of the Last Supper is part of the Communion service, with members offering words of love and encouragement as they wash each others' feet.

The first New Hope Primitive Baptist Church was established in 1813, near the present church (See driving tour, p. 4, for location of present church.) A second church was built where the cemetery now stands, and across from it was a one-room school, which later burned. The third (present) church was built by the old school site, which became the parking lot. It was constructed in the early 1900s by B. R. (Dick) Jarrell and other members of the congregation, using beams as well as the pulpit from the first church.

The church minutes have been faithfully recorded since its founding, and make for interesting reading! In the early days, stern justice reigned. Many a member was chastised or excommunicated for drunkenness, cursing, cheating, and even possum hunting behind the church. Once, a husband who protested his wife's excommunication was excommunicated himself for complaining. On a happier note, the dinners on the grounds following the service were (and still are) renowned for good times and delicious food! Services are held the 4th Sunday of the month at 11 am. The pastor is Elder Wesley Watkins. ❖
Information contributed by Clifford Black.

Driving Tour: Round Oak - Juliette Rd - Caney Creek Rd - Pippin Rd

Tour time: 2-3 hours. Most of the tour will be on graveled dirt roads in the forests of the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge. For more information on tour cemeteries and others nearby, see the Jones County Cemetery Survey at www.friendsofcems.org/Jones.

Hwy 11: WOW Lodge 358 and White Chapel

1. From Gray, take Hwy 11 North to the Round Oak railroad intersection (10 miles from Gray railroad intersection). Woodmen of the World Lodge 358 is across the tracks. Miss Lillie Gordon's Store, left of Hwy 11, has a nice display of historic photos, some relating to this tour.
2. Continue north on Hwy 11 for 1 mile. Turn right on Old Hwy 11 to see White Chapel AME.
3. Return south on Hwy 11 a short distance and turn right on Juliette Rd.

Juliette Rd and Will Russell Rd

SET YOUR ODOMETER TO 0.

4. **0.1 miles, on left.** White home site, where Carolyn White Williams (*Jones County History* author) was born.
5. **0.2 miles, on left.** About 50 yds from the stretched cable (Post 27) is a 19th c. family cemetery with finely quarried granite walls. Its inhabitants are unknown.
6. **1.4 miles, on right. Turn on Will Russell Rd.**
 - **At 1.7 miles, to the left** is the old road that led to the infamous 19th c. settlement of Fiddler's Rest, this side of Juliette Rd. Its tavern and inn boasted drinkin', gamblin', dancin', and fightin'. The late Bernard Jackson said that the name *Fiddler's Rest* refers to the night a drunken, rowdy traveler played his fiddle until sunrise, to the consternation of other guests at the inn.
 - Continue to the fork (at **2.3 miles**) and go left past the "Road Closed" sign. Continue to the left to the Russell homeplace. *Note: This is private property—please look from the car. For permission to walk around the site, call 986-6541.*
 - **At 2.4 miles, on the right**, the big rock here was the Russell's "storytelling" rock. The late Maureen Russell Bilderback often stood atop the rock, entertaining the children with her stories.

The family home on the right was inhabited by Russells for six generations. It began life as a log cabin in the early 1800s (home of Henry Trent Russell and his wife Phoebe), and later evolved into a dogtrot house (a dogtrot is an open hallway connecting two house wings). Notice the many outbuildings of this self-sufficient farmstead, some constructed of logs.

The granite-walled cemetery below the house encloses graves of brothers Stapleton and John Russell,

casualties of the Civil War. The family story is that a returning soldier claimed to know where they were buried at the Wilderness, Virginia battlefield. Their mother sent him with a servant and buggy to collect their remains.

- Continue down the road onto Refuge land. At **2.9 miles**, on the left, is a Piedmont Refuge trailhead (just before the road end). This is for foot traffic only. Turn around here, and park. Walk about 150 ft back to the left to an early 19th c., rock-enclosed cemetery. One grave is strikingly marked by a 10-ft tall rock pillar with this neatly carved inscription, "C. Gordon dide [*sic*] May 29, 1833, was born 1797." *Note: Into the 1950s, Will Russell Rd continued to Sugar Hill Rd. A left turn led to Juliette, and a right turn led through the old Sugar Hill settlement and on to Hwy 11.*

Return to Juliette Rd.

7. **5.2 miles, on left, at Piedmont sign.** The grassed-over road led to Pippin Rd in the pre-Refuge days, to Doyle Pippin's house (a stop later on the tour).
8. **5.9 miles, on right.** Entrance to the Piedmont Visitor Center and Allison Lake. They are not covered in this tour, but are well worth a visit.
9. **6.1 miles, on right.** Benjamin Crutchfield family home and cemetery (764 Juliette Rd). The left side of the house (board and batten) was a post office in the 1800s, and a store into the early 1900s. The log-shaped pillars in the family cemetery (on hill to right) are Woodmen of the World markers. Elsewhere on the property (not visible) is the c. 1840 Crutchfield house, with a unique construction feature. The airtight walls were built of 2x4s stacked lengthwise and covered with weatherboarding.
10. **6.2 miles, on left. Turn on Caney Creek Rd.**

The remainder of the tour winds through the heart of Caney Creek (see newsletter article on p. 3 for more information). Tour sites were identified by former Caney Creek residents who remember them from the 1920s and 30s (See "Newsletter Sources" at end of Tour Notes.) To locate where homes stood, look for old driveways, roadside roses and misteria, spring daffodils, and these trees: oaks, cedars, chinaberries, pecans, and black walnuts. You need imagination for this tour! Note: Caney Creek sites to the west will be covered in a future driving tour.

