



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

April 2013

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Without a past, there is no future

Next meeting: The next meeting will be a regular business meeting at 10:00 am on April 13, 2013, in the meeting room of the Liberty Library. The subject of any program has not yet been announced.

AMITE COUNTY HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Minutes of March 9, 2013 meeting

DRAFT

President Greg Barron called the meeting to order at 10:11 am in the meeting room of the Liberty library. There were 14 attendees. Gay Blalock gave the invocation.

Pres. Barron welcomed everyone to the meeting then moved directly to the minutes of the previous meeting. Pres. Barron asked if anyone had any corrections. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Dan Morgan made a motion to adopt the minutes; Oma Gordon seconded. The motion was approved by all present.

President Report: Pres. Barron reported that May 4th (first Saturday) is Liberty Heritage Day. Arrangements have been made for the society to have sole use of the conference room for its displays and business. The LRSB will be open.

Vice President Report: VP Dawn Taylor reported: The By-Laws are being made available to members.

Asked if someone would volunteer to periodically write an article to be published in the Southern Herald (after receiving society approval).

VP Taylor suggested that the May 4th Heritage Day activities be focused on the photo presentation and on the LRSB.

Secretary Report: Secy. Anderson had no report.

Future Meeting Schedule

April 13, 2013, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

May 4th, 2013, 10:00 am — Heritage Day event. No business meeting will be held.

June 8, 2013, 10:00 am — Annual meeting with election of officers in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

July 13, 2013, 10:00 am — The practice has been to not hold a meeting in July. If one should be held it will be on this date.

August 10, 2013, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

September 14, 2013, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

October 12, 2013, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

November 9, 2013, 10:00 am — Regular monthly meeting in the conference room of the library in Liberty, MS.

December 7, 2013, Time TBA — Annual Society Open House and Member Drive

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Treasurer Report: Treasurer Gay Blalock reported that the society currently has a bank balance of \$5844.05. Wayne Anderson made a motion to approved the Treasurer's report; Vera Prestridge seconded. The report was approved unanimously.

LRSB COMMITTEE REPORT: Mrs. Vera Prestridge reported:

There was no activity with the LRSB during the last month.

For Heritage Day, Mrs. Vera will be there all day but will need volunteers to assist on three-hour shifts (9:00 am until noon and noon until 3:00 pm).

Mrs. Vera thanked Joanna Hearn for mopping upstairs in the LRSB.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Other Business:

VP Taylor gave her "book report" on the Goat Castle story. The book is not a great story but is worth a read.

Pres. Barron had a work day at Clinton on uploading the rebuilt cemeteries web site info. The expanding of the data is causing the uploading of a lot of interesting questions from researchers.

Oma Gordon announced that she has received notice that someone is coming on March 25 to visit the Gerald Cemetery. Dan Morgan volunteered to help with the visit.

Nancy Martin thanked the 10 or 11 volunteers who have been helping with the cemetery project.

Dan Morgan brought two arrowheads that were found on his place.

Pres. Barron reported that he went to the Seal Family estate sale. The inventory of items included a large number of photographs.

Dawn Taylor gave the closing prayer. The meeting adjourned following the presentation at about 11:27 am.

Events

Living history events at MDAH sites commemorating the bicentennial of the War of 1812 include:

April 12-13 - The landing and encampment of Andrew Jackson's Natchez Expedition. Military reenactors will encamp on the grounds of Historic Jefferson College.

April 16 - Old Capitol Museum will host a concert of period music and an address by a reenactor portraying Andrew Jackson.

Member David Dreyer has sent a flyer on a conference being held in Natchez on **April 17-20, 2013**. "From Civil War to Civil Rights" The flyer will be available at the meeting for anyone wanting more information.

May 11, 2013, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Cemetery Conservation Workshop, cost \$25 per person (includes box lunch), advanced reservation required. The flyer with details will be available at the meeting on April 13, 2013.



