Bicentennial (Bulloch)

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A look at Bulloch County and its namesake

In December 1795, the people of this area submitted a petition to the state legislature asking for a new county to be formed to alleviate the inconvenience of having to travel such long distances to the county seat of Screven County. Crossing the Ogeechee River was a major hazard in those days.

On February 8, 1796, the legislature granted a charter for the new county of “Bullock” to be carved out of Screven and Bryan Counties. On February 8, 1996, Joe McGlamery read that charter to a large assemblage on the courthouse lawn after it had been brought from near Savannah by relays of horse riders.

(Bullock stands out as a true patriot. When a copy of the Declaration of Independence was finally received in Georgia, it was our Archibald who took it into the taverns of Savannah and read it for both loyalists and patriots to hear. Then he went to the flagpole and read it for everybody to hear! The Declaration was mostly signed on July 4 but it was not until August 10, 1776, that it was read in Savannah.

The first Bulloch in America was James (1701-1780). He married Jean Stobo. Their son, our Archibald, married Mary DeVeaux in 1764. Their son James married Anne Irvine. The next generation was James Stephens Bulloch who married Martha Stewart Elliot. Their third child was Martha (Mittie) Bulloch who married Theodore Roosevelt Sr., in 1853.

The wedding of Theodore and Mittie took place in Bulloch Hall in Roswell, Georgia. The stately home is still standing in Roswell.

The Bullochs had come with Roswell and Barrington King from Darien to found the town of Roswell on the Chattahoochee River.

Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt Jr., the sickly child who became the “Rough Rider” of the Spanish-American War, exhibited some of that same courage his forefather Archibald Bulloch had shown during the American Revolution. Teddy was our 26th president.

In 1905, Teddy visited his mother’s hometown of Roswell. He stayed at Bulloch Hall. Our friend, Miss Olive Faw, was a young lady then, visiting her cousin at nearby Barrington Hall. When invited to go over to Bulloch Hall and meet the president, she declined, saying, “Young ladies do not call on gentlemen.”

Word of Miss Olive’s reticence reached Teddy. He, therefore, went over to Barrington Hall to call on Miss Olive! Although quaint, Miss Olive was a dear old soul when I knew her. She had taught my grandfather, grandmother, my father and my mother in her private school.

Also in Roswell for that 1905 visit of Teddy Roosevelt was my father, who was eight years old. He positioned himself by the steps of the gazebo where the President was speaking. He remembered only the punchline from the speech, “I love the South,” Teddy thundered! Men’s hats flew into the air and Teddy had captured Roswell hearts forever. And the President of the United States shook hands with the eight-year-old farm boy who never forgot.

In 1955, the visit was reenacted. Again, my father stood by the steps of the gazebo. Again, the President (albeit an actor) shook hands with my father!

Archibald Bulloch had other prominent descendants, notably Elinor (Eleanor) Roosevelt who married her distant cousin Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who became the 32nd president of the United States. Both exhibited great courage in face of crises of health and war.

Archibald served in many capacities. He was the first CEO of the new State of Georgia. Sadly, he served less than a year in 1777 and died in office.

During this Bicentennial Year of Bulloch County, we can be very proud of our namesake, his courage and dedication and the courage and dedication of his descendants who served the nation. And all of these qualities of character can be found among the pioneers of Bulloch County.
Bicentennial commemorated

STAFF REPORT

Bulloch County celebrated the bicentennial of the signing of the United States Constitution Thursday with a public reading of the Constitution and a rededication of the courthouse.

Because it was 200 years yesterday that the highest document in the land was signed in Philadelphia by 39 delegates representing 12 states, 300 Bulloch Countians assembled at the courthouse to witness a reenactment of the event. Ceremony participants represented a cross section of Bulloch's community including school students, educators, lawyers, judges, merchants, military, and governmental officials.

Numerous city and county officials were in attendance during the singing of patriotic songs, the National Anthem, essay readings, and speeches on the courthouse square.

Libba Smith, chairman of the Statesboro-Bulloch County Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, said she was pleased with the weather and the response from the community at the dual ceremonies.

While students representing schools in the county were ceremony participants “Our one regret was that we could not plan the ceremony when all of the school children could have attended.”

Yesterday’s ceremony was the culmination of plans which dated as far back as late spring, according to Ms. Smith, when tentative plans were discussed.

