



Gateway to the West



Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society P. O Box 231 Jonesville, Virginia 24263

July 2016



President's Report *By Becky Jones*

We have had good year at the Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society as we continue to have more visitors and interest in our Society.

Faith Welch was our guess speaker in January. Faith is a college student and will be entering law school this fall. See article enclosed.

The weather had something to do with our February's meeting. We did not want our members slipping and sliding around.

Author of the book Hiding Ezra, Rita Quillen was our speaker in March. Mrs. Quillen describes her book as " Set during World War I in southwest Virginia, Hiding Ezra is the story of a simple farmer, Ezra Teague, who is forced to choose between fighting for his country and taking care of his family. Like more than 175,000 other young men, Ezra chose his family – not because he was a coward or a pacifist, but because he was practical and because he felt his Christian faith called him to do so. Hiding Ezra is also a love story, as we see the girl of his dreams, Alma Newton, try to figure out how to extricate Ezra from his predicament. And finally, Hiding Ezra is the story of an adventure, a quest, and a chase, as the authorities—including local boy Lieutenant Andrew Nettles—try to bring Ezra to Military justice." Rita said she had spent one summer researching old local

Continued on page 4

Historical Society Life-Members Pass

Carol Bowling Rivers, age 78, of the Wallens Creek community passed away at Lonesome Pine Hospital on June 9, 2016.

She retired from Mountain Empire Community College in 1998. Carol was a devoted member of Friendship Baptist Church and until her illness, was very active in the Women's Missionary Union (WMU). She was also long time clerk of the Powell River Baptist Association. She was a lifetime member of the Lee County Historical Society, serving as trustee. Carol was active in the Jonesville Woman's Club and a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). In her spare time, she enjoyed working on their Wallen's Creek farm.

She is survived by husband, J. Neil Rivers; daughters Pamela K. Bowen and Jane Jones; sister Rita Graham, and brother Bruce Bowling. Her Funeral Service was 3:00 p.m. Sunday, June 12 at Mullins-Sturgill Funeral Home chapel.

Marilyn Shackelford Davis of Rose Hill passed away at her residence in Rose Hill back in the winter. Marilyn retired from teaching in Hawaii and she and her husband, Charles Willard Davis, returned to Rose Hill. Willard preceded her in death. She was an avid historian, a Life-Member of the Lee County Historical Society and a member of the Major George Gibson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Marilyn is survived by a son, Charles S.J. Davis, of Kailua, Hawaii.



<i>President's Report</i> 1
<i>Life Members Pass</i> 1
<i>William Powell Duff – Civil War Soldier...2</i>	
<i>Herman Reed Williams.....3</i>	
<i>Books on Sale</i>8
<i>Queries for Info</i>8

William Powell Duff – Civil War Soldier

by Libby LaForce

William Powell Duff was born in Lee County, Virginia on February 6, 1837. He lived on his family farm in the Sticklelyville area with his parents James and Elizabeth Young Duff.

At about the age of 24 he enlisted as a Private in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. He served for a short time and then was sent back to Lee County to recruit more soldiers. He made up a company from the Wallen's Creek area of Lee County in 1861. Company G, 5th Virginia Regiment.

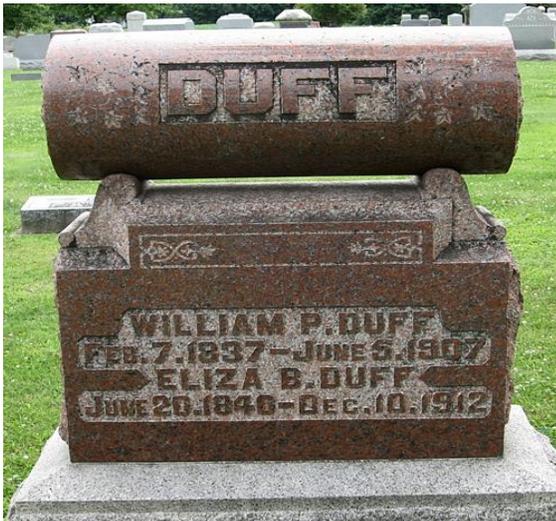
In November of 1863, William Powell Duff was promoted to full Captain. He fought in many important battles including Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Battle of the Wilderness and several others.

