

## Amite County Historical and Genealogical Society

William G. Barron, President  
 Wayne B. Anderson, Secretary  
 Dawn Taylor, Vice Pres.  
 N. Gay Blalock, Treasurer  
 Oma J. Gordon, Council-at-large  
 Wayne B. Anderson — Newsletter Editor

December 2011

Vol. 7, No. 12

Without a past, there is no future

**Next meeting:** The next meeting will be the annual Open House from noon until 3:00 pm. This year's site is the Decatur Butler House on Hwy. 567, northwest of Liberty. See map & directions on page 5.

### AMITE COUNTY HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of October 8, 2011 meeting

**DRAFT**

President Greg Barron called the meeting to order at 10:04 am in the meeting room of the Liberty library. There were 18 attendees. Mrs. Frances Phares gave the invocation.

The draft minutes from the October 8, 2011 meeting were presented for approval. At VP Dawn Taylor's request, Sect. Anderson made a slight wording change on the VP report concerning the cost of the quilt and the profit realized thus far on the raffle. Oma Gordon made a motion to approve; Vera Prestridge seconded. The minutes were approved as written by vote of the members present.

President Report: Pres. Barron reported: The MS Dept. of Archives and History has sent a letter of thanks to the society for its nomination of William Leo Hansberry to the Mississippi Hall of Fame. Pres. Barron has received from an anonymous source a number of books, Sweetly Be, by long-time columnist Rose Bud Stevens (Mamie Willoughby) who lived on Hwy. 24 near the east border of the county.

Vice President Report: VP Dawn Taylor's reported: Open House will be held from 12 noon to 3 pm at the Decatur Butler house on Hwy 567, northwest of Liberty. This is also known as the Tommy Talbert house. Members who are volunteering to help should arrive by 11:00 am.

(Continued on page 2)

#### Future Meeting Schedule

**December 3, 2011**, 10:00 am — Annual Open House and Membership Drive at the Decatur/Butler House.

**January 14, 2012**, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

**February 11, 2012**, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

**March 10, 2012**, 10:00 am — Quarterly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS. Program to be announced.

**April 14, 2012**, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

**May 5, 2012**, 10:00 am — Meeting and activities to coordinate with the Heritage Days activities.

**June 9, 2012**, 10:00 am — Quarterly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

**July 14, 2012**, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

**August 11, 2012**, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

You may contact this editor at:

**Wayne B. Anderson, Sr.**

**1737 Bridgers Drive**

**Raymond, MS 39154**

Or by e-mail at [sitemanager@achgs.org](mailto:sitemanager@achgs.org)

A notice of the event will be put in the paper. Parking will be available along the semi-circular drive. Someone will be needed to help direct visitors to parking. A sign-up sheet for providing refreshments is being circulated for volunteers to indicate what type of food they will bring.

VP Taylor and Linda Lea attended the first ever presentation of "Shadows of the Past" tour of the Vicksburg National Military Park. Park Rangers took groups through a series of stops on a tour of the park. Reenactors portrayed participants of the Vicksburg siege at various points on the tour.

Secretary Report: Secy. Wayne Anderson had no report.

Treasurer Report: Treasurer Gay Blalock presented reported that the society currently has a bank balance of \$5137.90. Wayne Anderson made a motion to approved the Treasurer's report; Linda Lea seconded. The report was approved unanimously.

LRSH COMMITTEE REPORT: Mrs. Vera Prestridge reported that new member, Irene Van Norman, has agreed to serve as a LRSH committee member. There will be a tour of the LRSH by attendees of a class reunion in April 2012. In the approach to Christmas, the Christmas cards are selling; Mrs. Vera will continue to sell as long as there is a demand.

Old Business: Pres. Barron gave a brief update on member Bill Rimes who has been ill in recent months. Currently he is in Beacham Hospital in Magnolia.

New Business: New business included:

A new bill concerning access to historic cemeteries is being prepared for legislative filing in the next session of the Legislature. A

previous bill failed to be approved out of committee.

Jim Freeman, at the request of Pres. Barron, attended a recent public hearing on this cemeteries bill held in Hattiesburg. The hearing was attended by 16 people. Two legislators were present. The new bill will be drafted to confine its impact to just the aspect of access by visitors and protections on the relative liability issues that may arise for both the visitors and the landowners. Other aspects of previous bills, such as maintenance of cemeteries by governmental agencies, will be left out of the new version so as to not obscure the real purpose of the bill. It is hoped that the bill can be crafted in such a way that the main opponent of previous bills, the Farm Bureau, will be able to put their support behind the new bill.

