

The Big Snow



In Bulloch County, Georgia, the average temperature in February, its coldest month, has a high of 57° F and a low of 37° F. As a result, snow is not a concern of most people who live there. That is not to say that there haven't been a few surprises over the years.

On Valentine's Day in 1914, Georgians awoke to an unusual sight... a blanket of white covering their streets and sidewalks. I know this because of a photograph that still hangs today in the Bulloch County courthouse. Court officials documented the rare weather incident by posing outside their building in 4 inches of snow. Among them was my 2nd great-

grandfather, Harrison Oliff (2nd from left, top picture), who in 1914 was the court bailiff.

The forecast for the day was for mild or fair conditions so no one was prepared for the fact that they would wake up to see four or six inches of snow on the ground. It effectively shut down the entire area. Businesses closed, government offices took the day off, and most importantly, schools could not open, giving southern children the rarest of opportunities... a snow day.

The snowfall of 1914 broke records and it stood for almost 6 decades. As a side note, to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the "Big Snow," the current court officials decided to replicate the 1914 photo by posing themselves in the same location, outside the courthouse (minus the snow). Interestingly enough, the deputy bailiff pictured in the photo of 2014 is Bruce Oliff (3rd from left, bottom picture). I'm not sure if there is a connection to my great great grandfather Harrison.

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