

THOMASVILLE
HISTORY CENTER

Thomasville Treasures



OUR HISTORY BEGINS HERE. LET US START YOU ON THE JOURNEY.

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THOMASVILLE HISTORY CENTER

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Coca-Cola Sign, c. 1955


Hello, from Thomasville History Center!


Pleased to meet you, friends! This is your guide to discovering all of Thomasville's treasures at home and across the community.

When you see a  that means there's something you can find!

When you see a  that means there's something you can color, a question you can answer, or an activity you can complete!

When you see a  that means you're about to learn something new!

When you see a  that means there is something you can make!

Remember, some items with a  don't have to look exactly like the picture. Use it as inspiration to explore something new, find things that are alike, and things that are different.



Thomasville History Center Word Search

Can you find all of the words that describe the History Center? Words may be horizontal (left to right), vertical (top to bottom), or diagonal (across).

Thomasville
History
Center
Museum
Dawson Street
Fountain
Bowling Alley
Courthouse
Log House
Story
Explore
Discover
Community
Preservation
Historic District

D	H	M	X	U	M	G	L	U	H	D	T	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R
B	Y	I	O	A	R	X	Q	Z	O	I	A	H	O	O	X	Y	C	M	B
C	V	T	S	N	G	O	P	F	O	U	N	T	A	I	N	C	E	M	P
V	O	V	D	T	Q	G	K	H	V	W	F	U	Q	A	U	X	N	I	R
I	Z	U	A	A	O	G	U	C	S	S	L	A	C	H	S	P	T	Z	E
J	E	L	R	V	E	R	Z	I	G	R	V	T	W	R	Q	N	E	G	S
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R	O	J	L	K	S	Q	X	H	I	S	T	O	R	Y	C	H	I	A	X
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Z	G	F	G	Z	L	L	J	H	J	D	T	W	B	A	P	J	H	Y	M
P	X	D	A	Z	E	Y	Z	M	E	A	A	R	P	N	W	F	E	T	R

Thomasville's Preservation Era: 1970- Present

Community leaders and preservationists (those who believe that old buildings should be kept and re-used) have worked hard to protect Thomasville's Victorian architecture and promote its history. Thomasville's beautiful downtown, brick-paved streets, and historic districts are all the result of the preservation movement. For museums like the Thomasville History Center, preservation goes beyond the buildings, it includes the items inside too!

How the Thomasville History Center Came to Be...

The Thomasville History Center was created in 1952 by local citizens who wanted to preserve the community's history. They began collecting photographs, letters, maps, and more. The County allowed the History Center to use two rooms in the jail for a workroom and to hold the growing collection. Dr. Bill Rogers from Florida State University used the collection to write the history of Thomas County. By 1965, the History Center had outgrown the jail and was looking for a permanent home. With money donated by Mrs. Elizabeth Ireland "Pansy" Poe, the History Center was able to buy the property at 725 N. Dawson Street. A big two story brick house with lots of land around it and a bowling alley in the backyard! Thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Pansy and others, the History Center could continue to grow. In 1972 the museum opened to the public and began sharing the story of Thomas County and its people with members of the community and visitors from all over the country and world.

Bessie Hopkins

Miss Elizabeth "Bessie" Hopkins was asked to write the history of Thomas County in 1951 and collected thousands of documents and photographs over the years that she worked on the project. There was no piece of the puzzle too small for Miss Bessie!



Be Like Bessie

Print out the puzzle on page 3, then cut out each piece. Answer the questions on each piece. For those pieces without questions, put a fact about you or draw a picture that represents you. Then, put the puzzle back together to tell the story of you! The puzzle, and the answers you add to each piece will help you to complete a later activity.

Storytelling comes in many forms. It can be written down, it can be spoken, and it can be performed. Museums combine all three to help tell the story of their community. All stories have an arc: a beginning, a middle, and an end. Sometimes, there are many smaller arcs within a bigger story.

First... and then... the end.



What is a museum?

Some museums study and display art, some explore science and technology, and others collect, protect, and share the stories and items that make up our history.

What is in a museum?

Museums have collections of "stuff" that helps them to tell important stories. Think of a collection like a puzzle piece, when you put the individual pieces together, you make a whole picture. That picture is the story of the past.



Art

- Paintings
- Photographs
- Sculptures
- Quilts
- Tapestries



Archives & Libraries

- Books
- Letters
- Journals
- Bills
- Receipts
- Maps



Artifacts

- Decorations
- Collectibles
- Kitchen Tools
- Furniture
- Tools
- Technology



At-Home Scavenger Hunt

With a grown-up's permission, go through your home and gather at least one item from each of the three categories above. We'll use them to make a museum exhibit!



My parents
names are....

When I grow
up...

I was born in....

Favorite Food.

I will visit...

I live in...

I play...

Sibling(s)" Names

I like to read...

School

Favorite Color

Birthday

Least Favorite
Food

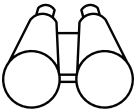
I can...

Grade

Age

Exhibits

Museums tell stories using artifacts, images, and words. These stories are shared through exhibits. An exhibit can be two dimensional (flat) or three-dimensional.



