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# What's inside?



## Cover Story:

Jay Williams, 66, of Alma, works hard every day to provide for his family and his community.

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## Feature:

Mary Clyde Scott, a tech savvy 92-year-old, has a passion for Coffee County history.

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# Nursing people with KINDNESS

By Mary Ann Ellis

Most Appling County folk know Olivia Norwood from her career with the health department and know that she is a people person who attracts other people like a magnet attracts paper clips. A true southern lady, she tends to call everyone “Honey” or “Sugar,” a typical practice here in the South. Once though, a lady came in from north of the Mason-Dixon Line. She had in tow 3 children who needed some vaccines. Olivia seated them in her office and started to collect various bits of information. Suddenly, a man appeared in the doorway.

“Sir, if you’ll please have a seat out there in the waiting room, I’ll be with you in a few minutes when I finish with these folks,” she told him, pointing to the room.

After some discussion, she understood that he was the woman’s husband. He’d been outside parking the car when his wife and children came in.

Turning to him, she said, “I’m sorry, Honey, come on in and sit down.”

The woman flew from her chair, shook her finger in Olivia’s face, and screamed, “Don’t you call my husband ‘Honey.’”

Olivia had some serious explaining to do. The woman knew nothing about southern customs, nor did she approve of them when she did understand.

It didn’t stop Olivia’s manner of speaking though. When I knocked on her door, she said, “Come on in, Honey, and sit down.”

When the big blue-gray Buick pulls up in front of the First African Baptist Church in Baxley, Georgia, everyone knows that Olivia Norwood has arrived. She’s been driving up to that church for the last 25 years, and she’s been driving that same Le Sabre for the last 18. She bought it new when she retired. Now it’s starting to need frequent repairs, but she keeps it limping along. She’s trying to get her money’s worth from the car. This



**OLIVIA NORWOOD - NURSE, HELPER AND FRIEND TO ALL SHE ENCOUNTERS.**

lady knows how to use every penny wisely.

“Just last week that car broke down with me in heavy traffic in the middle of town,” she said. “The sheriff’s department came and rescued me. They stopped traffic until we could get someone to come tow it. They were so nice



to help me like that. You know, this town's got a lot of nice people in it."

First and foremost, Olivia Norwood is a child of God. She's never had any doubt about that and shows

fan, she's an avid Bible scholar and spends time everyday studying God's word. She's been doing that all her reading life, but not always of her own volition. When as children, she, her

important was their biblical instruction.

At home her mother provided more moral education.

"You young'uns go get Mrs. Jones some wood. She's old," their mother would say, and they'd trot off to do it.

The children also worked in the fields in the summers, but they had to save their money to buy school clothes and supplies.

"We had a good life," Olivia remembers, "but we didn't think so at the time. We always had plenty to eat because we grew it ourselves. We played hop scotch and ball and had a good time with other children in the neighborhood. We were poor, but so was everybody else we knew. Why, my mama raised hogs until she was 87 years old. The old ways die hard."

Olivia attended school at the Surrency Elementary School through the 7th grade.

She then went to Baxley Training School, until she finished in 1950. In September of 1950, she married Grady Norwood, from the McTier Settlement in Appling County. They met in school and became sweethearts. They had three boys—Grady, James, and Anthony. Today Olivia has 7 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. Her husband passed away 23 years ago after 40 years of marriage.

Grady Norwood, the first elected black official in Appling County, served as a city councilman for 18 years, the last two of which he served as Mayor Pro Tem. He resigned in 1987 because of his poor health. He worked for Union Camp for 40 years. During the early years of their marriage, Grady spent some time in the military. As a matter of fact, being a patient in an army hospital in Washington, D.C. inspired Olivia's nursing career.

"Everybody in that hospital was so good to me that I knew for sure I wanted to be a nurse," she said. "I'd been thinking about it for a long time before that, but that experience made up my mind for me."

Back in Baxley, she enrolled in the Ware Technical School to study nursing and graduated in 1970. At graduation she won the Professional Award. She passed her boards and went to work at the Appling County Hospital, where she worked for 2 years until she left to work for Dr. Virusky, Dr Kanavage, and Dr. Hernandez.

"Everybody who knew Dr. Virusky remembers that he didn't always watch his language," she laughed. "He'd follow me around the hospital, talking to me and watching me. One day I told him, 'Don't talk to me when I'm working. These medicines I've giving out are very important and I don't need distractions.' He quit talking to me, but he kept following me and sit-



**TWO YOUNG HAWAIIANS VOLUNTEERING TO TEACH THE HULA.**

it in every aspect of her life. At church, she serves as a Deaconess, is a part of the Senior Citizen's Ministry, and sang in the choir for many years. Her friend Juanita Nails talked her into joining the choir years ago, and she left it only when her mother's illness required so much of her attention.

"Whatever the church needs, I'll do," Norwood said.

Not much of a television

sister Joann, or her brother Colon misbehaved, their mother, Mary Etta Hayes, didn't spank them. She put them on the couch with the Bible and made them read. When she came back for a report on what they'd read, they'd better be prepared or else. Young Olivia didn't appreciate that punishment then, but the mature Olivia certainly does. Her mother was a firm believer in education of all kinds, but most



ing quietly while I worked. One day I asked him why he was following me so much. That's when he asked me to come work for him at his office."

"I've watched you enough to know that I can leave the office and know that everything's in good hands when you're there," he told her.



**OLIVIA NORWOOD, OFFERING HER YOUNG PATIENT COMPASSION WITH A BAND-AID.**

She worked for him the next 6 years actually, until he died suddenly, leaving her and everyone around her in shock.

At that point, H.F. Johnson, school superintendent, hired her as a paraprofessional with kindergarteners. Although she loved working with the children, she returned to nursing at the Appling County Health Department and stayed there until she retired 18 years later. Her last years of work she spent very pleasantly as school nurse at Fourth District Elementary School. She came as temporary help, but stayed 6 years. Meticulously, she made folders on each child so she could serve each one better. There she earned the "Pulling for Kids Award" as well as various other appreciation awards. A stickler for punctuality, she absolutely hated being late. Nonetheless, on one particular morning, she

During the time she worked at FDES, she started to leave her house early one misty morning when she was accosted in her yard by a young black man and woman.