On May 12, 1864 at the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse, his whole division was captured and sent to Point Lookout in Maryland for about six weeks. Then to Fort Delaware around Philadelphia. From there to Morris Island near Charleston, South Carolina. Then finally to Camp Pulaski, Georgia near Savannah.

During the time he was held prisoner he was one of 600 confederate soldiers who was taken from the prison camp and used as a human shield. These men became known as the Immortal 600.

These soldiers were so mistreated that several died of starvation. For 42 days they were fed a retaliation ration of 10 oz. of moldy cornmeal and ½ pint of soured onion pickles. These men were reduced to supplementing their ration to an occasional rat or stray cat. Thirteen more men died of dysentery and scurvy, conditions that we find hard to accept even today.

To help pass the time Captain Duff made jewelry from the coat buttons from their uniforms (rings, etc.) using a small anvil (about a 6x6 piece of metal) he carried in his pocket. Guards bought and sold his jewelry to use to buy more provisions (food) for himself and fellow prisoners.



*Captain William Powell Duff
Confederate States Army*

After the war Captain Duff came back to Virginia and married Eliza Barbara Newland, from Sullivan County, Tennessee. They had 8 children. He later moved to Ardmore, Indian Territory because he contacted TB. Ardmore is what now is Oklahoma. William Duff worked to help Indian Territory become part of the Statehood.

He died five months before it became a state. He passed away June 5, 1907 at the age of 70. He died of liver and kidney disease. He is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Lebanon, Indiana.

Patricia Duff Gully, who is Captain Duff's great-great granddaughter recently visited us here in Lee County and was kind enough to share this information with us. She gave us his photo and copies of three letters he wrote to Eliza Barbara Newland from Sullivan County, Tennessee, who later became his wife. Patricia has the anvil that her great-great grandfather used to make his jewelry. Other family members have some of the jewelry he made.

Patricia and her husband have been tracing the footsteps of her grandfather's journey in the Civil War. She plans to write about her discoveries and share them with us at a later date.

Herman Reed Williams *by Judy Williams*

Herman Reed Williams was born March 5, 1940 in the Sulphur Springs Community, near Millers Chapel in Jonesville, Virginia, to George "Babe" Williams and Ola DeVault Williams. He was the fourth of six children. Reed passed away January 24, 2016 at the age of 75.

George Everett "Babe" Williams was born, November 8, 1914, the son of Bill and Ollie Eagle Williams. Both his paternal and maternal ancestors were among the Millers Chapel community's first settlers: His paternal grandparents were Joseph and Nancy Napier Hayes Williams. His paternal great grandparents were George and Jane Ely Napier and his paternal great, great grandparents were Thomas and Eleanor Garrett Napier. Eleanor was the daughter of Thomas Garrett, another early Millers Chapel settler. His maternal grandparents were Ambrose and Phoebe Minerva Lockhart Eagle.

According to Babe's sister, Jeanette Williams Anderson, he was named George after his half-brother George Williams (the son of Joseph Williams and first wife Martha Thompson Williams) and Everett after his mother's brother, who died at age 21; about the time Babe was born.

Babe married Ola DeVault on Saturday, November 27, 1932 at the court house in Jonesville, Virginia. Ola's parents were L. A. (Leff) and Millie Muncy DeVault.

Babe's sister Jeanette said his house was ready for the new bride as he had already obtained furniture. Babe and Ola had six children. Howard White Williams was born on August 12, 1933. He suffered from cerebral palsy and was never able to walk or feed himself. He was lovingly cared for by his family until he passed away on July 29, 1999. Bill Leff "Hoot" Williams was born on September 1, 1934. He now lives in Franklin, Ohio and has a successful business. Charlotte Gwen Williams was born on April 19, 1936. She lives on the family farm in Millers Chapel, having cared for her father and invalid brother. Herman Reed Williams was born on March 5, 1940. He married Judy Huff in 1983. He and Judy founded Old Virginia Hand Hewn Log Homes, Inc., which is now located in the Dot community near Pennington Gap. Reed's Dad, Babe and his uncle Bob "Ug" Williams helped in hewing of the logs and handcrafting log home packages. Euria Myrna Williams was born on August 2, 1941. She passed away in Ohio on April 10, 2003 due to a heart condition. Henry Southgate "Cy" Williams was born on June 26, 1947. Cy retired from General Motors several years ago. He lives in Nashville, AK and enjoys fishing and hunting. Babe was gifted in animal care and was known as a "cattle doctor" in the community. He was glad to teach his craft to the younger generation.

