

WEST GADSDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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Post Office Drawer D
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(850) 442-6434
www.GadsdenHistory.org

January 2007

GROWING.....**GROWING.....GROWING!!!!!!**

Our organization has had terrific success in its first two and one-half years. However, history is made each and every day. This is no time to rest or to be lulled into complacency. If we allow that to happen, our history will slowly but surely slip away. During the past year, we initiated a membership card system. If your membership card expires January 2007, **NOW IS THE TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP.** Our success depends on you! Everything we are undertaking takes a great deal of money. Only through your support and generous monetary donations will we move forward. The more you give now moves us closer to our permanent headquarters at The Dezell House. Once we are settled there we can begin to work towards displaying our historical artifacts and pictures as well as compiling and cataloging all of the historical data accumulated thus far. We want to achieve the excellence which **YOU** deserve.

MARKER UNVEILING WAS A SUCCESS

November 24, 2006 was a beautiful fall day in Greensboro. Members of the Dezell family arrived and were greeted by several members of the Society. There was a lot of reminiscing and an interchange of encouragement. Mr. James R. Dezell, Sr. of Coral Gables treated all of us to a delicious lunch at Phyllis's Café. After lunch it was back to The Dezell House to finalize the arrangements for the afternoon program. A crowd of 50+ was in attendance as the event got underway. After welcoming speeches from Greensboro's current Mayor, Buddy Pitts, and a genealogy report of the Dezell family by Linda Clark Smith, Lynne Layton Poucher thanked the Capital City Bank Group Foundation and their representatives, Jimmy Suber and Walter McPherson, for their funding of the National Register marker. Dr. Ken Davis of Clearwater and Mr. James R. Dezell, both grandsons of James and Maggie Shepard Dezell, honored us with the unveiling of the historic marker. As a surprise in honor of the Dezell family's Scottish ancestry, all present enjoyed listening to William Johnson of Tallahassee as he played the bagpipes in full Scottish attire. Shirley Clark had arranged refreshments which were enjoyed by all. Please notice the marker the next time you are in Greensboro.

RAISING \$\$\$\$ TO ACCOMPLISH OUR GOALS

Plans and permits are being finalized for bidding the re-roofing project at the Dezell House. This project will be completed by June, 2007. The firm of Manausa Lewis & Dodson Architects, Inc. of Tallahassee was chosen to work with us through the bidding and permitting process as well as overseeing the construction work. Randy G. Lewis, AIA, will be spearheading the project. We are glad to have Randy on board since he has plenty of experience with all of these facets of historical restoration. This project is being funded in part by the Florida Department of State, Bureau of Historical Preservation, in conjunction with the Florida Historical Commission.

As was reported in the last newsletter, WGHS was one of 129 applicants vying for historical preservation dollars through a special category grant application submitted to the Florida Department of State in June, 2006. The application reviews took place in September. The Dezell House was ranked #57 in the list of projects. Using the same dollar amount that was requested during the last budget year only allowed 53 projects to be funded. Now is the time to speak to your legislators encouraging them to allocate more funds for historical preservation. WGHS would benefit from this greatly. Make those calls, write those letters or personally contact your legislator. **MAKE A DIFFERENCE; LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!**

FAITH EIDSE - AUTHOR OF VOICES OF THE APALACHICOLA

Ms. Eidse will be the guest speaker at the January 21, 2007 meeting. She will review her recently published book about the Apalachicola River with its 106 miles of unimpeded flow. After her presentation signed copies of the book will be available for purchase.

FLORIDA PIONEER DESCENDANT CERTIFICATION

The February 18th meeting will feature Melody K. Porter, Secretary of the Florida State Genealogical Society, who will tell us how to apply for the Florida Pioneer Descendant Certification. Anyone who can document their ancestors living in Florida prior to March 3, 1845, the date of Statehood, is eligible.

POT LUCK TASTING

The program of the Society's March 18th meeting will feature Pot Luck Tasting from recipes taken from the newly published cookbook. Come enjoy samples of tasty foods and purchase your cookbook(s) at the pre-arrival price of \$13.50 each, including tax. See more details on page 3.