"You gonna take us to town," the man ordered her.

"Oh, no, I ain't," she told him. "I'll be late to work."

"That's too bad," he replied gruffly. "You gonna take us to town."



**MUCH NEEDED REST AND RELAXATION IN HAWAII.**

She turned around, ran back in the house, and called the

sheriff, who came and took the couple. She calmed down and still went to work after all the confusion was over.

Although Olivia lives less than a mile from the spot where she was born on March 1, 1933, she has done some traveling, too. In 1994 her doctor told her she needed to get away for a while, so she went to Hawaii with a tour group.

"I had a ball," she remembered. "We went to Pearl Harbor, a place I'd always wanted to visit. It was beautiful. Two nice young men volunteered to teach me the hula dance, but I turned them down. Our group rambled all over though before we came back. I didn't realize how the sun was burning me until I came back. My children said, 'Mama, if you'd stayed another day, you have turned into a little black Sambo for sure.'"

Olivia Norwood has endured hardships in her life, but she always turns to God to sustain her and keep her strong. Some of her greatest suffering came when her mother became too sick to stay at home.

"I was doing the best I

could with her," Olivia said, "but the final straw came the

day she disappeared. She slipped out the door when I'd gone to the kitchen to check on the rice and tomatoes I was cooking for her lunch. I was scared to death and had to call people to help me find her."

When they finally found the elderly lady, she was huddled under a palmetto bush, shivering from the cold. That's when Olivia knew she had to put her in a nursing facility, but Olivia cried and cried. Fortunately, Miss Mary Etta loved the Baxley Nursing Home, which became the Pavilion, and lived happily there the last years of her life. Olivia visited constantly, of course. She was not one to abandon her mother.

Olivia also has some physical limitations of her own, including Rheumatoid Arthritis. She's had both hips and one knee replaced, but she thanks God that she's still mobile. Appling County loves her. She was named Grand Marshall of the Martin Luther King Parade in 2009 and frequently is honored for one thing or another. Everyone who really knows her also knows that she speaks her mind. One day at the gas pump, she was fuming because the gas had gone up again. Muttering to herself and only herself, she said, "If I could get to Washington, I'd take my axe handle and straighten some folks out."

A voice from the other side of the pump said, "Ma'am, if you think you can do any good, I'll drive you."

She looked around the pump and saw a young white man grinning back at her. She grinned, too, but knows that in reality, Washington is too big a job—even for her.

"Life's too short to worry," she said, this lady who meets no strangers. "Turn it over to our Heavenly Father and He'll take care of it. That's what I do every day of my life." ¶



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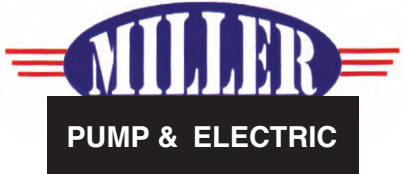
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# Mary Clyde Scott and her passion for the history of Coffee County

One fall day, Mary Clyde Scott was driving down the street and saw smoke rising from a big bonfire in the front yard of one of the old houses to her left. She slowed her car for a few minutes and gazed at the fire, watching the flames lick the overcast sky. Several people stood around, adding items, letting papers drift on the wind into the blaze. Suddenly she realized what was happening. The elderly lady who'd lived in that house for so many decades had died, and her children and grandchildren were cleaning out her house, feeding her papers into the inferno. The flames consumed the matriarch's treasures as Mary Clyde watched from her car. Then the epiphany crashed into her mind.

"That's going to happen to me and my research if I don't collect it in a book," she thought.

She went home and got to work immediately. For years she had done research on the Tanner side of her family and finally collected it into quite a large volume—566 pages, to be exact. She entitled the book, *John, the Tanner*. A copy of it is in the genealogy section of the Coffee County Public Library. She composed the book from a lifetime of research she'd gathered from family stories, the archives in Atlanta, the bounteous resources of the University of Georgia library, and various cemeteries, among other places.

"If it hadn't been a work of joy, I never could have done it," she said. "I enjoyed every minute of it, but it took a long time and an incredible amount of work."

Sometime later, the Gaskin Avenue Committee, made up of her and several other like-minded souls, wrote a book called *From Graveyard Road to Silk Stocking Road*. The purpose of the group was to preserve the history of the old



MARY CLYDE SCOTT WITH HER GENAOLGY BOOK JOHN THE TANNER.

houses on Gaskin Avenue and families that lived in them. As they did their research, various people connected with the original old houses sent them wonderful pictures and pertinent information.

Some people in Coffee County think that Mary Clyde Scott knows about all there is to know about the county's history. She has done presentations at History at Noon, a program presented by the Coffee County Public Library from 12-1 once each month. One such program spot-lighted the mayors of Douglas from the first one in the late 1800s to the mayor

in 1940. She researched each one and told a little bit about him, his family, and his life when he was in office.

Several years ago, she dug through old newspapers for interesting things from Douglas' past. Among other things, she discovered that a Tanner ancestor—George Tanner, who was mayor at the time--had gone to Atlanta to find out how to set up a Chamber of

Indians had carefully left the green ones on the trees to continue ripening.

Young Mary Clyde especially liked the story about her Great-great-great grandmother Mary Tanner. One day as she was crossing the Ocmulgee River in a boat, she saw Indians on the grassy bank on the other side. She started to tremble and a tear slid down her cheek. She was dreadfully frightened. She tried

interesting reading.”

Mary Clyde's father, Elie Tanner, appreciated her interest in such stories and invited her to travel with him when he had business in homes where elderly people resided. She'd spend her time listening to their stories and writing them down while her busy father took care of business.

Mary Clyde grew up the middle of three girls. She and her sisters Anna Jeane and Patricia lived practically in the middle of town in a pink house across from the First United Methodist Church. (A drive-in bank occupies the space today.) Her mother, Clyde Griffin Tanner, had seen all the Spanish houses down in Miami and wanted one. Since Elie, a farmer and turpentine man, gave her mother whatever she wanted, he built it for her. It was the only colored house in Douglas.

