

HISTORY NOTES

Jones County History & Heritage, Inc.

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About the Newsletter

This is newsletter #4 in the series on historic communities of Jones County, Georgia. The subject is Wayside, a former depot stop on the Macon-Monticello railroad line about 6 miles north of Gray on Hwy 11.

Like the previous subjects (Round Oak, Caney Creek, and Juliette), Wayside is on the proposed Route 11 Historic Ocmulgee-Piedmont Scenic Byway (Gray to Round Oak to Juliette). Recently public meetings have been held to discuss the project with byway residents. The response has been positive, and committees are now forming to develop a corridor management plan. Jones County History & Heritage is assisting by identifying significant historic qualities in the area.

The best part of working on this newsletter is the opportunity to interview some lovely people who are deeply connected to their community and love and value its history. Many of them are descendants of the first settlers in the area. Their reminiscences bring the past alive, and offer tantalizing clues for further research. Please see the last page for an acknowledgement of the many people who so generously contributed their knowledge about the Wayside area for this newsletter.

The next newsletter will feature Gray, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary

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History of Wayside

Before the coming of the railroad in the late 1880s, Wayside was a small settlement with the plainspoken frontier name of "Lousy Level," and later, "Black Ankle." Some early 19th century settlers in the vicinity were the Woodalls, Finneys, and Barfields. All that remains of their homesteads are the family cemeteries.

The settlement boasted a large spring of pure water and nearby, a two-story academy (later burned by Sherman's troops) for the education of planters' children in northern Jones County. This school was incorporated in 1822 as the Farmers' Academy; its name was changed to "Planters' Academy" in 1823. The first trustees were Bailey Bell, Adam Carson, Kinchen P. Thweatt, James Lockett, Cyrus Cotten, Samuel Barron, and William Cowen. In his remembrances of antebellum Jones County (*The Jones County News*, 1908), Samuel H. Griswold writes of the great barbecue and rally there in 1859 to support Thomas Hardeman (a Whig from Macon with family ties in Jones County) in his close race against Alex Speer (a Democrat from Monroe County). Hardeman won by a narrow margin, no doubt aided by the hospitality!

In 1883, the settlement was devastated by a tornado. Shortly thereafter, the railroad came through, bringing new life to this farming community and the more genteel name of "Wayside." Early businesses included a blacksmith shop, Mr. Walker's general store, and Mr. Slocum's cotton gin. Peaches were big business, and there were several peach packing sheds near the tracks. A big annual event was the Southeastern Fox Hunters' Association hunt in the surrounding countryside. The horses were stabled with the local farmers, and a big dance was held in the local dance hall.

In March 1921, Miss Maud Childs and others organized the Wayside Community Sunday School, which met in the schoolhouse. That fall, the Macon Presbytery organized a church with four members, E.M. Davis, Sr. and H.B. Davis (trustees and deacons), W. H. Marquess (elder), and Mrs. W. H. Marquess (pianist). In May 1923, the Wayside Presbyterian Church building was dedicated. Dorf Barfield donated the lot, and Macon architect, Elliott Dunwoody donated the plans. E.M. Davis, Sr. financed the building of the manse.

In the mid-1930s, H.A. Shaver Canning Company of Lakeland, Florida, built a cannery in Wayside. Eventually, Mr. Shaver turned the business over to his nephews, Vernon and Carroll Shaver. In the mid-1950s, Mr. Gibbs and Mr. Miller, bankers in Gordon, Georgia, foreclosed on the company, and resumed business as the G.M. Canning Company. The primary product was pimentos, roasted in oil and rinsed and packed in water. Peaches also were canned.

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Jones County History & Heritage, Inc.

(JCHH)
PO Box 2605
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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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Publications: Memorial editions of Carolyn White Williams' *History of Jones County, Georgia 1807-1907*, with a new index of names by Margaret Heard Stephens, are available for \$75 (or \$80 if shipping is requested). Send mail orders to the address above. Copies also may be purchased at the Jones County Chamber of Commerce in Gray, Georgia.

At its peak, the cannery employed 200 or more workers and operated three shifts. The cannery built duplexes to house families and single men lived at the Batchelor's Hall. The grocery stores had a steady stream of customers when the lunch whistle blew.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack H. Childs acquired the cannery in the late 1950s, and Cherokee Products Company in Haddock, Georgia, purchased the cannery from them in 1959. Cherokee Products canned pimentos there for 2-3 years before closing.

Wayside retained a post office and grocery store into the 1970s. Today, it is a quiet residential community, with activity centered on the remaining churches. ❖

Telamon Cruger Smith Cuyler

When asked about Telamon Cuyler, older residents of Wayside smile with delight and with a far-away look in their eyes, try to convey just how colorful and unusual a man he was in such a rural setting as Wayside. He was certainly the only man in Wayside who habitually wore a stylish white suit with white socks and white shoes, even to walk several miles on dusty red clay roads from his country home "Sunshine" into town. He had lived in Atlanta, New York, London, Paris, and other places and enjoyed connections to the highest society both in the United States and abroad. They remember his society friends arriving at the depot to attend grand parties at Sunshine, where he spent the last years of his life. [See *driving tour for location.*] They recall that local school children would visit Sunshine to see the gardens with their exotic plantings and his collections of historic items. They describe him as a cultured and learned man with passionate interests, particularly photography and the history of early Georgia. When *Gone with the Wind* director George Cukor came to Georgia to do research on mid-19th century Georgia, it was Telamon Cuyler who served as local expert and tour guide. His great-uncle's (Lt. Col. Algernon S. Hamilton of Jones County) Confederate uniform was used as a model for the costumers.