LAST APALACHICOLA NORTHERN DEPOT AT HOME ALONG THE TRACKS AGAIN

Thanks to Richard Thompson, project relocation manager, as well as Charles Poucher, John Canetta, Buddy Pitts, Dave Ferro, Scott Clark, and Ronald Williams the moving of the Greensboro Depot was completed prior to the deadline. We appreciate the use of Allen Clark's dump trailer and the cooperation of Gadsden County Manager Marlon Brown, Facilities Manager Spencer Bowens, Herb Chancey of Gadsden Recycling and last but not least the knowledgeable crew and professional service of Ducky Johnson House Movers. Hoorah for a job well done! WGHS is pleased to have had an active role in saving this important piece of history. Again a big THANK YOU goes to ST. JOE LAND COMPANY AND PROGRESS ENERGY FLORIDA for their valuable donations. April 30, 2007 will mark the 100th anniversary of the maiden trip from River Junction to Apalachicola. WGHS is planning a special meeting on April 15th to remember this 100th year anniversary. Mark your calendars for April 15, 2007 and join us for this special commemoration.

GUNN FAMILY EMANCIPATION CELEBRATION

Our meeting on May 20th will consist of a discussion about the progress of the re-roofing project and continue planning for July 4th Open House. Afterwards we will adjourn to travel South on SR 65 (Hosford Highway) to the Gunn Family's longtime celebration of "Emancipation Day". There will be a ceremony including the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. All are invited to come to Gadsden County's own "Black History" event that takes place each May 20th.

BARN DAY

"I Hear Hester Singing" Barn Day will be Saturday, June 2, 2007. Kay Davis Lay has hosted Barn Day in the past at her preserved tobacco barn on the Forrest Davis Family Farm located on SR 65S (Hosford Highway) before crossing over I-10. She has preserved this barn as it was during the shade tobacco era complete with stringing machines, bundles of sticks, barges, barn heaters, cured tobacco hole punchers and stringing tickets as well as the awesome height of the barn as you imagine hanging tobacco across the tier poles. This year's event will have an expanded theme including demonstrations of early life since it is coinciding with America's 400th Anniversary, the founding of Jamestown. There will be live entertainment during the day. Kay has invited WGHS to assist with this event which will start at 8:30 a.m. Let's show our support of this historical endeavor.

3RD ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

The Dezell House will hold its 3rd Annual Open House July 4, 2007. We will have our 2nd Annual Quilt Show and tentatively have commitments from Clay VanLandingham to cook his delicious barbecue and live entertainment by "Jim Hobbs and The Country Gentlemen". Various homemade jams, jellies and syrup will be available as well as ice cream served with homemade fruit toppings furnished by Jane and Lamar Clark. As usual we will have homemade baked goods, boiled peanuts and drinks for sale. Various artifacts will be displayed at The Dezell House. This is YOUR museum. We want to tell YOUR story. If you have any additions or suggestions to make this event better, please let us hear from you.

2007 \$\$\$\$ MAKING PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Note Cards and Prints for Sale

Note cards featuring the pen and ink drawing of The Dezell House, WGHS headquarters, are available in packages of 8 cards w/envelopes for only \$10.00 + postage. You can also obtain an 8.5 x 11-inch print of WGHS headquarters suitable for framing for only \$5.00. The 2nd drawing by Mary Barber Cox featuring Greensboro's Apalachicola Northern Depot will be available in note cards and prints at our April 15th meeting which will be the commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the run of the first train.

T-Shirts for Sale

The pen and ink rendering of WGHS headquarters, The Dezell House, is featured on our T-shirts. The cost is \$12.00 + shipping. Please contact us at the above phone number if you would like to purchase one.

Cookbooks for Sale

By the time this newsletter is received, our cookbooks will be going to the publisher for printing. The books will cost \$15.00 upon arrival. **RESERVE YOUR COPIES NOW FOR THE PREPAID PRICE OF \$13.50.**

Anticipated arrival date is May 1, 2007. We will gladly ship books for an additional charge; please contact us with your specific request.

All prices include 7% Florida Sales Tax.

Please complete and return with your check made payable to West Gadsden Historical Society.