After Reed was born, his family soon moved to Millers

Chapel where he grew up on the family farm. "Babe" was a coal miner as well as a farmer. One of the mines he worked in was Bonnie Blue, Virginia which is near St. Charles, VA, fifteen or twenty miles from where he lived. He was one of the few in the neighborhood who had a car, so he gave rides to relatives and neighbors who also worked there. Like most people in the Chapel, "Babe" also raised tobacco, corn and cattle. Families in those days did whatever they could to make a living and raise their families.

Reed was able to start school a year early because they did not have enough students to fill the class room. He entered the little school in Millers Chapel, at age 5. Grades 1-3 were in one room and 4-7 in the other. There was a pot-bellied stove in each room. The school did not have running water, so their drinking water came from a bucket with a community dipper. He recalls making a drinking cup by folding a piece of paper into the shape of a cone. You had to drink up quickly! Mrs. Berta Muncy, wife of Newman Muncy, was his teacher in grades 1-3. Reed referred to her as a very kind and sweet lady.

During his school days Reed had many duties and responsibilities around the farm. He said when all the rest of the kids were playing ball or going to town, he was working in the fields or watching some old cow. He hated farming and cattle for this very reason. After graduating from Jonesville High School in 1957, he said he was hoeing corn one day and threw the goose-neck hoe through the fence and that was the end of his farming.

At the age of seventeen, he and T.J. Delph, a longtime friend, hitchhiked to Dayton Ohio, where Reed had relatives. Their search for work there did not pan out, so they hitchhiked back home. Unable to find work, he and T.J. decided to join the Army. They started walking down the road from Millers Chapel. On the way they passed the farm of Caswell Williams, a relative, where they saw Bruce Williams. They told him of their plans and Bruce told them to wait until he got his shirt, he wanted to go too. So they walked down to the forks of the road to Corb Huff's filling station where they pooled their money and bought a bag of Prince Albert, then hitchhiked to Big Stone Gap, Virginia where they would sign up to join the US Army and see the world.

The three were soon separated and traveled in different directions. Reed was a member of the 82nd Airborne – 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He joined this group largely because they paid an extra \$55.00 per month. He saw this as an opportunity to send the extra money home each month to help care for his crippled brother, White.

Continued on page 5



Faith Welch



Jolene Lambert and Shawn Morris

President's Report *continued from page 1*

newspapers about the time this took place. She was a semi-finalist for Virginia's Poet Laureate in 2012. Hiding Ezra was inspired by a true story from her husband's family. Rita is a school teacher and lives on a farm in Scott County, VA. www.ritasimsquillen.com for information.

Jane Scott Scobey was raised in Lee County and graduated from Jonesville High School. She had called me wanting to know where some Daughertys were buried. After talking to her I asked her to come and talk to our members. Her grandparents, Burl and Doris, had lived in the old Judge Morgan House in Jonesville. Her Uncle Hollis sang at many weddings at the Methodist Church. We enjoyed her talk because she brought back memories of people and places in Lee County.

Shawn Morris and Jolene Lambert were our speakers in May. Shawn is with the Daniel Boone Soil and Water Conservation. He talked about the services they provide for the land owners - best management practices, banded mines, wet lands, pasture walks, free tree day, education of kids, Powell/Chinch clean water initiative and Friends of the Cedars for a few things.

Jolene is a sixth grade science teacher at Jonesville Middle school. She got involve with the Friends

of the Cedars through Education of kids in the creek. The Friends of the Cedars is a volunteer group of persons who want to Protect and Promote the National Heritage of the Cedars land here in Lee County. There have been 30-40 acres just west of Jonesville put in the Natural Preserve, Department of Conservation Recreation, with hope of getting more land. This land is shallow, rocky, sandy, dry, limestone and full of caves. Lee County has more caves in this area than any other part of the state. We have lots of sinkholes and our creeks running into the ground and coming up miles away. Cedar trees and western type prairies plants grow here; the running glade clover is one plant that is found here. We have the isopods, freshwater mussels and many plants that will be lost unless we get busy and protect what we have.

