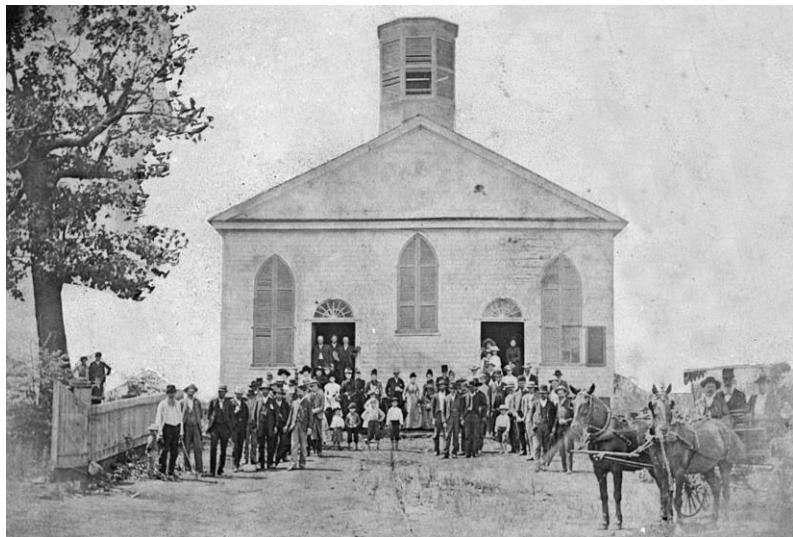


# *Glenwood Cemetery*

## Self-Guided Tour

Glenwood Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in Thomaston, Georgia. Located on 8.25 acres in the heart of the city, it grew from land that surrounded the site of the first Methodist Church in our area. (Where the Weaver lot is now, Section I -35, 36) The property was acquired through conveyances in 1835 and 1860. In 1901, the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church conveyed the then two-acre cemetery to the City of Thomaston. Since then, Glenwood is owned and maintained to the present, by the City.



**First Methodist Church: First Building, ca. 1885: Contributed by Mary Chatfield**

Much of your tour will be localized to the older section of Glenwood. There you will find many groundbreakers who helped shape Thomaston's early history.

- 1. John Nicholas Webb, 1812-1899: Helped make President George Washington's (second) coffin. (Section I: 153)**

John Nicholas Webb was born in Maryland in 1812. An orphan, John was apprenticed to James Greene of Alexandria, Virginia to learn the cabinet makers' trade. In 1837, George Washington's body was exhumed as the family tomb was in poor shape, and Washington's wood coffin with lead lining had badly deteriorated. (Washington died in 1799) The task of creating a new casket went to Mr. Greene, who selected four of his most skilled men to make it. Webb was one of them. Mr. Webb was also the owner of Webb Hotel which once stood at the site where Ritz Theater is now.

**2. James R. Davis, 1844-1880: Last man to carry the Battle Flag, 46<sup>th</sup> Georgia Regiment.  
(Section I: 152 i)**

Co. A 46<sup>th</sup> Regiment was from Upson County. The Battle Flag, preserved by the Upson Historical Society, is housed in the Thomaston-Upson Archives. The flag was issued to the Regiment in the spring of 1864. James R. Davis, a private, was the last man to carry the flag at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee. Private Davis, after picking up the flag from the fallen flag bearer, wrapped it around his own body. He was wounded and he along with the flag were captured. The flag was given back to him at the end of the war.

**3. Professor George A. Harrison, 1838-1901: Principal of R.E. Lee Institute, 1879-1886  
(Section I: 44 i)**

A Confederate veteran, Professor Harrison was listed in the 1880 Upson County census as a school teacher. He was in fact, the Principal for R.E. Lee from 1879-1886. His daughter, Martha or rather known as "Mattie Lou", later married one of Professor Harrison's students, R.E. Hightower Sr. When the school library for R.E. Lee Institute was built in 1968, it was named for George A. Harrison. It is the same building which later became the Thomaston-Upson Archives.