Please reserve _____ copies of the cookbook at \$13.50 each (pick up at The Dezell House)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

You will be notified when books arrive!

McLANE FAMILY MASSACRE - 1840

The Society's October monthly meeting highlighted one of the most historic tragedies in the history of Gadsden County. The family of John S. McLane, with the exception of his step-son & nephew, John Kenzie McLane, was savagely attacked at their homestead in the early morning of April 23, 1840. The location of the massacre was only a few miles southwest of Greensboro just off present day State Road 12 (Bristol Highway).

Mr. Hubert "Shorty" Edwards, great grandson of John Kenzie McLane, the sole survivor of this attack, was the featured guest speaker. For many years, Mr. Edwards has been the family historian and has carried his family story far and wide to civic organizations, school children, historical societies, and other interested groups in the surrounding area. With him that day was his grandson, Kenneth Edwards, who is "in training" to become the future family historian and keeper of the historic documents, photographs, relics, and other items of interest which were on display. In addition to a large crowd of interested folks, approximately twenty-five McLane family descendants from the North Florida area were present and enjoyed sharing family history with each other.

John S. McLane's family was composed of his wife, Nancy Jane; his nephew and step-son, John Kenzie McLane, (b. 1820); niece and step-daughter Catherine (b. abt. 1827); young daughter (b. abt. 1838) and young infant child (b. abt. 1839/40). On that fateful day, Mr. McLane was in Quincy taking care of business matters.

The Creek Indian War was going on in this area of the South. At this particular time, it was known by the pioneers living in this wilderness area, especially those within the vicinity of the Apalachicola River, that a band of Creek Indians from Georgia had been seen in what is present day Liberty County. One family in the lower part of that area near the New River as well as a family near present day Bristol had been attacked.

Early on the day of April 23, 1840, Catherine was already at the barn milking the cows when John left the house to gather herbs from across a nearby field. Soon John heard noises in the woods and spotted a band of 18 Creek warriors in full war costume, armed with guns, scalping knives, bows and arrows running toward the family's house. He screamed for his sister to run toward the house! As John ran in that same direction, a bullet grazed his left shoulder. They both reached the safety of the house and boarded up there with their mother and the two little children. As the morning progressed, Mrs. McLane decided to make a run for it, along with Catherine & the little ones, attempting to reach the Pickett or McDougald settlement, the nearest neighbors who were about four miles away to the east. As John watched, he saw two Indians heading them off. He attempted to fire at the Indians from outside the safety of the house, but was fired upon and immediately after being forced back into the house, he heard the screams of his mother and sister and then two shots rang out and then all was quiet.

Through the agonizing hours that followed, the Indians set fire to the adjacent kitchen at the rear of the house and began throwing blazing balls of cotton onto the house roof but the cotton rolled off the steep roof without igniting it. The wind shifted during the time of the kitchen fire and directed the flames away from the house in which John was barricaded in his defense against those savages.

Through the holes cut into the logs of the house, John watched one Indian who carried a torch as he skulked from tree to tree while headed toward him. When the Indian was within 20-25 feet of the house, John pulled the trigger of his musket. He then heard the most unusual screech and yells and was aware that it must be the Indian's death scream. The warrior staggered away, with the help of others. Soon the silence was broken by a low chant and it seemed to John that all the Indians had gathered around the wounded one. From the type of noises he was hearing, John believed that the Indian he had shot was either a chief or the son of a chief.

In the later afternoon as the Indians were performing their death ceremonies, John spotted his father returning and ran out to signal to him to keep quiet because Indians were around. Mr. McLane hurried off to find the bodies of his wife and children, but to no avail that afternoon. John jumped on a mare and headed east toward the Pickett or McDougald settlement and was fired upon by the Indians, but soon outdistanced them. He reached those nearest neighbors about dusk, soon followed by his father. A courier was immediately sent to the camp of volunteers near Jackson Bluff and by the next morning some of those volunteers arrived back at the settlement. The volunteers as well as Mr. McLane, John, and many others went back to the family homestead. The murdered bodies were soon located. The volunteers as well as U.S. Army regulars made an attempt to locate the Indians, but their escape had been made good.

