

RAILROAD TIES

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Facets of Life

Dear Reader,

Welcome to 2017. It's been a year since the historical society reorganized and time has certainly flown by. But, it is time that has been well spent. In the past year we've had the chance to hear wonderful tales of some of our cities, learn about our family histories, and celebrate the founding of our county. This year looks to be equally good. Our first meeting, for instance, will be next Thursday, February 16th at the Evans County Community Center on Church Street. The program, co-sponsored by the Evans County Historical Society and the Evans County Community Center, Inc, will focus on facets of African American Life in Evans County and will last from 6-7:30pm. I cannot wait to see you all there.

Sincerely,

Donald Allen Jones
Editor

The Roberts-Scott-Banks House



The Roberts-Scott-Banks home is located on 307 North Grady Street in Claxton. This home features a wraparound porch with Ionic-style posts and has twin pediments on a hipped roof. The steep pitch of the pyramidal roof is a memorable feature of the house. It has a square mass and four main

rooms with fireplaces in each. Gilliard Roberts, a Savannah African-American entrepreneur and one-time resident of Claxton, reportedly built the home. He had significant business interests in Claxton and Savannah. Other owners were Walter and Mattie Scott and Julius Caesar Banks. The house was used for a number of years as a boarding house and as apartments for teachers. Its construction dates to about 1910.

– (Photo and story courtesy of Pharris Johnson)

Susannah Hagan Smith:

Hagan's Great Lady



Born on August 22, 1842 to James and Keziah Cone Hagan, Susannah's life was one filled with turbulence and great change. Just four short years after coming into the world, in 1846, the United States entered into war with Mexico. Two years after the conflict's end, in 1850, the United States Congress drafted a Compromise between free and slave States which had arisen due to the outcome of the struggle.

In 1859, Susannah married Simon Wells Brewton, son of Samuel J. and Mary Ann Smith Brewton. Sadly, their union would be short-lived. Within a year South Carolina seceded from the Union, followed soon by seven other States after the *Star of the West* incident. In months the newly formed Confederacy and the United States were at war with Simon Brewton serving his new country until his death in 1864. Soon after, U.S. soldiers in Sherman's army entered the area, forced their way into Susannah's home, and made off with many of the family's possessions.

Simon's will thankfully made accommodation for his family. The administrator of the will was Marshall A. Smith, a cousin of Simon's. In time Marshall and Susannah wed and began their own family.

In 1889, Marshall Smith and Isaac C. Daniels met with representatives of the Central of Georgia Railroad to discuss founding a railroad town. As the depot was on Marshall Smith's property, he was given the right to name the new community. He did so, opting to call it Hagan, after his wife's maiden name. This city has prospered since its founding, with all the grace and strength of her namesake.