People would drive their

horses and buggies to town and then walk over to see the majestic pink house, quite an attraction at the time.

An excellent seamstress, Mary Clyde's mother made a white dress and hat for Anna Jeane, the oldest sister, when she was 18 months old. She dressed her in the outfit for a photography session. Since then, all the girls in the family have been photographed in the same dress when they turned 18 months old. The dress started a family tradition that continues to his day. Pictures of a multitude of little girls in the same dress cover one wall of her dining room. The white dress is currently in Maine, waiting for Mary Clyde's grandson's daughter to arrive at the magic age. After that, it will come back to Douglas for Mary Clyde to store in anticipation of the next female child.

Mary Clyde suspects that her father helped to make her the avid sports fan



**GENERATIONS OF SCOTT FAMILY GIRLS.**

Commerce. He then came back and formed the one that currently operates in Douglas. Also, she discovered an interesting old traffic law. In the early part of the 1900s, if a car and a horse arrived at an intersection at the same time, the horse had the right of way. Furthermore, blowing the horn to scare the horse was illegal.

From her childhood, Mary Clyde Tanner Scott has been fascinated with history. Her maternal grandmother—Mary Virginia Griffin--lived with her family and told mesmerizing stories that Mary Clyde could hardly tear herself away from. Her grandmother told of one ancestor who'd moved to the Valdosta area and planted quite a variety of fruit trees. As the various fruits grew, the Indians would come in the night for a taste, eating only the ripe specimens. When the family later checked the orchards, they'd find teeth marks in the fruit. The

to think of some way to escape, but saw no possible way. She was surrounded by water and knew the Indians were faster than she was. She had little to worry about though. Her red hair was her protection. When the superstitious Indians saw her flaming red hair, they ran away, allowing her to flee as well.

“My grandmother always used old sayings that confounded me,” Mary Clyde said. “For example, if someone came to visit and refused to sit and stay awhile, she'd ask, ‘Well, what'd you come for then? A coal of fire?’ I didn't understand that expression until years later when I was researching. Back in my grandmother's day, if someone's fire went out, he'd go to a neighbor and borrow a coal of fire to restart his. Obviously, he had to hurry back home with it so it wouldn't go out during the trip. I wish I could remember all her old sayings and could put them in a book. That



that she is today. He once managed a semi-pro baseball team there in Douglas. He'd load his family on the train and take them all off to Vidalia and other places to watch the team play. Back at home he gathered them around the radio to listen to the fights and baseball games.

In addition to listening to and watching sports events with her family, she played basketball at the old Douglas High School, her Alma Mater, and for two years at South Georgia State College. She went to Mississippi State College for Women after high school, but returned home when her father died tragically at age 44 from complications from a kidney stone.

Mary Clyde remains quite the AVID sports fan today. She's a Georgia Bulldog fan and a Braves fan, even in the hard times.

"The Braves have been a bit hard to watch the last few games," she said, "but they did win last night. Maybe their luck will change soon."

She thoroughly enjoyed the Olympics recently. Every time "The Star Spangled Banner" played to denote a gold medal, she stood up proudly in her living room and saluted.

After SGSC, she went to the University of Georgia, where she earned a degree in Speech Therapy. She then found a job in Athens as director of the Head Start Program in ten counties, which involved about 500 children.

Just as she was thinking of retiring, her mother had a stroke

and Mary Clyde returned to Douglas to care for her. When she returned, she immediately became involved in the community as well.

"People get old because they stay in and don't get involved in things. Isolation is a bad thing," Mary Clyde said. "People shouldn't do that. They need to be involved. Even people who are handicapped can be active--if only on the telephone."

Quite active in her church, she co-chairs the programs committee for her circle of United Methodist Women. For several years she played the organ for the church. A member of the Keen-ager Group, she's taken daytrips with the group, as well as longer trips to Nashville and Myrtle Beach. She's also a member of DAR, the Daughters of the American Revolution.

"I taught Sunday school until everybody in the class died," she said, ruefully.

Mary Clyde never gets bored—never. Her many hobbies keep her occupied much of the time. She crochets, knits, and recently started another hobby--making Persian rugs. She's been a reader since high school and finishes everyday with about an hour of reading at bedtime. She reads an average of one book a week from the library.

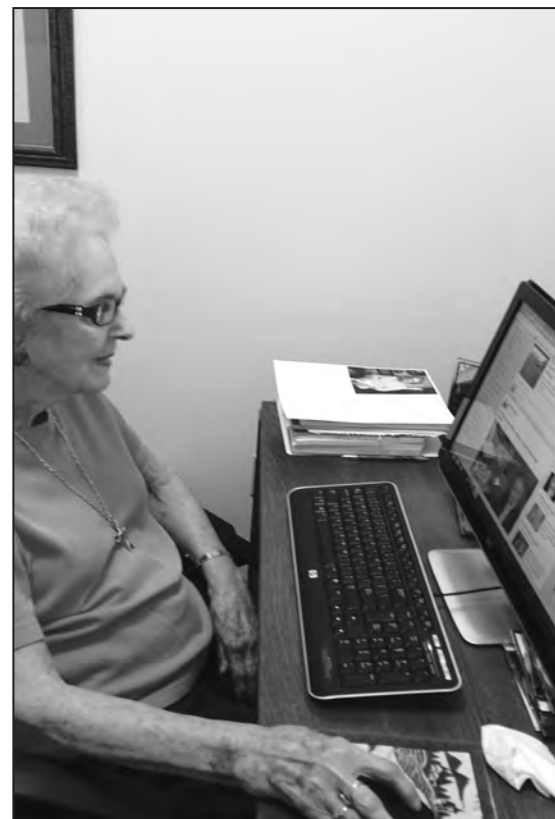
"I've read every book Louis L'Amour ever wrote—most of them I've read several times," she said. "I just love his books, but I like mysteries, too. Dick Francis, a British author that writes about horse racing, is another favorite of mine."

