



## 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

September 2011 Vol. 7, No. 9

Without a past, there is no future

**Next meeting:** The next meeting will be quarterly meeting at 10:00 am on **September 10, 2011**, in the conference room of the library in **Liberty**.

### AMITE COUNTY HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of June 11, 2011 meeting

**DRAFT**

President Greg Barron called the meeting to order at 10:00 am in the meeting room of the Liberty library. There were 15 attendees. Gay Blalock gave the invocation.

The draft minutes from the June 11, 2011 meeting were presented for approval. Oma Gordon made a motion to approve; Ann Brumfield seconded. The minutes were approved as written by vote of the members present.

President Report: Pres. Barron commented on the recent death of society member and friend, Jimmy Honea. He gave a brief description of the somewhat old-fashioned funeral and added a few personal comments about Jimmy Honea and his life.

Vice President Report: VP Dawn reported that:

- Work is continuing on the quilt to complete it before the open house in December.
- Raffle tickets are still available for sale and members are encouraged to pick up tickets to sell to friends and relatives.
- VP Taylor and several other members accepted the invitation of the SW Mississippi Genealogical Society and attended the tour of the Burris house recently.

Secretary Report: Secy. Wayne Anderson reported that the society had received a request from the Mississippi representative of the web site "What

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#### Future Meeting Schedule

**September 10, 2011**, 10:00 am — Quarterly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS. See program announcement on page 2.

**October 8, 2011**, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

**November 12, 2011**, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

**December 3, 2011**, 10:00 am — Annual Open House and Membership Drive. Location to be announced.

**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, 2011**, 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, 2011**, 10:00 am — Meeting and activities to coordinate with the Heritage Days activities.

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)

Was There" for submission of photos of old buildings and other historic sites. These will be featured on the web site in a comprehensive collection of photos of historic places for the whole country. The Mississippi representative is Katie Hardcastle. She may be reached at [Khardcastle@enlighten.com](mailto:Khardcastle@enlighten.com).

**Treasurer Report:** Treasurer Gay Blalock gave a written report. The society account currently stands at \$4855.02. Linda Lea made a motion to approve the report; Dawn Taylor seconded. The report was approved without dissent. Gay also presented a book on the Blalock family to the society for the LRSB records.

**LRSB COMMITTEE REPORT:** Mrs. Vera Prestridge reported:

- Two separate visitors doing family research visited the LRSB since the last meeting. One visitor came all the way from Wisconsin.
- She introduced Mrs. Jan Vilar and her mother, who was born and reared in Liberty. Mrs. Vilar discussed some of her family's history which involved the old "school farm" back when the school operated as a boarding school and taught agricultural vocation subjects. She brought some artifacts dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, including a school graduation announcement from 1924 that she donated to the LRSB.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Other Business:** Pres. Barron recognized Mrs. Frances Phares who discussed the following:

- Family history booklets are for sale.
- She has received a notebook of information collected by Mary Lou Cain, including a book on the Cain family.

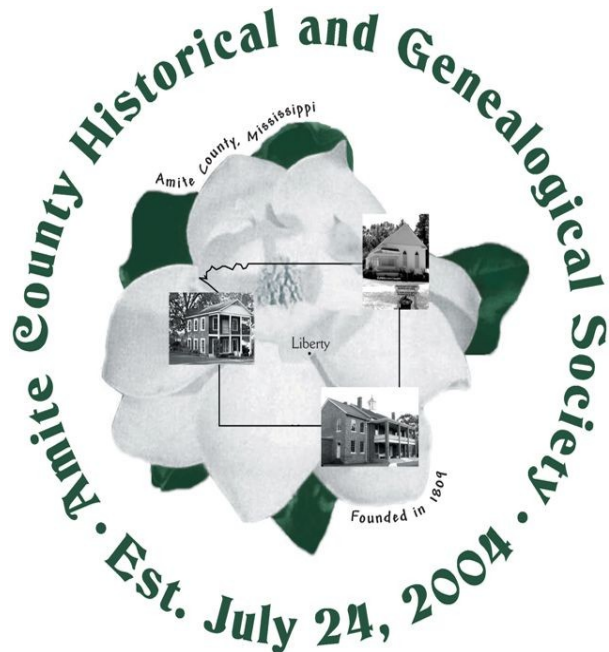
- She has arranged for Jim Hendrickson to give the society a program in September. Mr. Hendrickson is retired from the military and now restores historic homes. He is particularly active in Jackson, LA.
- If members have suggestions for society programs, please give them to her or to Jim Freeman, who is assisting.
- She also needs more submissions of genealogy and stories of the past.

