

# *Jackson County Historical Society News*

VOLUME FOURTEEN, NUMBER TWO

JANUARY, 2007



*Photograph of the Jefferson First Methodist Church, built circa 1845, torn down in 1905 to construct a new church building.*

The Jackson County Historical Society will meet at the Jefferson First United Methodist Church on January 21 at 2:30 p.m. There will be a presentation on the history of the church by Ms. Ann Jarrett. Directions: Take Highway 129 to the Jefferson Square, turn on to Sycamore Street (Highway 15) heading east, turn left on Martin Street, travel to the top of the hill. The church is on the right.

## Newsletter

The Jackson County Historical Society News is published quarterly and mailed before the next meeting. Back issues can be obtained for \$3.50 each plus postage. Past newsletters can be viewed online at: [rootsweb.com/~gajackso/](http://rootsweb.com/~gajackso/)

## Queries

Send queries to be published before the next deadline, March 15, 2007. Send requests for information to the address below with a stamped, self addressed envelope.

## Dues for 2006–2007 year

Costs for publishing have caused an increase in dues. The dues year runs from July to July. Checks can be mailed to:

Jackson County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 1234, Commerce, GA 30529:

Individual –\$15  
Family –\$25  
LIFE member –\$100

## JCHS Officers 2006-2007

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*Excerpt from Forest News, July 14, 1877*

## Death of R. J. Hancock

This most estimable citizen of our town, died at his home, here, on Friday afternoon, July 6th, 1877, about four o'clock.

Mr. Hancock has been, for some two or three months, in a rather precarious state of health—so as to unfit him, in some measure, for attending to his business, and at times he was quite unwell yet was, apparently, improving; but about four o'clock, on the morning of the day he died, he began to complain of pain in the head, and in a short while was suffering intensely and rapidly grew worse, in a short while was suffering intensely and rapidly grew worse, in spite of all the efforts of his physician, Dr. J. B. Pendergrass, assisted by Drs. W. A. Watson and C. R. Giles, and near eight o'clock he became totally unconscious, in which state he remained till he died. The physicians say his disease was congestion of the brain. His spirit passed away calmly—not a struggle or move of the muscles indicating his departure from time to eternity.

No man perhaps, who has ever lived here, will be more missed than the subject of this sketch. He was a leading and successful merchant and had a host of friends—many of whom testified their appreciation by their attention upon him in the last sad hours of his life, and at his funeral, which is said to have been the most largely attended of any one who has died here for a long time. He was buried in the new cemetery, on Saturday last, by the Masonic fraternity, of which he was an honored and useful member. The funeral sermon, preached at the Methodist church, by Rev. W. A. Farris, was a very appropriate and impressive discourse.

The deceased, was the eldest son of Hon. J. R. Hancock, of this county and was, indeed, a worthy son of a noble sire. He was thirty-eight years old; was born and reared in Jackson county, where he has numerous relatives, many friends, and but few, if any, enemies. He received a common school English education in the country, and was, just previous to the late war, clerking for Mr. R. H. Goodman, at that time merchandizing in Athens, where young Mr. Hancock made a large circle of friends, and performed acceptable service for his employer. He volunteered in the "Georgia Troopers" and went into service under the gallant Delony, in July, 1861. This company was a part of the famous "Cobb Legion Cavalry" and among all that band of tried, true and noble heroes,

there was no braver soldier than R. J. Hancock. Having served his country throughout the war faithfully, he returned, at the close, to his native county, and engaged for a time in farming, at which he was quite successful. He then married Miss Sallie Pendergrass, a most amiable lady, and youngest daughter of Esq. N. H. Pendergrass, of this county, and engaged in merchandizing in Jefferson. Beginning on a very limited capital, in 1868, by his indomitable energy, courtesy and fine business management, he rapidly accumulated capital; made customers and friends, until now we see the well established house of Pendergrass & Hancock, with its enviable business, as the result mainly, of his efforts.

Mr. Hancock was one of the most upright, thorough-going public spirited citizens of the county of Jackson, and one whose judgment and counsel was sought after by his fellow-citizens often, in regard to public matters. His voice and influence was ever on the side of good morals and good government. He served a term as Deputy Sheriff of the county shortly after the war, with fidelity in the discharge of every duty and acceptability with the people. He was an ornament to society in Jefferson, and in all the relations of life, whether around the hearthstone at home, among the active, stirring scenes of business life, in the work of reform as a Good Templar, as an Odd Fellow, a Mason, or in the Church, the weight and influence of his voice and life was felt and appreciated by his fellows—although he made no loud pretensions. His steadiness of purpose and decision of character, and his unflinching nerve in battling for the right, were always strikingly illustrative of the noblest type of man, Christian—that now deplores her loss in his death. He was a member of the Executive Committee, charged with the supervision of the of the Forest News office, and will be greatly missed by the “management” of this paper.