Some time later when a treaty was made and surrender took place, an old Indian chief said through an interpreter that a white boy had killed his son on the Telogia Creek, and had it not been for his death, the war would have continued. To quote John Kenzie McLane during his elder years – "So you see I may say that I was the cause of the Creek war coming to an end."

Following the massacre, Mr. McLane and his step-son, John, enlisted in the U.S. Army forces in Florida to fight the Indians. Later while serving in the Confederate Army, John carried the same old musket he had used to defend himself and his family.

Mrs. McLane was shot, Catherine was shot and scalped, and the two young children were killed with pine knots. They are buried in a common grave in the Sycamore Cemetery, several miles west of Greensboro. About 1895, John Kenzie McLane was interviewed by a traveling Methodist preacher who wrote down their conversation. These facts were later given to S.W. Anderson of Greensboro and Quincy, and they were subsequently published in the *Gadsden County Times* on January 30, 1936. John Kenzie McLane, hero, died 10-26-1904 and is buried in the Pine Grove Cemetery not too far from the family homestead.

**West Gadsden Historical Society
Exists Because of YOU**

All Lists Effective 8/1/06 – 12/31/06

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WGHS deeply appreciates your donations remembering loved ones and honoring those special to us. These gifts keep on giving as the Society grows. Effective as of 8/01/06 – 12/31/06:

MEMORIALS

Bruce & Angela Rowan
in memory of
Carl C. & Martha E. Rowan

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in memory of
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in memory of
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HONORARIUM:

Lynne L. Poucher
in honor of
Bruce Rowan

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have accomplished so much this past year. Over 300 man hours were donated on the Train Depot Re-location Project alone. Members also donated the use of their trailers, tractors, generators, and air hammers. Many volunteer hours have been spent at the Dezell House scraping paint, cleaning, mowing, setting up the quilt show, preparing baked goods, jams, jellies, and syrups, smoking pork, writing grants, drafting drawings and plans, writing newspaper articles, taking pictures, labeling pictures on disc, and attending various meetings to help WGHS become known throughout our County and State. All of these things were given freely by large hearted members and supporters willing and able to do their share to make a vision become a reality. THANK YOU! Those two words are short and simple. Other attempts to go beyond THANK YOU fail to express the full measure of gratitude due all of you. The directors of WGHS trust that each of you knows who you are and that you are greatly appreciated!

The Society now owns two pieces of real estate and two buildings. All of you homeowners know what that means in relation to expenses. Our insurance costs were \$2,100.00, water and electricity costs \$435.00 and mortgage interest totaled \$754.00 for 2006. The remaining principle balance on our loan is \$10,100.00. Grant money does not cover any of these operating expenses!

WGHS relies on a strong membership and generous donations to fulfill its mission of service to the community. Please take the time now to join or renew your membership. Perhaps you would like to give a donation as well. All dues and donations are tax deductible. As always the funds will be used wisely to support the valuable community service performed by WGHS.

MEMBERSHIP

Annual Dues are: Businesses \$250.00; Individuals \$25.00; Couples \$35.00

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL: _____ PHONE #: _____

DONATION

I would like to make a donation in the amount of \$ _____ to help WGHS reach its goal.

MEMORIAL/HONORARIUM

A gift of \$ _____ is given in memory/honor (circle one) of _____ by

_____. Acknowledgement is to be mailed to:

(Name) (City & State) (Zip)

UPCOMING HISTORICAL DATES TO REMEMBER

<i>WHEN</i>	<i>WHAT</i>	<i>WHERE</i>
January 21, 2007	<u>Voices of Apalachicola</u>	Greensboro Town Hall
February 18, 2007	Florida Pioneer Descendant Certification	Greensboro Town Hall
March 18, 2007	Pot Luck Tasting	The Dezell House
April 15, 2007	100 th Anniversary of Apalachicola Northern RR	Old Depot
May 20, 2007	Gunn Family Emancipation Celebration	Gunn Residence SR 65 South
June 2, 2007	Barn Day	Davis Farm SR 65 South
July 4, 2007	3 rd Annual WGHS Open House	The Dezell House

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