

November 28, 1976

"THE BIGGEST FAMILY

The widow of Mr. John L. Evins, late of this county, is living, stout and hearty. She is now 85 years old. She is the mother of 11 children, 57 grandchildren and 93 great grandchildren. Her maiden name was (Nancy) Baugh. She was a sister of the late William Baugh, of Gwinnett county and came to what later became Fulton county in 1818, and settled with her husband on Nancy Creek in this county when the Indians were here. This creek was named for her. Mrs. Evins, the mother of Mr. J. C. Evins of this city, is still living at the old homestead settled 65 years ago. Who can beat that for an old inhabitant?"

The above article appeared in the Atlanta Constitution of Wednesday, January 31, 1883.

John Leroy Evins, a native of South Carolina, was certainly one of the original settlers of DeKalb and one of its most substantial. He purchased a large body of land along Nancy Creek including acre upon acre of choice bottom land. Included in his holdings were all of land lots 13, 40 and 41 in the 17th district of then DeKalb, now Fulton County. The homeplace was in land lot 13 very close to the present intersection of Peachtree-Dunwoody and House roads and overlooking the valley of Nancy Creek. What name the creek bore when he arrived is not remembered, but that he named it for his bride about 1820 is a logical if not thoroughly proven conclusion. It is interesting to note that the U. S. Census of 1850 shows the valuation of Evins' land at \$15,530. That was a lot of land in a day and time when the City of Atlanta boasted a population of 2,500.

The writer of the above history set out to find the grave of John L. Evins which, he had been told, was somewhere around the old homeplace. The home had disappeared but the site was easily discernible, being upon an elevation surrounded by fine old trees. Indeed, the pioneers were unerring in their ability to pick home-sites endowed with natural beauty. A large cedar nearby disclosed what appeared to be one grave, but alas, no marker. Better luck was had some sixty feet away from the grave, for there, under leaves and pine needles, lay some of the broken remains of a once handsome box tomb. Vandals had done their work. Enough fragments were located to piece together the sought for vital statistics. Expertly cut in deeply incised letters and numerals was the following inscription:

In Memory of
JOHN L. EVINS
Born March 23rd, 1794
Died August 8th, 1864

Further investigation at the site led to the discovery that the side pieces of the tomb were serving as front doorstep and hearthstone of a small house nearby, while the lower half of the top slab, bearing the name of its maker, D. N. Judson, Atlanta, had

The writer believes that Nancy is the correct name of the creek, and its namesakes including the church and the road. The following article from the *Atlanta Constitution* of Wednesday, January 31, 1883, lends support to this belief:

"THE BIGGEST FAMILY

The widow of Mr. John L. Evins, late of this county, is living, stout and hearty. She is now 85 years old. She is the mother of 11 children, 57 grandchildren and 93 great grandchildren. Her maiden name was [Nancy]³² Baugh. She was a sister of the late William Baugh, of Gwinnett county and came to what later became Fulton county in 1818, and settled with her husband on Nancy Creek in this county when the Indians were here. This creek was named for her. Mrs. Evins, the mother of Mr. J. C. Evins of this city, is still living at the old homestead settled 65 years ago. Who can beat that for an old inhabitant?"

John Leroy Evins, a native of South Carolina, was certainly one of the original settlers of De Kalb and one of its most substantial. He purchased a large body of land along Nancy Creek including acre upon acre of choice bottom land. Included in his holdings were all of land lots 13, 40 and 41 in the 17th district of then De Kalb, now Fulton County.³³ The homeplace was in land lot 13 very close to the present intersection of Peachtree-Dunwoody and House roads and overlooking the valley of Nancy Creek. What name the creek bore when he arrived is not remembered, but that he named it for his bride about 1820 is a logical if not thoroughly proven conclusion. It is interesting to note that the U. S. Census of 1850 shows the valuation of Evins' land at \$15,530. That was a lot of land in a day and time when the City of Atlanta boasted a population of 2500.

On November 25, 1931, the writer of this history set out to find the grave of John L. Evins which, he had been told, was somewhere around the old homeplace. The home had disappeared but the site was easily discernible, being upon an elevation surrounded by fine old trees. Indeed, the pioneers were unerring in their ability to pick homesites endowed with natural beauty. A large cedar nearby seemed to indicate the presence of a family cemetery. An inspection disclosed what appeared to be one grave, but alas, no marker. Better luck was had some sixty feet away from the grave, for there, under leaves and pine needles, lay some of the broken remains of a once handsome box tomb. Vandals had done their work. Enough fragments were located to piece together the sought for vital statistics. Expertly cut in deeply incised letters and numerals was the following inscription:

In Memory of
JOHN L. EVINS
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Further investigation at the site led to the discovery that the side pieces of the tomb were serving as front doorstep and hearthstone of a small house nearby, while the lower half of the top slab, bearing the name of its maker, D. N. Judson, Atlanta,³⁴ had been pressed into service as a back doorstep for the same house. But the inscription that Mr. Judson so carefully carved for the information of posterity is hereby preserved, safely beyond the reach of vandals or the ravages of time.