Since childhood, Mary Clyde's been a very organized and determined person. The sound of her piano scales filled the pink house of her youth at 7 a.m. and woke everyone up. She practiced every morning from 7 to 8. That same determination and drive led her to the computer in her 80s. She keeps up with her grandchildren via Facebook, sends and receives emails, and does research online.

"You can learn whatever you want to," she said. "Age has nothing to do with it."

She has eleven grandchildren to keep up with and several of them are away in college. Her great grandchildren are too numerous to count. Her large family includes 3 children from her first marriage—Gail, Elie, and Cindy. When she remarried, she acquired 5 more children—Nan, Chris, Tim, David, and Bill.

Mary Clyde was born on November 18, 1921. The calendar labels her as 92 years old, but she's not intimidated by the word old. Old is just a word that applies to other people—those who choose to vegetate. She certainly does not. She enjoys every single day and lives it to the fullest. ¶



**MARY CLYDE SCOTT 92 FACEBOOKS WITH HER GRANDCHILDREN.**



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HEALTH**

# Exercise and the older woman

The aging process has a way of making people risk-averse. Financial advisors typically recommend that men and women steer clear of risky investments as they age, and men and women over 50 often make lifestyle choices to reduce their risk of developing certain medical conditions. As women age, some may feel exercise is simply too risky. Hormonal changes brought on by aging decrease a woman's bone density, and that fact makes many women over 50 hesitant to embrace exercise. But exercise plays a key role in helping women over 50 secure their long-term health and reduce their risk of injury.

\* Exercise promotes independence. Some women feel that exercising after 50 increases their risk of injury, which can make them overly dependent on their loved ones. But exercise, in particular strength training, slows bone deterioration, helping bones stay stronger longer and reducing a woman's risk of suffering a potentially debilitating injury. Independence is especially important to seniors, many of whom spent years planning their retirements and awaiting the day when they would be free to travel at their leisure. Daily exercise can help women maintain that independence by reducing their risk of injury and other

ailments that can be confining.

\* Exercise can improve sleep. Some women who are fighting fatigue may feel that routine exercise will only make them more tired. But exercise actually improves energy levels and makes it easier to get a better night's



rest. Numerous studies have shown that routine exercise can improve sleep quality and even increase energy levels throughout the day, something that should raise an eyebrow among women who do not exercise but routinely find themselves fighting fatigue. A more quality night's rest improves

vitality, making it easier for women to exercise and make it through the day without feeling fatigued.

\* Exercise benefits those with limited mobility. Women over 50 with limited mobility may feel that exercise serves no purpose because of their disability or physical condition. But even women confined to wheelchairs or those forced to walk with a cane or walker can benefit from cardiovascular exercise and even light strength training. Such exercises can improve a woman's range of motion while reducing her risk of heart disease.

\* It's never too late to start exercising. Many aging women feel their time to embrace exercise has long since passed. But it's never too late to start exercising. Women should take a conservative approach when exercising after a long hiatus, beginning with a slow walk around the neighborhood or a local park. Walking is a great beginner's exercise, as it provides a good cardiovascular workout while working a variety of muscle groups. As your body readjusts to physical activity, gradually increase the intensity of your exercise sessions, adding some strength training, ideally under the supervision of a professional. Always stretch immediately after each exercise session, and give your body ample time to recover, especially when you begin your new regimen.



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**ALMA'S  
NUMBER  
ONE BAG  
BOY PART  
OF A...**

# Family Tradition

When a group of first graders come with their teacher to tour Jay's IGA in Alma, Georgia, owner Jay Williams likes to follow the group around and talk to the children. He wants to

look each child in the eye and let each one know how special Jay considers him.

"How are you, little buddy?" he'll ask.

Jay firmly believes that every one of us can positively influence a child, and he tries to miss no opportunity to do so. Children recognize him as a friend.

One child proudly reported to his mother, "When we went to the grocery store today, Mr. Jay put his hand on my shoulder."

Just that small gesture made a huge impression on the child.

Jay said, "So many times when I tell parents what a fine child they have, they reply with something negative. 'Oh, he's a bad, bad boy! You just don't know him like we do.' I always tell the child to look at his hands. I'll tell him that I see a worker in those

hands. I know he'll be a wonderful worker some day. I want to make that child feel good about himself and leave him with a positive attitude."

Jay Williams sees his store as a Mom and Pop operation, which is a dying enterprise today. Neither his two daughters nor his son wants to follow in the grocery business, even though it is a family tradition. When Jay's father came home from World War II, he started the business in a small wooden—floored building.

"Dad worked endlessly to make it work, Mom worked as a cashier, and me—well, I was just in the way," Jay laughed.

A pot-bellied stove warmed the store in cold weather, and on Saturdays after the work was done, farmers in fresh clean overalls, the same ones they'd wear to church the next day, came in and gathered around that stove to talk. His father kept the store open as long as they wanted to stay. He realized that these men were the ones who kept him in business.

Even before he started the grocery store, Jay's father had worked for his brother Bill, the owner of Bacon Wholesale Grocery Company. Jay, Sr. drove the Rolling Store. He went to each little community store and traded things like sugar that the farmers couldn't produce for themselves for eggs and even live chickens. The truck had a coop on the back for the chickens he gathered.

Both Jay's parents are deceased now, but he remembers well the lessons they taught him. His father was a stern man who believed in hard work. He advised his son to be prepared

to do the work of two men if he ever went into the grocery business. During Jay's childhood, if he arose with a minor ailment and didn't want to go to school, his father's standard reply was always, "Take an aspirin and go to school." Later when Jay worked at the store, he got the same instructions if he felt bad and tried to avoid work for the day.

"Take an aspirin, son. I'll see you at the store."

Jay's mother, Elizabeth, was a bookkeeper at the Bacon Wholesale Grocery Company when she met Jay Williams, Sr. During their marriage, she spent time teaching the children about housecleaning, making beds, yard work, and other household chores. His father was too busy making a living to be involved much in the day-to-day family life. His mother also made sure they had some fun, like trips to the beach, for example. She served as a Cub Scout den mother and helped with activities at church. The family was constantly at the United Methodist Church for choir, Sunday school, MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship), and other activities. The church served them both spiritually and socially.