President Barron gave the closing prayer and the business meeting was adjourned.

**September program:**

Retired USAF Colonel James "Jim" L. Hendrickson will be our guest speaker at our meeting on September 10, at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room of the library. "Jim", a resident of Jackson, Louisiana, is restoring three ante-bellum homes and is currently secretary of the Jackson Historic District Commission, vice president of the Jackson Assembly, and treasurer of the Jackson Tourism Enhancement Committee.

Plan to attend and be ready to interact with him.



# BITS AND PIECES OF AMITE COUNTY HISTORY

## GIDEON SLEEPER

### First Generation

1. Gideon Sleeper was born on 5 Apr 1786 in N H. He died on 23 May 1836 . Gideon Sleeper and Peggy Margaret McDowell were married on 23 Nov 1824 in Amite Co, MS. Peggy Margaret McDowell, daughter of John McDowell and Martha Fairburne, was born on 2 Jan 1793 in Milledgeville, Baldwin, GA. She died on 21 Jan 1864 in Liberty, Amite Co , MS. They had the following children:

Martha Ann Sleeper  
Chlorinda Sleeper  
Gardner Southworth Sleeper  
Fabius Hoyt Sleeper  
Julia Ann Sleeper  
Lewis Gardner Collins Sleeper  
Arminda Sleeper

### Second Generation

2. Chlorinda Sleeper (Gideon-1) was born on 27 Aug 1827 in Yazoo County. She died on 13 Apr 1907 in Waco, McLennan, TX and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, McLennan, TX. Chlorinda Sleeper and (1) Robert Lee Torrence were married on 13 May 1847 in Liberty, Amite Co, MS. Robert Lee Torrence, son of Thomas Torrence and Jannet "Jane" Lowrey, was born on 12 May 1814 in Amite Co, MS. He died on 13 Mar 1852 in Amite Co, MS and was buried in Robert Brown Cemetery, Amite Co, MS. Robert L was the Clerk of Circuit Court for Amite County. They had the following children:

Thomas Daniel Torrence was born on 12 Mar 1848 in Liberty, Amite Co, MS. He died on 20 Jul 1852 in Liberty, Amite Co, MS.

Robert Blake Torrence Sr.  
Van Swearingen Torrence.

### Third Generation

3. Robert Blake Torrance Sr (Chlorinda Sleeper-2, Gideon-1) was born on 17 Apr 1850 in Amite Co, MS and died on 11 Jun 1904 in a gun battle in Elk, McLennan, TX. He was buried in Harper Cemetery, McLennan Co, TX.

Quote from Southern Chronicles, 1996 - "Robert Blake Torrance Sr. born April 17, 1850, was half orphaned when only 23 months old. His mother had a hard time making ends meet to support herself and three children. The youngest, Van S Torrance was born just 45 days after his father's death, then her oldest child died just 4 months and 7 days after his father died. His mother kept a few boarders (This was the hotel across the street west of the Liberty Courthouse [Tillotson building], now demolished.) and did some sewing. She remained a widow for about three years, then she married the second time, John H Morgan in 1855.

"Father stayed with an uncle by the name of Van Swerengen Torrance a great deal after he was

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about 10 or 12 years old and on up. During the Civil War this uncle drove cattle and hogs for the southern army. He had Father and some other boys to help him. The northern army uniform was blue and southern uniforms grey. Father got hold of a soldier's grey coat some way and put it on one evening and went into the woods to look for some stock. He was on foot. He heard someone coming and saw two northern soldiers approaching, also on foot. There was a large pine tree that had blown down and pulled up a lot of dirt making a big hole. Father jumped into that hole and stuffed the grey coat into a hole, shoveled some loose leaves over it, but the men had not seen him, so they passed on. Father then climbed out of the hole and went on, but he left the grey coat right there."

