

# Crabapple Silos last of their kind in North Fulton

The "Crabapple Silos," three of which still stand majestically alongside Roswell-Crabapple Road, just North of the Houze Road-Arnold Mill Road intersection, easily evoke memories of this area's rural past.

The rounded roofs of these concrete sentinels of our more pastoral days seem to mock the modern image of North Fulton, in which forests of residential rooftops continue to crowd the horizon.

For those who may have wondered about the survival of the silos in an area of urban sprawl, the answer is they were built to last. They have been on the spot for roughly half a century. And many a cow has gotten a hefty meal of silage therefrom.

What are now known as the "Crabapple Silos" were built after World War II by Jake W. Hughes, a wealthy businessman whose various enterprises included a regional bus company which served Atlanta and the Southeast.

Mr. Hughes, a native of South Carolina who came to Atlanta in 1931, later acquired several hundreds of acres of former crop land and woodland in the vicinity of Houze Road, Rucker Road, and Hardscrabble Road and began the raising of various breeds of dairy and beef cattle. This gave the area a neat, prosperous look, quite a change from the boll weevil, Depression-wracked days of pre-WWII.

Jake Hughes died in 1987. His widow, Jane (Patten) Hughes, from an old Roswell

family, still resides in the Crabapple area and continues active in business and civic affairs. Learning of current efforts to "Save the Silos," she proudly told me: "I'm very grateful they're being preserved. Jake will be too."

Before the days of the Hughes Farm, silos were rare in this area. I remember a silo at the dairy farm of Homer Powell, Jane's uncle. It was on Ga. 9 below the country store operated by Jane's father, James Shirley Patten.

The most impressive local silo during my boyhood was at the Swilling Farm, which stood on the spot where North Fulton Regional Hospital now stands.

T. C. Westbrook, an Alpharetta native, now 87, and a resident of Woodstock, has fond memories of the 30 years or more during which he worked in a variety of jobs on the Hughes Farm. This included the arduous task of refilling the silos when homegrown corn or other silage crops were at their peak.

Acre after acre of green corn, cornstalks and all, was harvested by machine, hauled to the silo area and, after being ground into small pieces, blown into the silos until each structure was filled.

My well-used World Book Encyclopedia points out that other crops such as clover, oats, rye and alfalfa can also be readily turned into silage for animal feeding.



**Aubrey Morris**  
North Fulton  
Footprints

helps beef cattle maintain their weight when outside grazing isn't so great.

Animal feed, again citing my World Book Encyclopedia, "is preserved in the silo by exclusion of air and by acids, mostly acetic, produced by fermentation..."

Round silos, such as our surviving local examples, work better than other shapes, because they better resist the immense pressure of packed feed. And they keep air away from fermenting silage, thus preventing spoilage.

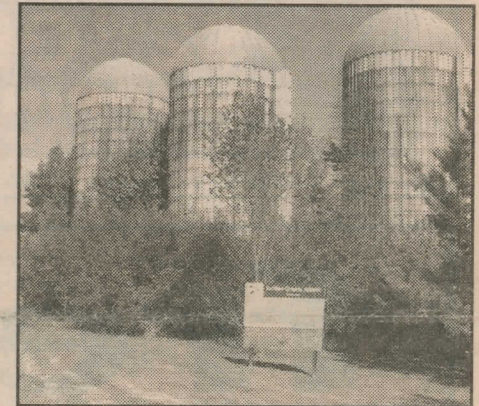
Why are there several small doors, at various heights, scattered about each silo? This allows the removal of contents, from the top downward, during feeding.

Mr. Westbrook remembers that an ample supply of locally produced manure, fortified with commercial fertilizer, was spread, on a regular schedule, over the rolling pasture land adjacent to the Crabapple Silos and beyond.

This, Mr. Westbrook believes, may be why many of the pretty lawns dotting the area today have such a lush sheen.

Early American farmers, mostly from

Silage makes it possible for milk cows to produce almost as much milk in winter as in summer, when green grass is more abundant. And it



REVUE/Staff

*The Crabapple Silos stand as lonely sentinels evoking the days when North Fulton was an agrarian community.*

England, learned the trick of preserving animal food from newly arriving Europeans, in the early 1870s. The earliest silos were simply pits dug into the ground, but they worked.

A farmer from McHenry County, Ill., Fred L. Hatch, is credited with building the first silo, a square, wooden job, above ground. Then, along came an agricultural scientist, Franklin Hiram King, who invented the first round silo, put into use in the dairy-ing state of Wisconsin in 1882, much to the delight of all the moo cows around.

Mr. King's round model was probably similar to the Crabapple Silos in appearance. Which makes ours all the more historic.

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HEAVEN	AND	DEARTH	IDEAS
SOME	ORE	CAKES	AND
NITRO	IRS	EEL	
MFA	OLA	DEBT	ESPO
SRO	BOW	AND	DARROW
PHRASE	DROPS	SINON	ORE
EYES	SAND	DEARS	NARROWED
ADAH	AORTAE	TARA	
RENE	PRES	MUCH	INKS
DELA	ESPANA	EDIT	
RED	PERCH	THE	KING
AVA	VALENTINE	ON	TIME
JEFF	FIRE	AND	DRAIN
ASTO	FOOD	OID	PEN
SKI	EON	BOCCE	
AMOS	AND	DANDY	CROUTONS
HABIT	CURRIER	AND	DIVES
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