Caney Creek Rd

SET YOUR ODOMETER TO 0.

11. **0.0 miles, on right.** Andy Crutchfield home, built around the turn of the 19th century. Across the road were a store, peach orchard, and the "Patsy" house (tenant house).
12. **0.2 miles, on left.** Jim Gordon homeplace. The family shared a spring behind the house with the Green Jacksons, on the other side of it. Claude Baxley remembers the beehive in the oak tree overhanging the road.

13. **0.9 miles, on right.** Look for a yellow-marked oak tree, with a limb overhanging the road. The Caney Creek one-room school (Grades 1-7) stood nearby, in use into the early 1930s. A basketball court was to the side. Molden Jackson (Laverne Jackson Adams's father) planted the oak tree on the schoolground. After the school moved to Round Oak, Wayside Presbyterian Church (under Preacher Manning, assisted by Alvah Bird) opened a branch church (Liberty Church) in the schoolhouse.
14. **1.1 miles, on left, just before Pippin Rd.** Daniel Jackson homeplace. Laverne Jackson Adams remembers the beautiful buttercups growing in the spring below the house.
15. **1.3 miles, on right.** Ell house.
16. **1.4 miles, on right, past orange roadside pole marker.** John Dan Maynard homeplace (original landowner was George Jackson). Agnes Maynard Morgan remembers the huge rock here, where everyone carved their initials. There was also a storm pit (tornado shelter). Nearby was a government-built sheep-dipping pit, for disease control.
17. **1.7 miles, on right.** William "Pa Bill" Jackson homeplace.
18. **2.0 miles, on right.** George Maynard homeplace.
19. **2.2 miles, on left, old roadbed slanting to the left by Post 34.** The road here passed by the Millard Jackson homeplace, crossed Caney Creek in the hollow, and continued to 5 Points Rd in Wayside. The old oak tree had a swing on it.
20. **2.4 miles, on right.** John Gresham homeplace. Ham Gresham lived in the vicinity.
21. **2.5 miles, on left.** Bradley's grave, with the inscription, "Beloved by E. A. Jackson family." Bradley was a family servant and companion, and a faithful attendee at New Hope Church. The Refuge road across from the grave fords a creek. There were two houses on it in the old days.
22. **2.6 miles, on right.** New Hope Primitive Baptist Church, c. early 1900s. The old baptismal spring is down a woodland path, behind the parking lot to the left. Today, the spring water is piped up to an indoor baptismal pool. The separate entries were for men and women. (See newsletter article for more information about the church.)
23. Turn around and return the way you came. Turn right at the Pippin Rd intersection.

Pippin Rd

SET YOUR ODOMETER TO 0.

24. **0.2 miles, on right.** Rufus Jackson homeplace. Across the road was Rufus's blacksmith shop. The "Molly" house (tenant house) was nearby.
25. **0.3 miles, on right.** Earl Jackson homeplace. There was a syrup mill on this place, down on Caney Creek.
26. **0.7 miles, on right, brown wooden gate.** Tyner homeplace (original landowner was a Pippin). Next to this was the Dollie and Willie Maynard homeplace. Across the

road was the Henry Gordon homeplace.

27. **0.8 miles, on right.** 19th c. Tom Pippin home (originally a log cabin), and later home of his son, Doyle Pippin. The original landowner was Samuel Warren Green. Note the 19th c. log barn across the road. The old road to the left led by the Homer Pippin homeplace, the Bunk house, and the Jim Jackson homeplace, and on to Juliette Rd. Gordons and Jacksons are buried in an old cemetery a short way back.
In the 1920s and 30s, Doyle held barbecues, hoedowns, and square dances at his dance pavilion near the house. Thomas Gresham and "Blind Man" Tyner fiddled, John Dan Maynard strummed the banjo, and Doyle played his pump organ. Doyle owned Caney Creek's first radio and car, which he drove to work at the Juliette cotton mill.
28. **0.9 miles, on right, after Caney Creek.** Walter Pippin homeplace. Pippin descendants (the Cranes) live in these houses.
29. **1.6 miles, on right (501 Pippin Rd).** Formerly the Nick Wilburn homeplace.
30. **1.8 miles, on left.** Jim Smith homeplace. Clarence and Mittie Hensley Gordon lived there.
31. **2.0 miles, on left.** Robert Crutchfield homeplace, about half way down hill, on level spot. This hill is still known as Crutchfield Hill.
32. **3.5 miles, on left.** An African-American church stood here.

End of tour. Turn right on Hwy 11 to return to Gray.

Newsletter Sources

Thanks to the following people who so generously gave of their time and knowledge: *Laverne (Jackson) Adams, Claude and Billie (Jackson) Baxley, Clifford Black, Earl Colvin, Louise (Williams) Goolsby, Margaret (Jackson) Crutchfield Greene, Tommy and Charlotte (Burgess) Hinson, Agnes (Maynard) Morgan, Mary (Russell) Musselman, Charlotte (Crutchfield) Wilson.*

References

- *Johns, Cleo Jackson, assisted by Gladys Jackson White. *A Family History: Jackson, King and Connecting Families.* 1975.
- *Williams, Carolyn White. *History of Jones County Georgia.* Macon GA, 1957. *Available for purchase at Jones County Gray/ Chamber of Commerce; (478) 986-1233*
- Yandle, Dorothy (King) Smith. Report on Caney Creek community, from a Georgia State University project for Prof. John Burrison's folklife course, Georgia State University, 1968.
- Websites: www.friendsofcems.org (Jones Co. Cemetery Survey); www.ame-church.com (AME Church); www.pb.org (Primitive Baptist Church).

* Available at Jones County Library.