You may contact this editor at:

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Raymond, MS 39154

Or by e-mail at sitemanager@achgs.org

BITS AND PIECES OF AMITE COUNTY HISTORY

Maude McKnight Rutledge Family Memories

Our great aunt Maude McKnight Rutledge and her husband William Ormsby Rutledge moved to Uvalde, Texas from Mississippi for her health. When she was expecting a baby, her sister Bonita rode the train to Texas to help. Both these southern belles were afraid to make the trip but eager for an adventure. Their mother, Elisha Ann Gardner McKnight, had died when Bonita was four years old and they felt no affection from the stern woman their father, Theo McKnight, later married. However all were very fond of half-brother Robert.

Bonita thought 1910 Texas intimidating. A young man asked her to go on a buggy ride and she refused because that wouldn't have been proper back in Vicksburg. Evidently she relaxed because a visit back home found her missing Uvalde. She doted on little Ormsby, Jr - and would continue to her entire life. Her social circle included the Nipper boys who mentioned their brother Wallace living in Mexico. The two met when Wallace was in Texas on a visit. Bonita had gone on a picnic with Raymond Nipper so Wallace asked his brother if he was smitten, for, if not, he would be interested in courting Bonita. On a trip in 1911, he declared the he "couldn't return to Mexico without her" and she answered "and, I couldn't let you". A dressmaker agreed to put a new serge skirt for Bonita ahead of other orders and they were married on June 27 in the Minister's study. They rode the train to San Antonio that night and, after a few days there went on to Aguascalientes, Mexico where Dr. Nipper was the company physician at American Smelting & Refining.

If Texas was intimidating, Mexico was petrifying. However, life there was more similar to Mississippi as servants were plentiful and the American women whose husbands were employed by American Smelting enjoyed an active social life.

There were challenges. Wallace contracted typhus fever. His mother came from Uvalde to help and the house was quarantined. Bonita, Mrs. Nipper and two servant men kept him wrapped in wet linen sheets that were changed hourly. Bonita also contracted the fever but had a much milder case. Wallace awoke very aware it was Christmas morning and that he did not have a gift for Bonita. Just at that time, up the hill walked a Mexican man carrying a cedar chest on his back that Wallace some time before had asked him to make as a gift for his wife.

Bonita came to Texas for the birth of their first daughter, Eleanor Bonita in May, 1912. She & the baby returned to Aguascalientes until 1914. A group of ladies were playing bridge when the word came that women and children must evacuate due [to] the escalating Mexican Revolution. Bonita and little Eleanor rode a train across the interior of Mexico to Vera Cruz where they were able to catch a German naval cruiser to Havana. There Bonita's Mexican maid was incarcerated. Eventually, Bonita secured her release (which cost \$15.00 in gold) and they all were allowed to take a ship to Key West, on to Florida and Mississippi. They spent time in Vicksburg and returned to Uvalde in September. Doctor Nipper joined them in November when all American[s] were forced to leave Mexico. He abandoned all his medicines, books, equipment and savings.

Starting over - The Nippers moved to Brackettville, Texas where he was able to acquire a practice from a retiring physician and later purchased a drug store. Brackettville is ranch country. Dr. Nipper was very interested in the mohair industry and gave up his medical practice to raise Angora goats. In 1926, he was the first to import a registered Angora from South Africa. The prize animal did not survive long as another goat, a family pet, Skippio - who could smoke a cigarette -- viewed him as a rival and butted him off a bluff into a river.

Wallace bought a car for Bonita and gave her a short driving lesson before sending her down the road to Spofford, Texas to meet the train. Her sister Mattie was arriving from Mississippi. When she admitted she was nervous about this jaunt, he reassured her that all she had to do was "stay" in the ruts and someone at the train station will be glad to turn the car around and head you home". She said she was halfway to Spofford before it occurred to her she might meet another car that was also staying in the ruts.

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A defining part of growing up in Brackettville, Texas in the 1920's and 30's was Ft. Clark, the farthest west outpost of the U.S. 5th Cavalry, a post where virtually every cavalry unit in the U.S. Army was stationed or trained at one time or another. Clearly, it affected the Nipper family since both Bob Arnette and Vernon Adler spent time there. Before these adult sweethearts, there were all the troops - and the Texas Aggies. A & M's adjunct was at Ft Clark and every young man entering the Corps spent a few weeks in Brackett. One local girl described it as "6 weeks of attention and romance". This thrill extended to the Nipper girls as those young Aggies were seen as desirable companions to Doc and M'Nip tho they were pretty strict parents and didn't allow dating 'just anyone' or attendance at public dances (which put them way behind in dancing skills for the rare private dance party). These Aggies were the ones who described the family as "Doc Nip", "Mrs. Nip", "Big Nip", "Mid Nip", "Little Nip" and "Littlest Nip". Some of these nicknames stuck - our grandmother was always "M'Nip".

