



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

August 2010

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Without a past, there is no future

Next meeting: The next meeting will be a regular monthly business meeting at 10:00 am on August 14 in the conference room of the library in Liberty. Mrs. Frances Phares will read selections from the McGehee Family History in a short program following the meeting.

AMITE COUNTY HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of July 10, 2010 meeting

DRAFT

Future Meeting Schedule

August 14, 2010, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

September 11, 2010, 10:00 am — Quarterly meeting and annual field trip. We will visit the Old Vaughan House in Magnolia that has been completely restored. Lunch will follow at La'Mara Posa in Magnolia. We will meet at the LRSH parking lot at 9:00 am and carpool to Magnolia.

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

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

December 4, 2010, 10:00 am — Annual Open House and Membership Drive. Details to be announced.

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

February 12, 2010, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

March 12, 2010, 10:00 am — Quarterly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS. Program to be announced.

President Greg Barron called the meeting to order at 10:05 am in the meeting room of the Liberty library. There were 14 attendees. Dawn Taylor gave the invocation. There were nine attendees.

Minutes from the previous meeting were presented for approval. Secretary Anderson noted that the date at the top of the minutes was incorrect and would be corrected in the final minutes. Dawn Taylor made a motion to approve; both Vera Prestridge seconded. The minutes were approved as written by vote of the members present.

President Report: Pres. Barron passed out an information sheet on the July 24, 2010 field trip in which the society has been invited to participate. This was discussed in detail in the June minutes and will not be iterated again here.

Vice President Report: VP Dawn Taylor announced that the Christ-

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mas ornaments with the picture of the LRSB in the snow have yet to be made so additional orders may still be taken from anyone wishing an ornament. Cost is \$5.00 per ornament. See Dawn to place an order and pay.

Secretary Report: Secy. Wayne Anderson again reminded members that it was dues time and that a number of long-time members have not paid for the next year.

Treasurer Report: Treasurer Gay Blalock was not present.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

WPA Books: There were no new sales recently.

LRSB: Mrs. Vera Prestridge reported that one couple from Magnolia visited during the past month. She also asked that everyone remember to sign in when ever visiting the LRSB for any reason.

Old Business: Pres. Barron indicated that the September meeting will be a field trip to the Vaughn House in Magnolia if all arrangements can be made.

New Business:

- Frances Phares made a motion that the price on the previously published family history book be discounted to \$8.00. Vera Prestridge seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Mrs. Phares asked that members to write down childhood memories of growing up in Amite County and submit them to her for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter. Anyone wishing to participate may send their write-ups to Secretary Anderson (see newsletter for contact info) and he will pass it on to Mrs. Phares.

Other Business: President Barron read a news article from 1915 which reported on the murder of Lum Cleveland and his wife by Allen Westbrook in the East Fork area of the county. This clipping was found among papers and other family effects being cleaned from a house that will be demolished for the widening of Hwy. 24.

The business meeting was adjourned by President Barron at about 10:50.

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

MISCELLANEOUS MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

The Ducktown "Booger"

By Wayne Anderson

My family moved from our house in town (Liberty) during the last week of December, 1956, to a house at the fork of the road where the Street Road connects to Highway 569. That put us somewhat in the heart of Ducktown as most everyone called it then.

One of the first things my parents used to keep my sisters and me from straying too far from the house, especially late in the day and early evening, was the threat that the Ducktown "Booger" might get us. I was ten years old and that point and was not one to just take the threat of some "boogie-man" as real unless I had some more information. Of course, they were slow to give any details and later I realized why: too little information kept me guessing and gave them time to come up with details that somewhat made sense.

Finally after some time, they told me that no one knew what the "Booger" is, but people in the area reported hearing all manner of growling and snarling around their houses, particularly after dark. They said that whatever it is it scared even the bravest hunting dogs and drove them into a frenzy of barking and whining.

I suppose they embellished it to as great a degree as they felt they could for my benefit since I was the only one of the children they were really concerned would go off playing or exploring and run into some kind of real trouble, like a rattlesnake or moccasin. My sister Susan was only four and wasn't likely to want to go roaming even if she could have. My sister Wanda was less than a year old at that point so she was no worry either.

I finally got my father to speculate that the "Booger" was a panther, the term usually applied in the South, particularly Mississippi, to a cougar or mountain lion. He as well as a lot of others of his generation were convinced that panthers still roamed the more rural areas even though the wildlife experts declared time after time that they were extinct in Mississippi.

That was enough to convince me that perhaps it would be best not to be too far from help should one of these extinct cats decide to check me out.

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Only much later when I was in college did I hear the real story behind the Ducktown "Booger" and even it was a bit incomplete as to time, people involved and other details. It seems that sometime earlier (I always presumed the 30s or 40s) someone from the area had gone out west and perhaps to Mexico for a time and had learned to make a "cat caller" which would simulate the sound of a large cat



Cougar

(cougar or, in Mexico, a jaguar) on the prowl. The call would be perceived by a very territorial big cat as a challenger's invasion of his domain and the big cat would come to sound of the call to drive the interloper away. A hunter would hide himself near the caller and wait for a clear shot on the now disgruntled cat.



Jaguar

The call was really a simple device (I've since seen a picture of one made in Mexico for jaguars) consisting of a drum-like body open at both ends, usually a large round gourd. Over one end a wet rawhide membrane was stretched and then allowed to dry so that it shrank, tightening into a taut drum-like cover. Through this membrane a hole was cut which would just barely allow a leather thong to be threaded and tied back to itself, creating an endless loop. When finished, the thong could be pulled through the hole making a sound from the friction between thong and rawhide. By varying the speed of the thong through the hole, a user could learn to mimic the pitch change of a big cat's squall. A slow pull on the thong would generate a low growling sound perfect for keeping an inquisitive cat interested in what he supposed was a territorial invader.

Of course these same sounds, even if not done perfectly enough to lure a big cat, would sound foreign to most people and animals living away from the areas where the big cats were commonly found.

The story went on to say that when this local returned to Ducktown he decided to play tricks on people just to see their reaction and used one of these calls to stir up turmoil around people's houses at night. Supposedly there were enough people who heard this that there was talk of having an organized hunt for what the people were presuming was a big cat of some type; however, when no depredation of livestock attributable to a big cat and no sightings by anyone of a big cat's spoor occurred, people began to suspect a trick was being played.

I never knew if the perpetrator was found out and identified or whether anyone ever confessed to having played the tricks later. I posed questions about this to a

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number of long time residents of the area in the recent past but very few had any information or clear memory about it.

All I can say is the perpetrator was lucky no one unloaded buckshot on him. He might have outrun a pursuer but not a gunshot.

**Repeating: Important Notice
Membership and Dues Payment**

Thanks to those who sent in dues payment after the last notice. Some members are still late however, and are being reminded one more time.

If you receive the newsletter by mail, check your mailing label for a date.

- If you have a date to the left on the first line of the label, that is the date on which your last dues payment should have been made but is not shown in our records as having been sent in.
- If you have no date showing, you are currently paid up through July 1, 2011, (or you are a life member who owes no further dues).

If you are more than one year out of date with dues payment, dues for the now expired years will not have to be paid; however, dues for the next fiscal year should be paid as soon as possible. Send dues payments to either the society PO Box or give to Oma Gordon.



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 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):

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Genealogical Society**
PO Box 2
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