



Amite County Historical and Genealogical Society

Dawn Taylor, President

William G. Barron, Vice President

Marcia Gordon McLaurin, Secretary & Newsletter Editor

N. Gay Blalock, Treasurer

Neil Randall, Council-at-Large

October 2020

Vol. 16, No. 5

WITHOUT A PAST, THERE IS NO FUTURE

**ALL IN-PERSON SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS POSTPONED
UNTIL COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ARE LIFTED IN FULL
*MEETINGS WILL BE VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM***

VIRTUAL BUSINESS MEETING:

Date: October 10, 2020

Time: 11:00 AM

Place: Virtual meeting for members via Zoom meeting. You may call or use link for video. You do not have to create a Zoom account to use this.

INSTRUCTIONS HERE:

Email link will be sent to those with email addresses.

Time: Oct 10, 2020 11:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/4606637067>

Meeting ID: 460 663 7067

One tap mobile (**use the one in your time zone**)

+13462487799,,4606637067# US (Houston)

+16699009128,,4606637067# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

(use the one in your time zone —doesn't matter your location)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 460 663 7067

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WILL MEET VIA ZOOM AT 10:00.

A private link will be sent to the members via email.

DUES are PAST DUE!!!!!!

(not applicable to life members)

Annual dues were due for the 2020-2021 fiscal year as of September 30, 2020. If you have not paid, you will be placed on an inactive membership list until we receive your payment. You will no longer receive the newsletter. You will be removed from the Facebook page. 50 members have not paid.

Announcements:

LRSH:

Closed for renovations until further notice. There will be a notification about helping with renovations in the near future. Thanks to Sam King, Ronnie Volentine, and Freddie Cook for all the work so far!

MEMBER AUTOBIOGRAPHIES:

We are asking all members who are willing to please submit a mini-autobiography to help other members get to know you! Please include where you live, your connection to Amite County, your hobbies, family information, etc. You get the drift! Include anything that would help others get to know you better! One member will be published in each newsletter! How exciting!

ACHGS Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2020

Executive Committee Meeting: 10 am. All 5 members were in attendance via Zoom. Prayer by Gay Blalock. Neil Randall spoke with Sam King about LRSB project. Sam has reached out to the contractor who is working on Robin Elliott's house. He said they were 2-3 weeks from being done and then will come look at the LRSB to make an estimate. The other contractor Tommy Carraway from Summit gave us a price but no detailed breakdown. Neither could work on it until October or November. Gay stated that we were not getting any mail to speak of, not like usual. Balance on hand \$38,048.39. We discussed whether to have everyone spell out the entire name of the society on their mail to us. 63 members have not paid dues out of 113.

General Meeting: 11 am via Zoom. Meeting called to order at 11:07. There were 9 in attendance.

Invocation: Greg Blalock

Minutes: Read by Marcia McLaurin, Secretary. Greg Barron made motion to approve minutes. Gay Blalock second. Motion carried. Minutes accepted.

President's Report: Still working on the LRSB. Sam King and Neil Randall have contacted contractors. Plan to meet the contractor that Robin Elliott is using to get an estimate. Tommy Carraway has given a general estimate, but Sam has requested that he give a more detailed estimate. They have done a remarkable job restoring the McGehee Beall house for Robin after the tornado almost destroyed it last December. Greg will post a link on the Facebook page so that members can see this house before and after the tornado.

Treasurers Report: Balance of \$38,048.39 on hand.

Secretary's Report: Dues are due by the end of September 30th. If dues are not paid you will lose Facebook privileges and not receive the newsletter.

Motion to accept executive reports by Stevie Svetich. Second by Jean Roberts. Motion carried. Reports approved.

Neil Randall Program: Family search is extremely helpful. www.familysearch.org. It is free but you do have to sign up for a membership. It is connected with Family Tree Maker. It is not easy to navigate but is a very clean site. Once you go to search, it gives you a dropdown and pick catalogs. 3 options to get records. Click on "online" then type "Amite". Then click on the one you want... ex: "Amite County". Then it will have things to choose from and you will see microfiche records. You can get into probate records. This will take you to a Mississippi site that then you will have to pick the county again. All these things are images. Everything is in one place. You can take the same person and go into the minutes records to see the court minutes on the same probate. Helps if you want to go to the courthouse to have them pull the records quickly. He also found records related to the Confederate monument, including donations, etc. Neil encourages everyone to visit this website. It will save you trips to the courthouse. Greg Price is an excellent resource for genealogy research. Abe Books is a good online resource for old books for sale. The National Archives is a great resource for records from Pike County that were later burned. You will need an appointment if going in person, but you can access them online. In Atlanta there are land records for SW MS from the origination of the counties that covers Wilkinson, Amite, Pike, and Franklin County in the National Archives.

