

Towns

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Gainesville/Haymarket



Neal Snyder—Journal Messenger

Living memorial

A sawtooth oak tree planted on Haymarket day in honor of James Gossom stands at Haymarket's Town Hall across from the hardware store and grocery he operated for more than half a century. Gossom came to Haymarket in 1937 with his brother.

Tree planted to honor Gossom

By KIM COGHILL
JM Staff Writer

More than a week ago, a local nursery donated and planted a small tree in Haymarket to grow in memory of a former town leader.

On Haymarket Day, White Oaks Nursery planted the sawtooth oak next to the Town Hall on Washington Street in memory of James Gossom, who died July 28.

"Jimmy Gossom was so active in the community and he really cared about Haymarket," White Oaks Nursery owner Tom Neil said. "We wanted to plant the tree to commemorate him."

"Gossom did so much for Haymarket," Neil said.

Community leader Elizabeth Nickens said, "Gossom was a wonderful man and town leader. He was a lifelong resident of the area and he did many things for

Haymarket. He began as the owner of a town business, Gossom's Store."

Neil said in 20 years the tree planted in memory of Gossom will stand 30 to 40 feet high and when it finally hits its full potential of growth, "we won't be around to see it," he said. "As the tree will become 60-feet tall."

Currently the tree is 2 inches in diameter and 10-feet tall.

"The idea of planting the tree for Gossom came from Ed Milhaus,"

Neil said. "Milhaus actually planted the tree."

For more than half a century, Gossom was one of Haymarket's leading citizens as a business owner, member of the Masonic Lodge No. 0313 Af & AM, a member of the Antioch Baptist Church and a member of the Town Council for 20 years.

Gossom was instrumental in starting the Volunteer Fire Department, but he was especially interested in helping families and

children in need.

Gossom came to Haymarket in 1937 with his brother George.

The two operated the general store which sold everything from hardware to food to tractors.

The Gossom's store was considered a gathering place for the residents of the community.

Gossom was once quoted as saying he never wanted to leave Haymarket, "because the world's best live here."