

# The Covington Historical Society

## Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 1

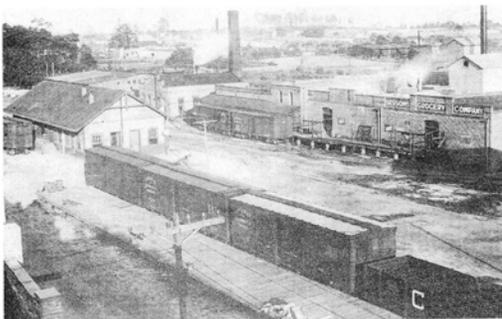
March 2015

"There is a history in all men's lives." Shakespeare

*"Preserving and publicizing the history of Covington County and the Andalusia area"*



**2014 WAS A GOOD YEAR for the Three Notch Museum** – 418 visitors registered that toured the old restored and converted Central of Georgia train depot that we now call the **Three Notch Museum**, Covington County's local history museum where our **proud past** comes alive as we anticipate a **promising future**. Visitors from **18 states** came through the display of artifacts and memorabilia housed in the century old building. Two local women's clubs held their meeting in the museum, the oldest wooden building remaining in downtown Andalusia – the **Docena Club** and the **Study Club of Andalusia**. **Camp Te Amo** from the **Guardian Angel Daycare** brought their summer camp students. **W. S. Harlan** 5<sup>th</sup> graders from Lockhart also made their annual trek to Andalusia to discover treasures some of them had never seen or imagined like the old **Speller Moates** radio collection, an ornery mule bit, a Coke bottle with Andalusia imprinted on the bottom, heirloom quilts, a courthouse spittoon, a World War I helmet, a Purple Heart award, pictures of old homes that once graced our main streets, a corn shuck mop, a traveling trunk, a country store checkerboard, the River Falls flood of 1929 photographs, an authentic coal/wood stove, and a picture of the only Andalusian who has ever played in a Rose Bowl football game, the late **Walter O. Merrill**.



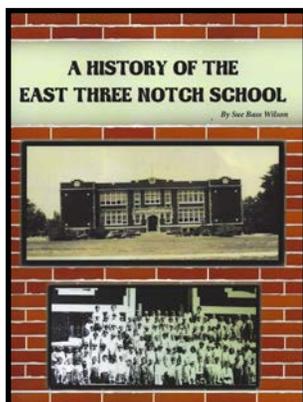
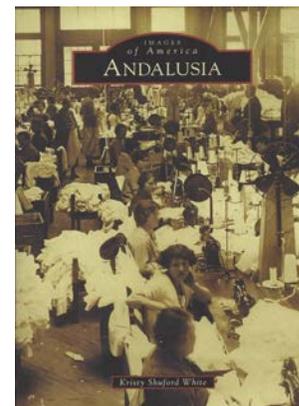
**NEW DISPLAYS** – Last summer **MaryAnn Rabren Johnson** worked for several months rearranging and redesigning our treasure of artifacts with her special touch and talent for design. So spread the word that there are new sights to behold when one visits in 2015. **Lenora Johnson** assisted in this effort which added new ideas to the display floors. "Under Construction" signs were in place for several weeks.

Central of Georgia Depot, Sessoms Grocery Co. & the Manufacturing District

**NEW OPENING HOURS** - The society has partnered with the **City of Andalusia** to assure that the museum is open during weekdays for locals and out-of-towners to visit. Society member **Linda Castleberry** is on duty as well as **Gwen Ryland** who also works part-time at the Andalusia Public Library. The days are **Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 a. m. until 2:00 p. m. Sunday afternoons from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.** usually find a society volunteer on duty to welcome visitors. **Harmon Proctor** and **Ottis Reynolds** have been faithful to serve in this capacity. Thanks to **Mayor Earl Johnson**, **City Clerk John Thompson**, and city council members for not only including this in the budget but also for their quarterly contributions which help to pay for utilities and insurance.

**SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER**, we are sorrowful to report the passing of **Mrs. Lela Mae Holmes (Mrs. Crawford Holmes)**. This wonderful lady made it possible for the society to acquire title a few years ago to the **Sunshine House** property on Stanley Avenue, a former project of the **Altrusa** and **Sunshine Clubs**. With special permission, the society was permitted to sell this property which has enabled us to replace the roof which was about 30 years old and to have reserve funds in our treasury for future repairs and maintenance. Mrs. Holmes was active in many civic and community endeavors for many years including a long-time member of the **First Presbyterian Church**.

