



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 2009

Vol. 5, No. 12

Without a past, there is no future

Next meeting: The next meeting will be the annual society **Open House at the Little Red Schoolhouse** (and library meeting room) on **December 5, 2009**. The event will run **from noon until 3:00 pm**. There will be food, music, tours of the LRSH and other historical and genealogical features. Members are urged to attend and to invite others who may wish to become members and bolster the society's membership.

AMITE COUNTY HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of October 10, 2009 meeting

DRAFT

President Greg Barron called the meeting to order at 10:05 am in the meeting room of the Liberty library. There were 14 attendees. Mrs. Vera Prestridge introduced new member Carla Brewer to the attendees. Walt Gaston opened the meeting with prayer.

Future Meeting Schedule

December 5, 2009, 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm — Annual Open House and membership drive. Details to be announced.

January 9, 2010, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

February 13, 2010, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

March 13, 2010, 10:00 am — Quarterly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS. Details of the quarterly program will be announced.

April 10, 2010, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

May 8, 2010, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

June 12, 2010, 10:00 am — Annual meeting with election of officers in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS. Other activities or program will be announced.

Pres. Barron asked if everyone had read the minutes of the October 10 meeting and whether there were changes to be made. A motion to adopt the minutes was made by Nelson Dawson and seconded by Walt Gaston. The minutes were approved by vote of the attendees.

President Report: Pres. Barron reported that:

- Society members took Dr. Scarborough to lunch in McComb following the October meeting.
- Some of the members went on to represent the society at the Holmesville event which included the Smithsonian Traveling Exposition and a tour of some of the homes in the area.
- On Wednesday, November 11, Pres. Barron and Jim Freeman attended a tour of the Vaughn House in Magnolia.
- The historical marker for the LRSH will be considered by the Archives and History Commission at its January, 2010 meeting.

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This should enable the society to obtain and erect the marker in time for a dedication ceremony on Heritage Day in May.

- Open House will be at the LRS (and library meeting room) on December 5, 2009. The decorations/preparation volunteers need to finish the decoration on December 3. Volunteers to bring food should indicate their preference of what to provide to Gay Blalock and Dawn Taylor.

Vice President Report: VP Dawn Taylor reported that the Christmas cards showing the Little Red Schoolhouse in the freshly-fallen snow are now available and selling out rapidly. Sets of 20 cards with envelopes are available at \$12 per set. Half of the 40 sets purchased from the printer have sold and others have asked to purchase sets after the meeting.

Secretary Report: Secy. Wayne Anderson had no report.

Treasurer Report: Treasurer Gay Blalock provided a printed report showing that the bank balance as of the date of the meeting was \$6905.49. Oma Gordon made a motion to approve the report; Wayne Anderson seconded. The report was approved by vote of the members attending.

Committee Reports:

- WPA books – About 8 sets of the WPA books remain.
- Little Red Schoolhouse – There was one family who visited the LRS in the last month.

Old business:

- Pres. Barron reports that the society is finished with the report on the Truly Whittington collection and no more discussion or inquiry on this is expected.
- Oma Gordon passed around a news clipping about locating and cleaning old Amite County grave sites. Mrs. Gordon, Jennie Livingston and Mary Pallon, among others, recently spent a day in this endeavor.
- The genealogical publication proposed by Mrs. Frances Phares is now planned for issuance semiannually. The first issue will be free to members; a modest price will be charged to non-members who receive a copy.
- The Dr. Thomas Jackson cemetery has been found on the Vines' property. Only a few graves exist in this plot. One of the tombstones has been buried and will have to be dug up and reset. Volunteer labor to clean and straighten the cemetery is needed.

New business: None

Other business: David Dreyer has donated two books, one by Will Campbell, the other by Jerry Clower.

The business meeting was adjourned and V.P. Dawn Taylor presented the still photo slide show of scenes from the Bicentennial celebrations.

Reminder

Be sure to notify this editor of any address corrections so that you can be assured of receiving your newsletter each month.

