



# CHRONICLER

## PRESERVING OUR PAST



ISSUE 44, JULY 1, 2018

Greenback Historical Society, Inc.  
6725 Morganton Road  
P.O. Box 165  
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WWW.GBHISTORICAL.WEBS.COM

### 2018 WINNING ESSAY

#### Nola Melton Elam Historical Award

##### *Sam Rayburn: A Political Powerhouse*

By: Colbe Cagle

March 17, 2018

In the little town of Greenback lived a vivacious woman named Minnie McTeer. She held the position of cafeteria manager at Greenback Public School for many years and was well known in the area as a lover of politics (*Carver*). She would often brag about her relation to the great U.S. Representative, Speaker of the House, and Majority Leader to Congress, Sam Rayburn. Although Rayburn was a Texan politician, his roots go back to the state of Tennessee where he was born in the nearby town of Kingston in a house located on the banks of the Clinch River. Ms. McTeer had great reason to be proud of her uncle as Rayburn is known as one of the greatest U.S. Representatives and the longest serving Speaker of the House - 17 years. He helped pass some of the twentieth century's most important legislation and worked "with, not under", as he put it, eight Presidents (*Samuel*). His success can be contributed to his convicting love for American politics, his cunning skills to persuade, and his ability to balance his roles as a National and District Representative.

Sam Taliaferro Rayburn showed an interest in politics at an early age. When he was five years old his father and mother, William and Martha Rayburn, moved their family of 10 children from Kingston, Tennessee to Windom, Texas to a forty-acre cotton farm. It would be this move to the great state of Texas that would nurture his dream of becoming a successful congressman. It was here that Rayburn first heard Representative Joseph Weldon Bailey deliver a three hour oration on American issues that so inspired him that he believed it was then that he set his sights on politics. He would declare that he would study law, enter politics, and one day serve in the United States Congress. As a boy he was a prodigious reader of American history and biography. He especially loved to read about past presidents and military leaders like Robert E. Lee (*United*). One of his favorite presidents to study was James K. Polk, the only House Speaker to move on to the Presidency from Tennessee (*Sam*).

In 1903 he graduated from the East Texas Normal

**NEXT MEETING: Saturday, July 14 at 2 PM at the Greenback Community Center.**

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College in Commerce, Texas. He worked his way through by sweeping out classrooms, making fires, and doing other odd jobs. He continued his studies at the University of Texas at Austin where he was admitted to the bar and later began practicing law in Bonham, Texas. After teaching school for 2 years, Rayburn in 1912, at the age of 30, was elected to Congress as a Democrat (*United*). In 1927, he would marry Matze Jones of Valley View, Texas, but the marriage would only last 3 months (*Sam*). Dupont Circle was his street of residence, but he maintained a 250 acre farm and 900 acre ranch in Bonham. He enjoyed golfing and fishing with his friends, but most of all he enjoyed long walks around Washington. He would often be seen strolling around the great city puffing on a large cigar (*United*). His early determination to be a part of American Politics, drove him to dedicate his life to improving the lives of the American people. *Table 1* shows the many capacities in which he served.

Shortly before his death in 1961, Rayburn said of his career, "I am a man in public life who is satisfied, who has achieved every ambition of my youth." (*Samuel*). Rayburn was a man who knew what he wanted and worked diligently to establish himself as a political powerhouse with his unflinching patriotism.

His love for politics challenged him to find ways to be successful. He wanted to make change for the betterment of America, not a name for himself. He did this through developing various means of persuasion. Not known for his elaborate oratory, he would use his

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## MUSEUM QUILT SHOW

The Greenback Heritage Museum’s 8th Annual Quilt Show is scheduled for September 6th, 7th and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The show is open from 9:00am to 4:00pm each day. Entries can be dropped off on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 31st, and September 1st between 10:00am and 2:00pm. You may enter as many quilts as you wish but can only win one prize per person. As in previous years, voting will be done by visitors casting a penny a vote for their favorite quilts. Cash prizes will be awarded. For additional information you may contact: Barbara Davis @ 865-660-0123 or Sandra Tipton @ 865-856-2944 or go to the Quilt Show page on the museum website at [www.gbmuseum.webs.com](http://www.gbmuseum.webs.com).

*Sandra Kerr Tipton*

## ICE CREAM CONTEST

This year’s annual Greenback Historical Society Ice Cream Contest was held at the Greenback Community Center beginning at noon on Saturday, June 30. Entrants vying for the prizes were invited to bring a gallon of their favorite confections and let them be judged by the crowd of eager tasters. First place prize was \$75, second was \$50 and third, \$25.

