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# The Vintage Rabun Quarterly

## *Rabun County Women Who Made a Difference*

**T**here are many women in Rabun County history with fascinating stories and significant contributions. Rabun's notable women are many and varied, and we certainly do not claim to list all of them here. Their accomplishments range from public service to artistic endeavors to entrepreneurial proficiency. Their contributions to Rabun history are often overshadowed by those of men, and we have sought to give these women their due in some small way. We will feature more of these amazing women in a future newsletter.



**Addie Corn Ritchie (1873-1966)** and her husband, Andrew, had a goal to educate entire families in Rabun County where illiteracy was rampant at the turn of the 20th century. The Ritchies began work on Rabun Gap Industrial School in 1903, with classes for day students starting in 1905. Addie was a graduate of Georgia College for Women and was the heart and soul of the school. While Dr. Ritchie travelled the nation raising money, Addie ran the daily operation of the school while also teaching. When a new dining hall was completed in the 1950s, it was named in her honor. Photo c. 1900



With no schooling and no formal training, midwife **Lizzie Keason (1871-1960)** delivered more than 525 babies as a midwife in Rabun County, without ever losing a mother or child and seldom being paid. Her mother had also been a midwife, so her career path had been set from childhood. She claimed her talent was a "God-given thing." In 1960 she said, "Sometimes I walked and sometimes I went in an ox wagon. I've walked through two miles of snow...Sometimes I'd have to stay a day and a night, waiting. The most I ever charged for bringing a baby was \$5. When I first commenced, I just charged \$2 and they didn't always pay that. I remember one little baby boy whose daddy just went out and shot me a squirrel. I have delivered as many as nine babies for one man and only got \$4 out of him for all of them." Photo c. 1950



**Carrie Edwards Dillard (1888-1975)** was a culinary magician who learned to cook at her father's boarding house near Highlands. After she and her husband, Arthur Dillard, moved to Dillard, they began to offer room and board to travelers at Oak Lawn, featuring Carrie's fabulous food. After a family death, the young couple changed the name to the Dillard House, and Carrie's gardening and cooking talents meant the business expanded by leaps and bounds. When Arthur died, Carrie kept the business going—cooking, tending the gardens and taking care of her boarders. Her children, her grandson, and her great-grandson carried on her legacy of fresh food, copious vegetables and meats, and Southern hospitality until the business was sold in 2024. Photo c. late 1960s



**Hattie McCall 1912-2008 and Lassie McCall 1910-2008** were teachers whose teaching resources were minimal and simple. They began teaching in Rabun County schools in the 1940s, working at several community schools including Antioch in Warwoman, Moccasin, Germany, Liberty, Chechero, and Lakemont. At times making only \$60 per month, the McCall sisters educated more than one generation of Rabun County children, and both retired in the 1970s. Their careers spanned around 40 years each. Neither of the sisters married and they lived together in their retirement. When talking with their former students, both McCalls agreed that, "One of the most gratifying things you could hear them say is 'you taught me to read'."



The glory days of the Bynum House lasted 57 years, from 1913 to 1970. The inn and restaurant and were run solely by **Irene Bynum (1901-1986)** after her husband's death in 1952. They had expanded their farmhouse, located just west of downtown Clayton, into a three-story, 48-room establishment. The Bynum House included Rabun's first concrete swimming pool, a nine-hole golf course, tennis courts, shuffleboard and many other activities. Irene created the family-like atmosphere for which the Bynum House was known. She supervised a kitchen staff of more than thirty. Many days the spectacular food was served to three hundred guests. Fresh vegetables, meat and dairy from their own farm made this resort one that is still remembered fondly decades after their closing. Photo c. 1950s



**Savannah Cannon Bleckley (1861-1950)** was a Clayton entrepreneur for decades, the matron of a city landmark and the namesake of one of Clayton's major thoroughfares. Until the 1930s, Clayton's primary east-west route was called Courthouse Street. In honor of Savannah Bleckley's famous boarding house, the Bleckley House, which overlooked Clayton from the east, the street was renamed in her honor. The Bleckley House was advertised as being located on a ridge overlooking the city with beautiful grounds and serving plenty of delicious food. Bleckley's boarding house had a fascinating history, having begun life as the county courthouse in Courthouse Square until 1908. The building was moved to South Main Street in Clayton, becoming the Bleckley Hotel until 1913. A team of oxen then moved the hotel to the hill opposite the train depot. Savannah renovated and added on to the building, making it a large family home which also served as Clayton's most famous inn until it was moved again in 1964 in order to extend the street to the new highway just east of town. Photo c. 1944

We are always grateful to our readers who point out our errors. We like to learn things, and it helps us relate more accurate information. In the March 2025 issue of the Vintage Rabun Quarterly, we made two errors. Corrections are noted below.



*Tom Hamby Homeplace*



*Mountain View Inn*

The resort town of **Tallulah Falls** burned to the ground on a windy December night in 1920 (not in 1921 as we had written).

The **Mountain View Inn** burned in March of 1975. The site is now occupied by the Mountain View Nursing Home. (photo on the right above) The photo we put in the newsletter was not the Mountain View Inn, but rather the Tom Hamby homeplace at the corner of North Church St. and Hamby St. (photo on the left above) It was also burned.

Rabun County Historical Society  
81 North Church Street  
P.O. Box 921  
Clayton, GA 30525



### ***Historical Society Membership Updates***

Welcome to our new members who have joined since March 2025

Benefactor  
David Greear

Patron  
Fletcher Deal

Friend  
Jenn Taylor Hatfield  
Mary-Jo Beck Perry  
Jerry A. Taylor

Phone: 706-782-5292  
[www.rabunhistory.org](http://www.rabunhistory.org)  
Email:  
[rabuncountyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:rabuncountyhistory@gmail.com)

- Please visit our museum and research library Wednesday through Saturday from 11:00 until 3:00.
- Group tours by appointment



### ***We would like to acknowledge our dedicated volunteers.***

Linda and Ron Barden  
Steve Bingham  
Anne and Dick Cinquina  
Pat Coleman  
Kaye Collins  
Wanda Darnell

Wanda and Gracie Dunn  
Gail Hopper  
George Prater  
Julia Taylor  
Mary Whitmire