[From Atlanta and Environs by Franklin Garrett
v. 17]

Nancy Evins died in November, 1883, and is buried in an unmarked grave in the cemetery of the church presumably bearing her name.³⁵

The *Southern Recorder*, published at Milledgeville by Richard M. Orme, in its issue of May 25, 1824, carried the following ad:

CHATTAHOOCHEE

The subscriber has established a Ferry across this river at the place commonly known as the Shallowford in the upper part of De Kalb County. Travelers from the Carolinas to the Alabama, coming by way of Augusta, Madison, Rockbridge, etc., will find this much the nearest and best route. Bridges will be placed over the water courses beyond the ferry.

May 17th

Jacob R. Brooks.

The editors of the *Augusta Chronicle*, *Columbia Telescope* and *Raleigh Register* are requested to publish the above three or four times and forward their accounts for payment.

The Shallowford was the northern terminus of the High Tower Trail or Path in De Kalb County, reaching the south bank of the Chattahoochee River in fractional land lot No. 370, presently in Grogan's District of Fulton County. It crossed about midway between the present Roswell Bridge and the Bull Sluice plant of the Georgia Power Company, at a point where the river was wide and shallow.³⁶

Its proprietor, Jacob R. Brooks, one of De Kalb's earliest residents, was born in Wilkes County, Georgia, in 1787. He was a regular soldier in the U. S. Army for five years and served in the War of 1812. Shortly after coming to De Kalb he established the ferry at Shallowford and, in 1826 and 1827, served in the State Legislature in the House, from De Kalb.

When Cobb County was created in 1832 he moved thither and became its first state senator in 1833. During the same year he was appointed Indian agent for Cobb, his duties being to protect the rights and property of the Indians. He became their firm friend and, when Walker County was created a few years later, moved there as one of its first settlers.

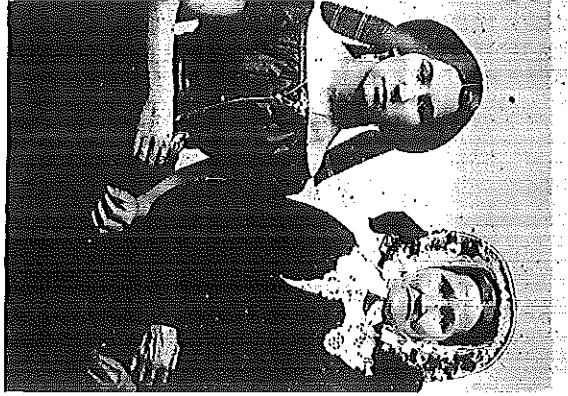
After having served his generation well and becoming the father of twelve children, seven sons and five daughters, he fell on sleep March 22, 1872, and is buried in McLemore's Cove in Walker County.³⁷

White Street in West End, running west from 825 Lee Street, S.W., bears the name of William W. White, one of the most highly esteemed of the early settlers of De Kalb. He arrived in 1824 from Franklin County, Georgia, riding on a pack horse, with his plowgear on the animal and a side of meat and various utensils tied up in a sack behind him.³⁸ He settled in land lot No. 119, of the 14th district, wherein much of Oakland City is now located.

The pillaging Indians fretted him very much when they came from their quarters at Sandtown and were forever peeping around the smokehouse and picking up any useful articles lying around.

His wife was afraid of them. He had gone back to Franklin County after just as soon as he could get the log cabin ready and was in such a hurry he didn't take time to board up some of the cracks between the logs. So when bears, wolves and panthers came prowling around the house at night, Judy refused to occupy the side of the bed next to the wall for fear that

Daughters



Georgia Ann & Nancy Burch Evans

c 1860

GRS P.00035

wife of John Berry

Evans

MAKING IT HAPPEN IN SETTLING DEKALB

Nancy Evins Gave Her Name To Many Things

In the 1820s, land-hungry settlers continued to pour into the land which was relinquished by the Creek Indians and later became DeKalb County. Most of the settlers in DeKalb, plain, uneducated people, came from Virginia and South Carolina. Among these were John L. and Nancy (Nance) Evins. Jack, as he was known to his family, purchased a large area along what was to become Nancy Creek. On the times when Jack could not find Nancy, he usually went to "the creek" and found her fishing. It was not long before he was calling the creek "Nancy's Creek."

The Evins were members of what would become the Nancy Creek Primitive Baptist Church in Chamblee, and they sometimes had to fight hostile Creek Indians to get to church. Nancy is buried in the church cemetery, but her memory lives in the names of schools and streets, as well as the creek and the church.