Jay's childhood was a good one. He enjoyed scouts and he had a horse which he broke himself. He always wanted a go cart, but his father refused to buy him one.

"Those things are too low to the ground," his father said. "You'll run up under a car."

And ironically enough, when Jay grew to manhood, he bought himself a go cart and almost immediately ran under a car with it, injuring himself severely.

On Jekyll Island one fateful day the child Jay Williams inadvertently discovered golf. The family was visiting the beach, which just happened to be adjacent to the golf course. Jay's curiosity forced him to explore the area. When he managed to get inside the fence, he discovered golf balls—lots of them. He grabbed as many as he could carry and took them back to the beach with him. This was his first exposure to the game that would become a lifelong pleasure. As a child, he also played golf in Fernandina, Florida.

In 1955, Jay's father enlarged the store, which he then dubbed the Big White Store with the electric door. This door was the first of its kind in Alma and people stood around, gawking at it. Only the exit door was electric, not the en-

trance. He had bought an old car dealership and refurbished it. His motto was "Big enough to serve you, small enough to know you." He, too, knew the value of treating his customers right.

Jay, Jr. left Alma in 1965 to attend the University of Georgia and earned his BBA in '69. He later went to a college in



**IGA'S NUMBER ONE BAG BOY, JAY WILLIAMS.**



**PROUD GRANDPARENTS - JAY AND GAIL WILLIAMS' GRANCHILDREN, J.D. AND BAY WILLIAMS.**

Lake City, Florida and earned a degree in agronomy—golf course management, especially in the area of turf.

When he came home after college, sparks flew frequently between Jay and his father.

"Dad was always right. Everything always had to be his



way,” Jay remembered. Jay and his brother Mike bought out their father’s grocery business in the 80s, and Jay then bought out his brother in ’83. Jay has been in the business virtually all his life. He purchased the current store from Piggly Wiggly in 1998.

“The name on the store’s front is my father’s,” Jay said. “It’s just coincidence that his name and mine are the same.”

Jay Williams’ roots run deep in the Bacon County

ball games, etc. He’s also served as a mentor many times.

Veterans, especially those who served in WWII, are dear to his heart, but he’s quick to include the veterans of the Vietnam and Korean conflicts



**JAY WILLIAMS SHOWN SUPPORTING YOUTH IN BACON COUNTY.**

as well. “Just think about those WWII vets,” he said. “They were told to pick up a weapon and go to a strange land to conquer it. They did, too, against all odds. They are my heroes. That generation had amazing values. Their word



**JAY CHATTING WITH A CUSTOMER AND BAGGING GROCERIES.**

soil. His grandfather, J. Doc Johnson, was a dirt farmer, who during the depression lost his 500 acre farm just off Bennett Still Road. His father, too, had done some farming before he left for the war. Jay is truly a native son and feels a great responsibility for his community. Throughout the years, he’s sponsored numerous children in various activities—Special Olympics (a particular favorite of his), beauty pageants,

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was their bond. They treated everyone with respect and politeness, regardless of their station in life. These virtues just seemed to come naturally to them. I hold the highest respect for that group.”

“Money has never driven me. My business comes fourth in my life, right after family, church, and school,” Jay said. “I love being a part of this community and carrying on a family tradition in groceries right here in Alma. My customers are my



**JAY WILLIAMS PASSING OUT CANDY TO CHILDREN AT IGA.**

friends and neighbors.”

Over the years the community has recognized his dedication and honored him accordingly. His peers voted him Citizen of the Year in the 90s. He’s won the Elkins Award for good citizenship and served as co-chair along with Buck Harnage of the Initiative 2000 committee back at the turn of the century.

He considers one of his greatest accomplishments to be helping to design the golf course in Alma at the Blueberry Inn and Country Club.

Jay is married to another Bacon County native, the former Gail McLain, who recently retired from the Bacon County School System. She was selected Star Teacher seven times

during her career. They have three children—John, Abbi, and Summer. Jay and his 3 children are all graduates of UGA, and Gail attended college there for one year. She then transferred to Georgia Southern University where she earned her PH.D. Jay proudly displays pictures of his two grandchildren on the walls outside his office. Young J.D. is an accomplished golfer, who plays all over the country. He has even played in the US Kids’ World Tour and done well. Granddaughter Bay is a talented diver. Just stop by and ask him something about his grandchildren—he’ll be happy to tell you all about them and give you a tour of his picture wall.

Even though he was overly energetic as a child, Jay was shy. He’s done many things in his life before settling into the grocery business. His iron nerve allowed him to race motorcycles even after his terrible go cart accident. Nonetheless, at 66 he now has some degree of self confidence and better understands his worth as an individual. He has no plan for the future except to continue working. He’s not the type to retire, but he plans to enjoy his grandchildren as much as he can. He once dreamed of playing golf with a senior professional team, but it’s never quite worked out. He’s sure there’s a reason for that, but it doesn’t bother him much. His life is richly blessed and full of everyday pleasures

Jay Williams is the number one bag boy at his grocery store.

“Why wouldn’t I be?” he asks. “That’s the last chance I get to see and interact with my customers. I enjoy it. What could possibly be better than being #1 Bag Boy anyway?” ¶



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# Showcasing the Indians of the Altamaha via art

By Mary Ann Ellis

In 2011 at the Three Rivers Cultural Festival at Towns Bluff Park in Jeff Davis County, artist Dee Sturgis met Victor Burgis, who had purchased her painting “Little Red Chief” at the Three Rivers Sportsman auction. He asked her to do a painting of the Creek Indians along the Altamaha River.

“What Indians?” she questioned.

Like most people in this area, she knew nothing of the Indians who once lived in this area, but that was about to change. At this park she also met Tom Hyatt, a professional photographer, who became her partner in October of 2011. Hyatt, who lives in North Georgia, has a degree in computer information management, economics, and business. He’s been working in software configuration management for several years. With advanced technology, he has combined the areas and developed into a fine arts photographer. He provided the name THRU HIS EYES STUDIOS for the partnership, and they, along with Dee’s daughter Sheila Sturgis, a full-time artist, have been working since then to share through their artwork the history of the Southeastern Native Peoples.