*Excerpt for the Jackson Herald, March 8, 1896*

### **Judge M. M. Pitman Dead**

Little did we think when we wrote an article in our last issue giving an account of the accident that befell Judge Pittman, that we would be called on to record his death this week.

Honest, sincere, plain spoken, Judge Pittman has gone to that country from whose bourne no traveler ever returned.

His eyes were closed in death on last Sunday about noon. He was surrounded by family and friends as the



*Judge Mordecai Monroe Pittman, 1853*

death angel came to that home and bore the spirit of Judge Pittman into the realms of eternity.

Judge Mordecai Monroe Pittman was born October 13, 1828, at Cabin Creek, Jackson county. He joined the M. E. Church at Jefferson, and at the time of his death was the oldest member. He united in marriage to Miss Mary J. Boggs February 6th, 1853. To them were born thirteen children, twelve lived to be grown, eleven still survive. He was admitted to the bar in 1858. He was Judge of the County Court in 1875.

He had been in declining health for years, and the accident hastened his death.

Age 67 years, 6 months, 20 days. Judge Pittman was buried in Woodbine Cemetery. The funeral obsequies were conducted at the Methodist Church. Rev. J. R. Speck preached the funeral sermon. Rev. R. S. McGarity, Judge H. W. Bell, Colonel J. A. B. Mahaffey and Uncle Winn Worsham made tender and appropriate talks on the life and character of Judge Pittman.

One of the largest crowds ever seen at a funeral in Jefferson was at Judge Pittman's burial, attesting the high esteem in which people held him.

Mr. Marcus M. Pittman of Oleburne, Texas, has been in Jackson County this week. Soon after his father was fatally hurt, Mr. Pittman was telegraphed for, and was at

his father's bedside when he died.

*Excerpt from Pittman Notebook, Commerce Public Library*

Judge Mordecai M. Pittman was fatally injured when returning from court, February 1896. His horse was frightened by an umbrella falling from his buggy and he was thrown from the buggy.

*Excerpt for the Jackson Herald, April 27, 1905*

### **Mr. J. E. Randolph, Sr., Dead**

One of the Pioneers Succumbs to Death—Largest Realty Owner of Jefferson—His Will has been filed with the Ordinary.

When the axe of death felled Mr. J. E. Randolph, Sr., last week, a great tree in the forest of mortality of this town was claimed. He was not wafted here by any wind of chance or transplanted from any state or county, but was indigenous to the soil of old Jefferson.

His ancestors were pioneers of this town. They were among the very first settlers of Jefferson, for when they came here the virgin forests were here, and were the home of the wild turkey and deer, and had recently been the abiding place of the "Red Man." They converted the trees of the forest into houses, and the hunting grounds into fresh fields.

Such were the ancestors of Mr. J. E. Randolph, Sr., who was born October 31st, 1838, and was therefore 67 years old at the time of his death. He was educated at the school at this place, and for many years had been a trustee of Martin Institute, and secretary of the board. He was a faithful member and did all in his power for the school. In his honor, Martin Institute adjourned last Friday.

He filled several important offices. He was sheriff of the county during the war, and made a most excellent officer. He served as justice of the peace of Jefferson district several years and was mayor of Jefferson for some dozen years of his life.

He was married to Miss E. C. Thompson, and no people ever lived more happily together than Mr. and Mrs. Randolph. They were both members of the Methodist church.

He was the largest real estate owner in Jefferson, and was one of the best business men this county ever produced.

He was a clever, and a kind-hearted man, who loved his friends and cared nothing about what his enemies had to say about him. He was always our true friend, and we

were made sad when we looked on his lifeless form. He had been ill for several weeks with Bright's Disease.

The funeral obsequies were conducted at his home by Rev. H. F. Branham, assisted by Rev. R. N. Abraham. His body was put to rest in Woodbine Cemetery by the side of his wife, who preceded him a few weeks ago. A very large crowd was at his burial.

