

CACKLE CORNER FARMS: MEMORIES OF THE “GOODE” LIFE, BACK IN THE DAY

By: Laurie Searle (with Susan Goode Chafin, David Goode, Melea Goode Brett, and Nancy Richardson)

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Two rural buildings serve as landmarks at the intersection of Cochran Mill and Rivertown Roads in the Friendship Community. Old and grey and full of character, these icons of our rural past pique the curiosity and beg an answer to the question, “What was life like there, back in the day?”

Across the street and well-hidden by lush landscaping, a historic home may hold some answers. Built in the 1860s and first occupied by two heritage families, the home is better known for its time spent as Cackle Corner Farms – a chicken farm owned and operated by the Goode family from 1952-1992. While the chickens have long since flown the coop, several family members are still in Chatt Hills and happy to share their memories of the “Goode” life, back in the day.



The intersection of Cochran Mill Rd and Rivertown Rd in Chattahoochee Hills is known as Cackle Corner, so named for the Cackle Corner Farms operated by the Goode family there from 1952-1992. (Note: This family is of no relation to the Goodes Community and its “Uncle” Billy Goodes.)

ESTABLISHING CAKLE CORNERS FARMS



Harry “H.K.” and Frances Goode established Cackle Corner Farms soon after moving to the Friendship Community with their four children in 1952.

Harry Kenneth (“H.K.”) Goode was some farmer, back in the day. The son of a farmer, he had established his own farm as a young adult, first in East Point, Georgia, then in nearby Ben Hill. He met Mary ‘Frances’ Waldrop, a city girl from East Point, and they married in 1941. He worked the farm, raising over 200 heads of hogs, thousands of chickens, and vegetables enough to feed their household. She worked from home, tending their family of five.

The year was 1952 when H.K.’s search for new farmland brought him to the Friendship Community in what is now Chattahoochee Hills. Miles of pastureland bordered the long stretches of gravel roads, with working farms and country homes dotting the landscape. A 75-acre parcel that included a modest home was just what H.K was looking for, so he closed the deal and started plans to make the house a home with his wife, Frances, and four children: David (10), Virginia (8), Harry (6), and John (1). (Children Susan and Allen were born years after moving to the farm.)

H.K. spent the next year or so preparing the new farm for his family – adding an indoor bathroom, tidying up the small home, and building his farm out-buildings. Once the family moved, they eased into the business of family farming, each doing their own part to help as they could.

MEMORIES OF CACKLE CORNER FARMS

– AS TOLD BY SUSAN GOODE CHAFIN

The Farm

My father raised White Leghorn chickens and sold eggs. He built the chicken houses and would buy 1,000 chicks at a time. They were delivered by the mail man in cardboard boxes when they were just a day or so old. He would raise them and feed them, inoculate them, etc. until they were old enough to lay farm fresh eggs! He named the farm, "Cackle Corner Farms." He did most of the work, but the children did help with the chores along with our mother who stayed home and raised six children and supported the church and schools with her volunteer work.

Our father sold eggs and delivered to homes in East Point and also sold to several grocery stores and restaurants including Wingo's, Cruise Inn, Happy Homes Grocery, Melear's Barbecue in Union City, and Hardy's Super Market in Southwest Atlanta. People would also come to the house and purchase eggs.

Two of his brothers were Jim and Hall Goode who are referenced in Truett Cathy's books about Chick-fil-A as "Goode Bros. Poultry". They sold Chick-fil-A their chicken filets at the first restaurant in Hapeville known as the Dwarf House.

The House



The house at Cackle Corner Farms, 6250 Cochran Mill Rd, as it looked, back in the day. Today, lush landscaping hides the house from view.

Ed Milton wrote a historical book titled, "Growing' Up in Hapeville (And South Fulton)." He said his family moved to the (Cackle Corner) house in 1928 when he was 10 years old. He remembers the house as "a large, two-story log house with large rooms and high ceilings, with a tremendous fireplace that burned logs, not coal. (The house was later covered with asbestos siding.) It had a well, a path and an outhouse."

When I lived in the house almost 30 years later, not much had changed. It had a metal roof and was unfinished upstairs except for two bedrooms at one end of the house. The rafters were in place, but the other rooms were never finished as long as I lived there. There was a large bedroom downstairs with a living room, and a kitchen with a fireplace in it. A bathroom and "tv" room were added at some point before I was born. Virginia remembers an "outhouse" when she first moved in.