Jim Freeman contributed a genealogy book to the society for the LRSH collection.

Mrs. Vilar asked if the society had ever considered offering small scholarships to students to encourage involvement of younger people in the society. Secretary Anderson pointed out that while granting scholarships would be worthwhile when and if extra funds were available, the rules and procedures for selecting a recipient would need to be crafted by an attorney so that the society could be protected from liability and lawsuits from litigious parties.

Jim Freeman gave the society a heads-up that the "tall ships" (the multi-masted wooden vessels common in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) would be in New Orleans April 17-23, 2012, in observance of the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

Jan Vilar informed the group that the Maritime Museum in Norfolk, VA, has put parts of the recovered iron-clad warship *Monitor* on display.

Other Business: Linda Lea announced that some members would be traveling after the meeting to Washington, MS for the Wirt Adams reenactment.

Monthly Program: Mrs. Frances Phares introduced Mrs. Canetti O'Brien and Mrs. Marilyn Harvey who presented a short program on the Daughters of the American Revolution and its activities. Mrs.

*(Continued on page 4)*

# BITS AND PIECES OF AMITE COUNTY HISTORY

## RUBY MAURINE "GRAVES" KING

Memories continued from last newsletter

There are a lot of things happened as I grew up so I may not keep them in order, but I'll relate each one as I remember them. One nite we had some girls to visit us and spend the nite. They were Brantley girls who was neighbors to us. That nite we all sat out on the front porch talking when all of a sudden a great commotion broke out in the nearby lot with the cows running, bawling with a big noise. Then the mules tried to break out of their stables also neighing & kicking the walls. All were scared out of their wits. Mama, the girls, also my sister & brother Jim got up & run in the house. They forgot I was asleep on the porch floor. Jim got his gun & raised a window & let Mama climb out & pick me up & put me through the window. I didn't know anything about all this happening until the next morning. They went outside to look around and at the front gate there they found 4 big bear tracks. They went down the road to the woods & turned into the woods. They never saw the bear but down on the river, it had killed a calf & eat it.

It was my job to ride a horse & run the cows home in the evening to be milked. We had open range for all the cows to roam at will. Late one evening we were out in the cow lot milking the cows. It was my job to gather up corn cobs & cow dabs to make several small smokes in the cow lot to run the horse flies away so Mama could milk. The flies would bite the cows and they would run around & kick and they had to be still so they could be milked. In those days there was no fly repellent to use. When I had the smokes going good I happened to look up in the sky and a light between 4 & 6 feet long was moving in the sky. As I watched it coming out of the southeast going in the northwest, it was a sight to behold. Of course I called Mamma, Bessie, & Clyde and we watched it moving. We had no idea what it was, but later heard it was a Comet. Years later I read about it in History. Some said it was Haley's Comet. Anyway, I was about 8 or 10 yrs. old at that time. Now I'm 75 yrs. old.

We had black people living on our place who helped us to farm. We raised sugar cane for our syrup, corn for our bread. We had hogs to kill. We had a good garden also peanuts to eat the year round, also cotton. Many evening when the peanuts was ripe, we would boil a large iron pot full out in the back yard. We had popcorn we raised also artichokes back of the corn shed. We never went hungry even if we had no daddy. I always missed a father's love tho as I had lots of girl friends and when I went to spend the nite with them they hugged & kissed their fathers and I missed that.

Mama would always tell us stories of things happening when she was a girl on the Homochitto River. She said one time their neighbor killed hogs and that nite the wolves smelled the fresh meat & howled around the smoke house, so they built up a bone fire and kept it burning all night to keep the wolves away.

One time one of her neighbors had a baby so my grandma baked cakes, pies and filled a basket full to send her. My mother carried it to her. She saw the new baby and left the basket of food for the family. She rode a fat horse and on her way home, she rode under a huge oak tree with a big limb over the road. There sat a panther on that limb and it jumped on the horse but couldn't stay on its back the panther slid off the horse & hit the road so hard it was knocked senseless. The horse ran home & Momma told her father who got his gun and rode back & killed the panther.

