



The CCHS Newsletter

Carroll County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1308

Carrollton, GA. 30112

June 2022

Smithfield Manufacturing

When the Smithfield School in the Smithfield-Highpoint community of Bowdon was consolidated with the Bowdon School System, the community found itself with an empty two-story rock building. The community saw this as an opportunity to start their own textile plant.

Families were asked how many would be willing to give \$100 to get things started. The funds were used to draw up the legal papers pertaining to getting a corporation started. June 1962, Smithfield Development Corporation was born.

Company stock of 500 shares were issued at \$10 per share. In September 1962 the shares were increased to 20,000.

The plant would begin with 15 machines and the first product to emerge was raincoats. All labor in the production of the raincoats was provided with no salary. The community was growing a company, building an investment.

Sewell workers from the community would come direct from their jobs as Sewell's and sew raincoats until nine or ten o'clock at night.

There was a tremendous amount of work required to convert the building from a school to a textile plant. The stage would need to be dismantled and new flooring added. The high ceiling had to be changed. The men and boys from the community came after their other day's work and school to do the sawing and nailing, while the women and girls made raincoats.

In 1968 the 200 stockholders were approached with an offer to buy the corporation. Later that year the sale was completed.

The new company would employ 202 persons, producing a full line of men's sports coats and suit coats. The plant draws employees from the Smithfield community, Bowdon, Carrollton, Temple, Tallapoosa and in Alabama, Ranburne and Muscadine.

Mr. Charles M. Davis was the General Manager and Mr. J. T. Norton was the Assistant Manager and Personnel Manager. Other key personnel included: Mrs. Sallie Davis as bookkeeper and receptionist, Mr. Dick Edwards, Chief Engineer, and Mr. Jimmy Ray Robinson, Cloth Utilization. Mrs. Naomi Benefield as Production and Inventory Manager, Mrs. Barbara Rivers and Mrs. Peggy Haehnlein as Payroll Managers.

The Engineering Department guided the work flow for maximum efficiency. To aid productivity, music was piped throughout the plant fifteen minutes of each hour.

In addition, a large attractive snack bar was installed affording a pleasant surrounding for lunch breaks. The idea was to make employees feel as part of the company, an extended family unit.

The Cutting Room would experience a devastating fire in 1975 that would close the plant.

The Smithfield School members continued to hold class reunions every five years through 2004.

Article by Robert Blakemore

William Jackson “Jack” Shirah

I was delighted to meet with Mr. and Mrs. Jayson Fields to receive a collection of letters, photos, artifacts, and assorted books from the Estate of William Jackson Shirah.

The son of William Ralph Shirah (1902-1983) and the former Miss. Alma Turner (1913-1998). “Jack” was born August 5, 1939 in Georgia and died April 26, 1982 in Carrollton Georgia. He is buried in the Carrollton City Cemetery.

“Jack” was a self-employed painter. A member of the First United Methodist Church. A Senior Warden of Carroll Lodge No. 69 F&AM, Eastern Star #406, Royal Arch Chapter #22, Western Council #29, Scottish Rite Order, Hebron Commander Knight Temple #23, Shriner.

Mr. Jack Shirah was a Veteran of World War II.

A Carrollton Federal Savings & Loan metal car bank is part of the collection.



William Jackson Shirah Collection Inventory

The Carrollton First United Methodist Church Member Directory for years: 1974, 1976, 1981, 1984, and 1992.

Hardback edition of Souvenir Historical Edition Carroll County Benefit Confederate Monument.

Six 8x10 early 1929 photos of Carrollton and groups.

Times-Free Press newspaper edition December 15, 1926. The 2nd Section published the Letters to Santa.

Forty-two vintage postcards with photos of Carrollton and Atlanta. Three leather postcards.

First National Bank deposit book for Mrs. H.F. Merrell. Hamilton Bank Ledger for 1864.

Educational History of Carroll County by James C. Bonner.

Marriage license for James Tyson and Florence Haynes.

Ledger sheet from J.,M. Hawkins store in Villa Rica.

Twenty Indenture notifications for various people.

Two panoramic photos of the Masonic Convention in 1929 and 1930.

Names included in the documents are: Thomas Hart, Mary Ann Bryum, M.L. Thomas, John B. Wick, Thomas Robinson, John B. Wilson, John M. Mitchell and many others.