Building the Chicken Houses

John remembers helping our daddy (he was known by his children and grandchildren as "Pop") build some of the chicken houses. Since there were many large cedar trees on the property, they were cut to make the corner posts of the chicken house.

John remembers "skinning" the bark off the cedar trees and Pop would dip them in a vat of creosote to preserve the wood. After the wood was cured, holes would be dug by hand, using post hole diggers. John, David, and Harry would take turns digging the holes.

Additional cedar poles were used on the roof and then covered with sheets of tin. Boards were nailed onto side of the frame about 3 feet up and then chicken wire was nailed on the



This ariel view of Cackle Corner Farms shows the white farm house and one of the chicken houses H.K. built with the help of his sons. Across the street on neighbors' property is a barn and Caldwell's Store, which still stand today.

remaining top half of the house to allow for air to flow through to the hens. In the winter, plastic sheeting was nailed over the chicken wire to keep out the cold wind and protect the hens.

Digging a Well

Water was critical to the health of the hens. They came first when water was concerned. With only a hand dug well to provide water for all of the chickens and a house full of folks, baths were sparse. There would be just enough water to cover the bottom of the tub for the bath. No bubble baths allowed!

One year, the well dried up and there was no water. With the family's livelihood in danger, a new well had to be dug quickly! The boys all pitched in and began digging the hole for the new well. Virginia married Jimmy Turner in 1962, so Jimmy was like another brother. He always helped out when it was needed. Jimmy, David, Harry, John and Allen began digging with shovels. The digging went on into the night. I can remember helping hold the lantern over the hole so that whoever was down there could see to dig. A rope was tied to the handle of a bucket and lowered into the hole with whoever was digging so that they could fill it with dirt. When it was full, the bucket was raised and emptied and lowered into the hole again.

Since Allen was the youngest and smallest, it was decided that he would go down into the hole to dig as the hole got deeper and deeper. I remember him saying how scared he was but didn't want to let on so that he could feel brave and grown like his older brothers. I can still remember the shouts of joy when they struck water and could stop digging!

Susie's Ceramics

At the age of 14, my sister-in-law Shirley (Harry's wife) introduced me to ceramics by taking me with her to a ceramic shop at the home of Tommie Webb on Hwy. 92 in Douglasville. I fell in love with it. Tommie had a small building in her back yard where she poured the slip into the molds and then put the greenware on the shelves for people to choose what they would like to make. There were all kinds of bowls, vases, figurines, Christmas trees, Nativity Scenes, etc. It was like a wonderland to me. Tommie would open her shop in the evenings 2 or 3 days a week and I went every chance I got. I asked a million questions and Tommie patiently answered everyone showing me her techniques of pouring the greenware, firing it in the kiln, using different types of stains and glazes and making beautiful artwork. I have always been interested in crafts and making things and this was right up my ally. As soon as I turned 16 and got my driver's license, I would borrow the car and go to Tommie's.



Susie's Ceramics were sold at the Palmetto Festival.

After I graduated high school and began working at the Federal Aviation Administration in East Point, I began saving my paycheck. First to buy a car since the family only had one car and one truck and I had been carpooling to work for a while. Next came the purchase of my own ceramic kiln. We put the kiln in Pop's "egg room" where he worked in the evenings to candle the eggs and put them in cartons and cases to deliver.

As I began to buy molds and slip to pour it got crowded, so Pop offered to let me use one of his empty chicken houses. Together, we boarded up the house, shoveled buckets of gravel onto the floor of the house, put in a wood burning stove and found old tables and chairs to set up shop. Pop even installed a sink and shelves! Mama loved pouring the molds and while I worked at the FAA during the day, she filled the shelves and fired the greenware so that it could be stained or glazed. Together, we opened "Susie's Ceramics" a couple of evenings each week! We were able to keep the shop open for about eight years and many friends and neighbors came and enjoyed creating their own pieces.

I was not able to purchase many molds at first, so I relied on other Ceramic Shops in the area to let me buy greenware from them and put it in my shop. Saturdays were spent driving to Hapeville, Stockbridge, Douglasville and anywhere else I could find a shop to buy greenware. I began taking orders for finished pieces and sold them at craft fairs, etc.

Georgia Ceramics in Hapeville was very close to my work, so many lunch hours were spent buying stains, glazes and getting ideas for new molds.

After I married in 1981 and moved to Jonesboro with my husband Bud, Mama kept the shop open for a while and folks would still come and paint. The commute and the cost of materials to keep the shop open eventually caused us to close it. There were many fond memories made there!