As I've said we had a family of black people living on our place by the name of Amos Cox. His wife Jane & Girls Gertrude, Ida, & Francis, boys Robert Aaron (Buddy), Wilsie Pharis or Faris so we girls went black berry picking on Uncle Bob Graves place who had a Mr. Reeves living in the house. We went back of his house on a branch to pick berries, but we heard ducks in the branch so we got sticks & killed 3 of them and went home to tell Momma. We thought they were wild, but Mr. Reeves came up just as we had picked them & said they were his ducks. Momma gave him 3 hens for the ducks so we got to eat ducks. We never hunted

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

ducks again you can be sure.

Albert married Lula Knight and lived with us awhile then moved in their house. Ardell was their first baby, so it was my job to go babysit. Then Ora Lee, Quin, Hubert & James, then Leon. Barney married Julia Stokes and I went to their wedding only when we got to Mr. Shelby Stokes house I decided to stay and play with Maurine and Mignon. Barney and Julia went to Mr. Ruff Jacobs & was married then we had dinner and came back home.

Mamma met Mr. Steve Whittington & they married. So we moved to his house back of Oxford school. We were used to a large house & his house was very small but we managed. He was good to us children. Jimmy, Bessie, Clyde and I were there. We all called him Pappie as everyone else did. He had some peach trees and they had big peaches on them. He told us not to pull them as they weren't ripe. They would fall on the ground and we ate those. So one Sat. he went to Gloster & spent the day so that was all I needed. I climbed the trees & got all we could eat. Then we helped him hoe the sugar cane and it was real tall. He didn't offer us any so Saturday came & he went to town. I broke down all the sugar cane we could chew. We crawled up a deep ditch & chewed it. I figured if we help to make it, I was due some of it so I helped myself. Ha.

Bessie and I used to go to Mrs. Sam Haynes house. Josie & Helen her two daughters and us rode horses. They had two pretty ones "Jennie and Camack". Oh how we enjoyed doing that. We spent many times up there. We had been going to Oxford school at that time. Mr. Delos Cassills was our principal. Boy was he tough. He slapped Noel Haynes who was talking to an unmarried woman teacher. Then he had Noel Emerson and T. J. Nix to go over in a pine grove to pray for them. Mr. Delos was a Methodist preacher. While he was praying, T. J. Nix found a pine knot and had it raised above Mr. Delos' head. When he opened his eyes, that was all that saved him a good knot on his head. Ha.

Well, Mr. Whittington's son Parritt, told him to get Mamma & us to move out and he would take care of him but not us. So Mamma moved to Baton Rouge, LA with Uncle John O'Neal. She cooked dinner for T. J. Berryhill & Uncle John. I worked in the grocery store down stairs. I had a good time there but we didn't stay to long as it was hard on Mamma. She rented our big house to a Mr. Tom Jackson and it burned down so she had a small house built back.

Contributed by Sam King with permission to publish, May 2011.

\*\*\*\*\*

Share your genealogy and Amite County stories by sending to Frances Phares, PO Box 1639, Clinton, LA or [phrances@att.net](mailto:phrances@att.net) Your corrections and additional information solicited.

---

*(Continued from page 2)*

O'Brien is currently Vice Regent of the DAR and Mrs. Harvey is Secretary. A number of handouts were made available to the attendees. Of primary interest to the local area is the information that the Mississippi DAR owns *Rosalie* antebellum home in Natchez and have a genealogy library there that is available to researchers.