About 300 people gathered on the lawn of the Bulloch County Courthouse Thursday to hear community leaders read aloud the U.S. Constitution in observance of the Constitution Bicentennial.
Bulloch Countians are invited to help stitch together a piece of history in celebration of the upcoming bicentennial.
Becky Taylor surveyed the boxes of papers and pipes and underwear crowded into one corner of her office. It has taken her and a committee of over 20 people months to accumulate the various and sundry items that will be placed in the county’s time capsule.

"It’s spine-tingling!" Taylor said.

Bulloch County will display these items and documents at the grand finale of the bicentennial on Feb. 7 at the courthouse. Taylor said a big crowd is expected.

"We will have the marker and the capsule on display beginning at 2 p.m.," she said. "At 3:30 we will begin our program. Members of the committee will be on hand to explain some of the items they acquired for the collection."

Libba Smith, who chaired the time capsule committee, noted that Smith Banks acquired a Wonderbra from Belk.

"I want to be there to see him explain that!" she said, laughing.

Taylor said school children are encouraged to attend the exhibit and the ceremony.

"There will be a register there for everyone to sign and it will be placed in the capsule," said Taylor. "Some of those children, and their children, could be alive when the capsule is opened in 2096."

This commemorative plate shows churches in Bulloch County.

with identification, medical cards and driver’s license.

"We also solicited letters from civic clubs and churches," Smith said. "And we have letters from local and state dignitaries — to include a letter from Governor Zell Miller. That came today."

"And we encouraged participation from all our municipalities," added Taylor.

Smith said Jan Tankersly from Brooklet, Kay Newton of Portal and Karin Stenborg of Register were very helpful in encouraging participation in their towns.

Both Taylor and Smith praised the people at Georgia Southern University who have helped prepare items for the capsule.

"They have provided acid-free paper and archival sleeves," said Taylor. "They have also provided invaluable advice and hours of their time."

"We are blessed to have Georgia Southern University in our midst," said Smith. "We couldn't have done this without their help."

Dr. Del Presley and Clark Deloach were instrumental in getting the actual capsule, Taylor said.

"Fisher Rosemount is providing the capsule," she said. "Since that's a local industry, it makes the capsule a keepsake as well as an excellent container."
Flags, bands, birthday cake and a few people in unusual costumes were among the highlights of Bulloch County's Bicentennial kickoff celebration Thursday at the courthouse square.

About 400 people, from the smallest children to old-timers who remember Bulloch County's last anniversary celebration in 1946, gathered on the square for the county's official birthday party.

It was on February 8, 1796, that the Bulloch County charter, signed by the Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives and President of the Senate, arrived by horseback. That charter created the county of Bulloch, named for Georgia's first governor, Archibald Bulloch, from portions of Screven and Bryan counties.

The charter also appointed the county's first commissioners, and authorized them to select a site and impose taxes for the construction of a courthouse.

A copy of that charter was delivered to the celebration by pony express. Members of the Bulloch County Horseman's Association made the ride from Savannah to Statesboro in relays, with more than a dozen members joining rider Ty Tyson for the final leg to the courthouse. Their costumes, representing the styles of riding they prefer, provided a backdrop for Tyson's buckskins.

Entertainment for Thursday's activities represented the talents and history of many parts of Bulloch County. Musical entertainment included members of the Statesboro High School Chorus, the Southeast Bulloch High School band, and a gospel choir, Exhortations, from Portal.

Residents from throughout the county shared bits of history through tall tales from county or personal history.

Harold McElveen told the story of storekeeper John Strickland. In addition to selling groceries and supplies, Strickland sold coffins, and occasionally took a nap in one of the coffins after lunch.

He was taking a nap one day when he heard someone walk into the store.

"This fellow went to the counter and was looking around. When he didn't see anyone, he decided to help himself. Just then Mr. Strickland raised up out of that coffin and in a very stern voice said, 'Can I help you?'

"That fellow didn't even bother to open the door. He went right through it, and they had to replace the screen."

Other tale tellers included Gerald Brown on the history of Stilson, Lois Sheley with the story of a piano during the Depression, Grace Bazemore with a big snake story and Denver Lanier about corn grinding. Mical Whitaker of Georgia Southern related Sam Eason's tales of growing up during the Depression, punctuated by a tap dance by Sam Eason himself.

