



## 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

June 2011

Vol. 7, No. 6

Without a past, there is no future

**Next meeting:** The next meeting will be the Annual Meeting with election of officers at 10:00 am on June 11, 2011, in the meeting room of the library in Liberty. See the announcement on the program on page 5 of this issue.

### AMITE COUNTY HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of the May 7, 2011 informal meeting

**DRAFT**

President Greg Barron called the society members into order briefly at about 9:45 am. Following a brief prayer by Vice President Dawn Taylor, Pres. Barron asked the chairperson of the Nominating Committee, Linda Lea, to formally present the committee's recommendation of candidates to be offered for vote to office for the next fiscal year. The report recommended reelection of the current members of the executive offices. Pres. Barron then opened the floor to anyone wishing to place other names into nomination for any office. Hearing no nominations from the floor. The nominations were closed and the business meeting adjourned. Since no action on the prior month's minutes was taken, those minutes are once again provided below.

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Minutes of April 9, 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 13 attendees. VP Dawn Taylor gave the invocation.

The draft minutes from the February 12, 2011 meeting were presented for approval. Oma Gordon made a motion to approve; Vera Prestridge seconded. The minutes were approved as written by vote of the members present.

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#### Future Meeting Schedule

**June 11, 2011**, 10:00 am — Annual Society meeting with election of officers and program (see page 5).

**July 2011**, 10:00 am — **No meeting**, decided by action of Executive Committee due to typical low attendance at the July meeting.

**August 13, 2011**, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS

**September 10, 2011**, 10:00 am — Quarterly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS. Program to be announced.

**October 8, 2011**, 10:00 am — Quarterly meeting — details to be announced.

**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.

You may contact this editor at:  
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President Report: Pres. Barron reported that:  
The field trip to Magnolia was held although the Vaughn House was not on the tour due to the owner being away. Pres. Barron could not attend due to health problems but he understood that the alternative tour had been interesting and had gone well.

A historic family-owned site, the east end of Cat Island in the Mississippi Sound, has been sold to British Petroleum, best known for the off-shore oil well blowout and leak last year.

An old cemetery from which the grave markers had been removed many years ago has been identified on the Hwy. 24 road-widening right-of-way. The Mississippi Dept. of Transportation will be surveying the site with ground-penetrating radar to confirm the exact burial spots.

An old corn crib dating from many years ago is on the road ROW as well and will be torn down for the road project. If anyone wishes to see the old crib and its home-made, split-rail construction, they should plan to visit the site in the near future.

Vice President Report: VP Dawn Taylor reported that she has the sign-up sheet for volunteers to work on the quilt on Heritage Day. She suggested that raffle tickets for the finished quilt be sold for \$5.00 each beginning on Heritage Day with the drawing to be held later, probably at the December Open House. Otherwise for Heritage Day, the society will have other quilts on display and will have knitters, rope-making and drop-shuttle spinning demonstrations. A piper has been lined up to play bagpipes periodically on the green. Jim Freeman will have his genealogy display set up in the library.

Secretary Report: Secy. Wayne Anderson had no report.

Treasurer Report: Treasurer Gay Blalock gave a written report. The society account currently stands at \$4720.23. Wayne Anderson made a motion to approve the report; Cathy Jaecke seconded. The report was approved without dissent.

LRSH COMMITTEE REPORT: Mrs. Vera Prestridge reported that she still needs volunteers for the LRSH on Heritage Day.

Old Business: Pres. Barron as VP Dawn Taylor to show the pre-pieced quilt cover that will be sewn onto the batting and backing.

New Business: The following were discussed:  
Frances Phares reported that she is putting together another family history book that will hopefully be ready for Heritage Day.  
By consensus to the members present, it was decided to drop the calendar idea for this year. It may be revived as a fund-raiser next year.

Other Business: The following were discussed:  
Sue Severson presented a short slide program showing the genealogy resources for researchers that are available on the internet.  
David Dreyer gave an update on the showing of the film about Ibrahim, Abd al-Rahman who had been a prince in his African nation, thus he became known as "Prince" in slavery. The film will be given a special showing in Natchez on June 5, 2011, from 2:30 until 5:30 pm at the Natchez City Auditorium.

Cathy Jaecke showed some materials that she has acquired including a photo of her Grandfather when he was a fireman at Camp Van Dorn, a photocopy of a "passport" allowing travel in Indian Country to the west, a preformatted chart for writing in names and dates for genealogy tree making (she can get members copies of the blank charts), a copy of one of the books containing excerpts from the Woodville Republican newspaper and a copy of a list of Confederate graves.

Dan Morgan told of his recent visit to some very rural property he owns in east central Mississippi and his discovery of a sandstone mound

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# BITS AND PIECES OF AMITE COUNTY HISTORY

## The Town of Gloster

by H. H. Ratcliff

A little while ago the ground whereon rests the town of Gloster was partly covered by blackjack bushes and a few tall pine trees, while the balance of the area was sedgefield. A thrifty little city of two thousand of more inhabitants now occupies this ground. Its growth and prosperity had been marvelous. Commencing less than twenty-five years ago with but limited resources the young men of that day pushed ahead with commendable zeal and energy and, while building their own fortunes, have likewise built up an attractive and charming inland town. The character of the builders is singularly reflected in the town buildings and their equipments.