He was born in 1873 into a wealthy and distinguished family in Rome, Georgia. His parents were Captain Henry Hunter Smith and Estelle Cuyler Smith. His maternal grandfather was Col. Telamon Cuyler of Savannah, who was a key figure in the survey of the Central of Georgia and also Western and Atlantic railroads. His maternal grandmother was descended from prominent early citizens of Jones County, Peter Clower and Dr. Thomas Hamilton of Clinton. When he was in his early 30s, he legally changed his surname from Smith to Cuyler, though he apparently was proud of his Smith lineage.

In 1893 he received a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Georgia. He married Grace Barton in 1900, with whom he had two children. From 1895 to 1905 he was special counsel for the governments of Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, and Chile. His wealth allowed him to travel extensively, and his career was varied, encompassing the fields of law, banking, journalism, and planting.

After his death in 1951, his valuable and extensive collection of photographs and documents pertaining to the early history of Georgia was willed to the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia. He obtained a number of items in his collections during his extensive travels in Europe and elsewhere. ❖

Driving Tour: Wayside Area

Tour time: 1-2 hrs. The tour begins at Wayside. Please refer to pages 1 and 2 of the newsletter as background information. The home sites and cemeteries on the tour represent only a few of the many families who settled here in the 19th century. For more info on the cemeteries, see References on p. 4.

1. From the railroad tracks in Gray, take **Hwy 11 north** through Bradley and on to Wayside (about 6.2 miles). After Mile 16 marker and the curve sign (on right), turn right to take the old route through the village area.
2. **On right, vicinity of the blue trailer and chain link fence.** In the early 1900s, Wayside School stood in this area. It was a two-room wood frame building for grades 1-10. The apartment building on this site is the former receiving shed for the cannery. Four duplexes down the hill housed the families of cannery workers. These structures were built by the Shaver Canning Company.
3. **Ahead, on right, next to Mailbox #1424.** The dilapidated building screened by trees was operated by Jerry Neel Smith in the 1940s and 50s. Later operators were Mr. Hoskins and Mr. Haislip. Behind the store towards the bottom of the hill is Academy Spring, which supplied water to the antebellum Planter's Academy, and later to the cannery. Samuel H. Griswold, in his remembrances of 19th century Jones County, described it as "one of the clearest and coldest springs" in Middle Georgia. Planter's Academy was in this general vicinity.
4. **On left, open area and brick warehouse.** The pimento cannery stood in the field beside the warehouse, and the white frame building ahead was the office. Until the cannery closed in the 1960s, this was a scene of intense activity in the summer, with the odor of roasting peppers filling the air. Paul Childs, a childhood resident of Wayside in the early 1960s, remembers the drama of the lunch horn blowing and hordes of workers crowding into his father's general store ahead to buy lunch.
5. **Ahead on right, frame house obscured by bushes.** William Jordan Childs and his wife, Annie Barron Childs, lived in the white house, to right of store. The first house on this site was built by a Mr. Slocum, who built a cotton gin near the house.
6. **On right, brick general store.** E.M. Davis, Sr. and D.V. Childs, Sr. built this store in 1907. Several members of the Childs family operated it over the years—William, Ponder, Barron, and the last owner, Jack H. Childs, who owned it from the early 1950s until his death in 1982. For a few years in the 1970s, he leased it to Laymond Watson, whose name appears on the sign. There was a post office in the store from the 1970s into the early 1980s. The red wooden building by the tracks across the street was the seed barn, where the train would off-load the store's seed and fertilizer.
7. **Ahead on right, dark green frame house with circular drive (Mailbox # 1460).** This structure was originally the depot, moved to this site from the railroad crossing. Mr. and Mrs. Jack H. Childs converted it to a residence in the early 1950s.
8. **Bear to the left, in front of church—this is a good place to park and look around.** The history of Wayside Presbyterian Church is given on page 1. The red house (# 1463) across from the church was built by Ponder Childs around the turn of the century. The old Batchelor's Hall that housed cannery workers stood between the red house and the store, where the circular drive is. Walker's store and blacksmith shop was across from brick store, in the general location of the present church. Mr. Gordon had a store down the dirt road to the right of the church.

There was a very small post office on the corner of the present church parking lot with a bench in front for socializing and teen courting. Miss Blanche Whitehead was the postmistress for many years until her retirement in the 1960s, at which point the post office was moved to Jack Child's store.

In the early 1900s, there were several peach packing houses. Mrs. Parks owned a packing shed to the left of the present church. The children of Wayside skated on the concrete floor that remained after it was demolished. Later, Mrs. Parks built a 3-story packing shed between the seed house and the cannery office. Mr. John D. Wood had another packing shed across the highway from the seed house. There was also William Wood's sawmill and a dance hall.