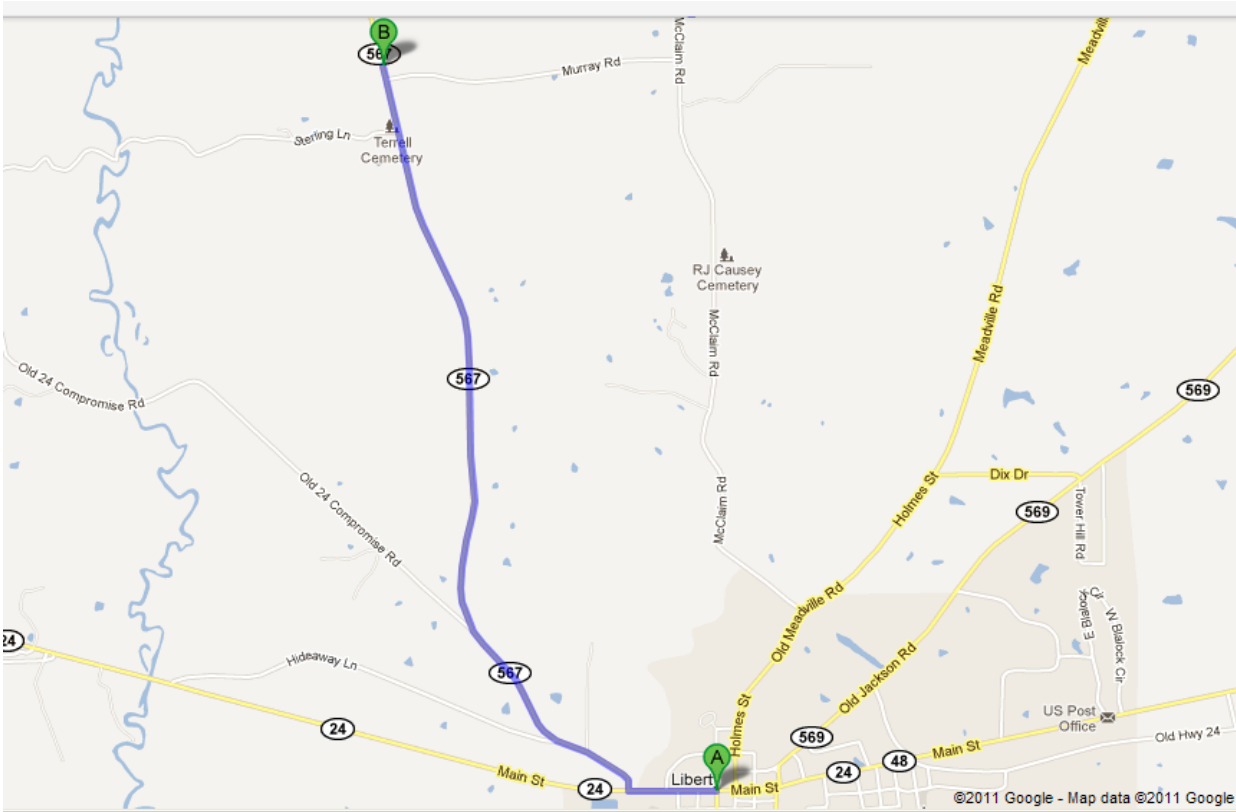
President Barron adjourned the meeting at 11:30 am.

## Open House Information

**Directions to the Decatur Butler House** – From McComb - Take Hwy. 24 West to HWY 567 (.2 miles from Four Way Stop in Liberty) Turn right. Continue 3 miles, passing Sterling Road and the Terrell Cemetery on the left and Murray Lane on the right, to gravel drive on left. Look for OPEN HOUSE SIGN.

Open House December 3, 2011 12:00pm to 3:00pm

Decatur Butler House



### **ACHGS Standing Committees and Chairpersons**

**Linda Honea Lea— Nominating Committee**  
**Vera Prestridge — Little Red Schoolhouse**  
**Dan Morgan — Amite County History**  
**Nelson Dawson — Amite County Family History**  
**Mary Pallon, Jennie Livingston, Bobby Haygood — Amite County Cemeteries**  
**Linda Honea Lea — Hospitality**  
**Gay Blalock — Special Events and Food**  
**Greg Barron — Programs and Publicity**  
**James Allen Causey — Tours and Amite County Landmarks**

Any member interested in helping should contact the committee chairman or Pres. Greg Barron.

**Annual Membership Contribution**  
**Amite County Historical and Genealogical Society**  
**PO Box 2**  
**Liberty, MS 39645**

**Check or circle choice**

\$15.00 – Individual    \$25.00 – Family    \$50.00 – Sponsor or Ancestor Memorial  
 \$200.00 – Lifetime    \$10.00 – Student (under 18)    \$10.00 – Senior (over 65)

All contributions are tax-deductible.

Please make checks or money orders payable to **Amite Co. Historical and Genealogical Society**.

**(Please print)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for joining the Amite County Historical and Genealogical Society. Your contribution helps us continue to collect and preserve historic treasures from Amite County's past, as well as to promote family history. Membership also provides an opportunity to attend programs and participate in special events.

I am interested in helping with:

Archives    Membership    Programs    Newsletter    Other (specify):

**Amite County Historical and  
Genealogical Society**  
**PO Box 2**  
**Liberty, MS 39645**