

Local History

A Newsletter of the Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies

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Summer 2007

From the Chair—Betsey Hamilton

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Patricia Young on May 6. Patricia made many contributions to preserving the history of Mississippi and at the time of her death served as Vice Chair of the Federation. In her place, I look forward to working with Paul Cartwright as the Vice Chair and welcome Jan Anglin from Tishomingo County Historical and Genealogical Society as our new member to the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee had its quarterly meeting on July 19. Having these meetings more often has proven extremely beneficial. The Committee is beginning to work together to improve what the Federation offers its members. Many important items were discussed—on October 29 a workshop focusing on creating a county archives will be held in Yazoo City; next spring instead of having a workshop and business meeting in conjunction with the Mississippi Historical Society, we will have a “Federation Day,” on April 19 at the Mississippi Museum of Art (more information to come). These events will offer our local organizations opportunities to meet others from different communities and share information that will help each of us improve our local historical resources. Hope you will take advantage of all that is planned.

Upcoming Workshop—Creating a County Archives

On October 29, the Federation, in conjunction with the State Historical Records Advisory Board, will sponsor “Creating a County Archives” at Ricks Memorial Library in Yazoo City. Learn from first hand experience, participate in case studies, and learn about the laws, basic archives management, and what assistance is available to you from the MDAH. A registration form will be sent out soon.

Mark
your
calendar!

Building Your Society's Online Presence: A Mississippi Case Study

By Bob Franks

Bob Franks is a founding member of the Itawamba Historical Society and served as its president for a twelve-year term. He is the society's publications editor, coordinator of the Issaquena History and Genealogy Project, and a member of the Mississippi Historical Society and Vicksburg Genealogical Society.

The local historical and genealogical society is a significant force in the promotion of local studies in Mississippi. These organizations on the “home front” offer access to local records. Most societies publish a membership quarterly filled with county historical articles and family records.

Over the past twenty years, the nature of historical and genealogical studies has shifted from traditional media such as society newsletters, magazines and quarterlies to the newer medium of the Internet. Many societies have

unfortunately seen a decrease in membership as more and more researchers are devoting time to online pursuits of their ancestry. Conversely, local Mississippi societies can capitalize upon the Internet to increase interest in the local society, bringing in new members as well as additional research material.

The Internet is the most cost-effective way for a local society to promote its organization to a worldwide audience. The Itawamba Historical Society published its first Web site more than ten years ago, and since that time its online presence has brought many new members and exciting family material relating to Itawamba County to the organization. The society's Web site not only promotes the society with information on membership relating to its Historic Bonds House Museum and George Poteet History Center, but also has contact information so that members and potential members may contact the society via email. Many tasks—address changes, research query submissions, article and photograph submissions and general research questions—have become automated for the member and visitor and can be accomplished via a home computer.

One of the more popular areas of the site is the online archives, where the society has published thousands of records relating to Itawamba County. In addition, an Itawamba County research guide details what items are available and where to obtain those items. Recently the society has added several special publications and galleries to the online site. One popular new area is the Photographic Archives, where the society is in the process of publishing archival photographs housed in the society's Gaither Spradling Library. Perhaps the most visited special online publication is the thirty-two-page PDF publication *Itawamba Settlers Contents: 1982-2006*. It details what has been published in each issue of the society's fifty-six-page quarterly magazine. Many back-issue publication sales come directly from this online connection. Many new online projects are on the horizon, including the digitalization of original nineteenth-century records to be placed online.

In May 2007 the society began a blog (Web log), as blogging has become popular. The society uses this blog not only to publish historical articles relating to Itawamba County but also to promote society endeavors. The blog has been receiving an average of twenty to thirty visitors a day, and the news items found on the blog are being picked up by other bloggers and organizations, providing an excellent free outlet for society news.

What is the cost for all of this online activity? Absolutely nothing. There are several online organizations that offer free Web space without advertising to historical and genealogical societies. One of the most widely used organizations is Rootsweb (<http://www.rootsweb.com>). There are also several free blog sites available for online publishing.

With a little time, effort, and absolutely no cost whatsoever, the local society can have an online presence with the potential of bringing more members and more historical material relating to the county. If no one in the society has experience in developing Web sites, there are many commercial companies specializing in such, and they may help a local non-profit organization in developing such a site as a community service. Having an online presence is not just a sensible, cost-effective investment for the twenty-first century Mississippi society, but a "must."

For more information
visit
[www.rootsweb.com/
~msichs/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~msichs/)
or email
[itawambahistory@
hotmail.com](mailto:itawambahistory@hotmail.com).