**IMAGES OF AMERICA: ANDALUSIA**, an Arcadia Publishing book compiled by **Kristy Shuford White** hit the shelves in the early fall. White who teaches English at LBW Community College authored the book with the Covington Historical Society receiving royalties. Many old photos from the past in the museum collection are featured along with stories she carefully researched using personal interviews with local historians and citizens. White can be contacted at 334-488-1770 for information on the current availability (\$22.). White who grew up in Opp also co-authored *Nurturing Spirits: Lurleen Burns Wallace and LBW Community College*. We owe a debt of gratitude to Kristy and congratulate her on this marvelous work!



**100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EAST THREE NOTCH SCHOOL BUILDING** – This event was held on the weekend of the Andalusia High School Homecoming festivities in October 2014. The cornerstone was laid on November 5, 1914 just a couple of months after students started to school in the new building in September 1914. An assembly and birthday party reception was held on Saturday morning, October 4, 2014 in the old East Three Notch School auditorium. A new book especially written for the occasion, *A History of the East Three Notch School*, by historical society member **Sue Bass Wilson** was available for purchase to the public. Many former elementary students and classmates, a good number in town for the AHS homecoming class reunion weekend, attended the gathering. “School days, school days, dear ole golden rule days!” Books are offered for sale at the **Three Notch Museum** and at **Bass Agency Real Estate** or by contacting Wilson at 334-222-3145 or [suebwilson@andycable.com](mailto:suebwilson@andycable.com). (\$15. plus \$2. for out of town mailing). A 3<sup>rd</sup> generation East Three Notch School student, Wilson writes, “It was at East Three Notch where we all learned to read, to write, to share, to listen, to take turns, to memorize, to think, to imagine, to dream, to sing, and to color our world. We had only just begun to sparkle.”

**HISTORIAN SIDNEY WAITS** has recently updated the museum website. One may browse his wealth of information and photos at [www.3nmsm.com](http://www.3nmsm.com) along with his homepage at [www.sidwaits.com](http://www.sidwaits.com) Read Sidney’s article in the March 11, 2015 of the *Andalusia Star News*, “**Reflecting Upon Shavertown.**” One may read this story on the website, [www.andalusiarnews.com](http://www.andalusiarnews.com).

**THREE NOTCH MARKET** will once again be held in the vicinity of the **Power Plant Marketplace** on Tisdale Street. This is sponsored by the **Andalusia Jr. Women’s Club**, The **Three Notch Museum** will hold an open house that date, the first Saturday in May, the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**MEMBERSHIP DRIVE** – The Covington Historical Society is urging everyone who wants to help preserve and publicize the history of Covington County to become a member in 2015. Annual dues are \$25. per individual and \$40. per couple. Meetings are held the last Thursday evening of each month except December. Many wonderful programs have been presented over the past almost 40 years including the history of businesses, churches, schools, events, colorful characters, communities, and homes to name a few including “Show and Tell.” If you know someone who can present a program, please give us that information. If you want to be just a supporter or friend of the museum and not attend meetings, please remit dues along with your mailing address and e-mail address to **CHS, P. O. Box 1582, Andalusia, AL. 36420**.

**NEW CHS OFFICERS FOR 2015** – **John G. Scherf IV** has been president of our organization for the past two years. He is replaced by **Dr. Morgan Moore** as president. We appreciate all of the interest and support and time **Past President Scherf** has devoted to the preserving of the history of Covington County. His family has been an important part of the town’s local history since his great grandfather, founder of the **Alatex Corporation**, moved to Andalusia in the 1920’s and helped transform a small town into a bustling economic giant through the textile mill industry. Other officers include **Vice-president & Historian, Sue B. Wilson; Recording Secretary, Nancy Mills Robbins; Treasurer George Harmon Proctor.**

**SCENE FROM THE PAST** – 6th AVENUE/  
COLLEGE STREET VIEW in the early 1940's – A  
young mother **Evelyn Fryar** and her baby **Dan** are sit-  
ting in the front yard of the **Mathews** house on Sixth  
Ave. The Givens house now owned by Carl and Linda  
Palmer can be seen in the background as can the  
“Green Shingles Apartments” both on College St.