BITS AND PIECES OF AMITE COUNTY HISTORY

Amite County Physicians

DR. ROBERT MIDDLETON

1. Dr Robert Middleton was born about 1816 in Mississippi and believed to have died in Texas. Dr Robert Middleton and Sarah Catherine Wilkinson were married on 9 Dec 1849 in Jefferson Co, MS. Sarah Catherine Wilkinson, daughter of W Duncan Wilkinson and Janet Buie, was born about 1825 in Mississippi. She died between Jul 1860 and Mar 1863 at the age of 35. Robert Middleton conveyed land in Amite County to E R Wilkinson, 5-30-1859. (Joseph Hoff's grandfather, James B Nelson's medical license showed Robert Middleton's signature. James B Nelson wrote by Dr. Middleton's signature- Gone to Texas.) It is thought Dr. Middleton moved to Texas and for a brief time was involved with medical education in that state.

US CENSUS AMITE CO, 1850 - Duncan Wilkinson, age 74, farm, real estate value \$792, born in North Carolina; Robert Middleton, age 34, schoolmaster, Sarah E Middleton, age 29, Wm C Middleton, age 9, John C Middleton, age 7, J I Middleton, age 3, Male, Willis Roberts, age 34, Farm, born in LA. [All others born in MS] Wm C & John C were students.

US Census, Amite Co, 1860, FN 519: Robert Middleton, 43 yrs, Physician, Real Val. \$1,500; Sarah, 35 yrs; William, 18 yrs, Student; John 16, Student; Judith, 13 yrs; Robert, 6 yrs; Baby, 1/12 yrs; Daniel Wilkinson, 22 yrs, Physician; James B Nelson, 30 yrs, Doctor \$500; John Nelson, 6 yrs; Richard, 4 yrs.

The Diary of Miss Frances Ann Cain of Zion Hill, MS 1856-1858:

p 19 - "March 15th 1857 Sunday - Well I went to preaching today down at the school house. Dr Middleton preached. Liz and I rode, the men folks walked. I enjoyed myself very well."

p 34, "July 5th 1857 Sunday! I went to preaching today over at the sixteenth. There was a good many out, preached out at a stand. Heard three sermons, Huff, Godfrey and Middleton. They dismissed about 3 o'clock and we came home....."

p 50, "...Dr Middleton made a few very affecting remarks over her [Minerva wife of Winston Wilkinson] and she was then laid down in the silent grave to remain until the end of time...."

p 77 - "April 19th 1858 Monday I have been making a new fashion hoop today but I have not finished it and I am tired of it now. Ma and I are going down to see Mrs Middleton this evening and I reckon I will stay all night as they have to sit up with her, so Adieu."

Robert Middleton and Sarah Catherine Wilkinson had the following children:

1.1. William C Middleton was born about 1841 in MS.

1.2. John C Middleton was born about 1843.

1.3. Judith Isabel Middleton was born about 1847. Judith Isabel Middleton and John Tyler Longmire were married on 8 Feb 1866 in Amite Co, MS. John Tyler Longmire, son of Robert Longmire and Martha Ann Robinson Capell, was born on 3 Oct 1841 in Amite Co, MS. He died about 1911 at the age of 70 in Pelahatchie, Rankin Co, MS. John and Judith moved to Pelahatchie, MS and operated a store.

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1.4. Robert Middleton was born about 1854.

1.5. Betsy Middleton was born about Jun 1860 - per George A. McGehee [W Duncan Wilkinson was a brother of Daniel King Wilkinson, George A's grandfather.]

Dr Robert Middleton and Eliza Jane Talbert were married on 5 Mar 1863 in Amite County. Eliza Jane, daughter of Thomas Albert Talbert and Sarah Caston, was born on 18 Jan 1828 in Amite Co. She died on 27 Jun 1896 at the age of 68.

