

Book says:

John Vance Cotter chose name of city

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Special to The Times

One hundred and fifty years ago, 1821, Gainesville, the "Queen City," was born. In recent years there has been much speculation as to the history of the name of the city. For whom was the city named? A pioneer family by name of Gaines? Or was the particular name chosen in honor of Gen. Edmond Pendleton Gaines?

Often the answer to such a perplexing puzzle is found written in the memoirs of a person who lived at that particular time. Such is the case as to the origin of the name of the city of Gainesville.

June 16, 1917, the Rev. William Jasper Cotter, a Methodist preacher in Georgia, completed "My Autobiography."

"It is my single aim to do something, if possible, for the good of those who may come after me. Hence I write this book, which I have finished at the age of 93 years and 7 months," he wrote.

Out of Print

My Autobiography is long out of print, but how grateful Hall Countians should be that the life of W.J. Cotter was spared that he might record a link in the county's history that otherwise might have been lost forever.

"My grandfather, William Cotter, was born in County Down, Ireland," he wrote. "When a young man he came to Virginia and married Miss Catherine Vance. They settled in Union District, South Carolina, where, on Nov. 28, 1789, my father, John Vance Cotter, was born. Father was a soldier in the War of 1812 and was stationed at Charleston. When peace was declared, he came to Georgia and traded on the borders with the Cherokee

Indians.

"My mother was Miss Mary Ann Nall, born in Chatham County, N.C., June 12, 1796, and was reared in old Pendleton, S.C. My father and mother were married Dec. 19, 1819. To them were born six children, three boys and three girls. Emeline E., the eldest, was an intimate friend to Miss Joanna Troutman, who designed the Lone Star flag of Texas. She died in 1872 in Arkansas while on a visit with other sisters.

"I was the second child and was born in Hall County, at Cotter's Store, Nov. 16, 1823. I was named William Jasper, evidently after Sgt. Jasper, the Revolutionary hero. My brother Robert married Caroline McRae, the youngest brother, J.C.K., married Malinda Green. My sister, Louisa, married Thomas Smith, and Martha, married a Mr. Canterbury and moved to Mountain Home, Ark.

Settled in Hall

"My parents settled in Hall County, Ga., at a place known for years as Cotter's Store, near Gillsville. Pioneers had located thirty years before in this eastern part of the county, on a section of fine farming land between the Oconee and Grove Rivers. Some of our early neighbors were: Garrisons, Caseys, Terrells, Buffingtons, Rileys, Bowens, Cowans, Peepleases. The community had good schools and a high standard of morals. The Baptist church was at Timber Ridge and Methodist meetings were held at Wesley Chapel. Miller's Meetinghouse and old Dry Pond Camp Ground.

"The larger portion of the county was west of the Oconee. The county had been organized in 1818. The first members of the county court were: Jacob Eberhart, John Bates, John V.

Cotter (my father), Nehemiah Garrison and William Cobb. The first thing for the court to do was to select a site for the county seat. The Big Spring and the Lime Kiln were nominated. My father suggested the place where the city of Gainesville now stands, then an unbroken forest. He also suggested the name for the new city that was to be in honor of Gen. Edmond

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Pendleton Gaines, under whom he had served during the war. The surveyor who laid off the site was a great-uncle of the late Gov. Terrell (Timothy Terrell was the surveyor). The deed to the lot bore the names of the five judges already mentioned."

Corn Tassel

The Rev. Mr. Cotter names the man killed by the Indian "Corn" Tassel and describes weather conditions. "George Tassels, the first Indian hanged under the law of Georgia, was executed at Gainesville on a cold, sleety day. I remember it well. We had not moved from Hall County then. Twenty years afterwards I saw his skeleton with coagulated blood about his neck. Tassels had killed Andrew Falon, a good Indian, the son, I think of Aunt Katie Falon." Many history accounts state that George Tassel killed a white man and Mr. Cotter's memoirs disagree with this and

since Cotter was practically an eye-witness, it is easier to believe that an Indian was murdered.