Birg Sergent was our speaker in June. Read his article in this edition.

One of our out of state members would like to have us do an article on the history of the Green Hill Methodist Church. It was on the old Woodway Road in Dryden, Va. If anyone has information on the old church we would appreciate your sharing it with us.



Rita Quillen



Jane Scott

Herman Reed Williams *continued from page 3*

After several failed attempts, Reed finally perfected the tower jump after his instructor explained to him he would be there until he got it right, so why not do it the way he was told initially. He quickly advanced to the rank of Sergeant and became an instructor at Fort Bragg, NC. He toured several foreign countries, spending the majority of his tenure in Germany. He was discharged in 1963.

When Reed returned home, still seeing no opportunity for work, he decided to go to Northern Virginia, near Washington, D.C. where he found work with a construction company. He soon learned the tricks of the trade and became foreman for the company, building houses in several subdivisions. Eventually, he started his own company pouring concrete. Seeing how successful this venture was, he decided to form his own company, Williams Construction Co. He was very successful with the company, developing several high end sub divisions in Northern Virginia and Maryland. His office was on the top floor of the Bank of Vienna building in Vienna, Virginia.

A lady who sold homes for him in Northern Virginia wrote this about Reed. "I was privileged to sell the houses and I soon came to know what Reed Williams was all about. Like the elephant in the kid's nursery rhyme, he 'Meant what he said and said what he meant. Reed Williams was honest 100 percent.' He also was a fine builder and had compassion for others, especially the disabled."

Things were going super for him until 1979 when the interest rates soared and the economy soured. He finally was able to sell the houses he had started, paid all his debtors and left the city. He drifted for a while, going to Florida for a short time. On his way home from Florida to Lee County, he passed through Franklin, NC and decided to hang around there for a while. He started a small construction company there, building residential homes. When one house sold he started another, until this business got on its feet. In the spring of 1981, on a visit to Jonesville, he learned that I was recently divorced, and called me. Although we were raised just a few miles apart, we did not know each other when growing up and going to school. We met in July for the first time since leaving school in 1957. Reed swept me off my feet, stole my heart and we became best of friends. He maintained his residence and business in the Carolinas for a year or so.

Reed had always wanted to build a log house for himself. We visited several companies and went through numerous brochures. With each manufacturer claiming to be the best, we became more confused with each one. He

quickly saw their "best" was not what he wanted, so he decided to build his own. He knew his dad's great-grandfather Ambrose Eagle and both his grandfathers, Emmett Eagle and Joseph Williams, were handcrafters and builders of log homes. With this in mind, we took a framing square, level and a little common sense and went up the hill to an old log house which had been handcrafted by Ambrose Eagle. We studied the technique he had used – integrating modern technology and a few modifications of our own, devised a near perfect system. Later, it seemed fitting to call the improved design "The Eagle System". Later, Reed also designed a 6" x 12" hewn log on log system (The Williams System) with the option to have a "chink" look or not, and an 8" x 8" "D" log (The Huff System), the first in the industry with dovetail corners for either system.

With the help of Babe and Ug, combining their knowledge and expertise in hewing and handcrafting with Reed's experience in construction, we began to build the first log house. Everything was done on site, next to the foundation. The logs were hand hewn; dovetail corners notched, and then the logs were placed in the wall, one at a time. When people saw the handcrafting, hewing, dovetail notches and workmanship, word quickly spread and the response was unreal. Before the house was finished, orders were coming in for other houses and Old Virginia Hand Hewn Log Homes was born, with the goal to continue an American heritage as well as a family tradition.

The business became very successful, delivering homes from Maine to Texas. Reed oversaw delivery and erection of the homes, traveling with the crew most of time, while I managed the office and sales. The company has delivered thousands of homes to more than thirty five states, as well as a sauna to the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Some of the charitable activities of Old Virginia have been the donation of fellowship halls to the Fleenor's Chapel Baptist and Millers Chapel Methodist churches; moving the old log church/school from Long Hollow and reassembling it on the grounds of Lee High School in Ben Hur, Virginia; doing the primary restoration on the Camp Meeting Shed at Jonesville; helping to restore the old Friendship Baptist Church for use as the Lee County Historical Society's headquarters and building the log structure for Appalachian Service Project on the hill at the mouth of Millers Chapel.

