

## **August Henry Graefer (1859-1925)**

In the "Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine" dated August 20, 1972, p.19, in an article written by Mary Lane "Memories of Early Rockmart" to celebrate Rockmart's centennial, Miss Minnie Headrick is quoted as saying the following about A.H. Graefer.

"One such memorable character was A.H. Graefer, sometimes known as Judge, but nobody knows why except for his stern judicial mien. He was a German with a club foot, short of stature and gruff in manner, a good citizen and a fine merchant - but peculiar. When he was not busy, he was reading a German newspaper. He heated his place with a grate fire in the back, unlike other merchants who had pot-bellied stoves. His little shop always smelled delicious, like spices and crystallized fruits you didn't find in other places. Once when a boy leaned on a counter, waiting to be served, Mr. Graefer said with a frown, "That counter doesn't need you to support it. Move on!". He always watched children carefully to see that they didn't filch a lemon drop or a stick of peppermint candy. Nobody ever forgot Judge Graefer."

Graefer is among other Rockmart businessmen in an 1889 picture copied in the Rockmart Centennial Magazine published in 1972. The picture identifies the solemn-faced group as members of the Board of Trade proving that Graefer was a prominent participant in the commercial enterprises of the day. A short, stout man with a round face and dark moustache he is dressed, as the other are, in a dark suit and wearing a hat. In all thirty-three men are depicted representing many other names appearing decades later on markers in Rose Hill Cemetery. Carmichael, Fambro, Randall, Morgan, Hogue, Dever, Allgood, to name a few. With a population at the time of less than 600 people, one would guess that Rockmart's commercial interest were in very good hands with this distinguished panel.

Circumstances that brought the young German immigrant to Rockmart are lost to time. But it is documented that he made an impact on the community and contributed to the early community's growth by operating a thriving business as well as serving as President of the Citizen's Bank, an early financial institution.

At sixty-six years of age he died, single and leaving no heirs. Community members came together to settle his final affairs and it was decided to mark his burial place near the top of Rose Hill Cemetery with a large monument using monies he left. He rests alone in the Graefer lot but lies among many of the other businessmen he worked alongside in his adopted American hometown.

We remember and recognize the contributions of August Henry Graefer to Rockmart's 150 years of history.

Georgia Death Certificate #25809  
August Henry Graefer  
DOB: 02/04/1859, Born in Germany  
DOD: 09/02/1925  
Father: C.M. Graefer, born in Germany  
Single  
Occupation: Merchant

Sources: Findagrave.com

“Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine”, August 20, 1972

“Rockmart Centennial Magazine”, 1972

Oral History, Beverly Baldwin Albea, 2022

Compiled by: Rockmart Sesquicentennial 2022  
Rose Hill Cemetery Tour Committee