**4. Robert Edgar Hightower, Sr., 1864-1936, & Martha (Mattie Lou) Harrison Hightower, 1867-1927: President of Thomaston Cotton Mills and Namesake for Martha Mills, respectively. (Section I: 44 n + 44 m)**

Born on April 1, 1864, Robert Edgar Hightower was both popular and successful. He was president of Thomaston Mills and instrumental in B.F. Goodrich, from Akron, Ohio, locating their new plant in Thomaston. By 1929 Thomaston Mills was producing 25% of the nation's needs in automobile tires. In that same year, Thomaston Mills sold the new Martha Mill (finished in 1927) to Goodrich. The mill was named after his wife, Martha, as she passed away in 1927. He excelled as a merchant, railroad executive, and banker before he became the driving force behind Thomaston Mills. He was a consistent contributor to local schools, churches, and the Red Cross.



**R.E., Sr. & Martha Hightower, ca. 1920's: Neil & Kay Hightower Collection, TUA**

5. **Benjamin B. White, 1811-1887, & Sallie O. White, 1839-1923: Owners of the Pettigrew-White-Stamps home. (Section I: 70 a + 70 b)**

In May, 1840 B.B. White purchased a home from John E. Pettigrew, who built the house in 1833. This home is the second oldest in Thomaston, after the Weaver Home on Bethel St. Back in those days, the kitchen was typically detached from the house for a variety of reasons. Unfortunately for White, his kitchen burned down on more than one occasion, which prompted him to organize the town's first fire department, the Hook and Ladder Company #1, in 1874. Mrs. Sallie O. White is probably best remembered as the donor of the cannonball which currently sits on the courthouse square. It was presented to the Whites by a long-time boarder, P.W. Alexander, who stated this particular cannonball was the first fired at Fort Sumter during the outbreak of the War Between the States. The ball was used as a doorstop for many years until Sallie donated it to the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

6. **Mayor Hugh King Thurston, 1888-1960: Thomaston's youngest elected and longest running mayor. (Section I: 60 a)**

Born to John Allen Thurston and Maynie A. King Thurston, Hugh became Thomaston's youngest elected mayor at the age of 24. He later registered for the draft to fight in WWI, May, 1917 and served in France from April, 1918-May, 1919. He was excused from mayoral duties at this time, and E.T. Black was elected in his absence. Hugh later decided to run for mayor again and served for a total of 25 non-concurrent years. One of his brothers, Joe Pete, was the first Upson casualty of WWI.



**Mayor Hugh King Thurston, ca. 1918.**  
Courtesy of Victor Thurston Family

**7. Joe Pete Thurston, 1896-1918: Upson's first casualty of World War I. (Section I: 59h)**

One of the four Thurston brothers, Joe Pete was the first to enlist for the Great War. He served in the U.S. Navy as the pharmacist mate aboard the U.S.S. Lincoln. On his third voyage overseas, Joe Pete contracted pneumonia and passed away March 5, 1918. While it is unclear whether Thurston contracted viral or bacterial pneumonia, it is tragic to realize that the modern-day antibiotic, penicillin, which was discovered by Fleming only 10 years later, could have saved his and countless other lives. (It should be noted, however, that penicillin was first used to treat bacterial infections in 1942)

**8. Evelyn Hannah Sommerville, 1900-1982: One of Upson's most successful authors. (Section V: 58)**

Together, Evelyn Hannah and Carolyn Walker Nottingham co-wrote a comprehensive history of Upson, aptly titled, *The Early History of Upson County, Georgia*. For years the two poured over countless court and family manuscripts. Their work was a project sponsored by the local John Houston Chapter of the DAR and was published in 1930. By 1938, Hannah had written a fictional novel, *Blackberry Winter*, which nearly won a Pulitzer in 1939. Advertisements for the book described it as, "Much better than *Gone with the Wind*," published just two years earlier. Hannah also had success with her next novel, *Sugar in the Gourd* (1942).



**Evelyn Hannah, ca. 1930: Taken from *The Early History of Upson County***

**9. Old Gym Building, R.E. Lee Institute (Section II)**

R.E. Lee's Old Gym Building was built in the mid 1930's. It was built as a WPA project as a part of Roosevelt's "New Deal." As construction on the gym began, bones were found just outside the limits of the cemetery. They were believed to be the unmarked graves of slaves. The bodies were then disinterred and moved to a plot in Lincoln Park.

