

Pea River Historical & Genealogical Society

Newsletter

Identifying, collecting, preserving, archiving, researching, and promoting interest in historic and genealogical materials and records of Coffee County and the Pea River Region of South Alabama

September 2013

Mark Your Calendars

September 14 – Annual General Meeting of the Battle of Newton Society, 3:00 pm at the Senior Citizens Center, 25 King Street in Newton. The public is welcome to attend and enjoy a hot dog cookout with us. Note: the Board of Directors will meet at 2:00 pm.

September 15 – Pea River Historical & Genealogical Society Meeting, 2:00 pm at the Enterprise Welcome Center on the By-Pass. This meeting will be a tribute to Depot Museum Director Larry Herbst, who died at his home in Dothan on June 9. There will be a presentation to the Museum in his memory. The public is invited to attend.

September 29 – Grave Marking for John Calhoun, Co F, 3rd Alabama Infantry Regt., 3:00 pm at Woodland Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, County Rd. 239 near Elba. All are invited to come.

October 7 - Troy Civil War Forum, 6:30 pm at the Troy Public Library. Georgia Fleming, 1st Vice President of the Pea River Historical & Genealogical Society, will present the program "They Also Served: Ethnic Minorities in the Confederate States Army." The public is invited to attend.

October 19-20 – Battle of Newton, John Hutto Park, Newton. Gates open at 9:00 am both days. Admission is free. Living history, live music, battle re-enactments both days.

Yard Sale Planned!

The Society is planning a Yard Sale in November. Details will be announced as soon as we secure a location, but in the meantime, please donate items to be sold. We can use clothing, tools, collectibles, kitchen equipment, CDs, electronics, books ... anything in sellable condition you want to donate. Drop-off points are: the Gift Shop/Library at 108 S. Main St., the Depot Museum on Railroad St., the Welcome Center on Boll Weevil Circle, and Fleming Multimedia at 122 S. Main St.

Please help us make this fund-raiser a success. If you can volunteer a few hours of your time to help set up and run the yard sale, call us at 393-2901.



Repairs & Improvements

We are very happy to report that some much-needed repairs and improvement projects are going on at our facilities.

Smith Contracting did a fine job of painting the ceiling in the Gift Shop/Library. For many years we endured falling ceiling tiles, the result of water leakage from a clogged pipe. The tiles are gone now, and the freshly painted ceiling looks great. The awning in front of the Gift Shop has also been repaired.

Work continues on the Little Red Schoolhouse on the Welcome Center property, recently damaged by an out-of-control vehicle. The foundation has been fixed, and the whole building will be getting a new coat of paint.

A Must-Have at Our Gift Shop!

The PRHGS Gift Shop on Main Street recently added these Alabama Puzzle Cubes to its inventory of collectibles. You can purchase one at the shop, or look for it on-line on our website at www.peariver.org -- the on-line shop is under construction and will be finished soon!



The Family Tree

*I think that I shall never see,
the finish of a family tree,
as it forever seems to grow
from roots that started long ago.
Way back in ancient history time,
in foreign land and distant clime.
From them grew trunk and branching limbs,
that dated back to time so dim.
One seldom knows exactly when,
the parents met and married then;
Nor when the twigs began to grow,
with odd-named children, row on row.
Though verse like this is made by me,
the end's insight, as you can see.
'Tis not the same with family trees,
that grow and grow through centuries.*

Queries & Requests

If you have a question, request, or something else to share with your fellow members, this is the place for it. E-mail Georgia at hyacinth@ala.net if you can answer questions or fulfill requests, and I will put you in contact.

- ❑ Wanted: a map showing the location of Simmons Mill.
- ❑ Wanted to buy: Pea River Reflections
- ❑ Wanted: a photograph of "The Houseboat", a teen hangout in the 1960s and early 1970s on Highway 84 near New Brockton.
- ❑ Wanted: our Gift Shop/Library is in need of an answering machine. If you have one you are no longer using, please consider giving it to the Society. (Email hyacinth@ala.net)
- ❑ Wanted: a copy of The Heritage of Geneva County.
- ❑ Wanted: a photograph (digital) of Travis Bedsole (1832-1899), whose wife was Rosa P. Ward.

New Board Member

The Pea River Historical & Genealogical Society is pleased to welcome Jerry T. Evans to the Board of Directors. Jerry is retired from civil service and the National Guard. He is an active member of the Assemblies of God, attending Faith Assembly.



Do you have **two hours each week** that you could spend volunteering at one of our facilities? Give us a call at 393-2901.

You can make a **big difference** in allowing us to have our Gift Shop/Library, the Depot Museum, and the Welcome Center open every day from 10 am til 4 pm!