This year, the first place went to Brenda Blair for her strawberry cheesecake. Tracie Littleton took second place with lemon cookies and cream and Carrie McKelvey was third place winner with her red velvet.

*Paul Bailey*

## GRADUATION, 2018

Greenback High graduated 55 students on May 11, 2018. As usual it was well attended in the gym of the still new school. After the Pledge to the Flag, the National Anthem, and the invocation, Principal Mike Casteel gave the address to the students. It was heartwarming to hear his remarks and his admonitions to the students beginning the new chapter in their lives. Melanie Shepherd announced scholarships and honors of the students. Those of us who have graduated from Greenback High and parents and teachers of the students can be proud that 98% were following graduation with higher education.

Mackenzie Lett gave the address as Salutatorian. Ella Tiller, who also won the award for Distinguished Young Woman of Loudon County, gave the Valedictorian Address. Both girls plan to follow education in the medical field, Lett to attend the University of Tennessee to study pre-med, and Tiller to study biotechnical engineering at Georgia Tech.

Colbe Cagle was awarded the Nola Melton Elam Historical Award for his essay on Samuel Talliferro

Rayburn, 17 times U.S. Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Peck asked that the honor be shared this year with Mrs. Minnie McTeer, Greenback First Lady, and Manager of the Greenback School Cafeteria for many years. Colbe’s essay is printed in this issue of the Greenback Historical Society Newsletter.

*Carolyn Melton Peck*

## SAM RAYBURN (Continued from Page 1)

firm but calm short speeches to captivate his audience. As a parliamentary leader, he relied mainly on persuasion and almost never on raw power to achieve his aims. "You cannot lead people by trying to drive them. Persuasion and reason are the only ways to lead them," said Rayburn (*United*).

*Table 1: Political Positions held by Sam Rayburn during his 48 years in Washington DC.*

<i>Position</i>	<i>Congressional Number</i>
Congress	63rd-87th
Caucus Chair	67th
Majority Leader	75th-76th
Minority Leader	80th,83rd
Speaker of the House	76th-82nd, 84th-87th

He was known as a man of massive integrity, consistent fairness, with a relaxed sense of humor. Developing deep friendships with Republicans as well as Democrats was one of his major persuasive tactics. He was also admired for his ability to unify the conservative Southern Democrats and the more liberal Northern Democrats (*Rayburn*). He would become well versed in political persuasion and would teach new members of the House how to get along with others. His standard advice to first-term members of Congress was, "If you want to get along, go along." Rayburn had a keen way to work through controversy to keep the focus on the issue and not on individual party affiliation. He was so respected that he would often be called Mr. Sam by his fellow congressmen. He became well known to the American people and was often shown on television holding his large gavel and projecting his scowling countenance (*United*). His ability to persuade enabled him to help pass important legislature that shaped and is still shaping America today. For instance, his early involvement saw him introduce a measure for increasing the power of the Interstate Commerce

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*Bell, Richard "Richie" 51, Oct. 6, 2017.*

*Bass, Sue, 91, Oct. 6, 2017.*

*Moats, Harold Randall "Randy", 47, Oct. 12, 2017.*

*Bierman, Leonard Michael, 87, Feb. 9, 2018.*

*Benson, Gene Laurel, 74, April 11, 2018.*

*Hawkins, Jerry Lee, 59, April 14, 2018.*

*Morgan, David Joshua, 29, April 22, 2018.*

*Morgan, Aidan, 6, April 22, 2018.*

*Morgan, Jaxsen, 5, April 22, 2018.*

*Cable, Sharon Kay, 64, April 26, 2018.*

*Miller, Betty Joyce, 88, April 29, 2018.*

*Guider, Mary Ruth "Ruthie" Brooks, 74, May 10, 2018.*

*Lewis, Virginia Louise, 87, May 21, 2018.*

*Spradlin, Stacy Lynn, 42, May 22, 2018.*

*Williams, Gena Mae, 72, June 5, 2018.*

*Dyke, Ray, 75, June 14, 2018.*

All of the above are missed and loved. We are dedicating this issue to three women whose relatives were early settlers in Greenback and who have continued to make a lasting mark on our community.