It is somewhere in this location that one of Thomaston's most sinister and nefarious acts took place. On the night of May 26, 1856, a local physician named Simeon Oslin

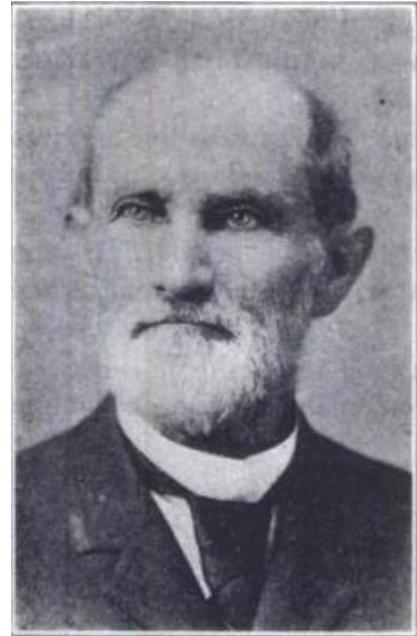
and his accomplice, Clark W. Upson met at the gate of the City Graveyard (known today as Glenwood) and set to work on digging up the body of a man, William, who was the slave of Hilliard Mabry. William had only recently passed away, so the ground had not settled yet, making their task easier. It was Simeon and Upson's intention to sell the body for scientific research, as bodies were in high demand for dissection and study by medical students. This practice, though highly illegal, was said to be profitable in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The perpetrators were called Resurrectionists or Ghouls, but today they are simply known as body snatchers. Further information on this case may be found in the loose court records housed at the Thomaston-Upson Archives. *State v. Upson, Clark W., 1856*

#### 10. Confederate Graves Section (Section III next to flagpole and historic marker)

Located in Thomaston, west of the intersection of Peerless Rd. and Edgewood Ave. (behind what was the Thomaston Mills Bleachery Division) there is a cemetery known as the "Old Mill Cemetery." There, bodies of Confederate soldiers from many places were buried. In 1904, 54 bodies were exhumed and reinterred. The reason for doing this was to make their graves more convenient for the city so proper care and attention would be given to them. \*See historical marker\*

#### 11. Dr. Edward Archelaus Flewellen, 1819-1910: Prominent Confederate Surgeon. (Section II: 75)

Dr. Flewellen practiced medicine in Thomaston with his uncle, Dr. John Calvin Drake. During the Civil War he served as the Inspector of Hospitals for the Army of Tennessee. Just before the end of the war, he was sent to Andersonville to investigate \$100,000 that was supposedly embezzled. The war ended before an official report could be made. He served the county and state legislature and at the time of his death, was president of the Upson County Railroad. Dr. Flewellen never married and purchased his own monument to his specifications before he died.



Dr. Edward A. Flewellen, ND: Taken from  
*The Early History of Upson County*

**12. Dr. Ivylyn Girardeau, 1900-1987: Medical Missionary and Upson's first female doctor.  
(Section II: 88 a)**

Ivylyn was the only daughter of John Bohun and Emmie Trice Girardeau (who started Upson's first public lending library out of her own home). Graduating from R.E. Lee in 1918, Ivylyn was a classmate of Evelyn Hannah Sommerville, who is also featured on this tour. After she received her medical degree in 1931, Girardeau decided to become a missionary. She served five years in charge of a hospital in Jhansi, India. Later she returned to Thomaston where she practiced as a pediatrician for many years. Her work as a missionary did not cease, however, as Ivylyn, at the age of 72, went to Pakistan and India to help provide relief medical work. She was also one of the original medical staff at Upson Regional Medical Hospital.

**13. Albert Matthews, 1877-1957: General Manager for Martha Mills, Matthews Field namesake, & creator of Crystal Hill Gardens (Section II: 24)**

Finally, as you make your way back to the entrance, you will notice the Matthews family mausoleum where Albert Thompson Matthews is interred. In the late 1920's, Upson was producing more peaches than anywhere in the state. There were many peach growers, including Matthews who was the co-owner of Matthews & Colquitt, Inc. The very popular "Three Sisters" brand was inspired by his three daughters, Sara, Martha, and Betty who are pictured on the peach label. In the early 1950's, Albert donated the land to build Matthews Field, which was dedicated in his name in 1954. This stadium is still used for sporting events. Also, Matthews built what was known as Thomaston's finest winter garden, Crystal Hill, an 80-acre garden filled with azaleas and camellias.



**Crystal Hill Garden: Albert T. Matthews Collection, TUA**