Officials representing Bulloch County and surrounding areas also participated in the ceremony. They included Bulloch County Commission Chairman Raybon Anderson, Statesboro Mayor Hal Averitt, U.S. Representative Jack Kingston, Brooklet Mayor Joe Aldrich, Portal Mayor Bill Brown, and Register Mayor Karin Stenborg, along with other current and former commissioners and many others.
County kicks off Bicentennial plans

By Vicki A. Smith-Davis
Herald Staff Writer

Bulloch County’s 200th birthday is in 1996, but local residents who want to make sure there is a party worth remembering got started planning it in 1994.

Planning began early in the year with the appointment of a committee to coordinate bicentennial events. Their first efforts included creating lists of possible activities, then deciding which ones to start with.

As the committee began planning, they also began drawing the community into the planning process. A contest to create a logo for the bicentennial drew a number of entries. The winning design will be used on stationery, t-shirts and other items connected with the bicentennial activities.

Work also began on an oral history project, which will be the basis of a historical play. Volunteers have been interviewing Bulloch County residents to get stories about the county’s past. A selection of that information will be used to create the historical play, inspired by the efforts which created the play “Swamp Gravy” in Colquitt, Ga.

The tentative schedule is to complete research in February, then spend from March to October writing the play. Production will be planned November through May 1996, and presentation during summer or fall 1996.

Other plans include a festival of some type, and designation of existing festivals, such as Brooklet’s Peanut Festival and Portal’s Turpentine Festival, as official bicentennial events.

Dr. Charles Herty is a part of Bulloch County history. He is known for conducting experiments in pine products while at Souther Georgia Teachers College, now Georgia Southern. The grove of pine trees at the entrance of Georgia Southern University was named in his honor. Shown above is a scene from the ceremony in which the trees were named in his honor. From left are R.J.H. DeLoach, a faculty member of the school at the time; Chester Williams, a student then and now a resident of Statesboro; Herty; Dr. Guy Wells, a former president of South Georgia Teachers College; Frank Klarpp, Herty’s assistant; and Dr. Marvin Pittman, president of South Georgia Teachers College at the time of the ceremony. Bulloch County will be attempting to relive some of its history next year when the county celebrates its 200th birthday.
Bulloch County kicked off its yearlong Bicentennial celebration with a re-enactment of the delivery of the county’s charter. The ceremonies, held on the courthouse square, took place last Thursday and featured a ride by the “Pony Express” staged with the help of the Bulloch County Horsemen’s Association.

The charter was read by Joe McGlamery and refreshments were enjoyed by all.

— Photos by Robert Cooper

Tom Smith, who rode in the 150th anniversary, checked out his hat for the ride last Thursday.
County starting oral history project

By Vicki A. Smith-Davis
Herald Staff Writer

Bullock County residents who want to get involved in the Bicentennial are invited to participate in the county's oral history project.

A training session for people interested in collecting stories will be held today at 3 p.m. at the Bullock County North Main Annex community room.

Volunteers, including sociology classes at Georgia Southern, are interviewing county residents on county history, with the results to be used in an oral history book and a living history play.

"This is not just a play, but it is hoped that this production will live on long after the Bicentennial year is over," said Bullock County Planner Susan Hill, who is working with the Bicentennial committee on many projects for the year.

The oral history project was inspired by the efforts which created the play "Swamp Gravy" in Colquitt, Ga. That play drew the community together as it celebrated local history, said Leslie Tichi of GSU, project coordinator.

She is working with oral history specialist Dr. Barbara Hendry, also of GSU, to collect the information for the play. Hendry's sociology classes have been collecting the oral histories, but more volunteers are needed to collect all the information on schedule.

The tentative schedule is to complete research in February, then spend from March to October writing the play. Production will be November 1995 through May 1996, including casting, set design and construction, costing and rehearsals.

Presentation of the play should be during summer or fall of 1996.

For information on the project, or to suggest people who should be interviewed, contact Barbara Hendry, at 681-5443, Leslie Tichi, at 587-5357, or Esther Mallard in the GSU history department, at 681-5558.
When Union troops marched into Bulloch County in 1864, an officer knocked at the door of a local home, asking how far he was from Statesboro.
The home's resident, according to written accounts, pointed to every building in the area — a courthouse, two boarding houses and "a whiskey store or two," — and told the soldier he was standing in the middle of town.
Disgusted at the poor prospect for spoils, he turned and left.