JOHNNIE ELIZABETH HAMMONTREE MYERS had a record of accomplishments which are difficult to list. She was born March 1919 in Greenback to Leon and Ella Hammontree. Leon farmed and also built many houses in the Greenback area. My first memories of Miss Johnnie were seeing her with her family on a house on old Hwy. 95 with her brother Tommy on the steps. Later I remembered seeing her in a long white dress climbing the steps to one of the old storage buildings in Greenback. She was going to the top floor to a meeting of Eastern Star. For her entire life she was always involved and supportive of the town of Greenback and all its endeavors. Married to Harley Myers, they had two children, Harlene (deceased) and Vickie Myers Gunnels. Johnnie was a member of Pine Grove Presbyterian Church for life. She served as Elder and Clerk of the session for many years. She was Past President of the Eastern Star, Past President of Loudon County March of Dimes, First Lady of Loudon County, and won an award for Community Service from the Coytee Chapter of the DAR. She was one of the first members of the Greenback Historical Society.

Just as Miss Johnnie was active in church, charity, and religious activities, she became active in politics. She served as President of the Loudon County Republican Women for four years, Tennessee State Executive Committee Woman, first Vice-Chairman of the Loudon County Republican Party, first Woman Chairman of the Loudon County Republican Party, delegate to the Republican Convention in 1976 and delegate to the

Republican National Convention in 1992. For life, she represented Greenback and Tennessee.

An avid sports fan, she rarely missed a game of the Tennessee Men's Basketball Volunteers and supported the Lady Volunteers Coach Pat Summitt. Loving to travel, she visited the Holy Land twice and she also visited Europe and the states of Alaska and Hawaii, as well as much of the United States.

#### BETTY CHARLES HALL CABE CARROLL

Another of Greenback's natives passed away February 13, 2018. She was a descendant of one of Greenback's early founders. Born to Ed and Blanche Hall, Betty Charles was one of eight children. As were many of the farm people at the time, large families were the norm, and Betty learned to be a worker at a young age. Greenback benefitted from her family's training.

Attending school in Greenback, she became friends with Coy Cabe, whom she later married. They had two daughters, Patsy Cabe McCarter and Linda Cabe Berry. Following the family tradition, Patsy and husband Garfield opened and operated Broadway Florists in Lenoir City and Linda became employed at UT Hospital.

Betty went to work at Levi-Straus in Alcoa. She was well-known and popular with the other employees and was involved in organizing a group for employees and arranging outings and get-togethers for them even after Levi-Straus closed. Betty then went to work in Loudon County Government in the Business Office where she was again well-known and developed many friendships.

After Coy's death, Betty met and married Andy Carroll. She dropped the Charles from her name and became known as Betty Carroll. When Betty walked into the Greenback Diner, she was known by everyone and she made all to feel as though they were one of the most important persons in the world.

She became interested in Republican Politics and active in the Republican Women's Organization and was Representative in the 6<sup>th</sup> district. Always supportive and interested in Greenback, she became active in the Greenback Community Club, an organization formed during the building of the Community Center. I do not know if anyone can count the number of "Bean Suppers" Betty organized as a means of funding community projects. One for which she will be long remembered was the Committee to develop and enlarge the Greenback Heritage Scrapbook.

The Committee, with the help of Paul Bailey, has published three volumes and will soon publish a fourth.

Soon after the establishment of the Scrapbook Committee, the city was able to purchase the building which now houses the Greenback Heritage Museum. With Museum Committee members, Sandra Tipton, Carolyn Franke, Louise Coada, and Mayor Tom Peeler, the Museum has grown since its inception in 2005. Recently, the building next door has been donated by the Ragain Family to the city for expansion of the museum. Betty's daughter Linda Cabe Berry has accepted the chairmanship of this committee.

A member of Morganton Baptist Church for life, we know that she will be well remembered. Goodbye Betty Charles, Rest in Peace.

**MARY ZEMANOVICH BEST**

Following a brief illness, Mary Best died November 18, 2017, just short of her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. Mary was born December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1918, in the village of Dolna Suca, in what is now Slovakia to her parents Zemanovich and Catherine Selvey. Her father immigrated to the United States in 1921. Her mother, older brother, and Mary followed him a year later and settled in New Jersey. As a teenager, Mary became interested in acting and followed that wherever possible so long as she lived.

She attended Hillside High School, in New Jersey but left at the age of 16 to take a job in a factory as many did during the years of the Great Depression. She made 25 cents per hour. She became a member of the Little Theatre in Newark where she followed her dreams and decided that she would always be an actress.