Carroll County Historical Society

Meeting July 19th 6:00 P.M.

Neva Lomason Library on Rome St.

Movie Stars with a Carroll County Connection

Ms. Hayward, our best-known celebrity, married Eaton Chalkley and lived in Carrollton from 1957-to 1966. From the stories I've heard she really enjoyed her time here. After Mr. Chalkley's death she took up residence in Florida, because she did not want to live in her Georgia home without her husband. They are both buried at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Carrollton off Hwy 113.



Photo Credit : Golden Globes and Biography.com



Photo Credit : E Movie

Though Ms. Evelyn Keyes was born in Texas, she has Bowdon roots. Her Grandparents, the Rev. Sam Garrett lived in the Kansas Community of Bowdon. After her father died, the family moved to Atlanta. She knew as a young girl that she wanted to be a movie star.

She would visit her grandparents in Bowdon and stage performances on the front porch. She started her Hollywood career by signing a contract with Cecil DeMille. She may be best known for her role as Sue Ellen O'Hara, Scarlett's sister in *Gone With The Wind*. She is buried at Waco Baptist Church Cemetery in Waco Georgia.



Mr. Bing Russell was born in Brattleboro Vermont. He came to Carrollton to play with the Carrollton Hornets in 1948-1949. His baseball career ended after being hit in the head by a baseball. He then moved to Hollywood to try acting. He landed the part as Deputy Clem on *Bonanza* in 1959. Afterwards, he would have recurring roles in over 40 TV shows including; *The Rockford Files*, *Mannix*, *The Big Valley*, *Andy Griffin Show*, *Ben Casey*, *The Fugitive*, *I Dream of Jeanie*, and others. He is also the father of Curt Russell.

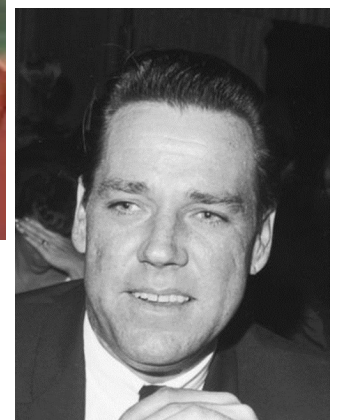


Photo Credit : E L Cinema

John Schneider of Dukes of Hazzard fame would be in Carrollton in 2008 to film the movie **Conjurer**. The producers used several areas for filming, such as Burson Feed & Seed, Pearls on the Square, and the City of Whitesburg. One of the photos in the Carroll Star News shows Ms. Burson checking out customers while they were filming.



Photo Credit: Wikiwand



Dean Cain would star in the movie **The Way Home**, based on the true story when Randy Simpkins' 2-year-old son went missing.

"**The Way Home**" was filmed in the fall of 2008 on Simpkins' Carrollton property, which included his five-acre home and the surrounding 80-acre farm owned by his parents.

Actor Sonny Shroyer co-starred in the movie as Ed Walker, the person who found the boy. You will remember him as Deputy Enos Strate of the Dukes of Hazzard show.



Photo Credit: AJC and Famous Birthdays.com



Better known as Thelma Evans from the sitcom Good Times. Parts of the 2012 movie "Between Love and a Hard Place" was filmed in Carrollton.



Photo Credit: Wikiwand



- 14th Bowdon Historical Society
- 14th Flag Day
- 16th Villa Rica Historical Society
- 21st Georgia Runoff Election Please Vote
- 21st First day of Summer

**Carroll County Historical Society
Membership Application 2022**

Individual Membership
Family Membership

\$30 per year
\$50 per year

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

Home Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

*** E-mail Address:** _____

*** E-mail addresses are important for receiving bulletins and announcements sent out concerning the Society activities between newsletters.**

Membership \$ _____ **** Donation \$** _____

Reason for Donation _____

Total Paid \$ _____

**** Donations to the Society will be used to fund preservation projects in Carroll County. All donations are Tax Deductible.**

Members receive our CCHS Newsletter.

Renew your membership on line at:
<https://www.carrollcountyhistory.org/cchsmf.html>

Or

Mail this form to:
Carroll County Historical Society
P. O. Box 1308
Carrollton, GA 30112

