

# Community

## Vandivers

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cemetery site where his four land lots joined. Pictures of the couple show them as distinguished and handsome. They had thirteen children, twelve of whom were born at the old Souther homeplace before the couple decided to move west. The first of Rhoda and John's children was Mary A. Vandiver who married Frank L. Smith on May 7, 1894. This couple moved to White County, Georgia to make their home. New-found distant cousin Dan Smith of Raleigh, NC, descends through a child of the Smiths, Jesse Benjamin Smith. In seeking information for Dan Smith, I came upon a lengthy personal memoir written in 1959 by John Joseph Vandiver, fourth child born to Rhoda and John Floyd Vandiver. The memoir is valuable for the insights it gives about his early life in Choestoe and why that Vandiver family decided to move west.

John Joseph Vandiver was a New Year's gift, born January 1, 1878 at his grandfather John Souther's home. He was the fourth child born to Rhoda Lucinda Souther Vandiver and John Floyd Edward Vandiver. Old Bald Mountain (Enota) towered above the Souther home to the east. The major occupation of the family was farming the land along Town Creek, raising hogs to take to the market in Gainesville, and gathering chestnuts and chinquapins to sell.

John Joseph and his siblings,

twelve of whom, like he, were born in the old Souther home, went to school at New Liberty that served as a schoolhouse during the week and a church house on Sundays. The teacher he remembers as being the best instructor was Rev. John Twigg, "who taught us many good things." He recalled with sadness the death of his grandfather, John Souther, in 1889 and his grandmother, Mary Souther, in 1894. They were buried on land his grandfather gave as a cemetery at Old Liberty.

John Souther willed his house and a portion of his land to his youngest daughter, Rhoda Souther Vandiver. John Joseph wrote: "Our living was meager for we had to grow all that we had to eat on the farm. Apples were dried for winter, as were pumpkins and beans for winter use. Potatoes were piled in a heap on the ground, as were cabbages, and dirt rounded up on them to keep them from freezing. Kraut was made from cabbage and stored in large pottery churns. Green beans were pickled in churns for use in the long winters." From their sheep they got wool for socks and spun the thread to weave woolen cloth for clothing.

In 1895, John Floyd Eugene Vandiver decided to "go west." Others in the Choestoe Valley had gone west and found better paying jobs and more productive farm work in western states. By that time, John Floyd and Rhoda Lucinda had twelve

children: Mary who was already married to Frank L. Smith; William J; Cordelia Jane who married Andrew Townsend on March 2, 1893 (son of Eli Townsend and Sarah Sally Dyer Townsend); John Joseph; James H.; Fankie Roseanne; Della L; Sarah Evelyn; Nellie May; Frank Hartwell; Calla B.; and Thomas Marion (born March 30, 1894), one year old when his family started west. Upon leaving in 1895, Rhoda Lucinda sold the old Souther homeplace to Eli Townsend who purchased it for his son Andrew, married to Cordelia Jane Vandiver. Rhoda Lucinda's child, then, was living in the place where Rhoda was born, and where Rhoda herself had given birth to twelve children. Cordelia Jane and Andrew Townsend had two children, also born in that house, before Andrew's untimely death at age 24 on November 27, 1897.

In his memoirs, John Joseph Vandiver did not tell how the large family traveled from Choestoe Valley to their first stop out west, Drake's Creek, Arkansas. It was after the Civil War, and the Vandiver family probably went by covered wagons, taking what they could of family belongings with them to the train station in Gainesville. From there they took passage to Arkansas. Neither does he explain why they chose Drake's Creek for their lodging place. Maybe other relatives had gone before them to that

location.

"In 1895 there was a depression similar to the one of 1929, and we had to work hard to live," Vandiver remembered. "When Andrew Townsend died (in 1897), my sister Cordelia (Delia) came to Drake's Creek with her two children to live with us." The thirteenth and last child was born to Rhoda Lucinda Vandiver on March 17, 1897, with the birthplace listed as Asher, Arkansas. John Floyd Edward Vandiver found a farm on Lollard's Creek (the old Lollard place) for sale and bought it for \$1,500. The family finally owned their own farm in Arkansas. Whatever the size of the farmhouse, it was no doubt crowded with Rhoda and John Floyd, twelve of their children (after Cordelia Vandiver Townsend joined them), and two grandchildren, a total of 16 people.

But as was the custom then, they shared in the work and "made do" with circumstances.

(Next week: Continuing the saga of the Vandiver family's move west, we will trace their journey to other locations to find better work.)

*[Ethelene Dyer Jones is a retired educator, free-lance writer, poet, and historian of the Dyer-Souther Heritage Association. She may be addressed at 1708 Cedarwood Road, Milledgeville, GA 31061; telephone 478-453-8751; or e-mail: edj0513@alltel.net.]*

## Tour fan

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rock embankment while attempting to descend Brasstown Bald, the highest peak in Georgia.