There are several nice turn-of-the century houses along the highway across from the tracks that you might view before continuing the tour. Also, if you are a Civil War buff, the old Barfield Plantation site, where Stoneman's army spent the night before the Battle of Sunshine Church is about 0.7 miles north from here on Hwy 11 (on left, at mailbox # 1609). Only the cemetery remains, visible to the north of the house. The battle was fought in the hills along Route 11 between here and the town of Round Oak (see newsletter on Round Oak for more information).
9. The next part of the tour begins at the corner of Hwy 11 and Five Points Rd, across the railroad tracks from

Wayside Presbyterian church. SET ODOMETER TO 0 HERE TO AID IN IDENTIFYING HOME SITES AND CEMETERIES. MILEAGE IS CUMULATIVE.

10. **0.1 miles, on left, Mailbox #115.** This early 1920s home was the Presbyterian Manse (minister's home). A short distance up the road, on the right, is a granite-enclosed early 19th century graveyard hidden in the vegetation about 150 ft from the road. It is to the right of the white house (mailbox #140). The inhabitants are unknown, but possibly are members of the Finney family.
11. **0.4 miles, on left.** St. Pauls African Methodist-Episcopal church and cemetery. Rev. Forrest Dickey is pastor. This church was formed in the late 1800s. The present church building replaces the original white frame building, which was destroyed by fire. The first church was also used as a one-room school into the 1960s. Grades 1-4 filled the benches on one side of the sanctuary, with grades 5-7 on the other side.
12. Bear to the left and continue on Five Points Rd.
13. **2.0 miles, turn left on Cyler Rd.** Note: The mid-19th century Allen (Abram Allen) cemetery is in the grove of trees on the rise to the right, before the intersection of Five Points and Cyler Rds. Abram Allen is buried in an impressive granite crypt, and there are two massive stone mausoleums with no inscriptions. Also, early settlers in vicinity of Five Points Rd straight ahead were Jeremiah Smith and Nathaniel Glover.
14. **2.1 miles, on left.** A classic beaver pond.
15. **3.3 miles, on left, board and batten, green-roofed house.** This was Telamon Cuyler's home, "Sunshine," since remodeled. See the article about him on p. 2 for more information. Notice the beautiful old cedar trees. At one time there was a swimming pool and dance pavilion behind the house for entertainment at his grand parties.

Cuyler's cook/housekeeper was a tall, slim African American woman named Nannie Newby Hill, who remembered the Union soldiers coming through in the last months of the Civil War. In his will, Cuyler stipulated that she and her brother, Otis Newby, were to reside in the house until their deaths. Nan lived to a ripe old age, and the women of Wayside used to visit her to listen to her stories of Telamon Cuyler and his lavish parties. Note: In Cuyler's time, the road continued straight past his house. It was rerouted to the right turn to avoid problem spots.
16. **Continue on Cyler Rd. to the dead end (at 5.4**

miles). Turn left on Chee Haw Trail, and continue, bearing left where the road branches (around 6.6 miles). At some point, the road becomes Dye Rd.

17. **7.8 miles, Mailbox #262, green house.** The unusual piled rock wall of an early 18th c. cemetery is just visible from the road, in a grove of trees behind and to the left of the house. It is presumed to be the English family cemetery. Ask for permission at the house if you would like a closer look.
18. **8.6 miles.** Turn left on Green Settlement Rd.
19. **9.8 miles.** Turn left on Hwy 11 and immediately left on Gordon Rd.
20. **10.2 miles, on right, behind small concrete block building.** This was the site of the 18th century Woodall house. Woodalls, Thweatts, Bryants, and Funderburks are buried in a family cemetery is in the grove of trees behind the small concrete block building. The earliest grave marked grave is for Mary Thweatt, 1820.
21. **10.5 miles, on left, white house.** This house was built by W.O. Bryant around 1910 and later purchased by Frank Gordon. Turn around here and return to Hwy 11. **End of tour.** ❖

Newsletter Sources

Thanks to the following for their contributions to this newsletter: *LaVerne (Jackson) Adams, Ruby (Dumas) Bland, Earl Colvin, Annette (Batchelor) Childs, Marguerite (Henry) Childs, Paul Childs, Coxie Davis, Mildred Dye, Mary (Willard) Gordon, Neede Goode, Tommie (Russell) Hall, Charlotte (Burgess) Hinson, Melody (Adams) Lowe.*

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- *Colvin, Earl and Beth. *Fields of Stone: Cemeteries of Jones County, Georgia*, Milledgeville GA. 2004.
- *Moore, Jesse G... *History of Cherokee Products Company, Haddock, Georgia, 1929-1991.*
- *Williams, Carolyn White. *History of Jones County Georgia.* Macon GA, 1957.

Websites:

www.friendsofcems.org (Jones County cemetery survey);
dlg.galileo.usg.edu/reed (History of the University of Georgia by Thomas Walter Reed, Chapter X, Telamon Cruger Smith Cuyler).

* Available at Jones County Library.