Today's Bulloch County — a regional hub for education, agriculture and industry — has come a long way since the days a 19th-century newspaper called it "a good place to stay away from."

On Thursday, Bulloch residents will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the day Georgia's legislature created the county from lands formerly making up parts of Screven and Bryan counties. A birthday party and reading of the county's charter at 4 p.m. at the Bulloch County Courthouse will kick off a year's worth of events meant to mark the bicentennial.

After a 1733 treaty with local Creek Indians made the area relatively safe, frontiersmen began settling land that now makes up Bulloch and Screven counties.

While some own property and a few owned slaves, most were poor — among them fugitives and drifters hoping to establish a homestead.

Population growth in the county was slow, due largely to the area's few roads and lack of a railroad. When the county was chartered in 1796, less than 2,000 people lived in its 1,200 square miles.

The county's early inhabitants mainly lived in log cabins and herded stock, with the majority of their property in cattle and hogs.

In his 1848 essay, "Statistics of the State of Georgia," George White describes the settlers of Bulloch County's first half-century as a hard-working, hard-living lot.

"The Bulloch farmer would get rich while others would starve because of his economy and industry," White wrote.

"(B)ut while awarding praise... for many good qualities, it is our duty to say that, so far as temperance is concerned, they are behind the times."

"Whiskey has its (enthusiasts). Those who have attempted to show the citizens the folly and ill consequence of intemperance have been ill-housed and threatened."

Like much of Georgia, parts of Bulloch County were laid to waste by Gen. William T. Sherman's Union troops in their 1864 march from Atlanta to Savannah that would play a part in ending the Civil War.
Wiregrass

David Van Tassell and Dakeeya Woods rehearse a scene from "Wiregrass," a musical drama about Bulloch County. The cast is dress rehearsal again tonight. Performances will run April 24 through 27 at Kiwanis Fairgrounds and tickets are $3 advance and $4 at the door.
“X” marks the spot

By Katherine Fitch
Herald Staff Writer

In 95 years, on Feb. 8, Bulloch Countians will gather together to celebrate the county’s 300th birthday and open a time capsule which will have been buried for 100 years.

Those future generations will find a wealth of information about what life was like in Bulloch County in 1996, including letters from their great grandparents, numerous documents and local directories.

They may never have seen a pair of eyeglasses, which were included in the capsule, and the black lace Wonder Bra may definitely leave them wondering.

But the hard work which countless people put into creating the time capsule and the generosity of the people who contributed to it may go unknown by future generations — if those who put the time capsule together don’t complete one last task.

Bulloch County officials and members of the Bicentennial Time Capsule Committee gathered to officially dedicate the burial site of the time capsule. A granite slab will mark the burial site of the Bicentennial Time Capsule and remind future generations when to open it.

Ensure it will be found, and on time.

This week, in honor of the county’s 205th birthday, a group of citizens who helped create that time capsule came together to make sure that happens.
## Bulloch County Bicentennial Events

### Event | Date | Contact | Phone
--- | --- | --- | ---
1. Bicentennial Calendar | January, 1996 | Sylvia Allen | 764-8600 w; 764-5458 h
4. Bicentennial Cookbook | April, 1996 | Myrtis Akins, Becky Comer | 764-6245
5. Theatrical Production ("Fodder and Frolic") | April 10-13, April 17-20, 1996 | Libba Smith, Dr. Kemp Mabry | 764-6111 or 764-6245
8. Bulloch County Quilt | on display now and throughout 1996 | Libba Smith, Myrtis Akins | 764-6111
9. Speakers Bureau | ongoing now through 1996 | Roger Branch | 681-5443
10. Re-enactment of first reading of Declaration of Independence in Georgia by Archibald Bulloch | August 10, 1996 | no contact yet | n/a

Co-chairmen for the Bulloch County Bicentennial are John Lee and Julian Deal. For general information on the bicentennial and for information on all the above events, interested persons may contact Becky Comer at 764-6245.
County offering memento postmarks

By Vicki A. Smith-Davis
Herald Staff Writer

Bulloch County residents will be able to get a special memento of the bicentennial, a letter delivered by pony express and postmarked on the day of the bicentennial, Feb. 8.

