

# WHITE COUNTY NEWS

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## Habersham EMC celebrates 75th year with 'John Kollock's Guide to 75 special places'

*'Experience Northeast Georgia' written and produced by White County's Emory Jones*



The Old Sauttee Store on Ga. 17 is one of the places.

by Billy Chism  
White County News

Habersham EMC is planning a number of projects and surprises during its 75th anniversary being celebrated in 2013.

One such project, *Experience Northeast Georgia: John Kollock's Guide to 75 special places*, in the works for months, has been completed and released.

It is a four-CD set narrated by Clarksville artist John Kollock, who provides listeners with a folksy audio tour of 75 special places in Northeast Georgia. A companion guidebook is also included in the CD set. The entire package is now on sale locally at the suggested retail price of \$29.95. So, how did project come about?

White County writer Emory Jones was part of the planning process for different projects during HEMC's 75th anniversary. He recalls meeting with Todd Peacock, Habersham EMC President/CEO, and part of their marketing group, Susan Baker and Carolyn Helton.

"We were throwing around ideas left and right," Jones said. "Todd threw out several suggestions and said he would even consider sponsoring a tour guide of some sort of 75 places to visit in Northeast Georgia. Well, that struck a chord with everybody. I came back a week later with a proposal. They loved it."

A White County native, Jones loves history and especially the history of Northeast Georgia. So, it didn't take him long to come up with a list of 200 or so places to consider.

"Together, we worked to get the list down to 75 places, and it wasn't any easy thing to do," Jones said. "Eight counties are being featured—White, Habersham, Lumpkin, Union, Towns, Rabun, Hall and Stephens—so we had a lot to choose from."

Jones and Baker made a road trip and visited each of the 75 places, with Jones taking several photos of each place. In all, they spent almost three days going from place to place.

But that was just the beginning. Jones knew that making this project a success was to secure his friend John Kollock as the narrator.

"When I suggested John, they were all for it. They just wondered if he would do it," Jones recalled. "Everyone knows John Kollock for his wonderful historic paintings and his many books published over the years."

But Jones had recently worked with Kollock on another project, in which John narrated part of a story.

"He has such a great voice, and he also knows this area so well," Jones said. "He really is one of the leading experts of this history of this area. And I know he's painted many of the places that were on our list."

When Kollock agreed to do the narration, the project began to take shape.

"It was fun, but also a lot of hard work," Jones said. "Every morning I would drive to Clarksville and pick up John, and we'd drive to Cleveland and WRWH radio station, where Dean Dyer let us use one of his studios."

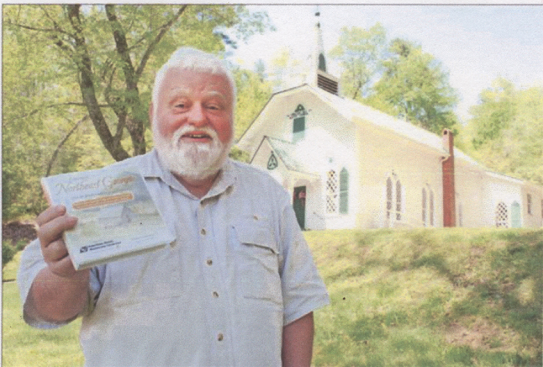
He added: "John put so much of himself into those recording sessions. We put in 14 two-to-three-hour sessions over a nine-week period. In all, we had about 38 hours of recording time in the studio. It was quite an experience in itself, and I really enjoyed my time with John."

Jones wrote the script, and had planned each of the 75 segments to be about 3 1/2 minutes in length.

"It didn't work out exactly that way," Jones said. "John went off script a lot of times and made it even better. He would add a comment here and there, and his ad libs just made the whole thing priceless."

The sponsors, Habersham EMC, were gratified with the end results as well.

"We wanted to generate something that would give back to the communities we serve, and to promote this area at the same time," Peacock said. "The result exceeded our wildest expectations. This is not only entertaining and informative, but it also preserves as incredible amount of history."



Emory Jones, standing in front of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in White County, holds the CD set titled "Experience Northeast Georgia: John Kollock's Guide to 75 special places." The church is one of those places. Jones wrote and produced the audio set and companion guidebook for Habersham EMC. John Kollock narrated. (Photo/Billy Chism)

Along the way, Jones researched each place, including a visit to each one. Although he'd visited about 60 of the 75 places, he wanted to see them all again. In addition, he bought 10 books about Northeast Georgia, not counting the many he already owned.