To begin this work it seems that nature wisely adapted and selected this locality for this special purpose. The railroad bed is so completely in the centre of a dividing ridge as to perfectly drain the town on the east and west, carrying all the water that falls on the west side through "Buffalo Creek" to the Mississippi river, and on the east through "Beaver Creek" to the Amite river and to be the highest point between Vicksburg and Baton Rouge, we are thus able to account for the continuous good health enjoyed by our people. The thorough natural drainage is a sure guarantee of the best hygiene conditions. People, of course, sometime die here, but the spread of fatal epidemics is something unknown to us. Being thus blessed with a most healthful locality and a climate most congenial and temperate, it were well nigh impossible for our hustling people to sit still and rust out on indolence, but instead we have most judiciously caught on to the waves of progress and floated on to still greater prosperity and usefulness. The town now has a first-class electric light and water-works plant, accommodating its conveniences to nearly the entire population. We are supplied with the purest and best of water in the greatest abundance. A ginnery and an oil mill is here for public accommodation, and doing the most satisfactory service. This property was constructed at a cost of about forty-five thousand dollars, and is said to be a paying investment. There is also a well-equipped saw mill plant here, with a capacity of from forty-five to fifty thousand feet of lumber per day.

We have a splendid school, accommodating comfortably more than three hundred pupils. This institution is being run to the entire satisfaction of all of the people, fine discipline and good management prevailing in every department. There is good reason to be proud of the school. Its corps of teachers are greatly interested in its prosperity and all of the children are pleased with the management. From such a well regulated school we may expect great benefit and blessings to accrue to the town and surrounding country. So we are favored with abundant opportunities and conveniences for the education and cultivation of our children.

We have a bountiful supply of live and working churches; two Baptist, two Methodist, and one Presbyterian, all having an earned desire to promote the interest of Christianity by building up the kingdom on earth. Each has a thriving working Sabbath school well patronized. The impression prevails everywhere that ours is a Christian town. Indeed our progress and steady growth may properly be attributed to the high moral character of our people. When righteousness rules we may expect to advance on the highway of industrial development and intellectual culture. There are many other

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things that co-operate to make our town, young as it is, the most attractive in the State. We have a busy wide-awake newspaper, "The Gloster Record." It is a most potent factor in keeping up the high standard of social excellence we enjoy, and it is hoped that it may continue to grow and circulate for our steady advancement.

Then we have two banks, both of which are exceptionally strong and invulnerable. Neither seems to have known or thought anything about suspension, panic or reputation during the period of depression, and although these things were very general, elsewhere, the Bank of Gloster and Citizens' Bank have turned down no valid check nor failed to oblige a customer. A drummer facetiously remarked that the Gloster Banks, the Brittan & Koontz of Natchez, and a National Bank of Meridian, were the only ones in the South that maintained their status quo of usefulness in the line of public accommodation.

Thus far only matters of growth and development have been considered as springing up from home energy and home capital. All of our progress and successes have been the result of home energy and industry with the single exception of a compress, which was built by foreign capital. Quite a handsome revenue comes to the town from the property. Its original cost was about fifty thousand (\$50,000.00) dollars. The work done by the compress this season will probably reach twenty thousand (20,000) bales. This has done much to help the business interests of the town.

Notwithstanding the business interests of the whole country have been passing through a stringent period of depression and embarrassment, it has been our good fortune to move forward in the march of progress. It looks very much like the guiding hand of the Omnipotent is behind us to encourage and to bless.

It may probably occur to some that enough has been said to turn the attention of homeseekers in this direction, but the half has not been told. The most attractive feature of our town is the large number of beautiful girls and manly boys. With this magnetic influence to fascinate and charm the eye of visitors we expect the tide of immigration to increase from year to year until we rival that city on the bluffs.

We are still in our infancy; only twenty-five years since the first steam whistle blew on the down train to New Orleans on the first day of September, 1884. No one can question the rapidity of Gloster's growth. From an humble beginning we have in this short time become a flourishing town with an assessed valuation of property of more than eight hundred thousand (\$800,000.00) dollars, and more than two thousand population. Can it be said that we have been idle or neglectful? If we have made such progress in building and equipping a town, as heretofore described, in so short a time, what may be expected in the next generation? We do not expect a phenomenal growth and development like Chicago, Bogalusa or some of the splendid cities of the wild and woolly west, but we do expect with the foundation basis already laid, there will be seen here a city that will be most creditable to its original founders, a benediction for ourselves and a blessing to our posterity.

Source: The Woman's Herald, Gloster, Mississippi, published August 1908. Editor in Chief, Mrs. L. J. Cuming; Associate Editors - Mrs. Julia Ratcliff, Mrs. Lucy Hill, Mrs. Minnie S. Mitchell, and Mrs. I. W. Hoskins.

Also included in publication are photographs of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. The mayor was

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H. H. Ratcliff, writer of this article. Aldermen were N. B. McLean, W. D. Caulfield, W. L. Tatum, J. T. Lowry, and D. I. McDaniel.

--Contributed by Dr. Paul Jackson, Jr.

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### **Special Guest for June Program**

The Amite County Historical & Genealogical Society is pleased to announce that Dr. James "Jimmy" Robertson will be the guest speaker at the meeting of the society on Saturday morning, June 12, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in the Liberty Library Conference room. "Jimmy" is a native of Liberty and a graduate of Liberty High School. This former Amite County representative and former college teacher at University of Southern Mississippi and Texas, has turned his energy and talent to writing. His just released novel is "Sweet Alice".

Members and guest will not want to miss this opportunity to share in this special time with "Jimmy". Invite a friend or friends and join us for this meeting.

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#### **Note about historical & genealogical booklets:**

The four booklets, published by ACH&GS, with historical and genealogical information, will be available at the meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting and would be interested in purchasing a booklet, send order to Frances D. Phares, P. O. Box 1639, Clinton, LA 70722. Purchase price \$10. each. Shipping and handling \$4. for 1 to 3 booklets.

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or cairn almost certainly built by Indians, probably Cherokees.

The business meeting was adjourned about 11:20 am.

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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):

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