

20th Meeting
Jackson Historical and Genealogical Society
23 February 2010
Pascagoula City Library, 6:00 P.M.

President Barry McIlwain called the meeting to order, announcing what a pleasure it is to have our visitors, and thanking the Friends of the Pascagoula Public Library and the Jackson George Regional Library System for hosting the meeting.

Kathie Keene moved and Melanie Moore seconded that the e- mailed minutes be approved as written – all aye.

Treasurer Linda Grimes advised that we took in \$326.00 in book sales (journal) and \$425.00 in dues. She added that our outflow was \$2100.00, but that we had enough in the bank to cover it.

Barry reminded us that the Mississippi Historical Society will meet next week in Gulfport and all are looking forward to it. Sherry and Renee will attend and sell our books while there. He continued in saying that membership in our society was a fee of \$25 annually, which includes a copy of our current journal.

Melanie Moore then gave an update of “Fete La Pointe”. She explained to our visitors that the Spanish Fort is neither Spanish nor a fort. She continued to explain that the Williamsburg Conservancy had inspected it and advised us of the wonderful authentic French Colonial treasure that is in our midst. Prior to Katrina, it was in poor shape and only worse after it. Consequently, we are planning a “Fete” to help fund the restoration. That will be on 23 April, black tie optional, at 7:00 P.M. It will be a dinner with surprises. The cost of a ticket is \$50 per person.

Addressing members of the Society, Melanie advised that tickets will be mailed out mid next week. She asked that members write their addresses on a provided envelope and place the number of tickets they think they might sell where the stamp goes and get it to her. She will then forward the envelopes with the tickets. As part of La Fete, Alice Lachaussee addressed the membership. Letters have been sent out to potential sponsors asking for sponsorships in a wide range of prices. She has already received \$5000.00 for one source and one from Chevron as well as one from M&M Bank. She feels that within two weeks she will receive many more. Depending on the type sponsorship, sponsors will receive a number of tickets and advertising in return. In two weeks, it is important that members follow up on these letters in a personal visit and she asked members to sign up for that phase with companies with whom they are familiar. The vision of the Fete committee is to do as much as we can for interest in the LaPointe-Krebs house museum.

Betty Oswald will republish “Thought You Should Know” a short history of our area and donate the proceeds to our Society. Liz Ford has the corrections and will be contacted to get them to her.

The door prize was drawn and won by State Stallworth.

The Program Chairman introduced the evening’s program in honor of Black History month. Our own treasure, multi-talented Joanne Anderson, the layout editor for the JCHGS Journal and the writer of ”Sampling our History” in the Mississippi Press Register. Presenting with her is J. B. Carter. J. B. was born in Pascagoula, graduated from Carver High School and Tougaloo University. From there, he taught English in Hollandale and Utica, Mississippi. In 1966, he returned to Pascagoula, worked in Human Relations and

Labor Relations at Ingalls- not an easy task. He was the first black Justice Court Administrator here. He is married with three children and 2 grandchildren. One of his granddaughters was a speech writer for Elizabeth Dole and Condeleesa Rice.

Joanne and J,B, presented a slide program, “Black History, Jackson County”, which was divided into.

Slavery- Nat Plummer from Ocean Springs was a slave and many in the audience knew of him.

Pioneers – Haywood Brooks, Mayor of Scranton; Aunt Dicey McDaniel, born a slave in Columbus, Ms. And very prominent in the Union Baptist Church.; Thomas Barial, grocery store owner and operator; Alex Glaude Lanier, 1887-1997, Pascagoula; Sylvester Durden, Sr. 1895-1995, his daughter was introduced from the audience, Pascagoula; Lillie Johnson Pierce, Moss Point, Creole; Thomas Isaac Keys, 1889, first black postmaster, Ocean Springs.

