

# THINGS IN MOTION...

*All things are in motion and nothing is at rest ... you cannot go into the same (river) twice. –Heraclitus (540?-480?) B.C.*

Number 11, Spring 2007. Published by Hugh Singleton  
At 102 Azalea Trail, Leesburg, FL 34748  
For The American Amateur Press Association

## *Back to Nature*

THERE IS SOMETHING about finding your way back to your early environs that seldom loses its appeal—a sort of reunion with those places always seems to lift your spirit ... at least it does for me. During the first weekend in May of this year, I attended the annual reunion of my high school class of 1948, and during my two days in the area, I revisited some of the spots that held special significance for me.



This is the driveway to a plantation known as The Burnett Place. It was my home from 1938 thru 1941 (I have written about this farm several times). Today, farming is still done here, although most of the woodland that once blanketed the plantation is gone and much of the acreage is now covered by Lake Walter F. George. Lakefront homes now line the shore, providing country tranquility for people instead of cattle.



Entering George T. Bagby State  
Park—four miles north of Ft. Gaines,  
Georgia on Highway 39.

One drawback to venturing into your past is the painful realization of how much has changed and how much is missing today—it brings home sharply the truth that all things do indeed change.



This driveway leads to the house where my younger sister was born ... and died. My family lived on this farm from 1934 thru 1937. In those days, all roads in the area were unpaved; this driveway was red clay and very slick when wet. This farm was known as The Shaw Place ... it is only a mile or two east of The Burnett Place and has been owned by the same family for about 130 years.

At some time during our lives most of us have known of at least one abandoned cemetery—perhaps being surrounded by woods in the end. My family’s gravesite was established (during or shortly after the Civil War) in the church cemetery of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, which was organized in 1856 and situated halfway between the towns of Ft. Gaines and Bluffton, GA. In 1918 the congregation moved its meeting place to a location in Bluffton, however the original church building was left where it was built and was used for funerals as well as the annual Homecoming Day gathering. During the 83 years when it was used only once or twice a year, the old church fell into decay because those members who would have kept it in good repair grew old themselves and were buried in the cemetery alongside the church—my father being one of those. Younger members lost interest in the old church and cemetery, and in the end, little or no care was taken of either the building or the cemetery. In the passage of time, vandals destroyed most of the ornate monuments and tombstones, so that less than half of the graves are now recognizable and no trace at all is left of dozens of graves. In a last gasp, the self-appointed caretaker arranged to sell the lumber from the church building and used the proceeds to put a substantial fence around the cemetery before he, too, died. No one is left to lift a hand and the ground in which the remains of so many are buried has surrendered at last to the grim reaper. The moss-draped remnants of once vibrant trees stand defiantly, lending a sense of the inevitable to the bedraggled symbols of death now in their own final throes of decay and disappearance ... to complete the cycle of birth, death, and finally, infinity.



In retrospect, the history of my early days and the way of life that existed during those years could not have continued as it was then. However much I loved that time, there is no place for it in today's society – it is like the Old South as portrayed by author Margaret Mitchell.



This old photograph shows the main street of Ft. Gaines, GA on December 18, 1925 when the town celebrated the opening of the first steel bridge across the Chattahoochee River, replacing the old wooden bridge which mysteriously fell into the river a week later.



I never saw this old bridge, but some of the pilings are still visible. This photo was made from the site of the new steel span.



This is the same part of town today – most of the 1925 buildings still are in use, however the streets are now paved and there is no longer a livery stable or buggy shop where farmers congregate.

Trips down Memory Lane should include visits to schools, however four of the five schools that I attended have been razed and sadly, only two of my teachers can be reached. Many of the wonderful men and women who influenced me and helped to set my moral values as a child are long gone – and they are sorely missed.

Living in the past is not something I want to do, but an occasional visit to the old, old places is refreshing and helpful in preserving favorite memories as well as keeping the dragons of old age at bay.