Originally from Montana, Dee Sturgis, a self-taught artist, has developed her skills in many mediums, including pastels, acrylics, oils, oil pastels, graphite, colored pencils, water color, and charcoal. Her versatility allows her to combine several subjects and objects in detailed memory paintings, thus allowing the eyes of viewers to play out an entire memory scene. Two such paintings hang in the Hazlehurst-Jeff Davis Historical Museum and

depict the period from 1750 to 1870. The paintings show farmers, Indians, and other members of society involved in normal everyday activities.

“Seventy-five per cent of painting is research,” said Dee. “The accuracy of the finished product depends on accurate research.”

Since Dee is disabled, she depends on her family and friends to be her eyes. They go out with cameras in hand to

collect research photographs for her. In her research she also includes interviews with historians, hunters, agriculturalists, farmers, and gardeners, among others.

Once she became interested in the Indians of this area, she found that information abounds—if you know where to look for it, that is. The 3rd weekend in April, 2012, three Muskogee Creek Indian men set up camp at the Towns Bluff Park. Dee met them and they talked for hours. Lee Riley, a full Creek Indian whose family is from Oklahoma, lives in North West Georgia. His family left on the Trail of Tears, but later returned from Oklahoma. The second, Mike Gibson, hunts on the Flint River and is also full Muskogee Creek. The third was Tom Crowder. Lee Riley introduced Dee Sturgis to Stan Cartwright, who then became a liaison to the Perdido Bay Tribe in Pensacola.



**THIS PORTRAIT GIVEN TO FAMILY AFTER CHIEF BEARHEART PASSED AWAY. IT IS NOW A PART OF HIS MEMORIAL IN MUSEUM.**

The Perdido Tribe was founded in 1990 for Indians of mixed blood. Bobby Johns Bearheart, chief of the tribe, wanted a haven for people of mixed breeds so they could safely tell their stories. Too many Indians were afraid to tell their real stories because until 1948, the law allowed Indians to

be sent to Oklahoma with no warning at all. The Indians even hid their names out of fear of being exported. Cartwright provided phone numbers for Chief Bearheart, and Dee called him. He was excited about telling their stories through her paintings. He asked only that she paint their history with accuracy and with truth.

“This is the last frontier,” Bearheart told her. “—a history that needs to be told. My people were a good people, not the warlike savages that too many people picture them to be.”

She painted her first painting for him and entitled it “Creek Ways Rising.” Lee Riley is the Indian in the painting.

Chief Bearheart’s family did not leave on the Trail of Tears, but remained in this area, making a living however they could. They collected firewood and stacked it on the banks of the Altamaha for the steamboat captains, who picked it up and left money in a can for them. Also, as their main source of income, they hunted deer for their hides. As a matter of fact, in the 18th century, all Native Americans in Georgia were hunting deer to sell their hides to traders.

The tannic acid in the black waters of places like Whitehead Creek in Jeff Davis County helped to process the deer skins. The Creek women of the area processed the most popular skins, the ones in great demand, particularly in Europe.

Many signs in this area (Telfair, Wheeler, Montgomery, Toombs, Jeff Davis, Appling, and Bacon Counties) still bear witness to the existence of the Indians. For example, the Indians bent trees to mark their trails. Some pointed the way to water, to shelter, to stream crossings, to rock deposits, and to sacred sights. The Indians bent these trees when they were just saplings, a testimony to the skills and knowledge of the Indian people. They knew how to use nature to their advantage. The Indians used hardwood trees to make their bent-tree signs, and every shape had a distinct meaning. Unfortunately, much of the lore has been lost; however, many of those trees still exist today.

The Indians also planted trees along their trails when they came to hunt. They planted pecan trees—not the hybrids, of



**DEE STURGIS CHATTING WITH MIKE GIBSON AT PROJECT'S ONSET**

course. They called the original trees the seeder trees, and these trees have never been hybridized. Chief Bearheart called them bottom hickory. The Indians made a sweet milk from the nuts by grinding their shells and meats together, adding water, and boiling the concoction, which they then added to cornmeal to make a breakfast food. The shells were exceptionally hard and in the Snipesville community, one approximately 300 year-old tree still exists today.

An Indian village once existed at the confluence of the Ocmulgee, Oconee, and Altamaha Rivers, and the area is currently being excavated. However, people have discovered a variety of artifacts in this area. Clint Hutcheson from Toombs County has quite a collection of arrow heads. David Deen has many arrow heads, too, that he found as he was growing up around Deen’s Landing in Appling County. They’ve also found clay pipes in the dirt there. Not much pottery is found because the Indians stopped making it when the traders brought in copper pots.

THRU HIS EYES STUDIOS (THES) is currently preparing the Heritage Gathering Exhibit, which will be displayed in September, 2014, in Waycross at the Okefenokee Heritage Center. It will include collaborated art works of artists Dee Sturgis, Sheila Sturgis, and photographer Tom Hyatt. Collected artworks from various Indian artisans will be displayed



# I See a Mekko

By Dee Sturgis

*I see a Mekko across the water's way; he stands alone in regalia sway.*

*Dressed in a crown of royalty, he represents his peoples' victory.*

*Victory over death is the way he chose.*

*The joy of forgiveness is his repose.*

*Along the water's edge grow many kinds of trees, each distinctly different as they share the same breeze.*

*I see the river waters flowing from place to place; they ripple with hues of the purest blues.*

*The lofty trees are drinking of the river's grace.*

*I see this same Mekko across the water's ways, waving his arms in a dance of great delight.*

*He begins to run among the trees; his flowing regalia is quite a sight.*

*He stops at one particular tree and bends down; I watch him as he gathers something from the ground.*

*Then, walking to the water's edge, he casts his gathering into the river's flow.*

*It is then I understand what this Mekko wants me to know.*

*He found his beloved hickory nut tree, and casting the seeds into the river's flow, they will go to parts unknown.*