In 1897, Mr. Randolph made his Will, which was witnessed by Mr. R. B. Maxwell, Dr. J. C. Bennett and Mr. W. W. Dickson. It was made, this after consulting his wife, and that was satisfactory to her. He gave all the machinery, the gin house, and fifteen acres of land, to his brother, H. J. Randolph, his life time, after which it is willed to the children of Mr. H. J. Randolph. To Mrs. T. S. Johnson, his niece, he gave six hundred dollars. He gave to the children of Mrs. Sarah J. Kelly, his sister, one thousand dollars. He willed the coffin business to Messrs. James E. Randolph, Jr., F. H. Randolph, and Miss Minnie May Randolph; and, in addition to this, gave Miss Minnie May \$1000. After his wife's death he willed that his executors sell his property to the best advantage, pay his debts, his legacies, and the remainder should go to his brother, Mr. Hillard J. Randolph, and three sisters, Mrs. Nancy A. Harrison, Susan C. McCoy, and Fannie E. R. Howard, to be divided share and share alike. He willed his gold watch and chain to his nephew, Mr. Frank Howard. He named Judge W. C. Howard and Mr. J. E. Randolph, Jr., his executors. The Will has been filed with the ordinary, and will be probated in solemn form. The executors have already qualified.

*Excerpt for the Jackson Herald, December 13, 1906*

### **Mrs. F. M. Bailey Dead**

The town and community was greatly saddened last Friday, when it became known that Mrs. F. M. Bailey was dead. She had been ill only a few days with pneumonia, and no one thought she was critically ill. She seemed bright and cheerful in the early morning, but later in the day became worse. The physician was immediately summoned. He responded to the summons, and went at once to her bedside. He prepared some medicine and she was lifted up in bed by her husband to take the medicine and fell back dead.

She leaves two daughters, Mrs. C. L. Bond and Mrs. I. W. Rogers, both of whom were at her side when death came. Her only son, Rev. R. F. Bailey, a member of the South Georgia conference, in charge of the church at Syl-

vester, was wired at once to come. He and his wife and two children reached here Saturday afternoon.

The funeral obsequies were conducted at the Methodist Church Sunday at 2 p.m. by Rev. B. H. Trammell. Her body was then carried to Woodbine Cemetery, where the interment took place. The church was crowded to the door, and a large concourse of people followed her remains to their last resting place.

Mrs. Bailey was 62 years old at the time of her death. She was a good woman. She was a member of the Methodist Church, and lived a consistent Christian life. We deeply sympathize with all the members of her bereaved family.

*Excerpt for the Jackson Herald, May 10, 1907*

### **Mr. E. M. Thompson Dead**

Mr. E. M. Thompson died at his home, near the Methodist Church, last Wednesday morning at 1 o'clock. He had been a sufferer for several weeks with Bright's Disease, being confined to his bed most of the time. He had been sinking since Sunday night, and the end came peacefully at the above named time.

He was buried in Woodbine Cemetery Wednesday afternoon by the K.P.'s of which order he was a devoted member. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. B. H. Trammell, assisted by Revs. R. No Abraham and R. S. McGarity.

Mr. Thompson was 73 years old at the time of his death, and was a native of Jackson county. He lived here all his life, and was a quiet, peaceable and law abiding citizen. For more than half a century he lived a consecrated member of the Methodist Church at this place.

He leaves a wife and four daughters—Mrs. W. H. Smith, Mrs. O. P. Aiken, Mrs. R. D. Johnson, all of this county, and Mrs. W. J. Tribble of Oglethorpe, to mourn his death.

One of Jackson County's citizens has gone to his reward, and as his body sleeps beneath the sod of his native county, we can truly say that we believe his soul is basking today in the presence of God's omnipotence.

*Excerpt for the Jackson Herald, February 23, 1911*

### **Asleep with the Braves**

Another Veteran and Hero, Judge Andrew J. Bell, Gone to his ethereal reward. Buried with Military Honors by his comrades in the Gray

Death has again invaded our midst, it has taken from us Judge Andrew Jackson Bell. This death is the fourth during the past few weeks that has occurred in Jefferson. First, W. J. Martin; then Mr. J. L. Williamson; last week Mr. J. C. Hancock; closely followed by Judge Andrew Bell.

He was a man of more than ordinary intellectuality. Had he given his attention in early life exclusively to letters, he, no doubt, would have been a great success. Few men could wield the pen as did he. He could write with it when dipped in sarcasm, ridicule or invective; but could write best with it when dipped in love.