DR. JAMES BENJAMIN NELSON

About the year 1847 when James Benjamin Nelson was about 21 years old, he and his brother William Winfield Nelson came to Amite County from Europe. They had relatives in this area but relations (Neilsons or Nelsons) have been forgotten. At any rate the John F. Collinsworth family "took them in" and used him in his business, as he wrote a beautiful hand and was well educated for that time. Within two years, John F Collinsworth died leaving a widow, children, and a large estate. On December 18, 1849, James B. married John F. Collinsworth's widow, Lavis Cassels Collinsworth, the daughter of Rueben Cassell and Mary Sojourner. Two sons were born to this marriage - Winfield and Benjamin Drake Nelson. Lavis died in August 1858 after being thrown from a horse. Following her death, James B. made the decision to leave his son Benjamin (Winfield was deceased) with his two unmarried stepdaughters, Amazon and Antoinette Collinsworth and attend medical school.

About the time he received his medical license to practice medicine and had returned to the county, the Civil War "broke out". Soon thereafter, he joined Capt. William L. Huff's company for the duration of the war, serving as a physician to the troops as they moved into Kentucky and Georgia. Before returning to the county after the war, he married one of his nurses, the mother of a son about 12 years old, the age of James B.'s son Benjamin. As they began to settle into life in Amite County, the new wife seemed to play favorites with the boys; the unresolved conflicts led to her returning to her people.

About the year 1867 when his last stepdaughter married, the Collinsworth estate was sold and James B. moved to Cedar Grove community (O'Neil). There he built a medical office, practiced medicine, and served as the O'Neil postmaster from 1874 until his death on 18 Oct 1891. (The post office was removed to William Whittington's store at his death.)

In later life, he married Sarah E Jackson on January 5, 1881, the daughter of Thomas Jackson, Jr. and Elizabeth Van Norman. Elizabeth was a sister of Hiram Van Norman.

This staunch Methodist established the Cedargrove Methodist Church and public school with the help of Rev. Martin Luther White, his first wife's cousin. The church was removed after his death and re-named the New hope Methodist Church. With the consolidation of the county schools, the school at Cedargrove was merged with the Oxford school and became Oxford school.

The 1850's were difficult times for immigrants. The "Know-Nothing" party born of that era was anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant. James B., a recent emigrant to the county, was harassed and threatened by the group. When chosen for jury duty in Liberty during this period, necessitating his having to spend the week in Liberty with few rooms available, his only choice was to sleep on the benches in the courthouse. Fearing for his safety, he hired a bodyguard to stay with him day and night while

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the court was in session. An uneventful time!!!

His son, Benjamin Drake Nelson, grew up with the Collinsworths as his family. Showing his affection for the family, Benjamin named his second, third, and fourth sons respectively, Fletcher Collinsworth, Edmund Garrett, and Hamilton Burton. Joe's mother, "Nettie", was named for Antoinette, one of the younger sisters.

Benjamin Drake was very proud of his Methodist kin, the Whites and Lewises, despite his wife's strong Baptist family. He was a master builder, building at least ten churches in Amite County, including the Berwick Baptist Church and remodeling the Ebenezer Baptist and Woodland Methodist churches; the latter are standing in 2004.

James B. Nelson and his first wife, Lavicy Cassels, are buried in the Cedar Grove (Hollingsworth) Cemetery, located about 1.2 miles north of Mount Pleasant church in Amite County.

Researched by Joseph "Joe" Hoff, Gretna, LA. James Benjamin was Joe's great-grandfather. Edited and submitted to Southern Herald, Liberty, Mississippi by Eva Frances Phares, July 20, 2004.



ACHGS Standing Committees and Chairpersons

Jeannine Dixon — Nominating Committee
Vera Prestridge — Little Red Schoolhouse
Dot Whittington — Archives (at the LRSH)
Kenneth Gordon — Amite County History
Nelson Dawson — Amite County Family History
Bobby Haygood — Amite County Cemeteries
Linda Honea Lea — Hospitality
Gay Blalock — Special Events and Food
Robert Stratton — Special Events Publicity
Greg Barron — Programs and Publicity
James Allen Causey — Tours and Amite County Landmarks

Anyone interested in helping with should contact the committee chairman or contact President Oma Gordon to be referred to the committee chairman.

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
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