(Photo courtesy of **Dan Balnchard** who was recently  
searching for his Covington County roots)



**NEWS FROM A CENTURY AGO** – From the *Andalusia Star* (thanks to **Linda Grimes Davis**, Archivist  
at the **Andalusia Public Library**):

**March 16, 1915** - “**Probate Judge J. M. Robinson** tells the *Star* that 25 years ago today,  
Covington County was frozen solid. Oak and chinaberry trees were dangling and all early crops  
had to be replanted.”

**January 29, 1915** – “The **Falco Mill** will close down indefinitely due to poor demand  
for lumber.”

**March 1915** – “**William Sylvester Newberry** died on the train en route to San Antonio,  
Texas for his health.” “**Preston Bryant**, age 40, was killed Sunday night by the Andalusia  
passenger train. Caught on the trestle and was horribly mangled.”

**February 12, 1915** – “**Miss Jessie Savage** and **Mr. Bud Bass** of Route 8 were married.”

**March 2, 1915** – “**Mr. Henry Hart** and **Miss Alma Gillis** were married.”

**March 30, 1915** – “Married in Gantt. **W. D. Allen** and **Miss Carlie Raley**.”

**Business newspaper ads were placed in March 1915 by the following:**

**Sessoms Grocery**

**J. H. Jones Auto Repair**

**Benson Hardware**

**C. J. Watch Repairing**

**Andalusia Bank & Trust**

**Bank of Andalusia**

**W. R. Tisdale**

**A. M. Riley Drug Store**

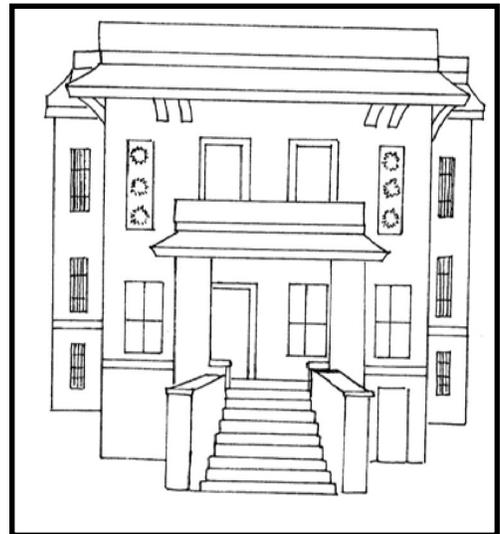
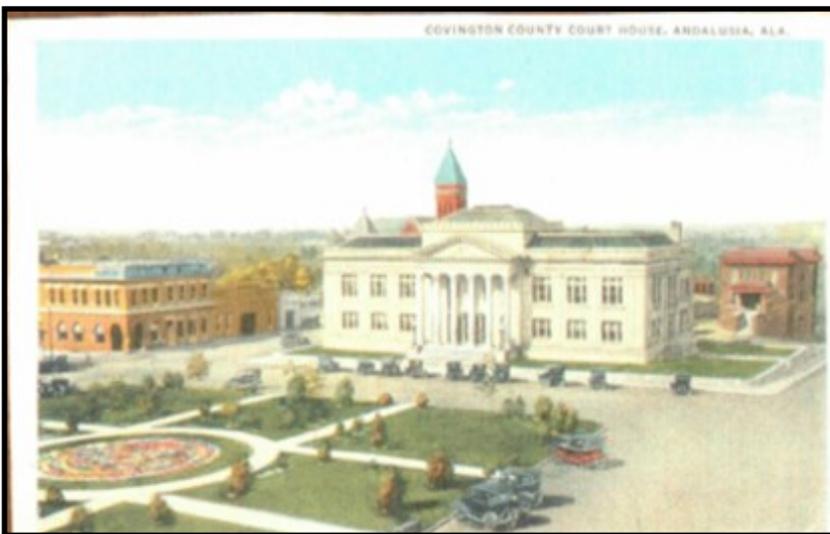
**J. P. Tilley, Jr. (Insurance Agent)**

**A. Whaley, Attorney**

**A. L. Rankin, Attorney**

**NEW ANDALUSIA BOOK** – By the time you receive this newsletter, a new book on the history of Andalusia should be just off the printing press. **Dr. William Hansford** of Birmingham along with the collaboration of **Linda Brogden Palmer**, a resident of Huntsville, have expertly created this magnificent work. Both are former Andalusians who love their hometown. Dr. Hansford presented two Power Point presentations several years ago about the architecture of the Andalusia area homes, and he was asked by many citizens to put all of this information together in book form. He has done just that and has generously stated that he will donate all of the proceeds of the book sales to the historical society. The shipment will be received soon and will be on sale at the museum gift shop. Look for more details very soon. Hansford’s mother was a well-known nurse, **Grace Hansford**, and she resided on McRainey Loop. Linda and her husband have purchased and restored a home on College Street, the historic Givens home. She compiled all of the information to list the **J. W. Shreve Neighborhood** on the National Register. She and her husband Carl visit her hometown often at which time she attends CHS meetings. Linda has helped Bill to research much information and to take photos for this publication. **Bill Hansford** is a 1959 AHS graduate and Linda, the class of 1960. We congratulate them both and look forward to a local book signing very soon.