Few has done more in this section to keep alive the memory of that glorious struggle of the South's valiant sons than Andrew J. Bell. Many reunions of those who fought for that "lost cause" were held in this county. It was Judge Andrew Bell who suggested these reunions. At them, men lauded that cause in speech; sons and daughters sang of it in song; and the veterans related their beautiful, touching and pathetic stories. As we pen these lines, the erect form of Judge Andrew J. Bell, standing on the rostrum of Martin Institute, telling one of his touching stories about Callahan, McCullough, or some



*Judge Andrew J. Bell, circa 1861*

incident of battle or about the camp comes vividly before our memory. The sound of his soft voice is heard speaking for the shaft to be erected for the confederate veterans of Jackson County. It is a melancholy thought that he never lived to see that monument erected. But like Moses of old, who saw the promised land from Nebo's lonely heights, and was called of God and surrendered his work to other hands, this venerable hero got in sight of the good of his desire, and was called away from earth, and some other will have to finish the task so nobly undertaken by him.

His task is finished. On Monday afternoon he went home from his office, and lay down on his couch, never to rise again. In a few moments after he lay down, he became unconscious and never spoke but one time more. Friday morning he breathed his last.

His funeral was preached in the Methodist Church, by Rev. F. S. Hudson, and the Confederate veterans put his body beneath the sod.

Judge Bell was 66 years old. He leaves a wife and three children to mourn his death, namely, Mrs. A. H. Burtz of Ellijay, Mrs. Mattie Roberts, and Mr. Gordon Bell.

He had many positions of trust. Deputy Ordinary, Notary Public, Justice of the Peace and Clerk and Treasurer of the city of Jefferson were some of the positions held by him. For fourteen years he conducted the A. J. Bell Fire Insurance Agency, and it was his motto that when a building was burned on which he had written a policy, the owner had to be paid in full. In all positions, he showed himself to be efficient and faithful.

It is with sorrowing heart we write these last words concerning this man, who will be greatly missed in Jefferson. Peace to his soul, and may the blessings of Heaven attend those who were nearest to him.

*Excerpt for the Jackson Herald, May 4, 1911*

#### **Hon. H. H. Hancock**

Called to his last reward. Departed this life Thursday. Buried in Woodbine Cemetery

On last Thursday, at his home, in Jefferson, Hon. H. H. Hancock departed this life.

For more than a year he has been a great sufferer with Bright's Disease and death was not unexpected.

At one time there was great improvement in the condition of his health, and hopes were entertained of his ultimate recovery. He recovered sufficiently to come over to town and to perform his duties as a county registrar,

but he was never a well man, and he soon after was confined to his home, where he suffered for several months prior to his death.

On last Friday, his body was interred in Woodbine Cemetery. The funeral obsequies were conducted at his home by Rev. F. B. Hudson, assisted by Rev. R. N. Abraham. A beautiful floral tribute was paid to the deceased. Mr. Hancock leaves a wife and four children to mourn his death: Messrs. Homer and Claud Hancock, Mrs. J. C. Turner, and Miss Ruby Hancock. Besides these, his mother survives him, at the age of 93; one brother, Mr. J. B. Hancock; and three sisters, Mrs. Whitehead of Gainesville, Mrs. G. B. Stanton of Social Circle, and Mrs. Emma Bush.

The deceased was sixty-three years old. He was a man, and a member of the Methodist Church, of which church he had been a steward for more than twenty years.

He was held in high esteem by the people of this county. One term he represented his county in the House of Representatives, and no man ever made a cleaner or more honorable record in that body. He was urged to stand for reelection, and, no doubt, would have been his own successor had he only asked the people to bestow upon him that honor; but he declined to make the race.

In his death, Jackson County has lost one of her best and noblest citizens, and he had a great host of loving friends, as attested by the large crowd who attended his funeral.

*Excerpt for the Jackson Herald, August 17, 1911*

#### **Mrs. T. J. Bennett Passes Away**

A pall of gloom was thrown over the town on Tuesday night, when it was known that Mrs. T. J. Bennett was dead. Very few people knew that she was even seriously ill; and when her death was announced, the shock was too great to be realized. Her death was caused from acute peritonitis, and she was sick only a short time.

Mrs. Bennett, before her marriage, was Miss Mattie Holder, a sister of Messrs. J. N. and F. P. Holder. Her death removes from our midst one of the purest and most loveable women who ever lived in Jefferson. She was truly a Christian, and in her life exemplified all the characteristics of a follower of the meek and lowly Nazarene. As a wife, she was all that was faithful and true; as a mother, she was loving and kind, at all times teaching her children to do only those things that were Christian

and that would lead them to make true men and woman. As a daughter and sister, she was thoughtful and considerate; and to her friends she was ever loyal.

She leaves a broken-hearted husband, five sweet little children, the youngest of whom is only ten days old, a mother, and two brothers.

Her body was laid to rest on Wednesday afternoon in Woodbine Cemetery, Rev. F. B. Hudson, assisted by Rev. R. N. Abraham, conducting the funeral services at the Methodist Church.