New Business: None

Old Business: None

It is great seeing people online who live too far away to attend in person!!!! We will continue the Zoom meetings even after we resume in-person meetings so that the people out of state can still participate.

Motion to adjourn Greg Barron. Jean Roberts second. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:17.

Remembering Camp Van Dorn

By Kenneth Gordon

It was the summer of 1942 that Gwin H. Gordon, my cousin and I, both school boys 16 & 17 years old, worked the entire summer in the rush-rush construction of Camp Van Dorn, and it was the hottest summer I can remember. The army training camp being built was in the edge of Centreville, MS and extended from Wilkinson County through the southwest part of Amite County, comprising about 46,000 acres. At this juncture of WWII, the United States was losing more battles than we were winning against Hitler's Germany and the empire of Japan. I had a job with Farnsworth Construction Company as an engineer's helper. We were mostly measuring and staking out buildings. Later I found out I could be paid more as a carpenter's helper on the same job, about \$35.00 a week, so I made the move. Gwin H. was also employed in similar activity.

The camp had been constructed by hundreds of farmers, carpenters, and other tradesmen in a matter of months and was largely completed by late August. Gwin H.'s & my employment had been completed by then, but due to good standing with our employer we were called back to finish work needed for the placement of pot-belly heaters in the barracks. These heaters were placed on sheets of asbestos flex-board. At this day and age the health hazards associated with asbestos had not been discovered. This material was widely used in the camp's construction and hopefully no one suffered ill effects from it.

During that summer the work was oppressive from the heat and rushed conditions. Our transportation from Liberty to the job each day was riding on boards placed across the body of a pickup driven by Harold Dixon, which was extremely dangerous, but no accidents occurred.

The United States Army had sent a cadre to inspect Camp Van Dorn and began occupancy with thousands of troops by the end of 1942. These Army units, the 99th Division and the 63rd Division trained here because of the terrain that they would face in Western Europe. Both divisions and some smaller units served with distinction during the Battle of the Bulge and crossing the Siegfried Line into Germany.

After the end of that summer I finished my senior year at Liberty High School by Christmas of 1942 and Gwin H. finished his senior year during the summer of 1943. At age 18, I joined the United States Naval Air Force and served in military training until mid-1946.

Gwin H. entered the Naval Air Force and served through the war on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific theatre. Both Gwin H. and I were honorably discharged. Upon his return he was employed by Orgill Bros. in Jackson, MS until his retirement, and in the process was married to his high school sweetheart, Jessie Lane Cockerham. To this marriage 3 children were born, one daughter and twin sons.

Gwin H. just recently passed away and Jessie Lane passed away several years ago.

After the war I practiced law in Liberty, MS for two years with my father and brother at Gordon & Gordon Law firm and then became owner of the Liberty Insurance Agency. I stayed there and managed the business until I retired.

In the fall of 1948 I married Flora Nell Newman, my wife of 69 years. We were blessed with one daughter. We now live in Liberty.

Tom Brokaw, famed TV personality, wrote a book about World War II and described us as "The Greatest Generation".

Kenneth Gordon passed away December 1, 2018, the day of the open house at the McGehee- Beall home, at the age of 93.