Upon giving medical exams to so many prospective young men, Dr. Nipper decided to join the cause himself and served in World War I. He was on the Draft Board in both WW I and II.

After Wallace Nipper's death in 1943, Bonita operated Nipper Drug. She sold the business in the early 1960's.

The Nippers had four daughters. All were strong self-sufficient women. And, of course, all went to the University of Texas.

Eleanor met Daniel McKnight at the University of Texas School of Pharmacy. She approached him when she heard his name and asked if he might be related to her mother. No connection was ever found, but she did 'take him home to meet the parents' telling her dad "You always make fun of my boyfriends but you can't say anything about this one as you married one too". After they married in 1936, Bonita and Dan would say to Wallace and Eleanor "We're blood kin - only related to you by marriage.

Jean, born in Brackettville in 1914 married Robert Arnette - an Army officer stationed at Ft. Clark. Bob died in 1965. In 1983 Jean married Richard Myers who had been Bob's classmate and also at Ft. Clark. When Jean died in 2009, it was said "There have been 4 West Point class of 1933 widows in San Antonio - and she was 2 of them

Maude was born in Uvalde in 1918 and also married an Army officer, Lt Col Vernon Adler of Boerne, Texas. Maude, engaged several times through the years, remained in touch with Vernon when he was away at war. Dr. Nipper was particularly fond of Vernon who had spent many an evening visiting with him at the drug store before heading overseas. Once near the end of W.W.II, when Maude told her dad she was yet again engaged, "Doc" asked, "Whatever happened to that boy from Boerne?" Needless to say she waited. Maude and Vernon moved back to Boerne in the early 1950s. Bonita McKnight Nipper built a house at the edge of the Adler's yard in 1964 and lived there until her death in 1980. Vernon was very fond of his mother-in-law. When her driving skills began to fail, he had everyone in town looking out for her. Often, he'd get a phone call from a neighbor who had seen her pull out of the driveway and he would leave his office to go follow M'Nip and be sure she made her destination safely. Dorothy Adler Barringer has kept her family home and hosts a Thanksgiving reunion. Every year, all nine of Bonita's surviving grandchildren, their children and grandchildren are there - to tell the old stories and remember the remarkable woman - the Mississippi magnolia who adopted the Texas plains..

Kay (Mary Katherine) Nipper was born in 1923. She married Roger Naylor of Houston, Texas and lived there until her death in 1982. Kay loved the old stories and took her mother back to back to Mexico several time. She worked for Eastern Airlines and arranged for M'Nip's first plane ride. Bonita said it was all very nice "Everyone was so attentive. The pilot even came out and asked me for permission to land the plane." Kay was able to explain this - the pilot was actually deferring to the gentleman seated next to Bonita - Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, the head of Eastern Airlines. Dorothy Jean Nipper was born on 16 Nov 1914 in Brackettville, TX.

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Bonita (January 5, 1889 - August 26, 1980) and Wallace (September 8, 1881 - June 13, 1943) are buried in the Masonic Cemetery in Brackettville, Texas. They donated the land for the cemetery to the Masonic Lodge. The ranch they owned is just across the fence.

Submitted by Grandchildren - Eleanor's children: Dan McKnight, Bob McKnight, Ted McKnight (yet another Theodore McKnight), Bonita "Nita" McKnight Thedford (the sender)
Maude's daughter: Dorothy Adler Barringer

Historical & Genealogical Connections to this family will be included in Amite County Mississippi Historical & Genealogical Connections, Volume V.

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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 Your corrections and additional information solicited.



ACHGS Standing Committees and Chairpersons

Due to changes in membership and in makeup of committees, the Standing Committees are being reevaluated and reformed. Once this process is complete, a new list will be posted.

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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