EMS personnel from both Union and Towns counties responded to the scene and used CPR to regain a pulse from Kinnebrew. He was loaded into a Rescue Air Helicopter and transported to North Fulton Regional Hospital.

Although he was wearing a helmet at the time of the crash, he sustained serious injuries to his head and spine, resulting in him being paralyzed from the waist down.

A secretary who once worked for Kinnebrew told the *Union Sentinel* that he was an avid cyclist and returned to Georgia for the Tour each year.

Following the accident, internet cycling forums were inundated with questions about his condition. After his death, some who knew him responded to those who had shown so much concern for a fellow fan.

"I am sorry to say that he was pronounced brain dead and removed from life support after his organs were [donated,]" one user on the atlbike.org forum stated. "He is a friend of ours and great family man, leaving a wife and two children. [He was] a very low key, caring person that will be missed."

## Calender

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### Beginning Guitar Lessons

Registration: Now through May 24; Ages 8 and up; \$60 for whole session or \$10 per class; 7-8 p.m.; May 24, 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28; Lessons will be held in the Meeks Park office. Instructor will be Mr. Ray Bryant.

### Beginning Chess Class

Registration: Through May 8; Ages 8 and up; \$60 for whole session or \$10 per class; 7-8 p.m. Class dates: May 8, 15, 22, 29, and June 5, 12; at Meeks Parks office; Instructor will be Mr. Tim Braun.

### Mother and Son Picnic

The 1st Annual Mother and Son Picnic at the Park will be held Saturday, May 19 at Meeks Park Pool/Paris Field/McAfee Field from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. The cost is \$30 per couple and it's \$10 each for additional son or mother.

There will be lunch, five inflata-

bles, obstacle course, inflatable slip and slide, free admission to the pool, fire truck, ambulance, police cars, tractors, live DJ and much more!

Purchase tickets at Meeks Park. For more information call 706-439-6074.

### 'Spring Fling' at Choestoe

Large Yard/Craft Sale at Choestoe Baptist Church on May 5 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Items include shell roses, handmade notes with tags to match, ponchos, and many other unique items.

A lunch plate of grilled hot dogs, baked beans, slaw, drink and dessert will be served in the Fellowship Hall for \$4.50. Come spend time finding great items and enjoy lunch.

Follow the signs on 129 south to Hwy. 180 East. Lots of parking. For more information call 706-745-9467 or 706-745-3833.

### Free Health Seminar

A free health seminar will be presented on Avoiding the Obesity Threat. Obesity is becoming the

greatest preventable factor of premature death. Strategies on how to reduce the risk of becoming or remaining overweight for children and adults will be presented. The seminar will be at the Blairsville Better Living Center, located between the Animal Shelter and Home Depot, at 1325 Watkins Road, Blairsville at 7:00 PM Thursday May 10, 2007 and will be presented by Johanne Kittle, the Director of the Better Living Center and PhD candidate. Healthy refreshments with recipes will be served for your tasting after the presentation. For further information call 706-745-1978 or 828-389-0814.

### Georgia Mountains Community Service Board

The Committees of the Georgia Mountains Community Service Board will hold the monthly meeting of the Board of Directors Tuesday, May 8, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the Georgia Mountains Community Services Administrative Office at 4331 Thurmon Tanner Road, Flowery Branch, GA.

The public is invited to attend. For further information or directions, please contact Carol Evans at 678-513-5714 or 1-800-525-8751 or by email at cgevans@gamtns.org

### Union General Hospital Auxiliary changes May's meeting location

Friday, May 4, 2007 come join Union General Hospital Auxiliary at Meeks's Park Pavilion #1 at noon as we conduct our monthly meeting. We are trying to convince ourselves that Spring may really be here and are celebrating by having a picnic. Please come and share all the fixin's with us and learn more about us as well. Any questions, please call President Betty Shank at (706) 835-4281.

### Tri-State Gem & Mineral Club

The Tri-State Gem & Mineral Club meets the second Tuesday of each month, for educational programs. They will meet Tuesday, May 8 at 1:30 PM at the Senior Center on Ritter Rd. in Hayesville, NC. All rock hounds and jewelry workers are invited. Refreshments will be served. For info, call Fran at 828-389-6224 or Gene at 706-896-2723.

### Ga. Mtn. Writers Club

We meet 10:00 a.m. to noon the

second Wednesday of the month at the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic church on the Young Harris Highway. Our next meeting will be May 9th.

We have no membership dues or elected officers and meet to share

our writings and provide helpful criticism, inspiration, motivation and encouragement to each other.

Everyone is welcome. You do not have to be a writer - just visit and enjoy listening to readings and

discussion. You will be entertained - and maybe acquire a new interest.

Call for information: Larry Casey at 781-6636 or Ellie Dobson at 745-0678.

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## State Water Restrictions

Odd numbered addresses can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday.

Even numbered addresses can water on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Outdoor watering is banned between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and midnight.

Watering on Friday is banned.

It is also illegal to wash Streets, gutters, sidewalks, and driveways.