Each person learns in their own way. Some people learn better by reading, while others like to hear, touch or even smell. In museums, we try to make exhibits that use all these methods. Pictures can show us what someplace looked like years ago, while objects can show you the things people used in the past.

Take a look at the items you gathered from around the house. How do they help tell the story of you? Use the diagram below to help you organize your exhibit and then use the worksheet on the next page to create your exhibit. Once you've created your exhibit, show it off!

Title

By: Names

Text: What is the topic of your exhibit? Give me a little background information:
Who?
What?
Where?
When?

Image

Image Label & Caption: What is this a picture of?

Text: Why?

How? & After that, what happened? Why is this important?

Fun Fact the Reader Should Know...

Image Label & Caption

Image Label & Caption

Image Label & Caption



Your Turn

By:


The Stories We Tell...

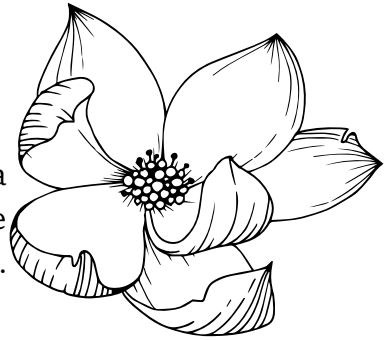
Flowers-Roberts House, 1923

The brick house at 725 North Dawson Street was built in 1923 for Joseph Hampton Flowers and his family. The house was built on the footprint of the 1893 Ewart mansion that burned in an electrical fire in 1922. The house was sold from the Flowers family to Mildred and Fritz Roberts in 1939. The Roberts family had five children who had many adventures on the property. The family had a horse and a small barn in the backyard. Once, one of the children rode the horse up the front walkway of the house! The Roberts family added a big basement beneath the house that they used as a game room. The basement also has a fallout shelter with thick concrete walls. It was built during the Cold War era.

Did you know?

The logo for the Thomasville History Center is inspired by the decorations above the windows on the Flowers-Roberts House.

 The front yard of the Flowers-Roberts House has several big magnolia trees. In the late spring, the mangolias bloom with big white flowers the size of dinner plates.



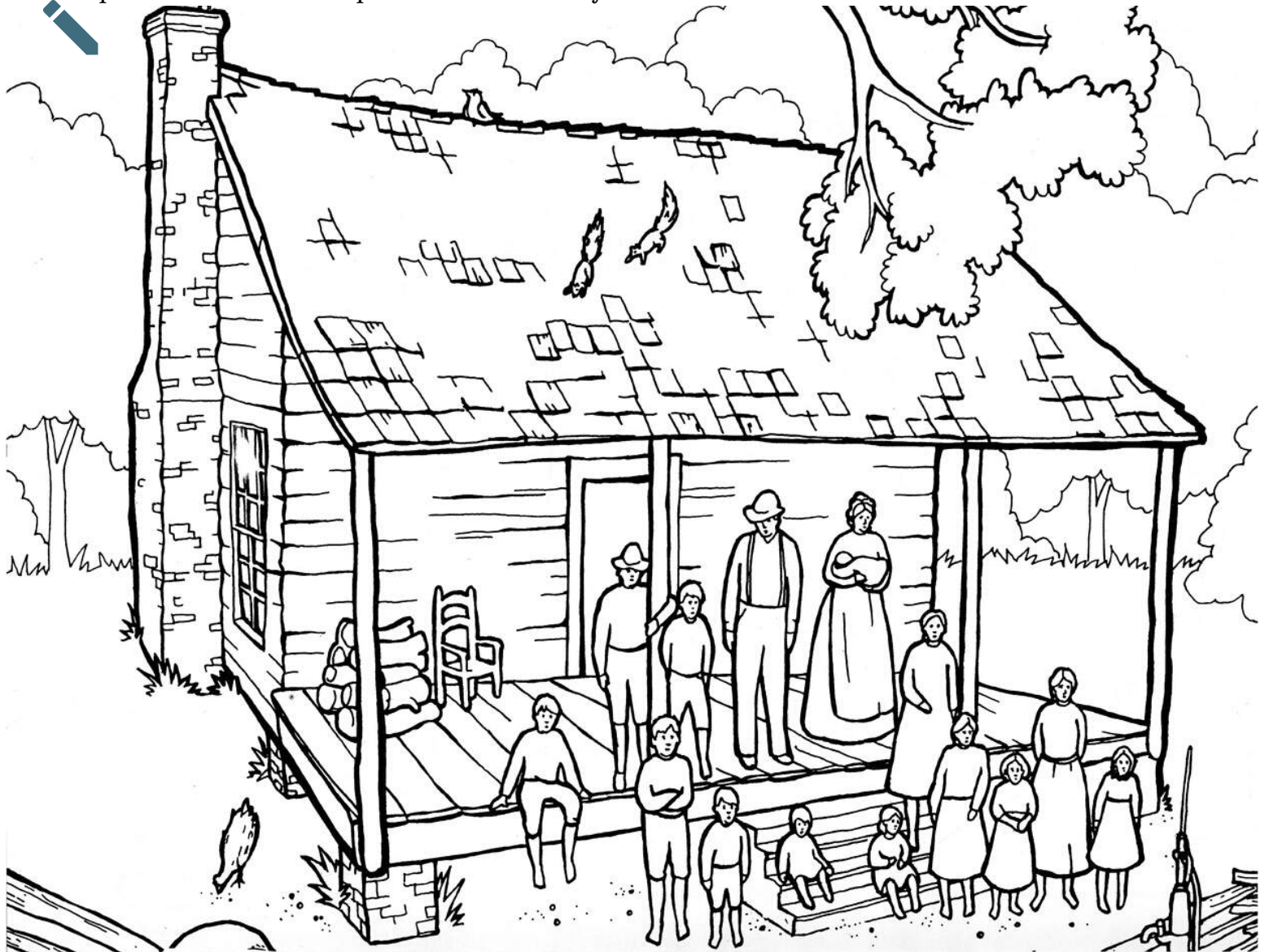
The black wrought iron fence is more than 100 years old. It is one of the few things left from the original house.