A Look Around the State

Amite County Historical and Genealogical Society had two excellent programs held in conjunction with regular society business meetings.

On March 3, Dr. Myron C. Noonkester from William Carey University presented a program on early Amite County history entitled “Why the British Left Mississippi.” The program was complemented by a bound booklet to which attendees could refer as various historical people, places and events were explained. Dr. Noonkester is dean of arts, humanities and sciences, professor of history, and co-director of the Carey Center at William Carey University in Hattiesburg.



On June 9, society member David Dreyer gave a program on the McKnight family of Amite County. This family and a number of others came from South Carolina after the Revolutionary War and settled across the county.

The society is also now providing downloadable audio files of the business meeting proceedings. The recording of the meeting is made in MP3 format; it is divided into chapter files to keep each file to a manageable size. These will be available on the society Web site (www.achgs.org) for several months after each meeting and may be played in streaming audio or downloaded for replay later. For more information contact Wayne Anderson at sitemanager@achgs.org.

Covington County Genealogical and Historical Society has three new publications: *Covington County Marriages, Book II (15 Mar. 1909–10 Jan. 1915)*, *Covington County Marriages, Book III (16 Jan. 1915–3 Jan. 1920)*, *Covington County Marriages, Book IV (11 Dec. 1919–8 Mar. 1924)*. Each title is \$25 plus \$3 for shipping and handling. Variations in postage will be made when multiple titles are purchased at one time. For more information contact Joy H. Brown at joyhbrown@hughes.net.

Historic Jefferson College brings works from the Mississippi Museum of Art to Washington, September 1 – October 7. *Marie Hull, Home and Abroad* presents paintings that record the artist’s travels throughout the United States, Europe, and Northern Africa. Drawn from the Mississippi Museum of Art’s Permanent Collection, these works demonstrate Hull’s interest in exotic locations and architectural details, as well as the landscape and people of her native state. For more information call 601-442-2901.



Tishomingo County Archives & History Museum held its Flag Day festivities on Saturday, June 16. A flag retirement ceremony and other activities were held. The U.S. Flag Code states, “The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.”

“Betsy Ross” told the story of how George Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross came to her home in May 1776 and asked her to make the first flag. Betsy also demonstrated how she could cut a five-pointed star with one snip of the scissors, a talent that led George Washington to redesign the flag using five pointed stars instead of six pointed ones.

The Children of the American Revolution (CAR) assisted with the retirement of twenty-five flags. For more information contact tarchives@nadata.net.

Yazoo Library Association is in the first phase of creating its county archives. Two volunteers have been able to save several hundred volumes of early Yazoo records from the 1820s to 1870s to be included in the archives. For more information contact pcartw@yazoo.lib.ms.us.

Send your news in by October 22 to be included in the next issue of Local History!

In Memory

The Federation lost two great supporters this past spring. They will be greatly missed.

Patricia Glen Brown Young died May 6, 2007, in Tupelo. Mrs. Young was a founding officer of the Oxford-Lafayette Heritage Foundation and an active member of the Skipwith Historical and Genealogical Society. At the time of her death she served on the board of the Mississippi Historical Society, was the vice chair of the Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies, and was president-elect of the Mississippi Genealogical Society. In 2002, she was named a Blue Cross Blue Shield “Ageless Hero” for her work in community involvement.

Margaret Clyde Bryant Everett died June 7, 2007, in Vicksburg. Mrs. Everett was a life member of the Mississippi Historical Society and a longtime supporter of the Department of Archives and History.

A native of Coffeerville, Mrs. Everett attended Ole Miss, where she received the first degree given in the Music Department. She married Frank E. Everett, Jr., of Indianola, and they settled in Vicksburg, where they build their home, “Everest,” overlooking the Mississippi River.

An avocational historian, Frank Everett served as the first president of the Mississippi Historical Society following its reorganization in 1953. He was also a distinguished attorney and a longtime trustee of the Department of Archives and History. Mrs. Everett was her husband’s active partner in these historical pursuits and honored him after his death by helping endow the Frank E. Everett Jr. Award. Given annually as merited by the Historical Society, the Everett Award honors an outstanding local historical society that is affiliated with the Federation of Mississippi Historical Societies.

Old Capitol Shop

The Old Capitol Shop, currently located in the William F. Winter Archives and History Building, will be closed September 1 – November 4 for reorganization. On Friday, September 14, 9 a.m. - 4p.m., and Saturday, September 15, 9a.m. - 1p.m. there will be a massive sale. Mississippi books, pottery, music, crafts, jewelry, souvenirs, Christmas items, and much more will be priced at 75% off. For more information call 601-576-6920.