Reed and I also hosted a community Birthday Party for his brother White. The last fifteen years White was

Continued on next page

Herman Reed Williams *continued from page 5*

alive his party featured Jim & Jesse McReynolds and the Blue Grass Boys, White's favorite Bluegrass group, until White's death at the age of 65, just days before his 66th birthday in 1999.

White was the inspiration for many of Reed's civic activities, some of which were: establishing scholarship funds at Mountain Empire Community College, Milligan College and UVA at Wise for special needs students only.

He and Babe donated funds to build a room for use by handicapped students in Williams Hall (named in honor of Federal Judge Glen M. Williams) at Milligan College. He and his siblings donated White's wheelchair van and wheelchair to the Jonesville Rescue Squad to help in transporting the handicapped. Each spring, we hosted a fishing tournament for the handicapped at our home in Long Hollow near Jonesville, inviting handicapped children and adults as well as residents of the local nursing homes.

Reed also sponsored "Super Saturday" for the disadvantaged through the Junction Center for Independent Living, which would not have been possible for the organization without outside donations from sponsors. One evening each month the clients-and their caregivers if they wanted to come—were taken out for different activities, such as movies; have swimming parties; games and door prizes and then treated to dinner.

Reed was also instrumental in establishing a scholarship at LMU in memory of Ross Carter, a World War II hero who was born in Duffield, VA. Ross entered the army just after graduating from LMU in 1941. One of the three survivors of his platoon, he re-enlisted after the war ended and died of cancer in 1947. He was a member of the 82nd Airborne Division and wrote about his service during WWII, a book titled "Those Devils in Baggy Pants".

After a while, Reed became bored with the log home company and wanted to do something in addition. He formed a land development company, calling it "Axehandle, LLC". He gave it this name because the money to make it possible was earned with an axe at the log home company. The profits from the company would be donated to the Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children. Through this company, he developed Marwyngal and Countryside Sub Divisions in Jonesville building affordable quality homes. The land for the first sub division was previously owned by the Martin/Wynn/ Wygal families, thus the name "Marwyngal". Bricks were salvaged from the school that stood on the property and incorporated into the first house built there. It is said the bricks were made in Millers Chapel.

He was a lifetime member of the 82nd Airborne Association, Ross Carter Appalachian Chapter, 504th

Parachute Infantry Regiment Association, Preston Lodge #47- Jonesville, Miles Lodge #167 - Pennington Gap, Martin Station Lodge # 188 - Rose Hill, McPherson Lodge # 99 – Blackwater, Jericho Shrine Temple – Kingsport, TN.

Other clubs and accomplishments included 32nd Degree Mason Scottish Rite of Free Masonry – Knoxville, TN, Powell Valley Shrine Club, Kazim Shrine Temple, Kazim Road Runner, Legion of Honor, Order of Eastern Star Powell Valley # 13 - Pennington Gap, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Kentucky Colonel, American Legion (National), Lee County Optimist Club, Woodway Ruritan Club, Lions Club, VFW Bugler, Grand Marshal of the 2002 Jonesville Christmas Parade, and Grand Marshal of the 2007 Lee County Tobacco Festival Parade.

Reed stepped down as Grand Marshal of the 2003 Lee County Tobacco Festival Parade and recommended a very deserving local veteran who entered the military at age 13 and served in WWII; Korea and Vietnam - CSM Roy Cheek.

Continued on next page



Reed Williams at the Lee County Veteran's Memorial Wall

Herman Reed Williams *continued from page 6*

Selected for "Small Business Man of the Year" by Lee County Chamber of Commerce; 504th PIR Association Trooper of the Year, 2014, Atlanta, GA. He received numerous award plaques for support of community projects, Masonic and Shrine functions.

Reed had always been known as one who gets things done. He didn't talk about doing things, he performed. Knowing this, R. B. Pennington invited Reed and me to their monthly Ruritan Club meeting. During the meeting there was discussion about how several organizations in the county had tried to build a Veteran's Memorial Wall without success. They asked who would be willing to serve on a committee for the project and of course, Reed volunteered. There was a committee formed to plan for the project, with Reed as Chairman and R. B. Pennington Co-Chair.