Smith Homestead, c. 1870

This dogtrot style log house was built about 1870 by Rufus Smith and his wife Cecilia. Located on Enon Church Road in the northeast corner of Thomas County, the three-room House sat on a 504-acre farm and housed Rufus, Cecilia, and their five children. While Rufus and his wife slept in the bedroom, the children would make bedding for themselves on the floor. Although many land owners managed their property by renting to tenant farmers and sharecroppers, the Smiths were a yeoman farm family (middle-class).

Yeoman farmers worked the land with their families, and occasionally hired hands. You can guess how successful the family's farm was by looking at the construction of their house. The glass windows and raised foundation show that they could afford some of the more expensive building materials.

The Smith House was designed for a warm-weather like we have in south Georgia. Dogtrot-style homes like this one usually had two sections of the house connected by a breezeway that let air flow through while limiting warming sunlight. The Smith Log House was built in the "slat pine" style with cracks between wall planks, to allow even more cooling breezes to enter the house while limiting heat. During cold spells, additional wood planks, mud, and clay could be used to seal the cracks.



? Why are there so many children in the picture of the log house if the Smiths only had 5? For a long time, the History Center believed that the Smiths had 13 children! It was only after careful research that we discovered there were only 5. We're always learning new things!

Joyner-Calloway House, 1877

Emily Joyner, a Civil War widow, purchased this house and lot in 1877 for \$125. The original lot was along Jerger Street, about the current location of the pole barn. Mrs. Joyner had two small quarters loaded on logs, and moved to her lot, where the small hallway was built to join the two structures together, a lot like the Smith Log House's breezeway, just all closed in. When the Ewart family purchased the rest of the block in 1893, Emily Joyner refused to sell at first. She finally sold to Ewart in 1895 for \$1,000! The Ewart family then used this house as servants' quarters and moved the house to the corner of Jerger and Crawford Streets. Mrs. Joyner used the proceeds from the sale to build a larger, nicer house at the corner of Dawson and Washington Streets. The property at 725 N. Dawson was purchased by the Flowers family in 1909, and they moved their children's nanny, Matilda King Calloway, into the house. Mrs. Calloway lived in the house until 1942. After she moved out, the Roberts used it as a guest cottage and then as headquarters for Thomasville Landmarks until 1970.



The Joyner-Calloway House has 3 raised garden beds. Draw the flowers and vegetables you would plant if you lived in the house.

Three empty rectangular boxes, each with a thick blue border, arranged vertically. These boxes are intended for drawing flowers and vegetables to be planted in the raised garden beds.