*This is the circle of life and he is saying, "go forward; go on!"*

*I see a Mekko across the water's way, waving his arms in a dance of delight, and then, from behind him, a bird lifts its wings and takes flight.*

*It is a dove of the purest white.*

*Seeing the dove he waves goodbye and follows the bird's flight path up into the blue sky.*

*I see a river course laid out before me to parts unknown in search of the seeds' fruitfulness.*

in shadowboxes. Included in some of the artwork will be various bent-tree signs. The entire exhibit will honor the memory of Creek ancestors and is especially dedicated to the memory of Chief Bobby Thomas Johns Bearheart, who worked to create a better understanding of the value of Southeastern Indigenous Peoples in the history and cultural fabric of this region. He died in February of 2013, but his dream lives on via the Perdido Bay Tribe, Lower Muscogee Creek Indians now under the leadership of Chief Robert CedarBear Johns. The purpose of the Heritage Gathering Exhibit is to promote via art the preservation of Native American history for the education of future generations.

Clint Hutcheson is working to get Jim Sawgrass to bring his complete Creek Indian Village to set up in Lyons in the fall, possibly October. Clint Hutcheson and THRU HIS EYES STUDIOS will be working together to promote the Native American history and conservation awareness.

Stan Cartwright helped THES contact the Elders and the groups who travel about the area performing and allowing spectators to visualize the life of their ancestors. At approximately 86 years of age, Sam Proctor is currently the

**Continues on page 27**



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**THE PURCHASE OF "LITTLE RED CHIEF," PAINTED BY DEE STURGIS STARTED THE WHOLE INDIAN PROJECT.**



**RE-ENACTOR MAUREEN PATRICK WITH A TOLOUSE CRADLE BOARD.**

Spiritual Leader of the Creek Nation in Oklahoma. The tribe is an oral society and all information about it is entrusted to the elders. However, the Mountain Stewards have been interviewing and videotaping many conversations with the elders. The Heritage Gathering Exhibit will be available to museums all over the country and in addition to displaying the exhibit, the various museums can also add any local information that they have. ¶

**Any group interested in more information about these activities can visit [deesturgisartist.com](http://deesturgisartist.com) or [tom@tomhyatt-photo.com](mailto:tom@tomhyatt-photo.com).**



**TOM CROWDER ON THE LEFT AND MIKE GIBSON - ON THE RIGHT. BOTH MEN HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN THE PROJECT.**



# CHOOSING A PET?

## These dog breeds are very compatible with seniors

Pets often make ideal companions. They are around when a person needs support, they can provide protection for those living alone, they're always willing to lend an ear to problems, and many tend to offer unconditional love. Seniors facing an empty nest or the loss of a spouse may find pets can buoy their spirits. Studies have shown that seniors can benefit both mentally and physically from having a pet around. Pets can alleviate anxiety, depression and boredom.

While pets can provide comfort and companionship, they remain a significant responsibility. Seniors should find an animal that will fit in with their lifestyles.

This is an important consideration for those seniors who travel frequently or have mobility issues. In addition, men and women living in senior communities or assisted living facilities should determine if there are any pet restrictions in place.

Those seniors who have decided that a dog will be the best fit can choose among several breeds that may be a good match for their needs. When selecting a dog, consider both size and temperament. Smaller dogs tend to be easier to handle and will need less maintenance. They are easily carried and won't take as long to bathe and groom. Smaller dogs also consume less food than larger breeds, reducing the expense of dog

food and the hassle of wrangling large, heavy bags of chow. Temperament is also important, as some breeds tend to be more easygoing than others. Larger breeds may be preferable to a smaller breeds, which tend to be hyperactive. However, always remember there are

big balls of fur and can bring a smile to an owner's face. The breed tends to be perky, can display dominance and can be difficult to train. Because Pomeranians can be dog-aggressive, they may be best as the only pet in the house.

\* Yorkshire terrier:

The Yorkie is a diminutive breed in size only, as they tend to have exuberant personalities that dwarf their stature. The ideal lap dog, Yorkies want to lie around and lounge, though some do like to bark. If the fur is kept short in a "puppy cut," the dog can be easy to maintain.

\* Pembroke Welsh

Corgi: This medium-sized dog hails from Wales and

typically requires only moderate exercise and little grooming. They are easy to train and moderately dominant. They don't bark excessively, and they often get along with other dogs.

\* Schnauzer: Available in three sizes, Schnauzers are good companions and protectors. This is an intelligent and loyal breed and will need to be kept amused to stave off boredom.

\* Brussels Griffon: These dogs do not shed, but they will require professional grooming at least once every 3 months. If socialized early, the Griffon can be a good companion but will likely remain wary of strangers. They are good watchdogs and devoted to their owners. ¶



**THE LOYALTY AND INTELLIGENCE OF SCHNAUZERS MAKES THEM IDEAL COMPANIONS.**

pros and cons to each breed, and each dog will demonstrate his own personality traits. The following are some dogs that can be especially compatible with seniors.

\* Pug: Equally playful and willing to be a lap dog, the pug requires little exercise and grooming. The breed is typically nonaggressive and submissive. Pugs are good-natured and playful; they don't often bark and are easy to train.

\* Shih Tzu: The Shih Tzu lives for attention, but this breed can be dominant and difficult to train. The Shih Tzu will be alert to its surroundings and, despite its small stature, can be a good watchdog.

\* Pomeranian: Pomeranians look like

# Health Insurance Options for Early Retirees

**Dear Savvy Senior,**

*At age 63, I will be retiring in a few months and need to find some health insurance coverage for my wife and me until Medicare kicks in. Is Obamacare my only option?*

**About to Retire**

**Dear About,**

There are actually several places early (pre-Medicare) retirees can go to find health insurance coverage – Obamacare isn't the only game in town. Here are your options depending on your income and health care needs.

**Government Marketplaces**

If your yearly income falls below the 400 percent poverty level, the Obamacare insurance marketplace is probably your best option for getting health coverage because of the federal tax credits they offer, which will reduce the amount you'll have to pay for a policy.