"I used Garrison Baker's book on White County, Matt Gedney's about the Unicoi Road and Anne Amerson's on Dahlonega. I also found the new book on Helen by David Greear and Chris Brooks helpful, too. And I talked to a lot of knowledgeable people, such as Shirley McDonald and Judy Lovell in White County. Of course, John is an expert himself on the history of this area."

And it's Kollock who makes Jones' script come alive. Whether you are listening to it at the location, while driving or while sitting in your family room at home, each segment tells a short story (about 3 minutes in length). And with the CD, you can skip quickly to any segment you want to hear. Each segment is stand-alone, and in one segment you may hear about Charlie Turner's Coca-Cola-drinking bear. In another, you may hear about how Ranger Woody brought the white-tailed deer back to North Georgia. Still another may tell about the paratroopers at Camp Toccoa.

After final editing, the four CDs total almost 4 1/2 hours of narration, with DeDe Vogt's original music serving as a brief introduction to each segment.

"After I heard her soft melodies on guitar and piano, I told DeDe that she wrote and performed exactly what I had in my head," Jones said. "Her music is really nice and ties the segments together."

And what do local residents have to say who've already bought a set?

Alta Buckley of Sauttee Nacoochee said simply: "I love it."

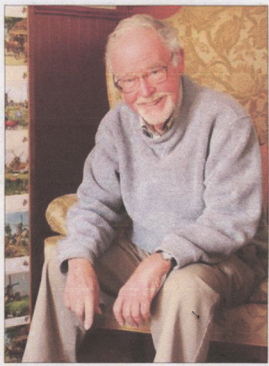
She added: "I've listened to the first two discs, and can't wait to hear the other two. As a newcomer to White County of 19 years, I've learned so much about the area. He (John Kollock) makes it so real. If you haven't visited some of these places, he makes you want to go. Really, it's the little anecdotes about the different places that make it so special. You can read the historical facts. But these little stories make it real."

Duncan Dobie of Marietta, who enjoys visits to the Sauttee valley to visit his mother-in-law, Lib Tucker, had this to say: "My wife, Kappi, and I went up to Chattahoochee and listened to the tapes. They are unbelievable...just unbelievable. We love them. She wants to get a whole bunch more to give to people we know up in the mountains. It's the wording...and the fact that John is narrating it...it's just a work of art. I can't wait to hear it all. I've already gotten choked up a couple of times, especially when listening to the Arthur Woody part. I mean he (Kollock) just does such a fantastic job."

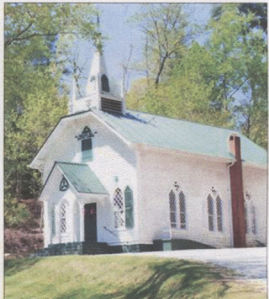
Linda Jordan of Clarksville, a long-time fan of Kollock, had this to say: "I'm overwhelmed with this incredible project. I think it's the best thing Emory has ever done, and the best thing John has ever done, and I love DeDe's music. And I have laughed and then I've cried. And then I've laughed some more. John is the perfect narrator, and really he's a storyteller."

She continued: "John had a painting, 'Picking on the Porch.' I think it was last spring. I felt like I was sitting on a porch in a rocking chair as I listened straight through all four hours. The whole project is perfect...perfect in the choices of sites—perfect in the choice of narrator."

The CD set is on sale at the following White County locations: HEMC Cleveland office, Yonah Mountain Treasures, White County Historical Society, Cleveland Pharma-



John Kollock, known for his paintings of times past, took on a new role narrating the HEMC audio set about 75 places to visit in Northeast Georgia. (Photo/Emory Jones)



Crescent Hill Baptist Church was built by Capt. James Nichols in 1870. It is located on Ga. 17.

cy & Gifts, Mt. Yonah Book Exchange, The Red Door, The Willows Pottery, Yonah Mountain Vineyards tasting room, Nacoochee Village Antiques, Old Sauttee Store, Sauttee Nacoochee Center and The Gourd Place.

You can also go online to order at [www.seenortheast-georgia.com](http://www.seenortheast-georgia.com).