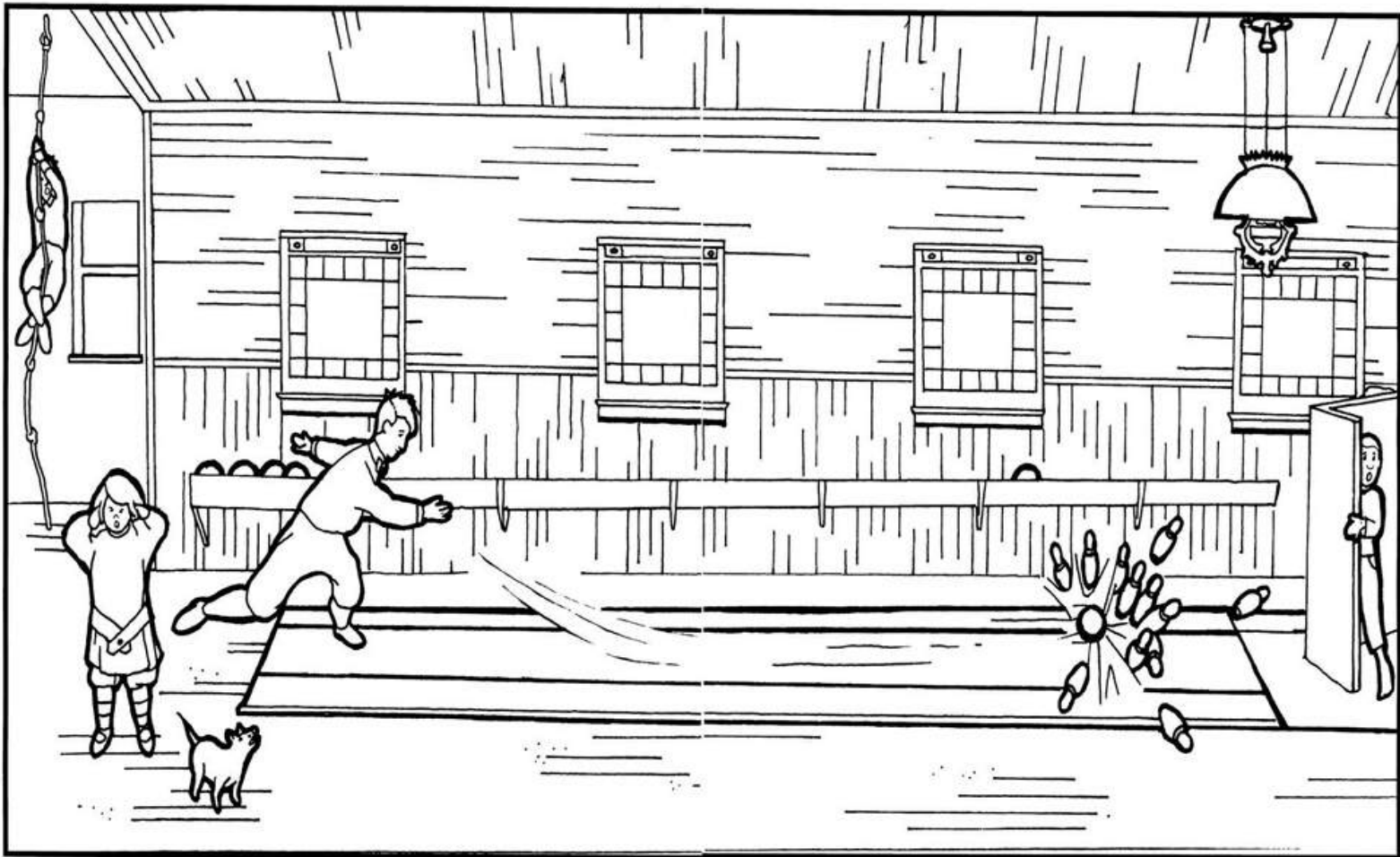
Metcalf Courthouse, 1892

Metcalf, is a small community located 8 miles to the southeast of Thomasville. It was founded as a railroad boomtown; that means that when the railroad built a depot, or stop, a small town built up nearby. The community was known for farming and timber, and watermelons. In 1889, By 1892, Metcalf asked the County to build a courthouse in the town. The courthouse was rarely or never used for court and instead the building was used as a meeting place for the residents of Metcalf and was the voting location for every election until 2002. In 2003, the Courthouse was in severe disrepair and was put up for auction by the County. The History Center won the bid, and the building was moved to Museum grounds in 2004. It came with its contents, including benches, ballot boxes, and materials.



