

TOWNTALK/Nelda Woodall

Early mayor's descendant presents pictures

Tom Chatham was dismayed to see the name of his great-great-grandfather misspelled in the Walker County History Book. But, with an unusual name like Micalah Clack (not Clark) Rogers, Huntsville's first mayor, you could expect some confusion over proper spelling.

Chatham, a writer who lives in Mexia at the Robertson-Bass-Chatham House, traced the history of his family and displayed memorabilia at the Walker County Historical Commission meeting and open house Dec. 21 at the Gibbs-Powell House Museum.

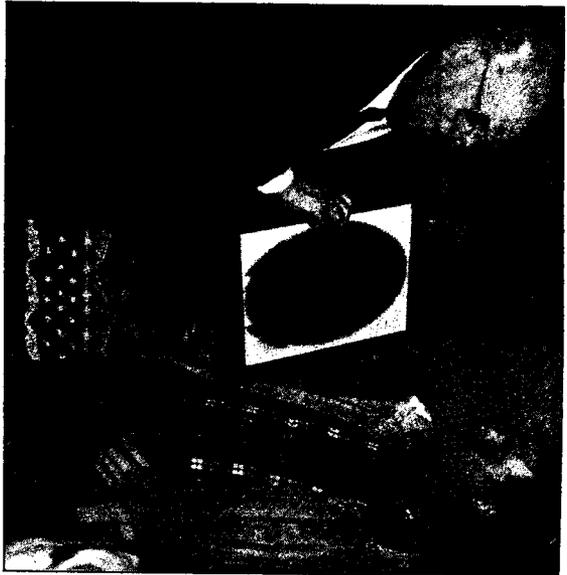
Chatham also presented Mayor Jane Monday with a framed copy of Micalah Clack Rogers' photograph. George Russell received a framed color copy of a photograph of Micalah's son, George Washington Rogers. The reason our George received the picture is because last June he made the initial contact with Chatham for the historical commission.

Additionally, George owns and is restoring the former home of George Washington Rogers, 1418 University Ave., and Chatham hopes the photo of George W. will be displayed there in the future.

In his speech here, Chatham recounted a story told by his brother, Elmore Koss, who was a student at Sam Houston State Teachers College in 1938. "...

Considering what we knew was true about Micalah Clack Rogers and his son, George W. Rogers, I have always had this clear impression from my mother: It was the Rogers who had it all — the intellect, the breeding, and the warm, good manners."

Micalah Clack Rogers, a native of Sevier County, Tenn., moved to Huntsville in 1842, when it was still a part of Montgomery County. He soon became involved in town affairs, serving as a trustee of the Huntsville Academy in 1843, and becoming a member of the commissioners court in 1844. He was elected mayor in 1845. His son, George, was the first city treasurer. In 1849, Micalah Clack was a



Tom Chatham presents a photograph of Huntsville's first treasurer, George Washington Rogers, to George Russell.



Tom Chatham and Mayor Jane Monday with photograph of Micalah Clack Rogers, Huntsville's first mayor.

Nelda Woodall photos

People

The Huntsville Item

trustee of the Baptist Church and a justice of the peace. In 1851, he became postmaster, and in 1860 became the financial agent of the "poorly supported Texas Prison System Penitentiary located in Huntsville, to which his personal funding kept inmates fed during the war," said Chatham.

Quoting from various sources, Chatham said, "Although he was much too old to fight in the Confederate Army, Col. Micalah C. Rogers rendered material aid and served on various relief committees during the War Between the States, using his own money."

After the Confederacy fell, Micalah lost his citizenship, but gained it back by writing a letter to his personal friend and former neighbor in Tennessee, U.S. President Andrew H. Johnson, according to Chatham.

His son, George Washington, married Lucinda Benson Gibbs of Huntsville. The two daughters of the couple, Miss Laura Rogers and Alice Luelia Rogers Ross, brought some of the Rogers memorabilia to their homes in Mexia in 1876.

A portion of the memorabilia displayed at the Gibbs-Powell House that Sunday afternoon was the Rogers' portmanteau, a gold bar pin and six engraved sterling silver forks which had belonged to Lucinda Benson Gibbs Rogers. Other items included several books from George W. Rogers' private library dating from the 1840s to 1860. The memorabilia may some day become a part of the Gibbs-Powell House collection.

The section of Huntsville known as Rogersville was named for Micalah. He owned the land and sold it to the freed Negroes who began building their little homes there, according to a chapter in the Bicentennial History of Huntsville and Walker