*Excerpt for the Jackson Herald, December 3, 1912*

### **Mrs. A. J. Bell Passes Away**

On Wednesday at noon, at her home, on Washington Street, the soul of Mrs. A. J. Bell passed out of this world.

Mrs. Bell had been in declining health for more than two years, but just a month ago she took her bed, and for the past two weeks she has been seriously ill.

Mrs. Bell was the widow of the late Andrew J. Bell. Before her marriage she was Miss Laura Cheatham. She was born in South Georgia, but losing her parents at the age of nine years, she was reared in Athens in the home of her uncle, Mr. John W. Nicholson. She was a member of the first class which graduated from Lucy Cobb Institute. She was 69 years old, and leaves to mourn her death three children, Mrs. A. J. Burtz, Mrs. Mattie Roberts, Mr. Gordon Bell, and three grand children. She also leaves two nephews, whose homes are in Macon.

Mrs. Bell has resided in Jefferson for many years, and every one who knew her loved her, and appreciated her worth. She was faithful in all things: a wife, mother, neighbor and friend, she was always true and devoted; loving and self sacrificing.

She was a woman of high Christian character, being a loyal member of the Methodist Church. Her strong Christian personality created a spiritual atmosphere which had great influence over those around her.

Mrs. Bell's last trip from home was to attend the woman's Missionary meeting at the Methodist Church, on the first Sunday night in November, and she was the first member of the church to die during the pastorate of Rev. John F. Yarbrough.

Her body will be interred in Woodbine Cemetery this afternoon, Thursday, the funeral being preached at the home at 2:30 o'clock. Rev. Yarbrough being in Florida, the funeral will be preached by Rev. R. S. Hudson.

*Excerpt from Jefferson First United Methodist Church Bicentennial, April 23, 2006*

### **Jefferson First United Methodist Church**

There are no known records telling exactly when the Jefferson Methodist church was organized. However, it is known that the first church was constructed shortly after Jefferson was incorporated November 1806.

The first church was located on the hill in Jefferson's Woodbine Cemetery and faced Oak Street which was then the Winder Highway. This building was dismantled and a new location was secured about 1845. (Miss Lurline Collier, prominent leader in the church in the 20th century, told Mrs. Ann Jarrett of the church's historical committee, that the columns on the "Gurley House", next to the First Christian Church, were from the First Methodist Church.)

This new location was near the site of the present church on Martin Street. The site was called "Mitchell's Hill" at that time and the lot was described on the Deed as an oak grove containing one acre of land.

The first church built on the Martin Street lot was a wood building in the Greek Revival style.

On October 13, 1905, an article in the Jackson Herald: "The work of tearing away the old Methodist church was begun last Friday morning and a new one will be built as quickly as possible. The Methodists will worship in the Presbyterian Church until the new one is built." This would have been around the time of the church's centennial.

The second church built on the Martin Street lot was a wood building with stained glass windows depicting Christian symbols. There was a sweet toned bell that rang on Sunday mornings.

This church burned on an extremely windy Sunday morning during worship services in March 1925. The fire spread down the hill to the covered bridge over Curry Creek on Sycamore Street. Few items were saved from the church that day. For the next several months, the congregation met in the nearby Martin Institute Auditorium or at the Baptist, Christian or Presbyterian churches.

The present building, of native fieldstone in the English village style, was constructed on the same site. The stone came from fields around Jefferson. The inner walls are constructed of brick with only the outer walls of stone. The beautiful structure was completed for occupancy on June 20, 1926. It had cost \$64,000.

# *Portraits of a Southern Place*

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF EARLY JACKSON COUNTY, GEORGIA



Photographs from the Collection of  
the Jackson County Historical Society  
Edited by Tina Harris

Published by the Jackson County Historical Society, *Portraits of a Southern Place* contains 257 black and white photographs that document life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Jackson County, Georgia. Among the collection are 54 photographs taken by photographer, Cicero Simmons of Talmo. The book includes an index by surname and most of the photographs identify the places and people depicted.

This beautiful hard cover book is Smyth sewn and printed on archival paper. Copies can be purchased at the Jefferson, Commerce, Braselton, and Talmo Public Libraries for \$32.00 (this price includes the tax).

*To have a copy delivered to you, send a check for \$37.00 along with your address and contact information to the Jackson County Historical Society, P.O.Box 1234, Commerce, Georgia 30529. If you have any questions, please call Tina Harris, 706 757-3750.*

**Jackson County Historical Society**

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P.O. BOX 1234 COMMERCE, GEORGIA 30529