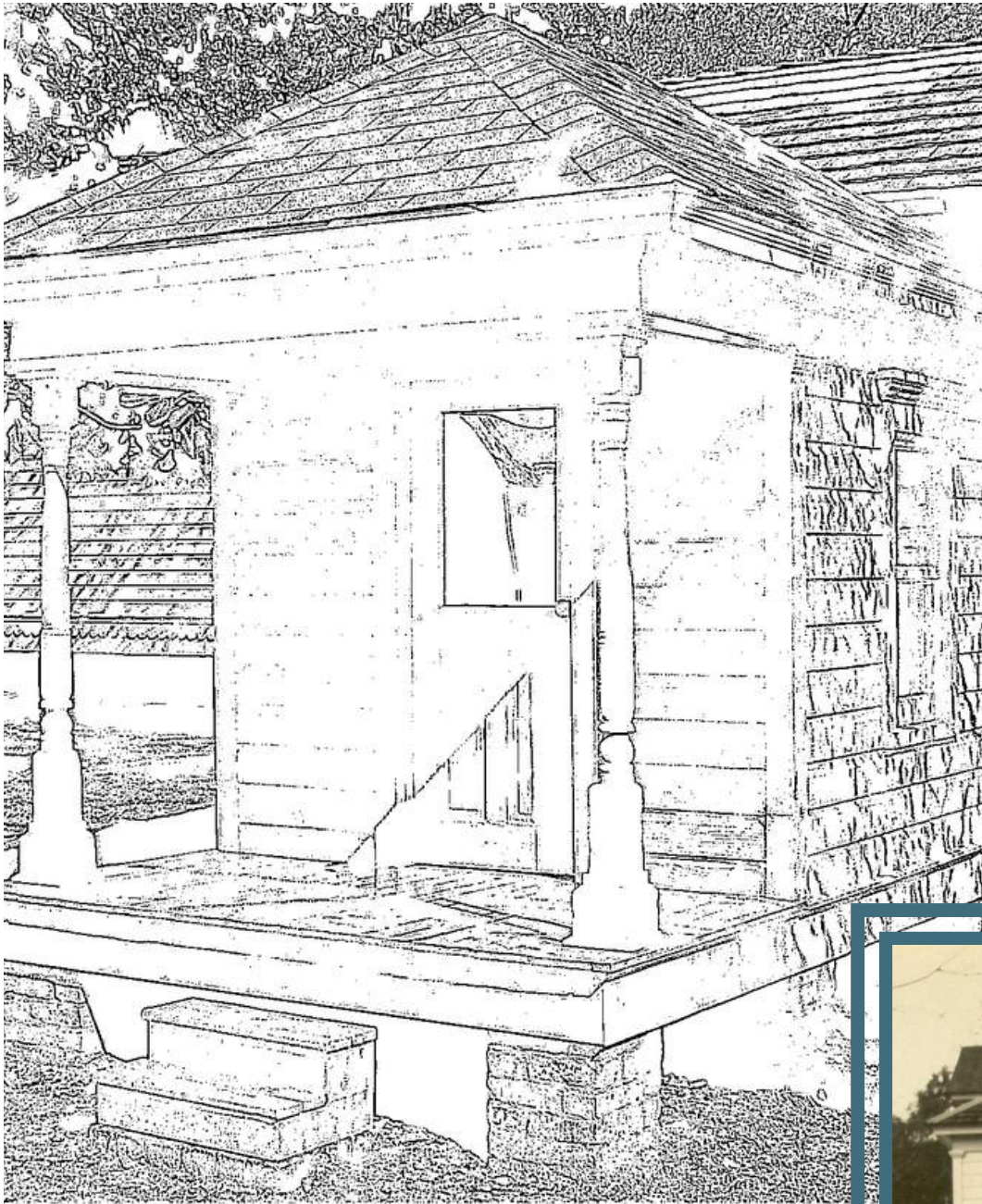
Ewart Bowling Alley, 1896

Oliver Ewart, a banker who split time between New York and Mount Vernon, Ohio, purchased the lot at 725 North Dawson Street in 1893 and built a three-level mansion. Three years later, he added this ten-pin bowling lane/shooting gallery/gymnasium for his twelve-year-old son, Robert. Believed to be the second oldest bowling alley left standing in the United States, it is built from heart pine. Pocket doors separate the bowling lane from the gymnasium area, which include twisted hooks on the ceiling to support ropes and swings. The doors also helped maintain heat in the gymnasium section during winter months, while the Ewart family was in Thomasville. The three-level mansion burned while under the ownership of the Joseph Hampton Flowers family in 1923. While the brick building that now houses the museum was under construction, the Flowers family lived in the bowling alley, adding a kitchen and bathroom addition which have been removed. Under the ownership of the Roberts family, 1939-1968, the outside was painted green, the inside painted white and wood railings on the porch were replaced by metal piping. The bowling alley was restored to its original style.



Flowers Playhouse, 1910

In 1910, Joseph Hampton Flowers built matching playhouses for two of his granddaughters who were cousins, Marguerite Heard Neel and Claire Flewellyn Flowers. This playhouse went to Claire Flewellyn Flowers, whose photograph is on display. Watch your head if you go inside!