Though not a Greenback native, she was connected to the Best Family, another of the pioneer families of Greenback, through her marriage in 1948 to John R. Best, Jr., a WWII veteran from Greenback, Tennessee. John reenlisted in the Army Air Force in 1949 and served as a Navigator on B-52's. Attaining the rank of Colonel, he retired after 27 years. During this time, Mary and John moved from place to place. Each place they went, Mary joined the community theaters and used her long ago dream of being an actress. While living in Louisiana, she joined the Community Theatre there where "playbills filled with accolades of her talent" showed that she played the lead in such roles in "The Subject was Roses." "A Man For all Seasons," and "Mary, Queen of Scots."

In 1982, Mary and John settled in the family home in Greenback. Mary decided to fulfill a lifelong dream of obtaining a college degree. After obtaining a GED, at the age of 68, she enrolled at the University of

Tennessee, as a part-time student. She graduated at the age of 78 with a B.A. Degree in Theatre. Three years later, she received a B.A. Degree in Communications.

Greenback is grateful to have such a talented couple as that of John R. and Mary Z. Best. This partial obituary is a summary of the obituary submitted by Edwin J. Best, Jr. A complete copy may be seen in Vol 4 of the Greenback Heritage Scrapbook.

*Carolyn Melton Peck*

**SAM RAYBURN (Continued from Page 2)**

Commission, and during World War I he sponsored the War Risk Insurance Act. His support of President Roosevelt's New Deal saw him instrumental in the passage of the Truth in Securities Act, the Public Utilities Holding Company Act, the Emergency Railroad Transportation Act, and the Rural Electrification Act. He believed with Roosevelt that the power of the federal government was needed to get the country out of the Great Depression. Rayburn pushed through the passage of banking reform laws, emergency relief programs, work relief programs, and agricultural programs. When Roosevelt's second New Deal was evolving, he assisted in passage of union protection programs, the Social Security Act, and programs to aid tenant farmers, and migrant workers (*Champagne*). The New Deal programs helped improve the lives of the American people suffering from the events of the Depression in which 1 out of 5 people were unemployed (*Sam*). It also set a precedent for the federal government to play a key role in the economic and social affairs of its nation. Rayburn was a part of that precedent. He is also credited for helping the nation to prepare for World War II (*Samuel*). More significant achievements include his work in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and 1960. The late 1950's saw the passage of the Hospital Survey and Construction Act, the first legislature which provided federal grants for construction of hospitals and healthcare facilities (*Champagne*). During Truman's administration, Rayburn aided in getting Congressional approval of the Marshall Plan and other foreign-policy and defense legislation. He was also a part of the Fair Deal Laws which included the Housing Act of 1949 and the liberalization of the Social Security system (United). He coined the term "Sun Belt" while gaining support for the construction of Route 66 (*Champagne*).

Lastly, Rayburn's success can be seen in his ability to

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balance his two roles as National and District Representatives. This would be a difficult task but one that challenged him to perform his national duties without compromising his responsibilities as a delegate from the state of Texas. His ability to do this so well won him continued admiration from his fellow Texans and also from his Washington peers. Over the years of loyal support for Democratic principles, Rayburn would often excuse himself from the rule of party regularity when Democratic policies conflicted with what he conceived to be his responsibility as a representative from the Fourth Congressional District of Texas (*United*). He even opposed President Truman in supporting legislature to relieve natural gas producers of strict Federal price regulations because he felt that his state was largely contingent upon the financial well-being of the gas and oil industry. Despite the opposition, he still maintained his solid relationship with Truman and Congress. On the other hand, he was a strong advocate for liberal foreign trade policy which was not always popular with Texas oil and gas interests (*United*). He was known as a politician who kept in close touch with his constituents. His informality allowed him to identify with the people of his rural district (*United*). His successful balancing act enabled him to keep the economic interests of Texas while still being an effective Speaker of the House.

Often after their service, politicians become victims of scrutiny for past events, policies, and laws that they helped initiate, write, support, and pass. Not true of Sam Rayburn, who even after his death and still today is known as a man who loved America and was a fair and honest politician. His love for the American people, his power of persuasion, and his ability to balance his responsibilities enabled him to reach this status. In 1961 he died of cancer at the age of 79. Although ill, he insisted on working to promote the New Frontier program of the President. His funeral was held at the First Baptist Church in Bonham where he was a member. President Kennedy's message of condolence called Rayburn, "a devoted servant and an unflinching friend of all Americans" (*United*). In his lifetime he received the Congressional Gold Medal and was honored with the Cordell Hull Award in recognition of his long vigilance over foreign trade and support of liberal policy (*Sam*). Although he never served as President, he was an integral part of promoting the policies of Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy. In April 1956, a New York Times article about his contributions to American Politics was entitled, "Mister Everything: Sam Rayburn" (*Samuel*). To search American history for a more prominent man who is held so highly and accomplished so much for the American people would

be a difficult task. Today his legacy lives on in the teaching of Political Science & American History in colleges across America, the Sam Rayburn High School in Pasadena, Texas, the Sam Rayburn House Museum, and the Sam Rayburn Library in Bonham, Texas (*Samuel*). No wonder Minnie McTeer was so proud!