MEMBERS WILLING TO SHARE THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	EMAIL	PHONE	FAMILY NAMES
Anderson	Thad Dudley	thad@seniorsbluebook.com	228-396-4602	Anderson, Swearingen, Gillis
Barron	Greg (William)	williamgbarron@msn.com	601-810-7843	Barron, Erwin, Anderson, Dean, Deer, Marsalis, Myers, Ward, Gayden, Morgan, Collins, Bickham, Richardson, Huckabee, Newsmith
Blalock	Gay	gayblalock@gmail.com	601-657-8807	Spillman, Shuckrow, Weathersby, Jackson
Boyd	Susan	Susan.boyd1@icloud.com	601-660-2550	DAR specialist
Cate	David	davidjcate@comcast.net	832-266-9545	Kennedy, Gillespie, Cotton, Ellis, Erwin/Ervin, Marsh, Blocker, Patterson, Brasfield, Bassfield, Bechtel
Clark	Angela			Gallegly
Cook	Jacob	jacobcook82@gmail.com	803-443-3114	Shurley, Taylor, Jones, McMillan, Lundberg
Crowell	Millijon Mila	billnmila@sbcglobal.net	512-788-7644	Harrington, Terrell, Godbold, Jones (professional genealogist)
Crump-Russell	Helen	hrussell9671@gmail.com	318-789-8396	Butler, Nunnery, Johns
Daniels	David A.	davidadaniels@comcast.net	615-517-5225	Daniels, Causey, Jackson, Buford, Nesmith
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Fortenberry	Teresa	taf6768@aol.com	404-296-6768	Simmons, Goslin, Covington, Washburn
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Khayat	Susannah	susannahkhayat@gmail.com	404-556-7040	Walker, Benthall, Jackson, Jenkins
Lane	Maurice	mauricelane@att.net	205-988-3521	Lane, Garner, Cook, Addison, Sleppy
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Lovgren	Wendy	mx287308@SBCGlobal.net		Anderson, Causey, Daniels, Jackson, Jenkins, Perkins, Smylie
McGehee	Debra	debby_higgins@yahoo.com	985-259-1322	McGehee, Dykes, Downs, Muse, DeJarnette, Varnado, Hutto, Strickland, Easterling, Higgins, Passman, Taylor, Thomas, O'Neil, Watson, McKenzie, Richardson, Talley, Warrne, Butler, Morris
McGraw	Marie K.	marie410@att.net	601-924-5788	McGraw
McLaurin	Marcia	geemarcia@gmail.com	601-988-4077	Gordon, Butler, Newman, Burris, Barron, Causey
Parker	Marti	lipseylibrary@yahoo.com	601-320-4474	James M. Miller descendant
Parks	Tracy	tracycparks@comcast.net	901-409-7751	

LAST	FIRST	EMAIL	PHONE	FAMILY NAMES
Payne	Jennifer	jenpayne10@gmail.com	832-696-5973	Cain, Caston, Cunningham, Covington, Cockerham, Huff, Jones, Longmire, Moore, Payne
Price	Gregory	gaprice@comcast.net	601-856-0009	Price, Rollins, Bunch
Prospere	Katherine	prospere@cableone.net	601-597-0955	Middleton, Thornhill, Emfinger, Barksdale
Randall	Neil	Jrand57@msn.com	985-290-2325	Randall, roundtree, James, Lusk, Whiteside, Roberts, Coleman, Page, Tanner, Bowlin, Lindsey, Small, Cothorn, Pierce, Thigpen, Richardson, Prine, McKay, Ward, Harrell, Hopgood, Duncan, Conerly, Farmer, Dees,
Roberts	Jean	jeanroberts@comcast.net	303-431-9191	Bankston, Hall, McElveen, Carter, Coates, Prescott, Jones, Conerly, Ward, Scott, Guy, Magee, Herring, Miller, Roberts, Wall, Varner/ Vernon, Gordon, Hope, Smit, Simmons (Bogue Chitto), Tyler, Davis
Turner	Martha	martha.turner58@yahoo.com	540-645-2013	Butler, Gordon, Robinson, Turn, Quin, McElveen, Brumfield, Campbell
Victor	Patricia	Pkvictor.hou@gmail.com	281-384-2757	Richard Curtis, Phoebe Courtney, Talkbert, Johns, Lea, Perkins, Slade, Reeves/Rees
Walker	Carole	cawalker@scarletmail.rutgers.edu	404-963-1231	Walker, Jackson
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Young	Rob	ryoung51@gmail.com	228-265-1294	Young, McGehee, Nunnery, Thornton, Wilkinson
Zeigler	Virginia H.	ginyaz@bellsouth.net	601-249-5467	Edwards, Turner, Zeigler, Bates, Rawlinson

If you are willing to share your contact information with other members, please let us know by emailing us at amitecohistory@gmail.com or text Marcia @ 601-988-4077 with your family names.

Annual Membership Contribution
Amite County Historical and Genealogical Society

PO Box 2

Liberty, MS 39645

amitecohistory@gmail.com

Check or circle choice

- \$15.00 – Individual \$25.00 – Family \$10.00 – Senior (over 65)
 \$200.00 – Lifetime \$150 -- Lifetime, couple 70+ age \$100 - Lifetime, 70+ individual
 \$10.00 – Student (under 18) \$50.00 – Sponsor or Ancestor Memorial

All contributions are tax-deductible.

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

Please send PayPal payments to: **amitecohistory@gmail.com**

(Please print)

Date: _____

Name: _____

Amite County Families to whom I am related: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Zip+4: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

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):

YOU MAY SHARE MY CONTACT INFORMATION WITH OTHER MEMBERS for FAMILY RESEARCH PURPOSES:

YES NO

Prefer newsletter to be mailed () Prefer newsletter to be emailed ()

Please let us know if you would prefer to receive the newsletter via email instead of snail mail. This would allow us to save money on postage which would in turn allow money to be spent more prudently.

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