The Traveling Playhouse

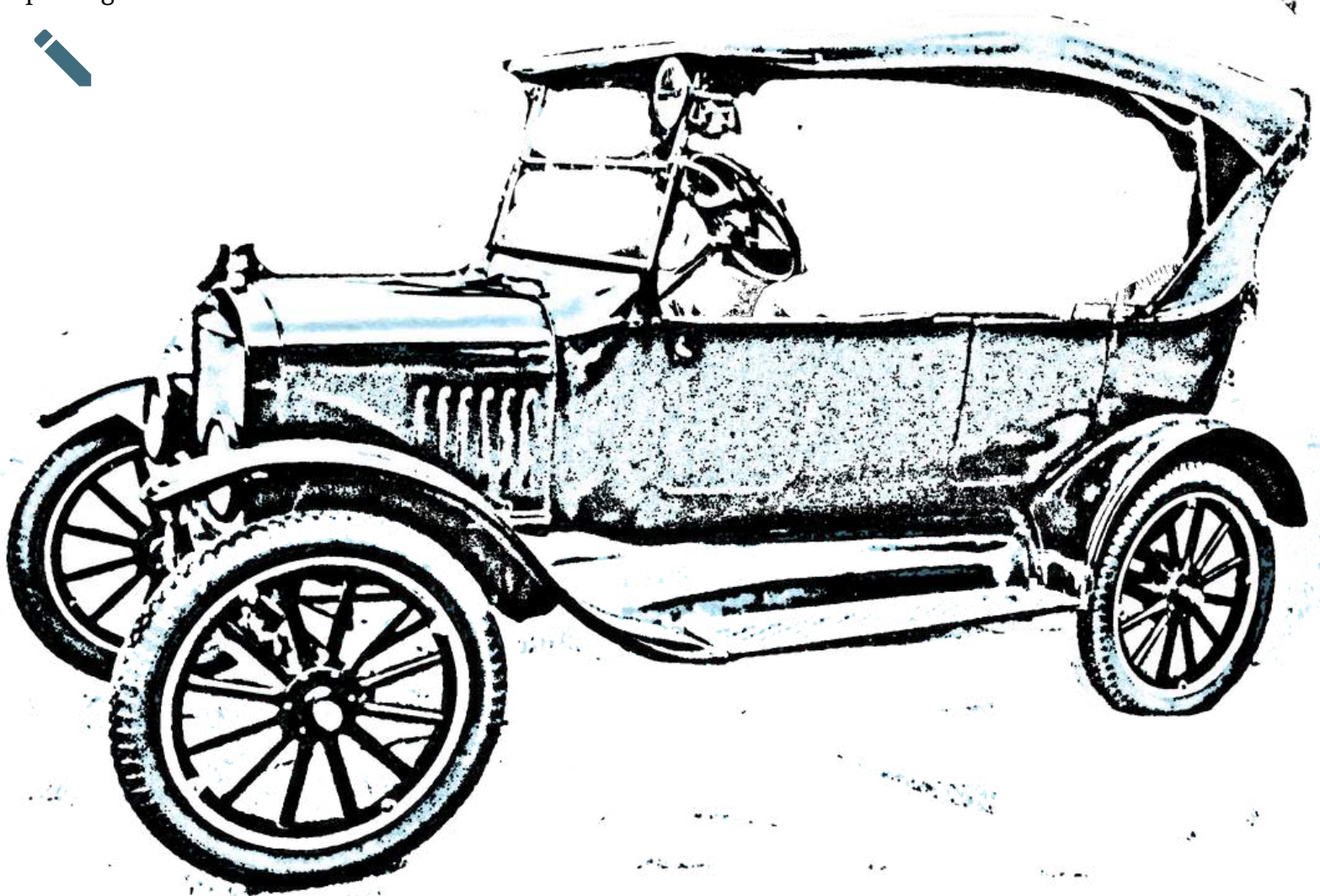
In 1939, the Playhouse was moved for the first time to the property of Claire Flewellyn Flowers Varnedoe and her husband Heeth Varnedoe for their children to play in. Through the rest of the twentieth century, whenever one set of Flowers children became too old and another generation was born, the house would be moved again. Four generations of Flowers children have frolicked in this Playhouse which was donated to the History Center by Claire Varnedoe Thomas, Claire Flewellyn Flowers Varnedoe's daughter.



Roberts Garage, 1942

The Roberts Garage was constructed in 1942 shortly after the the Roberts family purchased 725 North Dawson Street. Built to match the main house, the Garage originally had a cupola that was blown off during Hurricane Kate in 1985. The six door, three bay Garage was also built with a drive that wrapped around the rear to allow drivers to face forward when pulling out, therefore never having to go in reverse or make a U-turn to exit. The Roberts Garage was the longtime home of Mildred Robert's giant Cadillac, which is still well-remembered by many.

The Roberts Garage is home to several vehicles, most notably, the 1916 American LaFrance, which is believed to be the Thomasville Fire Department's first motorized fire engine. It is also home to Miss Fannie Chisholm's 1926 hardtop Model T. Miss Fannie drove her car, nicknamed the "Blue Bomber" for its once deep-blue color, until 1961. In her later years, Miss Fannie earned a reputation as an unconventional driver, frequently going through stop signs and stop lights, and driving down the middle of streets which earned her the nickname "The Moses of Broad Street." Folklore has it she had her license revoked after it was discovered she was legally blind. In addition to the "Blue Bomber," the 1923 Cox Model T is also a part of the automobile collection. Legend has it Mr. Cox found his original Model T many years after selling it, and restored it in the 1960s. The Faulk family of Cairo donated it to the Thomasville History Center after the passing of his widow in the 1980s.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THOMAS COUNTY

Our history begins here. Let us start you on the journey.

10,000 BC

Humans are believed to have first migrated to the Florida peninsula. They develop agriculture, trade networks, and societies.

900-1600 AD

The Apalachee establish a thriving mound-based civilization in the region.

1539

A Spanish expedition led by Hernando de Soto lands at Tampa Bay seeking fortune.

1540

De Soto's forces move up the peninsula into the land of the Apalachee in north Florida and southwest Georgia. His forces camp for five months at an Apalachee village near Tallahassee.



EARLY 1700S

The Muskogee (commonly referred to as Creeks by white settlers), flee the Yamasee War and resettle on the Chattahoochee River.

1787

Commissioners from Georgia and South Carolina meet in Beaufort, South Carolina, to settle various boundary conflicts.

The agreement finally placed the future Thomas County within the State of Georgia.

1814

After the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, the Treaty of Fort Jackson forced the Muskogee (Creeks) to forfeit most of their lands in Georgia and Alabama.

1818

The United States Agency for Indian Affairs pays the Creek Nation \$120,000 for the remainder of the land they occupied in southwest Georgia, including the future Thomas County.