Robert Blake Torrance Sr and Jeannette Elvira Silliman Dixon were married on 19 Feb 1874 in East Feliciana Parish, La.. Jeannette Elvira Silliman Dixon, daughter of Benjamin Franklin Dixon and Jane Elvira Silliman Norwood, was born on 15 Mar 1854 in East Baton Rouge Parish, LA and died on 26 Jun 1907 in Elk, McLennan County, TX. They had the following children:

Robert Blake Torrance II  
Lucius Seals Torrance  
Jeanette E S Torrance  
Mary Taylor Torrance  
Thomas Swearingen Torrance  
Jared Rivers Torrance  
Sallie Chlorinda Torrance  
Elizabeth Torrance  
Nettie Jane Torrance  
Beulah Torrance  
Edgar Lee Torrance  
Willie Torrance  
Benjamin Franklin Torrance.

Fourth Generation

4. Robert Blake Torrance II (Robert Blake-3, Chlorinda Sleeper-2, Gideon-1) was born on 15 Jun 1875 in Elm Mott, TX. He died on 20 Sep 1965.

Southern Chronicles, 1996 quote: "Robert B, Jr. ....wrote 'The Torrance Family History' on Oct 31, 1946, when he was 71 years old."

Part of story: "Father knew Mother's youngest brother, Rivers M Dixon and along in January, 1874, he met Uncle Rivers. He invited Father to a party at the home of Mother's sister, Aunt Lizzie Dunn (that was Thaddeus's wife). Father went to the party and met Mother for the first time and he proposed to her at the party. She accepted him and they were married three weeks later. I think it was 15 or 10 miles[?] from Liberty, Mississippi, to Zachary, Louisiana, where Mother lived. It came a big rain and the creeks were all overflowing the day they were to marry. There were not many bridges in those days, so Father rode a large mule down there that day because he knew the mule was a good swimmer and would swim high, too. He was a little late getting there anyway, so Mother was getting a bit worried. After Father and Mother married Feb 19, 1874, they lived either in Mississippi or Louisiana that year, and I suppose Father farmed. In the winter following they came to Texas in a covered wagon. (Note: They went there at the recommendation of Fabius Sleeper, who was related to Robert Blake Torrance's mother's family and who lived in Waco.) They were three weeks on the

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road. Father rented a farm just east of Elm Mott, Texas, that year, but as it was so dry that year, the farmers did not make any crops. I was born there, June 15, 1875. In December, Father and Mother took me back to Mississippi. (Note: One of the reasons for going back to Mississippi was to escape a scarlet fever epidemic in Texas.) Father and Uncle Van S Torrance had bought some horses and Uncle Van went along horseback and drove the loose horses. Father, Mother and I went in the covered wagon. We were three weeks on the road again. It was so dry they could not get water for anything except to drink for the first few days on the road. Father bought a farm at a tax sale near Liberty and we lived there in a log house with a kitchen that sat about 20 feet from the house. The kitchen had a dirt floor. I remember Father coming home a few times at night after dark when we were out of kerosene and candles too, so Mother put an old time bake oven on the table and put some fat pine splinters on the lid then lit them to make a light for Father to eat by. I also remember Father cut up a lot of fat pine splinters, stuck them in the ground on the edge of a clay bank, turned a wash pot upside down over them, punched a hole up under the pot, and put a bucket under the hole under the bank and caught the tar that the fire drew out of the splinters. He used the tar to grease the wagon wheels. We lived there until Dec, 1882. Then Father lost the last mule with Scharbon or anthrax, so he sold the farm and hired a man with a wagon and team to carry us to Osyka, Mississippi, about 25 miles away. Then we got on the train, went to New Orleans, then on a ferry boat across the Mississippi, and on to Houston and up the old Texas Central Railroad to East Waco....."

Robert Blake Torrance II and Daisey Allen were married on 24 Dec 1902. Daisey Allen was born on 16 May 1880 and died on 5 Mar 1962.

More data on other members of the Sleeper family in the Amite County Mississippi Historical & Genealogical Connections, Volume IV.

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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.

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October Program:

October 9, 10:00 in the Conference Room of the library -

Getting Acquainted with the Historical & Genealogical Treasures Housed in the Little Red School House. You will be exposed to the Filing Cabinets??? Is your family history in the files??? Don't miss this opportunity to have a PEEP!!!!

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### **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):

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**Liberty, MS 39645**