To qualify for the tax credits, your household's modified adjusted gross income for 2013 must have been under \$45,960 for an individual, or \$62,040 for a couple. If your income will drop below the 400 percent poverty level in 2014 or 2015 because of your retirement,

it may still make sense to buy coverage through the Obamacare marketplace, even if you don't qualify for the tax credits based on last year's income.

To help you see how much you can save, see the subsidy calculator on the Kaiser Family Foundation website at [kff.org/interactive/subsidy-calculator](http://kff.org/interactive/subsidy-calculator).

To shop for marketplace plans in your state, visit [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov) or call their toll-free helpline at 800-318-2596.

**Outside the Marketplace**

If you aren't eligible for the government subsidy, or you want additional policy options to what Obamacare offers, you can also buy health coverage outside the government marketplaces directly through insurance companies, brokers or agents. This option is not available if you live in Washington D.C. or Vermont.

These policies do not offer the federal tax credits, but they are required to offer the same menu of essential benefits as Obamacare policies do, and they can't deny you coverage or charge extra for pre-existing health conditions. You might even find

slightly lower premiums on outside policies, assuming that you don't qualify for the tax credits.

Another possible reason for shopping outside the marketplace is to find a plan that has your preferred doctors and hospitals in its network. Many plans offered in the Obamacare marketplaces provide a very limited number of health care providers.

To shop for these policies, contact insurance companies, brokers or agents and ask them if they offer policies that are not available through the government marketplaces.

To find a local broker or agent that sells insurance plans, check the National Association of Health Underwriters website ([nahu.org](http://nahu.org)) which has an online directory. But keep in mind that agents won't necessarily show you all available policies, just the ones from insurers they work with.

You can also look for these plans at insurance shopping sites like [eHealthInsurance.com](http://eHealthInsurance.com) or [GoHealth.com](http://GoHealth.com), which lists plans and providers that may not be listed on [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov).

**COBRA**

If you only need health

insurance coverage for a short period of time before becoming Medicare eligible, another option you may want to consider is COBRA. COBRA coverage allows you to remain on your former employer's group health plan for up to 18 months, but not every employer plan is COBRA eligible. Contact your employer benefits administrator to find out if yours is.

In most cases COBRA is expensive, requiring you to pay the full monthly premium yourself. But, if you've already met or nearly met your employer plan's deductible and/or out-of-pocket maximum for the year, and don't want to start over with a new plan; or if you find your employer's health plan to be better or more affordable than the government or off-marketplace options, it makes sense to keep your current coverage under COBRA.

*Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [SavvySenior.org](http://SavvySenior.org). Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.*



# A TASTE OF THE SOUTH

## Grandma's Sweet Potato Pie

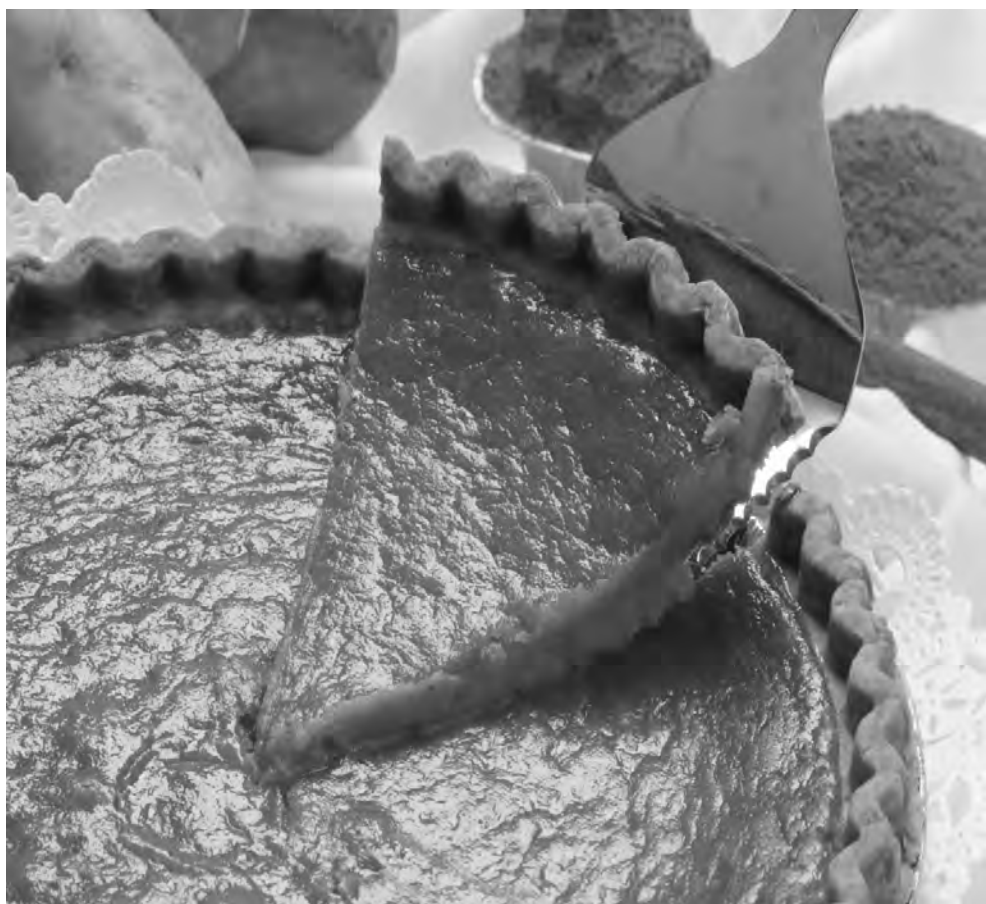
**Servings:** 12-16

### **Ingredients:**

- 2 cups sweet potatoes, cooked
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 3 eggs
- 2 1/2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 unbaked pie shells

### **Preparation:**

1. Combine all ingredients in mixing



bowl; mix well.

2. Pour into pie shells.

3. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes.

4. Add desired topping such as powdered sugar or whipped cream frosting.

**Finally.** Eat a bellyful and kiss grandma for making it for you!

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