Devoted to Cedar Grove Elementary

Although Mama (also known by her children and grandchildren as “Memaw”) did not have a “job”, she had many titles. One of her beloved ones was PTA President at Cedar Grove Elementary. Having six children all go from 1st grade through 7th gave her many opportunities to serve in every capacity. She was chief fundraiser (paper drives, Krispy Kreme doughnut sales, Carnival, Country Store and Spaghetti Supper with a Variety show afterward) were just a few. Many fondly remember the “Womanless Weddings” performed on stage at Cedar Grove. Her lifetime membership and PTA pin are still treasured items that she left.



From a newspaper clipping of the time: Gov. Lester Maddox spoke to Cedar Grove PTA Tuesday night. In the picture with him are, Jimmy J. Lankford, principal (second left), Mrs. Vaughn Watts, program chairman (second right) and Mrs. Frances Goode, President (far right).

MORE FARM FRESH MEMORIES

– AS TOLD BY DAVID GOODE, MELEA GOODE BRETT, AND NANCY TURNER RICHARDSON

David, who was the oldest child, was 10 years old when his father bought the farm. Early on, he helped feed the chickens, clean the coops, and collect the eggs, learning all aspects of farming. By the time he graduated from high school and bought into the business, the farm had 20,000 chickens and five chicken houses. After he married Bonnie Melear, he left the business for a career at Georgia Power.

David’s childhood memories on the farm include sleeping upstairs in one of the two rooms his father built. He said, “In the winter, it would be so cold up there, we’d have to warm a brick in the fireplace and slip it between our sheets to keep warm. In the summertime, it would get so hot the metal roof would make popping noises.”

One of David’s favorite pastimes as a kid was riding his horse, Prince. “We’d ride up to ‘flat rock’ behind Friendship Baptist Church, and also sometimes ride through the woods where there would be (moonshine) stills.”



David, his daughter Melea, and niece Nancy still live in Chatt Hills and visit often with their Goode family members. They are shown here at Melea’s home in the Rico Community, holding Melea’s baby chicks.

He also remembers going up to Bear Creek with his father and brothers. “Daddy would take a hoe, and we’d carry five-gallon buckets. We’d go up above the waterfall, and Pop would take that hoe and shake it up under the bank and we’d catch brim and bass, then bring them back to stock the lake. What we had left over, we’d have a fish fry.”

Melea remembers visiting the farm often as a child. “There were cousins there all the time,” she said, “and it was nothing to just spend the night there or at Susie’s house across the street. One big difference between back then and today was there wasn’t this problem of everybody checking their schedule to see when they could get together. We all just knew when it was Sunday, we headed up to the farm for Sunday lunch. When it was Easter, we went there to color eggs and have an egg hunt. And when it was Christmas, that tiny farmhouse was packed full of family and love.”

Nancy remembers going to the farm to help gather eggs. “We lived two doors down from Friendship Church, so after school I’d go to the farm to gather eggs in my bare feet. Or I’d ride my minibike.”

The Goode Family Reunion in 2019 at Friendship Baptist Church was a joyful occasion. Family came from far and wide and a few still live in Chatt Hills: David and Bonnie, Virginia and Jimmy, and Susan and Bud. Two granddaughters also still live here. John lives in Villa Rica. Deceased are H.K., Frances, Harry and Allen.



MORE “GOOD” MEMORIES TO COME



Nate and Gigi Haskell, new owners at Cackle Corner Farms.

After H.K. and Frances passed away, Cackle Corner Farms sold in 2009 and had four different owners over the next 10 years. Each owner loved the property and made slight – and also major – improvements. By the time the property came on the market again in 2021, it seemed to be waiting for just the right next owner.

Nate & Gigi Haskell were ready to get back to their country roots after 30 years living in the city. Having visited Chatt Hills many times before, they found a farmette in Serenbe they liked, but someone else beat them to it. Then they started looking out in the rural part of Chatt Hills and were shown the Cackle Corner Farms, but there was already an offer on the property. However, the house must have worked its magic because the offer was pulled, and Nate and Gigi jumped on the opportunity.

One year later, Nate and Gigi love their new-old home and the many neighbors who have welcomed them to the Friendship Community. They look forward to becoming the caretakers of this special property and plan on carrying on the tradition of making “Good Memories at Cackle Corner Farms.”

Note: A shorter version of this story was written for the Chatt Hills News – The municipal newsletter. The longer version is included for the Chatt Hills History website to capture more of the rich details provided by the Goodes family.