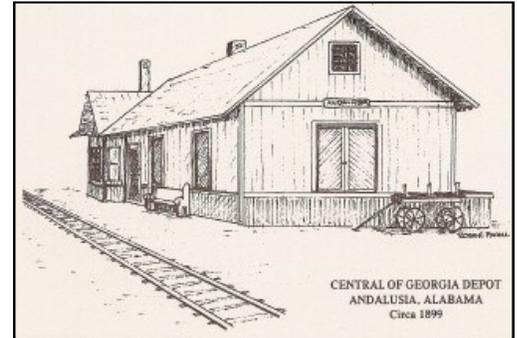
**THE COVINGTON COUNTY COMMISSION** is seeking additional storage and office space close to the courthouse. They are considering several options: **1** - the purchase of a nearby commercial building as well as **2** - utilizing the old jail **Circa 1916** for relocating sensitive records currently stored in the basement of the courthouse or **3** - both. The jail is listed on the “**National Register of Historic Places**” (1989) in the Andalusia Historic District and is probably one of the safest and soundest buildings in Covington County. Because of the historical society’s goal **to preserve and publicize the history of Covington County**, we want to emphasize to the county commission that the architecture of the old jail is important to the character of our historic downtown. It is truly a treasure of a building and is worth preserving for a new use. This has been pointed out to the commission on several occasions by passionate historians, but there continues to be an undercurrent of talk of tearing it down. **To begin with**, it would be very costly to raze the jail building because of its superior construction. **Secondly**, it is an architecturally designed building, constructed before the building of the courthouse. **Frank Lockwood** was the architect who designed many buildings across the state and beyond. What pride those turn-of-the-century Andalusians had when that beautiful **Italianate designed structure** was built just off the **Public Square**! Such an action would dishonor those who planned and made the building a reality in the early 1900’s. **Thirdly**, old jails across America are being restored for new uses. Many are tourist attractions. **Fourthly**, look around at our downtown. There are many older buildings that will not be on the scene in the near future if **restoration and pride of ownership** does not prevail. How many vacant lots will be prevalent as eyesores when that occurs? We will miss those beautiful storefronts, windows and doors, rosettes, columns, unique brickwork, and architectural features of days gone by that tells the story of Andalusia as the town evolved. We implore the county commission to consider all of this information as they make important decisions. A theme of the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** is “**THIS PLACE MATTERS,**” and it is the opinion of the historical society that the preservation of the old jail matters.



**“We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.”  
Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)**

**UPCOMING CHS MEETING** – The March meeting of the historical society will be held on Thursday evening, 7:00 p.m., March 26, 2015. **Brenda Gouge** will present a program on **“Researching Genealogy on ancestry.com.”** Brenda and her mother **Shirley House** are very active in the **Old Three Notch Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.** They organized the July 4, 2014 patriotic parade last summer and plan again for the same event July 4, 2015. So mark your calendars! Decorate a car, a truck, a trailer, a wagon, a bicycle, or just march along and be a part of this local patriotic celebration!

**GROUP TOURS-Linda Castleberry, Museum Docent,** welcomes visitors to the museum. School and club groups; family reunion, class reunion, summer camp groups; and out of town visitors may call 334-222-0674 to schedule group tours.



**Three-Notch Museum  
Historic Central St and Tisdale St.**

Annual Membership Dues (payable in January of each year)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25. Individual or \_\_\_\_\_ \$40. Couple  
 Please encourage others to become a part of our society and of  
 preserving and publicizing the history of Covington County.  
**WE APPRECIATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP.**

Editor, Sue B. Wilson  
 suebwilson@andycable.com  
 Technical Support, Doreen Cumbie

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Detach and Return)**

Enclosed are my dues for 2015: \_\_\_\_\_

(Name)

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 (Mailing Address)

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\*Optional\*

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 (Comments)

**Covington Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 1582**  
**Andalusia, AL 36420**

**TO:**