



• *Businesswoman*

## *Dicksie Bradley Bandy*

1890–1971

### ***Inducted 1993***

A Georgia woman who initiated the industrial transformation of a whole area of the state, and who then did everything in her power to atone for the Trail of Tears: Dicksie Bradley Bandy of Dalton. She was born in Bartow County in 1890, the daughter of a country doctor. After schooling in her home community, she attended Reinhart Normal College in Waleska and later Georgia State College for Women. In 1915, she married Burl J. Bandy, a young telegraph operator for the Southern Railroad. During World War I, when the men were away, she too served as a telegrapher, in the time she could spare from teaching school.

After the War, she, her husband, and their growing family ran a country store in Sugar Valley, and all seemed well. Then came the Depression. Here is how she described it: "During the depression, my husband and I were running a country store, and most of it was on credit. People would pay us when their crops were in. As times got worse and worse, many of our accounts took bankruptcy and never paid us anything. We owed our suppliers \$22,000, and my husband and I were determined to pay 100 cents on the dollar for what we owed."

In their desperation, they were led to call on a lady in their area who made tufted bedspreads – chenille. This lady kindly allowed them to use some of her patterns. They hired a few people and set about hand-tufting bedspreads. Having worked for the railroad, they had a free pass, and this gave Dicksie the nerve to go up North and try to sell their handiwork. Listen to her describe that trip: "I'd never been farther away from home than Atlanta before this trip. I had one new dress, and I sat up all night long on the train with my suitcase and my bundle of bedspreads. The next morning, upon arriving in Washington, I started walking to my first store. Frankly, I didn't know you could check a suitcase in the terminal, so I carried both my suitcase and my bedspreads to Woodward and Lothrop's and asked to see the buyer. I showed him what I had to sell. I also told him I'd never tried to sell anything before. He smiled at me and said, 'I know that,' but he was one of the nicest persons I ever met. He said he would take 400 spreads at

\$4 a spread. I was doubling our money at this price. I got back on the train and went to Baltimore, and at Hotchschild and Kohns I sold 200 more. I had planned on going to New York, but I turned around and came home. We had to hire people to tuft up 600 bedspreads. We shipped them all." The next trip, to Macy's in New York, brought an order for one-thousand spreads at \$2 each.

The Bandys hired people by the dozens to do hand-tufting at home, but the demand for the product grew so fast that they could not satisfy the market as a cottage industry. As their fortunes prospered, the Bandys bought and developed industrial sites in Dalton, Rome, Cartersville and Ellijay. The tufted fabric industry became the economic salvation of Dalton and Northwest Georgia, and Dicksie and her husband and children were in the forefront of the movement. Coronet Industries, Southern Craft Company, Bartow Textiles, Universal Carpets – these are just a few of the companies in the Bandy family complex.

As she achieved success, Dicksie turned her efforts to the public good. She and her children donated the intensive-care unit of the Dalton Hospital. She was chief fundraiser for the Dalton Salvation Army. She was the first moving spirit in the Dalton Regional Library System. All of these groups have endorsed her nomination for this honor. But one charitable cause drew her with special force. Here is her description: "My heart is filled with sadness when I think of the atrocities perpetrated on the Cherokees ... by the State of Georgia and the United States Government with Andrew Jackson as President. Even though the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in their favor, the Cherokees could not override the force that piled up against them, and they were moved by armed forces from the land that was theirs by every human right known to man. That act can never be forgotten, for history will not allow it to be. More than four thousand Cherokees died on that Trail of Tears to the West. I apologize to you, the Cherokee Nation, for what our gold-hungry, land-famished ancestors did."

Dicksie Bradley Bandy initiated and led a campaign to restore a prominent monument of the Cherokee Nation, the home of Chief Joseph Vann, near Dalton. As she conducted her campaign, she made extensive contacts with the Cherokee People in Oklahoma. There she was named official Ambassador to the Cherokee Nation. In 1958, the finished house was dedicated and presented to the State as a monument to Cherokee culture in Georgia. One of the letters nominating her for Georgia Women of

Achievement is from the Honorable Jonathan L. Taylor, Principal Chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Cherokee, North Carolina.

For her energy and skill in initiating the industrial recovery of Northwest Georgia, and for her social conscience in trying to atone for the sins of the fathers, we honor Dicksie Bradley Bandy as a Georgia Woman of Achievement.

### **Additional Resources**

#### **Chief Vann House State Historic Site**

National Park Service, Trail of Tears, National Historic Trail, Chattsworth, GA

#### **Chief Vann House State Historic Site**

Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Chattsworth, GA

#### **Crown Gardens & Archives**

Dalton, GA  
(706) 278-0217

#### **Northwest Georgia Regional Library System**

Dalton, GA  
(706) 278-2974

#### **Regional History & Culture, Kennesaw State University**