

5 Aug 2019

Dear Board of Commissioners:

My name is Linda Ward Meadows, retired Cook High history teacher, and member of our Cook County Historical Society and Cook County Centennial Committee.

6 years ago, you granted permission to mark Elm Street and Highway 76 to the Brooks County Line as part of the SSG Briand T. Williams Memorial Highway.

Today, I request that you designate Old Quitman Road as "Dave & Comer King Jackson Memorial Road." This entire road stretches a distance of about 6.02 miles, until its intersection with Union RD. in southwestern Cook County.

A Memorial designation would not involve any address changes along that route. But, it would honor a man and his wife, who were very important in Adel's agricultural growth and positive racial interactions in the early-to- mid-1900s.

Comer was a devoted teacher, who walked several miles to reach the rural school where she taught. Her grandson, David "Sonny" Jackson, says that distance was more than 3 miles, one way. Comer was listed as being a teacher in Cook County's first Federal Census of 1920. Dave was a successful farmer and businessman. He was the son of Stephen Jackson and Elizabeth Moore Jackson, who were married in Berrien County on 21 Nov 1890, by Minister of the Gospel P.R. Bryant. We were still part of Berrien in 1890.

Comer and her husband, David Edward Jackson, eventually lived in a beautiful white house on Highway 41, where the current DFACS Office is located. Dave, as he was called, was a farmer, landowner, and a Funeral Director later in his life. (Show license.) He bought from farmers and sold watermelons, hay, ground corn, and bought and sold other ag products with farmers in Cook County and neighboring counties.

Dave raised livestock, such as cows and hogs and shipped them by railroad. He owned real estate all over GA, and stock in several banks. He employed numerous farm workers. Dave let area teenagers keep their horses on his land, but they had to build their own barn. He taught them the value of working for what they wanted, as they and his grandson Sonny built their "Hoss Hotel" from Del-Cook lumber in the 1960s. Sonny's friends included the Curingtons, Nelson Clements (son of Dr. Fred), Kirk Duke, and others.

The Jacksons promoted the value of education and hard work. Comer came from the King family, early Black educators in Cook County. She was born in 1895. Dave was born in December 1891. They were married 25 February 1912, in what was then Berrien County, GA. JJ Parrish officiated their marriage.

The Jacksons and Kings set the example for their descendants to follow. Comer passed away in 1965, at the age of 70, and Dave in 1970, at the age of 78. That was right in the middle of the years covered by our Centennial Celebration. The Jacksons lived during a period of segregation and Jim Crow, but achieved much during their lives. It is timely that we honor this couple, now.

Memorializing them with this road that runs adjacent to some of their extensive property holdings would be an appropriate thing to do. We would be honoring a family that worked with blacks and whites to benefit both groups. We need more of those positive interactions in our community today.

On the grounds of the DFACS property is a large Magnolia Tree planted by Comer. It was already a tall tree by the mid-1950s. That tree serves as a silent sentinel for a family that made a difference during their lifetimes.

They reared their children, and mourned the loss of ones who passed away before them. Their beautiful Lillie Claude Jackson died in 1936, as the result of a skull fracture sustained during an automobile accident in Cook County, when she was almost 19 years old. Her maternal grandmother, Lydia Pennington King, died on 4 July, the same year. Lydia and her husband, Jefferson King, were born in the 1840s, probably as slaves. 12 children were born to their union. They lived along what we call Old Quitman RD. Comer was one of their children. What irony, born as a slave, Lydia lived on a road that might now carry her family's name. Look at her photo.

Dave and Comer King Jackson's son, King David Jackson, was born in Dec 1915, and passed away in Dec 1952. The loss of Lillie, Mrs. Lydia, and KD must have brought great sadness to the Jacksons.

There were several other children born to Dave and Comer. Dorris and Grace were two other daughters. Their son, Ellis Kermit Jackson, was born in 1919, and outlived Dave and Comer, to pass away in 1980.

Ellis and his wife, Mary Edwards Jackson, had children, including a son, David Sonny Jackson, who has shared the foundation for the story that we know about his grandparents, Dave and Comer King Jackson. Wade Young developed an outstanding podcast on the Adel News Tribune site, following his interview with David Sonny Jackson. I recommend that you listen to Sonny's words about his grandparents. Wade has added another podcast based on his interview with me. These can be found by using the Adel News Tribune Facebook connection.

As for Comer, Sonny says she was also a good cook who loved to share food with those less fortunate than her family. She also fed the young men who helped build the horse barn on their property near Old Quitman Rd. Kirk Duke recalls the Jacksons' hospitality with much fondness.

I love Magnolia Trees, and I believe Comer King Jackson did, too. I ask you to let's place another more visible reminder of Dave and Comer King Jackson. I don't request money for road signs, but you may certainly help pay for them. This couple is worthy of a Memorial Highway/Road to serve as a lasting reminder of their contributions to this community. Old Quitman Road was adjacent to their property on what was first called the National Highway, in early Census listings for the Jacksons, but later was known as Highway 41.

I ask that our County Commissioners extend the City of Adel's designated miles of memorial road all the way to its intersection with Union Rd., a total distance of approximately 6.02 miles. This should not interfere with future road variances caused by rerouting.

I will provide Mrs. Faye Hughes information that might be included in your resolution, as you express your own motivations for this action.

I will then submit an application for road signs to the Tifton DOT office. I am already in contact with them. Then, Penny Houston will take the DOT approval and a Resolution from this Board to present to our GA General Assembly, and then, to Governor Kemp for his signature. Penny is ready to do this.

DOT turnaround on signs is 48 hours. But, other steps can be time-consuming. I would like for this project to be completed during our Centennial year. We will have a dedication ceremony and invite various state dignitaries. It will be awesome! We have the Adel City limits area of Old Whitman RD. approved, but want to extend, with your permission.

If you can look in the folders that I have given you, I'll tell you a little about the contents.

I appreciate your positive consideration of my request tonight. And, I ask that you take action on my request during tonight's regular session. Thank you.

I will try to answer any questions that you might have.

Linda