

Thomson Memorial Cemetery was established in 1854 when the Bethany Methodist Church moved from 1 mile north of Thomson and established the First United Methodist Church on Main Street. The land for the cemetery was deeded by James R. Wilson. The earliest marked grave is that of Mary Sutton, who died on June 5, 1855. In 1932 funds were raised to replace the wire fence with the iron one that presently surrounds the cemetery. As of 2008, there are 1086 graves, marked and unmarked, in the cemetery.

The Confederate (C.S.A.) Grave Marker was patterned after the design on the Southern Cross of Honor medals. The front of the markers are the dates 1861 and 1865, which represent the beginning and ending of the war between the states. Also on the front you will read Deo Vindice which is latin For "God Is Our Vindicator" or "Vindicated By God". On the back are the letters C.S.A. meaning the Confederate States Of America.

The Thomson Memorial Cemetery represents part of the 19th century "Rural Cemetery Movement" (1830) which advocated moving cemeteries away from church-yards into more park-like settings, often on a high rise or bluff - considered prettier and more healthful; cemeteries became sites of recreation, picnics and family outings. Lawn cemeteries or memorial gardens emerged in the 20th century to retain a park-like atmosphere.

DONATIONS TO SUPPORT
THE CONTINUED CARE AND
MAINTENANCE OF THE THOMSON
MEMORIAL CEMETERY ARE
TAX DEDUCTABLE AND
MAY BE MAILED TO:

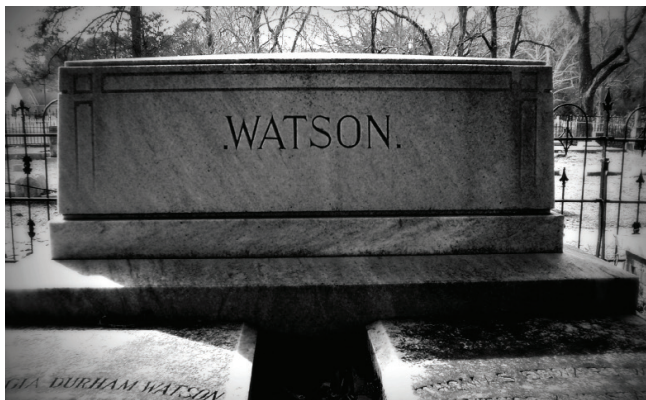
**THOMSON MEMORIAL
CEMETERY, INC.**
104 COBB STREET
THOMSON, GA 30824



**THOMSON MEMORIAL
CEMETERY**
CIRCA 1854

A SELF GUIDED
WALKING TOUR

THOMAS EDWARD WATSON (1856-1922), SECTION 20:



Thomas Edward Watson was born September 5, 1856 two miles from Thomson, Georgia, oldest son of John Smith Watson and Ann Eliza Maddox. His family descended from Georgia's early Quaker residents who had settled the area in 1768. As a young lawyer, Watson eagerly accepted virtually every law case that came his way. His gifts of eloquence and intellect and his willingness to spar with lawyers twice his age and experience soon positioned him among the foremost trial lawyers in Georgia. Watson made his political debut as a delegate to the Georgia convention of 1880. His impertinent opposition to the nomination of Governor Alfred H. Colquitt immediately earned statewide recognition and branded Watson a political rebel. He was elected to the Georgia House in 1882, with the notable support of the district's black voters. Disgusted at the lack of concern for reform, Watson resigned his seat midway through his term. He would be elected to the US House in 1890, once again on a platform of reform. While serving in the House, Watson successfully shepherded the bill establishing Rural Free Delivery through the Congress. He became the founder of Georgia's People's Party, the populists. Watson's last political post was that of Senator from Georgia, he died in office on September 26, 1922.

DR. JAMES SPANN JONES (1811-1885), SECTION 52:

James S. Jones was born August 31, 1811 in Warren County, GA. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Medical College in 1834 and established a medical practice in Warrenton for a time before moving to Thomson. In 1842, Dr. Jones was elected to the Georgia Senate from Warren County. Despite his move toward a more political career, Dr. Jones remained close to his east-central Georgia roots and in 1853 helped to found the First Methodist



Church in Thomson. Following the upheaval of the Civil War, Dr. Jones served as a delegate to the Georgia Constitutional Convention of 1865 from Columbia County. In 1877, Dr. Jones was elected to the Georgia House from McDuffie County. He was married to Susan Ann Butt; they had seven children. An early McDuffie County school was named for their daughter Laura Philoclear Jones who was a popular educator in Thomson. Dr. Jones died in Thomson on September 8, 1885.

CLAUDE NATHANIEL BENNETT (1866-1926), SECTION 37:

Claude Nathaniel Bennett was born on November 29, 1866 to Nathaniel Jones and Eugenia Pearce Bennett. He attended Harlem High School and Emory University and started his career as a school teacher. However, he left the area in 1890 as a correspondent for The Atlanta Journal. While working in Washington, D.C., Bennett caught the eye of Hoke Smith,

from Georgia, and became Smith's secretary while he served as the Secretary of the Interior during President Grover Cleveland's second administration. In 1896, Bennett founded the Congressional Information Bureau, which provided data to Congress and maintained a bureau for international business in all branches of government. In 1915, Bennett married Harriett Graves of Georgia. He was a President of the Southern Society, a member of the National Press Club, the Washington Society of Fine Arts, Phi Delta Theta, Sons of the American Revolution, Sons of Confederate Veterans, the University Club, and the City Club. He died in Washington, D.C. on June 13, 1926, from bronchial pneumonia.