1825
Thomas County is created from parts of Irwin and Decatur Counties by a bill introduced by Pebble Hill Plantation founder Thomas Jefferson Johnson.

1827
The first Thomas County Courthouse is built out of logs.

1858
The Thomas County Courthouse is completed by plantation architect John Wind.



1861
The Atlantic & Gulf Railroad is completed, connecting Thomasville to Savannah.



1820

A land lottery to distribute lots in the newly acquired territory comprising southwest Georgia was held in Georgia's antebellum capital of Milledgeville.



1826

The settlement of Thomasville is named the seat of Thomas County.

1831

The City of Thomasville is granted a governing charter by the state of Georgia. The settlement of Boston is founded nine miles east of Thomasville.

1859

The Thomasville town council enacts laws restricting enslaved and free African-Americans including a limit to three people at a gathering without a white chaperone, a five-minute limit at any establishment where liquor is sold, and a 9PM curfew without detailed written permission from a white person.

Thomas County representatives hesitantly vote in support of secession at a convention in Milledgeville.

Local military companies form to fight in the Civil War.

- Thomasville Guards
- Ochlocknee Light Infantry
- Thomas County Volunteers
- Seventeenth Patriots, Dixie Boys
- Wiregrass Rifles

1864

5,000 Union prisoners of war are transported from Andersonville Prison to a make-shift prison at Thomasville for a ten-day period.

The railroad connecting Thomasville to Savannah is severed as a result of the war for a 35-mile stretch.

1865

Federal troops enter Thomasville and take control of government functions.

1866

Atlantic & Gulf Railroad service is restored, connecting Savannah to Thomasville.

1867

African Americans hold a mass political meeting in Thomasville, seeking a way towards healthy race relations with whites. The event included numerous leaders from the white and black communities.

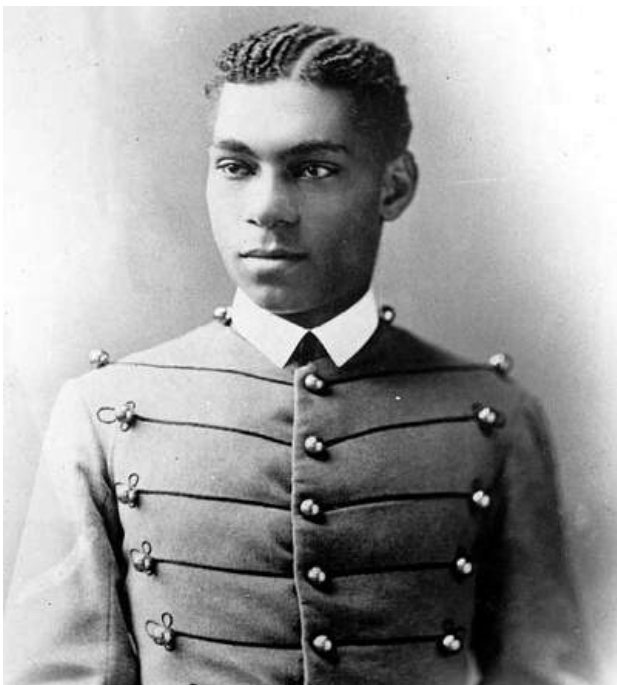
1874

The Mitchell House, Thomasville's first luxury hotel, opens on the 100 block of North Broad Street.



1877

Henry O. Flipper (formerly enslaved) of Thomasville becomes the first African American graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point.



The Thomas County settlement of Ochlocknee, in existence since 1830, receives a governing charter from the State of Georgia.

1879

The first telephone in Thomasville is installed, connecting the Mitchell House to H.B. Ainsworth's livery stable.

The Confederate Monument is purchased and installed at the intersection of Broad Street and Remington Avenue.

1882

Pinetree Boulevard, a perimeter road circling Thomasville, is constructed as a pleasure course for winter visitors.



The Allen Normal & Industrial School opens on Lester Street for African-American students, funded as a mission of the American Missionary Association. It operated until 1933.



1886

a second Mitchell House Hotel building is opened, replacing an earlier structure which burned.



1889

Electricity is introduced to Thomasville.

1890

Glen Arven opens as a nature park.

1893

La Cubana Cigar Factory is built on Clay Street as Thomasville experiences a minor cigar-rolling boom period.



1895

Winter resident Marcus Alonzo Hanna, the senior United States Senator from Ohio, invites Ohio Governor and presidential candidate William McKinley to his Thomasville residence on Dawson Street to discuss campaign strategy with other southern Republicans.

A year later, McKinley is elected President of the United States. He fulfills his promise to return to Thomasville as President in 1899.



1901

Clay Street School, Thomasville's first public education institution for African Americans, opens at the corner of Clay and Pine Streets.



1903

Millpond Plantation is constructed for Jephtha Wade, owner of Western Union. It is one of the first modern, twentieth-century plantations.

1906

The "Sandy Bottom" neighborhood on West Jackson Street becomes a thriving African American business district.



The Piney Woods Hotel burns.