We started soliciting funds, contacting the businesses in the county, set up a table on the 4th of July and at the Lee County Fair selling red, white and blue hats and taking donations. Fundraising began in July, 2002 and the response was tremendous! Groundbreaking for the wall was on 9/11/2002. Reed designed and supervised construction of the wall. Through his diligence, the wall was completed and dedicated on May 24th, 2003 Memorial Day weekend, less than ten months from commencing. Through his efforts, over THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (300,000.00) were raised for this project. The wall is here today because of Reed Williams' ability to get things done as well as the generosity of the businesses and individuals of Lee

County. He was so proud of this accomplishment, as we all should be.

Located in Cumberland Bowl Park in Jonesville, VA, the granite KIA monument displays 197 names from this county who were killed serving their country and over 2,000 servicemen bricks. This long awaited monument is a credit to the county and the state of Virginia and one of the finest tributes to those men and women who sacrificed so much for the freedom we enjoy today. A perpetual care fund for the Memorial Wall has been established. Names of annual donors are displayed on a plaque at the rear of the wall over the flower box. Donations are still being accepted.

If you wish to contribute to this very worthy cause, checks can be mailed to: Lee County Veterans Memorial Wall, P O Box 526, Pennington Gap, VA. 24277. All donations are appreciated. Servicemen bricks are still available to be placed on the wall. The County of Lee chose the Veterans Memorial Wall to appear on their county sticker for automobiles in 2003.

Reed was truly a unique person. His Dad told me several years ago, that from the time Reed started walking, he hit the floor running and didn't stop until he went to sleep at night. He was the same with anything he attempted to do. He approached every project with GUSTO. He really lived up to the Army slogan, "BE ALL YOU CAN BE". I feel honored and blessed to have had Reed in my life for 35 years. He was my husband, partner and most of all, my best friend.

Respectfully submitted by Judy Williams



The Lee County Veteran's Memorial Wall at Cumberland Bowl Park, Jonesville, Virginia



Lee County
Historical and
Genealogical Association

P.O. Box 231
554 Old Friendship Rd.
Jonesville, Va. 24263-0231

*Located in the
Old Friendship Baptist Church*

Office Hours by Appointment

PHONE:
(276) 346-0005

E-MAIL:
leecovahistsociety@hotmail.com

President:

Becky Jones

Vice-President:

Ada Vandeventer

Secretary:

Judy G. Davidson

Treasurer:

Greg Edwards

Office Assistant:

Libbie Laforce

Directors:

H. Ronnie Montgomery
Carol Rivers
Jean Martin

Researchers:

Judy G. Davidson
Nell Newman
Kim Hurst

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.leecountyvahistoricalssociety.org
contact us on our website or at:
leecovahistsociety@hotmail.com

A Query For Information.....

Mr. Jim Jones, P.O. Box 23, Humboldt, AZ, 86329, telephone (928) 533-4459 is seeking information about Stephen Jones son of Samual & Selah (Celia) Jones. Born 1787—Died 1848, Turkey Cove, Lee Co. Va.

Mr. Edgar Cress will no longer be doing Genealogical Research for the Historical Society. We appreciate his service and devotion to the Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society over the past many years and wish him the best!

Historical Society Books On Sale!

Bicentennial History of Lee County 1792-1992

Regular \$65.00 – Sale \$52.00 Book

2.75 Tax (VA Residents)

5.00 S & H

\$59.75 Total Cost

Volume I Cemeteries of Lee County

Regular \$40.00 - Sale \$32.00 Book

1.70 Tax (VA Residents)

5.00 S & H

\$38.70 Total Cost

Volume II Cemeteries of Lee County

Regular \$45.00 – Sale \$36.00 Book

1.90 Tax (VA Residents)

5.00 S & H

\$42.90 Total Cost

Volume III Cemeteries of Lee County

Regular \$50.00 – Sale \$40.00 Book

2.10 Tax (VA Residents)

5.00 S & H

\$47.10 Total Cost

A Pictorial History of Lee County

Re-print of the First Volume

Regular \$49.99 - Sale \$40.00 Book (Tax Included)

5.00 S & H

45.00 Total Cost

Our Library and resources are available for use by appointment.

Please contact:

Becky Jones (276) 346-2010

Judy Davidson (276) 346-2335

Jean Martin (276) 546-3924

Libby Laforce (276) 346-3562

Ada Vandeventer (276) 346-2464