The special logo envelopes, with the bicentennial logo and a reproduction of the pony express logo used for the county’s 150th anniversary, are on sale now at the county’s North Main Annex, Chamber of Commerce, Statesboro Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, and city halls in Brooklet and Portal.

The envelopes cost $3, which will be used to pay postage and for other bicentennial programs.

After they are purchased, the buyer can write a letter and address the envelope to the recipient, then must return it to the place where it was purchased by Feb. 6, said Beth Mathews, chairman of the bicentennial kickoff committee. They should not be taken to the post office, because they will then go through the regular mail.

The envelopes will be carried from Savannah to Statesboro by pony express riders, who will also deliver a copy of the county charter, then will be mailed out of the Statesboro post office that afternoon.

The pony express ride will be made by members of the Bulloch County Horseman’s Association, who will ride in relays from Savannah to Statesboro.

Buyers could mail the envelopes to themselves, or to friends or their children as a memento of the bicentennial.

The envelope delivery will be just one part of the bicentennial kickoff celebration on Feb. 8, which is the actual anniversary of the county’s charter.

The charter re-enactment will be held on the courthouse square, beginning at 4 p.m. It will include performances by several local musical groups, the reading of tall tales by local residents, the arrival of the charter by pony express, and the reading of the charter.

The celebration will end with birthday cake and punch.
Above are two Pony Express mail letters — the current Bulloch County bicentennial envelope (top) and the Pony Express envelope from county’s sesquicentennial in 1946. The new Pony Express mail envelopes will be carried by horse from Savannah to Statesboro as part of Bulloch County’s bicentennial celebration. They will be on sale soon to the general public.

**Bulloch bicentennial echoes last big birthday party**

By Vicki A. Smith-Davis

Most current Bulloch County residents probably were not around the last time the county held a big birthday party, its sesquicentennial. But many echoes of the 1946 event can be seen in the preparations for this year’s bicentennial.

Fred Hodges, who is serving on the charter re-enactment committee, remembers the 1946 events. His father, Fred Hodges Sr., was county commission chairman and the chairman of the sesquicentennial committee.

The pony express ride to deliver the county charter is an echo of that celebration, said Hodges. So are the special anniversary envelopes which will be delivered by the riders.

The big event that year, held Dec. 4 to 6, was a display of historical items with demonstrations, said Hodges.

“There was a display out at the airport. At that time it had just closed as an Army air field, and they had just given it to the city and county. They had old clothing and documents displayed. They tied that in with the delivery of mail by pony express from Savannah.”

That mail delivery included the charter and special envelopes with the sesquicentennial logo, a pony express rider following an airplane, and the logo “150 Years of Bulloch County Progress.”

Tom Smith of Statesboro was one of the 11 riders in that sesquicentennial ride from Savannah. The list of riders

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reads like a ‘who’s who’ of Bulloch County, also including Col. Albert Deal, Bill Anderson, Fred T. Lanier, George Bean, George Marsh, L.A. Waters, W.O. Denmark, W.W. Mann, Lannie Simmons and Dr. A.L. Clifton.

“There were 11 of us. 10 of us are dead and that leaves me,” said Smith.

He hopes to participate, at least for a short time, in the pony express ride on February 8, with members of the Bulloch County Horsemen’s Association.

“When you get to my age, it’s a lot harder to get on a horse than it used to be,” said Smith.

That ride was much different than this year’s will be, said Smith. Riders left Savannah ahead of a parade, and were able to ride on Highway 80 into Statesboro. This year’s riders will take mostly back roads to avoid traffic.

“We didn’t have to have a police escort, even in Savannah,” said Smith.

The start of the ride was something to remember, he said.

“Colonel Deal started the ride. He was a lawyer here in Statesboro, and he rode his horse back and to, to work every day. That’s hard to believe now, but he left that horse downtown in the street every day.

“Well, I don’t think that horse had ever seen a motorcycle before, and when we left Savannah he was right in front of the parade, with motorcycles and a fire truck.

“When they opened those sirens up, that horse went crazy. The last I saw of Colonel Deal he was headed for Statesboro. He made the fastest lap of any of us.”

Each rider rode for four to five miles, and trucks dropped off fresh horses and picked up the others, said Smith.

The riders made the trip at full speed, he said.

“When I got to the Blitchton Bridge — it was still a wooden bridge then — you should have heard that bridge rattle, and felt it shake. We had a little trouble there, but made it all right.”