1907

Broad Street is paved with bricks between Remington and Jefferson, Jefferson and Jackson, and Crawford and Madison Streets.



The Broad Street Theatre opens as Thomasville's first modern movie house.

1912

Aviation pioneer Robert Fowler lands the first airplane in Thomasville in a field near Clay Street while on a Los Angeles – Jacksonville flight.



1919

Flowers Baking Company is founded and a new factory is built on Madison.



The United Methodist Church purchases the old La Cubana Cigar Factory and moves the Vashti School to the Clay Street property.

1910

Land to the northwest of Thomasville is purchased by John F. Archbold of New York, son of Standard Oil executive John D. Archbold. He names it Chinquapin Plantation.



Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show performs in Thomasville in Mallette Heights. The show is billed as Bill Cody's "farewell to Thomasville." A performer died while here, spurring an investigation.

1915

The East Side School building is built in MacIntyre Park, currently home to the Thomasville Center for the Arts.



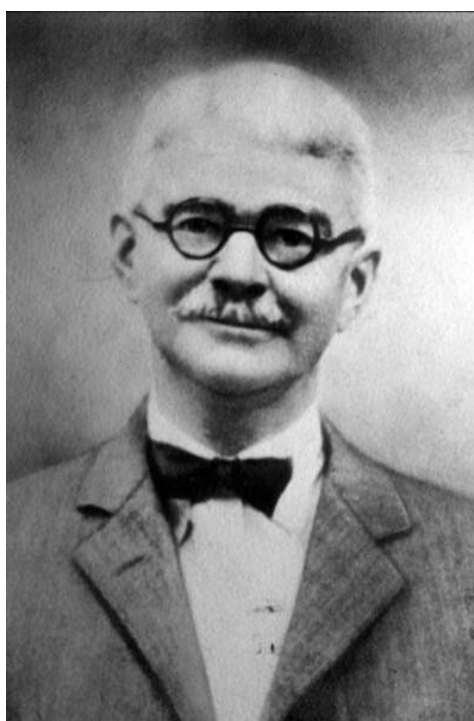
1922

The first Rose Show is held at Neel Brothers Department Store on the Mitchell House block.

WPAX Radio Station makes its first broadcast, becoming the 3rd radio station in Georgia.

1925

John D. Archbold Memorial Hospital opens, a gift of Chinquapin Plantation owner John F. Archbold in honor of his deceased father.



Thomasville High School opens a new building in MacIntyre Park for white students, fronting Glenwood Drive.

Douglass High School opens between Alexander and Forrest Street for African-American students; it was originally known as Dewey City Public School. At the same time, Normal Park Elementary School opens for grades 1-6.

1939

Thomasville Municipal Building constructed as a project of the W.P.A., replacing City Hall at the corner of Jackson and Crawford.



1941

Thomasville's Bi-Racial Committee forms as an effort to improve education and relations amongst all members of the community. ..

1942

The Thomasville Army Airbase opens, eventually becoming Thomasville Municipal Airport.



1943

Finney General Hospital opens on Pinetree Boulevard, one of sixty Army hospitals built to care for sick and injured World War II soldiers. The hospital eventually came to house German prisoners of war.



1952

The Thomas County Historical Society is formed at a public meeting at the Thomas County Courthouse.

1954

President Dwight D. Eisenhower makes the first of his six visits to Thomasville

1963

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People charts a chapter in Thomasville.



1965

African-American students apply for admission to white-only schools in Thomasville.

1970

The Thomas County and Thomasville school systems open for their first year of fully integrated education.

Brookwood School, Rose City Christian School in Thomasville, and Ravenwood Academy in Meigs open for their first year of private education.



1972

The Thomas County Museum of History opens at 725 N. Dawson Street.

1958

The Thomas County school system consolidates into Central High School for white students and Magnolia High School for black students.



1964

Ladybird Johnson stops by the Jackson Street depot on a whistle-stop campaign tour.

Jacqueline Kennedy stays with her friends Jock & Betty Whitney at Whitney's Greenwood Plantation following the assassination of her husband, President John F. Kennedy.



1968

Jacqueline Kennedy returns to Thomasville for another visit to Greenwood Plantation.



1971

The State of Georgia budgets \$50,000 to restore the Lapham-Patterson House and convert it into a museum, and \$150,000 to restore Thomasville's "Tockwotten" district.



1978

First Lady Rosalyn Carter is the Grand Marshall of the annual Rose Parade down Broad Street, accompanied by her husband, President Jimmy Carter.



1986

Earl Williams, Sr., becomes Thomasville's first elected African-American mayor.



1994

Camille Payne becomes Thomasville's first female mayor.

1996

Longtime Harper Elementary School principal Mary Grubbs carries the Olympic Torch down the Courthouse steps as it passes through Thomasville on the way to Atlanta.



2010

Following state budget cuts, the Thomas County Historical Society agrees to save Thomasville's only National Historic Landmark, the Lapham-Patterson House.



2013

The 1858 Thomas County Courthouse re-opens as its 1886 appearance is fully restored, operating as a center for county government business.