Home Described

The Hall County Cotter home is described: "...it originally was for 808 acres, but had been divided into three parts, called the Garrison, Cotter and Peebles places. It was a lovely country, shaded with great trees and brightened with pinks and roses. We had a cold and living well of water and a garden fertile with the vegetables of that time. In the Spring the sunshine made more beautiful by the glittering wings of butterflies, and bird choristers made the trees vocal with their song of praise..."

Moved to Murray

"The time came for us to leave our beautiful home. We disposed of most of our livestock, prepared provisions for the journey, loaded the wagons, and started on April 3, 1832." The family moved to Murray County in west Georgia.

"Why did we go there? Many answers might be given to the question. It would be hard to make the people of the present time understand the situation then. People had the spirit of adventure, the new country had the charms of attraction, and it was confidently believed that the Indians would all be gone in

a year, at least; but they did not go till six years. On the 11th day we stopped at the James Monroe place, on the old Federal Road...we were in the midst of the Cherokee Nation."

Appointed

The Rev. Mr. Cotter was appointed to the Gainesville Circuit in 1851. "McGregor was on his native heath." My father had selected and named the place. Nineteen years before, in my ninth year, I had left the county. Our membership contained some leading men, including Brother Johnson, a lawyer, and Brother Graham, my first school-teacher.

"The most distinguished man was Dr. Richard Banks, a graduate of the university and of a medical school. He was the most widely known man in that part of the state, and sometimes he rode a hundred miles to perform an operation. He came all the way to Murray County to remove a tumor from a lady's breast. He performed an operation with a perfectly steady hand, yet he was tender and emotional. It would not be saying too much to state that Dr. Banks was an oculist fifty years in advance of his profession. He not only discovered many troubles of the eye, but he invented delicate instruments by which they could be

removed. Dr. Westmoreland, a leading surgeon in Atlanta, told me that years ago, when he was a young man, he rode fifty miles and stayed a week or more to receive instructions from Dr. Banks. Banks County is named in honor of Dr. Banks.

'Good Year'

"It may be said that he had a good year all the way round. At its close my family went to stay at my father's while I went to Conference. A most fatal fire destroyed three squares of the town and the Courthouse. Our books, bedding, and all we had went up in flames. I received notice of it while at Conference and sent it to my wife...

"Twenty-six years afterwards the first Conference was held at Gainesville, and I was the guest of Sister Banks. The Doctor had been dead a number of years, and she was quite an old lady. Fifty-seven years after my pastorate I took part in the memorial service, the last held in the old church, and also in the opening of the splendid new church. The Conference was held that year in Gainesville.

"Bishop Hoss asked me to take the chair and preside over the Conference for a little while. This would not be mentioned but that it was at Gainesville. When I was 86 years old, I dedicated a nice church at Gillsville, in

sight of where I was born. While there the thought came to me that this was the ground my feet first trod upon. This was my last visit to dear old Hall County."

William Jasper Cotter was married to Rachel Mullinex, an orphan, while pastor of a church in Lumpkin County. His mother and father died at the home of his brother, J.C.K. Cotter, in different rooms, on Sept. 9, 1871, the mother died at 5 o'clock and the father at 7. They were interred in the same grave at Stone Church. John Vance Cotter, who, according to his son, selected the site and the name of the city of Gainesville, is buried in west Georgia near Dalton.

NATO GAME

NAPLES, Italy (UPI)—Allied forces played "hunt the carrier" today in this year's major test of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Forces based in Southern Europe.

NATO missile ships, submarines and aircraft staged "enemy attacks" on a U.S. and Italian fleet of destroyers and aircraft carriers attempting amphibious landings in the Ionian Sea area.

Today's operations were part of Exercise Dawn Patrol 71, a training mission running April 28 to May 17.