*Editorial Note: Due to space constraints, the essay's references and picture of Sam Rayburn have been omitted.*

## CAROLYN'S CORNER

*"It doesn't matter how many times you fall down, it only matters how many times you get back up." Abraham Lincoln.*

I saw the above quote in Brenda Lee Quarte's column in the Daily Times and thought it was especially pertinent to my situation. I really do not remember how many times I have fallen in my lifetime, but it has been many. This is the first time, however, that I had no idea I was going to fall, no warning, and no idea why. For all those who live alone, and even those who do not, I strongly recommend a medical alert button. As the ads say "it saves lives". I don't really think that I was dying, but I certainly did need help!

For the Greenback Fire Department, the Rescue Squad, the EMT's, and volunteers, my grateful thanks. To Mike Tarwater, who had a key to my house, to Jack Lett, who thought to ask him, and who drove at least 95 miles per hour (according to Mike who might have exaggerated a little) to get me the help I needed on a night when all the hospital rooms between Knoxville and Atlanta were full, to the EMT's who stayed with me at Parkwest until I was admitted, and to the Good Lord, who aided us all, my eternal gratitude.

We lost some really good ones this winter, Mary J. Best, John's widow; Johnnie Hammontree Myers, who has always been a supporter of Greenback, and Betty Charles Hall Cabe Carroll, who has kept all our memories for the next generations. How we all will miss them and we have dedicated this issue to them. There were others whom I'm sure are sadly missed, but the handwritten list (January through March) is lost in the "snail mail" because I was unable to use my computer.

I am hunting for some information about Homer Hammontree. Do we still have any descendants of his family in our community? When Rev. Billy Graham died this year, it made me think of Rev. Hammontree. I remember that he used to travel with the Evangelist

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**Greenback Historical Society, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 165**  
**Greenback, Tennessee 37742**

Stamp

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Rev. Billy Sunday. When he was home, he used to come to the Presbyterian Church and perhaps others. He had a beautiful, booming voice. If you have memories, pictures, or know someone who does, please get in touch with me at 865-816-0947 or 600 Donaldson Light Lane, Lenoir City, TN 37772.

The joke is on me! I have been asking if anyone has the recipe for Lemon Cake Pie, a pie my grandmother taught me to bake. When I was looking for another recipe, I opened the Loudon County Recipe Book and there was my recipe! I had submitted it myself!!!!

The winter of 2018 has been one to remember, but now it is summer and we are free to complain about how hot it is! The Annual Ice Cream Contest has been reset for June this year, hoping it will not be so hot as last July.

The Officers of the Historical Society have come up with some wonderful places to go and interesting places to visit. I hope many people begin to take advantage of the tours they have scheduled. I certainly hope that I can do so.

*Carolyn*

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**June 30, Annual Ice Cream Contest. Setup at 11AM at the Greenback Community Center Pavilion. Contest at noon.**

**July 14, Quarterly Meeting. 2PM upstairs Greenback Community Center. Public is invited.**

Aug. 19, *Hist. Soc. Of Loudon County meeting. 3 PM, Trinity United Methodist Church, Lenoir City. Program on the 1926 Athens, TN, feud.*

Sept. 6-8, *Greenback Heritage Museum Annual Quilt Show. See article this issue.*

**Oct. 13, Quarterly Meeting. 2 PM upstairs in the Greenback Community Center. Public is invited.**

Oct. 20-21, *Ft. Loudon 18<sup>th</sup> Century Trade Faire. \$10 admission.*

Oct. 21, *Hist. Soc. Of Loudon County meeting. 3 PM, Trinity United Methodist Church, Lenoir City. Speaker: Dr. Aaron Aster on pre-Civil War slavery in Loudon County.*

**Oct. 27, Greenback Trunk or Treat, 4 PM setup, 5-8 PM kids roam in the downtown area.**