COLONEL JOHN ALLEN WILKERSON (1834-1912), SECTION 163:

John Wilkerson was born on July 4, 1834 in Wrightsboro. He attended college at Athens, GA and Auburn, AL with the intent of becoming a doctor. On November 4, 1860, he married Martha Alford, they had four children.

But, duty called, and Wilkerson enlisted with Walker Light Artillery which became part of Company F of the 12th Georgia Battalion in May, 1862. He was badly wounded in the left leg at Hatcher's Run, VA, in 1865 and sent to a Richmond hospital to recover. Wilkerson joined the Methodist Church in 1872, under the guidance of Reverend W.T. Hamilton. He served for six years as the Commander for the McDuffie County Camp No. 823, United Confederate Veterans before his death in 1912.



JOHN LEWIS KING HOLTZENDORF (1848-1898), SECTION 132:

John Lewis was the eldest son of George Washington and Ellen King Holtzendorf of Camden County Georgia. He was educated in the public schools of McDuffie County but ran



away at age 18 to join the Confederate Army. His last post was as a mount procurer with Company C of the 8th Georgia

Regiment Cavalry in 1864, which became part of the 62nd Georgia Volunteers. The regiment fought at the Petersburg Siege and the Appomattox Campaign. Holtzendorf returned home to Thomson and in 1871 married Ella Hammock of Crawfordville. After her death, Holtzendorf remarried in 1874, this time to Lillie Latimer of Warren County. Three of the couple's four children died in infancy. A businessman by trade, Holtzendorf was elected as the first Mayor of Thomson in 1889 after the city received its charter, a post he held through 1895. One of Mayor Holtzendorf's first acts was to add a hook and ladder truck to the Thomson Fire Company.

DR. GEORGE THOMAS NEAL (1857-1936), SECTION 38:

George Thomas Neal was born at White Oak, Columbia County, April 25, 1857.

After graduating from Thomson Schools, Emory College at Oxford and Vanderbilt in 1886, he began a dentistry practice in the area – Thomson, Warrenton, Norwood and Harlem.

He was the first of 4 generations of his family practicing dentistry in Thomson, followed by his son, Howard P. Neal, grandson, Thomas J. Neal, and great grandson Thomas J. Neal, Jr.. Dr. Neal married Rosa Ray of Norwood on November 11, 1881. He died in 1936. His father James Briscoe Neal and mother, Martha W. Neal are also buried in Thomson Memorial Cemetery, Section 56.



DAVID FIFE IRVING (1833-1900), SECTION 49:

David Fife Irving was born in Arbroah Forfarshire Scotland on April 15, 1833. Irving settled in Thomson in 1856 by way of Quebec, Canada and Augusta, Georgia. He married Mary E. Knox of Columbia County in May 1859. He was a tanner and shoemaker, and when the Civil War broke out he was called, but on his journey was stopped and sent back to tan leather and make shoes for the Confederacy. After the war, he settled in Thomson and built a dry goods store across from the Knox Hotel (later Hadaway's Store). He served on the Thomson School Board for 17 years, serving as President for 14 years. Mr. and Mrs. Irving had eight children, three of whom died in infancy.

CHARLES E. KNOX (1838-1918), SECTION 58:

Charles E. Knox was born in Columbia County on June 20, 1838. His father, James Knox, sailed from Scotland to Upstate New York in the early 1800's, married Ruth Chandler in Cazenovia, New York, and moved to then Columbia County in 1824. (James and Ruth Knox are also buried in Thomson Memorial Cemetery, Section 49). Charles Knox was a courier for General James Longstreet in 1863 and was captured near Lexington, Kentucky in 1864, imprisoned and exchanged in 1865. He purchased the Greenway Hotel which served railroad passengers in 1882, and changed its name to Knox Hotel. He served as proprietor of the Knox Hotel until his death in 1918. He married Leila Williams of Crawfordville on October 10, 1867 and then had 7 children, Peter S., Georgia, Robert, Kate, Margaret, Mary and Ruth.

ELIAS WILSON (SHADE) HAWES (1853-1927), SECTION 84:

Elias Wilson Hawes was the son of Dr. Ellington Cody Hawes, a respected doctor and plantation owner of Wrightsboro and grandson of Peyton Hawes. Born in Wrightsboro and educated in Wrightsboro School, he was a farmer, Democrat and Mason. He was elected McDuffie County Sheriff in 1889, serving until 1907, when he resigned to become Georgia Prison Board inspector. He returned to elected office as Ordinary in 1925, serving until his death on January 5, 1927. Hawes was married to Adella Heath Wilder of Warrenton and they had four children, James Wilson Hawes, India Hawes Dozier, Ada Hawes Boulleneau and Admiral Richard E. Hawes.