Segregation- many newspaper clippings listed “colored drowned, colored dead”, etc., whereas in the case of whites there was no such mention. There was a Black Fair and a White Fair and winners were delineated along those lines. Obituaries followed the same script. Home Demonstration agents visited homes by race. There was a Negro Library and a White Library from 1946 – 1955. Audrey Cook McKuhen was the first black librarian. International Paper Company held a company picnic for whites and a separate one for blacks. There was a Negro hospital Ward at the hospital. On a national scene, everyone knew about Rosa Parks. But Fannie Lou Hammer also helped people register to vote. She is remembered by her quote, “ I am sick and tired of being sick and tired”. In 1964 there was a civil rights demonstration in Pascagoula and in 1965 in Moss Point. There was a White Citizens Council. Slate Stallworth told the story of the “Loyal Democrats and of the Regular Democrats” at the convention in Atlantic City New Jersey during the Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey campaigns. Also memorable in those times were Ernest Watson of Moss Point and Elvira Anderson Watson, Justice Roberson, David Broadnax and Ernestine Long. Francetta Sanders told of her role as secretary of the NAACP signing a retainer for the cause. She took her children to register in the Moss Point schools and because they were denied attendance, she was able to file a suit on their behalf. She mentioned how the swimming pool became cemented and the problems of getting to a point at which her children became eligible to join minor league ball. Francetta and Barry commented that we “have come a long way, and we still have a long way to go. Curlee Clark was also remembered.

Religion-Joseph Lawson Howze was the first black bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. His bishopric was in Biloxi, Ms. Rev. Carl Fisher, a graduate of St. Peter’s Church and school, Pascagoula, was the first black bishop in the western United States. He is currently in Colorado, and his cousin was in attendance. The Reverend William Norvel was the only African American pastor of a church in Washington, D.C. He also attended St. Peter’s Church and school in Pascagoula. St. Peter’s also produced three nuns who went on to work in various parts of the United States and foreign countries.

Education-Ernestine Fountain was the first black principal of an integrated school. She attended Gilbert Academy in New Orleans then obtained a Bachelor’s degree from Jackson State and on for her masters and doctorate. She has been honored for her contributions by the University of Mississippi. She applied for a notary public license and was investigated as a result by the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission in the 1960’s. A new black school was built during these times and it was named Fair Elementary. Attendee Ernestine Barnes taught at Fair.

Churches-1874, the Asbury Chapel AME Zion Church was begun; 1874, The First Baptist Church of Moss Point; 1891, the Macedonia Church of Ocean Springs; 1871, St. Paul United Methodist Church; 1819, St. Peter Baptist Church in Pascagoula; 1875, the Union Missionary Church.

Leaders- 1935, Barial Grocery, Henry Wells, Louis Jackson, Maxine Lawson Conway, J.B. Carter, J.R.Spillers, Fred Robinson. Evelyn Barial was the first black poll worker in Ms., appointed by Robert Oswald. Toni Seawright was the first black “Miss Mississippi”. Charles Fairley was a member of the “Nite Riders” and played a mean Saxophone. Annie Wimbs was the first black Home Demonstration agent. Calvin Huey was the first black to attend the United States Naval Academy. Also memorable were Ruth Carter and the Mayor of the city of Denver, Co. from 1991-2003. There are many notable sports leaders as well; Terrell Buckley, Terrence Wells (Green Bay Packers and Houston), Lateral Green (NBA), Morris

Thomas, Fred Cook (Baltimore Colts), Vernon Biggs (Jets) and Jim Marsalis. Lionell Anthony Bonell was a member of the famous Tuskegee Airmen and Arthur Johnson of Moss Point fought with honor in the First World War.

At the close, Joanne asked anyone having pictures of the persons in the presentation to allow the library to copy and return them. She also asked for any available additional information. Julia Holmes, who has worked so tirelessly in putting together much information on black history in Jackson County, and has spent many hours of her life at the Pascagoula Library was profusely thanked.

Barry thanked Joanne and J.B. for their outstanding presentation as well as those who gave their personal history.

A member of the audience stood and thanked those leaders who made life more homogenous in Jackson County for their determination, and example. He received a large round of applause from all. President Barry also mentioned that the Pascagoula Library was the first in the state of Mississippi to open its doors to blacks, and that at the time Ms. Lou Hewlett and his mother, Kathleen were there. Mrs. McIlwain was also investigated by the Sovereignty as a result.

Barry then thanked the Friends and Library for the refreshments and invited attendees to join the Society and to use the library to work on their genealogies.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathie Keene for Liz Ford