Remembering . . . 1920

- Among those born in 1920 were: actors DeForest Kelley (d 1999) and James Doohan (d 2005) [respectively, *Star Trek*'s Dr. McCoy and Chief Engineer Scott]; actor Tony Randall (d 2004); *Dragnet*'s Sgt. Friday, Jack Webb (d 1992); Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens; Pope John Paul II (d 2005); singer Peggy Lee (d 2002); actors Yul Brynner (d 1985) and Mickey Rooney; actress Maureen O'Hara; science fiction writers Ray Bradbury (d 2012) and Frank Herbert (d 1986); and baseball player Stan Musial.
- Notable 1920 deaths: Arctic explorer Robert Peary, realist writer William Dean Howells, and Alabama-born Army physician William Crawford Gorgas.
- In the news: the charter creating the League of Nations went into force (10 January; the U. S. Senate voted against joining on 19 January); Prohibition began in the U.S. when the 18th Amendment to the Constitution went into effect (16 January).
- Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) was President of the United States; in the November Presidential election, Republican Warren G. Harding defeated Democrat James M. Cox and Socialist Eugene V. Debs. This was the first election in which women had the right to vote.
- The first commercially licensed radio station broadcast for the first time – KDKA in Pittsburgh. (Several other stations also claim to be the first.)
- Average income was \$1130/year. Unemployment stood at 5.2%.
- A first class stamp was 2¢, gas was 30¢ a gallon.
- The Belmont Stakes was won by Man o'War in 2.14.2
- Babe Ruth was traded by the Red Sox to the New York Yankees for the unprecedented sum of \$125,000 cash plus three \$25,000 notes payable yearly.
- The American Professional Football Conference was formed. It changed its name in 1922 to the National Football League.
- A popular film of 1920 was D. W. Griffith's *Way Down East*, starring Lillian Gish. Other well-known actors of the day were Hoot Gibson, Harold Lloyd, John Barrymore, Buster Keaton, Gloria Swanson, Rudolph Valentino, and Mary Pickford.
- Top songs of 1920 included "Swanee" (Al Jolson), "St. Louis Blues," and "Alice Blue Gown." Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in G Minor* also charted.
- The first domestic radio sets were available in U. S. stores. A Westinghouse cost \$10.
- A dozen eggs was 39¢, a loaf of bread 11¢, and a gallon of milk 58¢.
- Thomas Kilby (Democrat) was Governor of Alabama. He arbitrated the settlement of the 1920 Alabama Coal Strike.
- Books first published in 1920 include Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis, and Frederick Jackson Turner's *The Frontier in American History*.
- Life expectancy in the United States was about 53 years (it is now 78 for males and 81 for females).
- First seen in 1920 – the first commercial armored car was introduced in St. Paul, Minnesota; the Republic of Estonia declared its independence from Russia; the League of Women Voters was founded in Chicago; in California, the first dog racing track using an imitation rabbit opened; and the 1st World Scout Jamboree was held in London.

Telegraph Firsts and Lasts

- ❖ On 6 January 1838, Samuel F. B. Morse first successfully tested his electrical telegraph at the Speedwell Ironworks near Morristown, New Jersey.
- ❖ Morse made the first public demonstration of his telegraph on 24 May 1844, sending a message from the Supreme Court Chamber in Washington, D. C. to a B&O Railroad depot in Baltimore. The message was, *What hath God wrought*.
- ❖ In 1845, the first commercial telegraph line in America ran between Lancaster and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The first message was, *Why don't you write, you rascals?*
- ❖ The Associated Press was formed in 1846 by five New York City daily newspapers to share the expense of transmitting news of the Mexican War. The AP claims the title of the first wire service.
- ❖ On 24 October 1861, the first transcontinental telegraph system was established. Gov. Brigham Young of Utah sent the first telegram, which read: *Utah has not seceded but is firm for the Constitution and the laws of our once happy country*.
- ❖ The first successful transatlantic telegraph cable was completed in July 1866, the last connections finished by *SS Great Eastern*.
- ❖ Thomas Edison received a patent for a two-way telegraph on 9 August 1892.
- ❖ In the first news test of Guglielmo Marconi's wireless telegraph, the AP covered the America's Cup yacht race off Sandy Hook, New Jersey.
- ❖ In 1914, the AP introduced the teleprinter, which transmitted directly to printers over the telegraph wires.
- ❖ Telegraph capability was extended to photographs in 1935, when the AP initiated WirePhoto, the first wire service for photos. The first photograph sent over the network was of an airplane crash in Morehousen, New York.
- ❖ On 27 January 2006, Western Union discontinued its telegram services, while retaining its electronic money transfer service.
- ❖ On 14 July 2013, 169 years after Morse's *What hath God wrought* transmission, the world's last true electric telegraph system ended its services -- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), India's state-owned company.

-- Georgia Fleming

Very Special Deliveries

In June of 1920, the U. S. Post Office announced that it would no longer accept children mailed via Parcel Post. There are records of quite a few children being "mailed" to relatives, as postage was cheaper than train fare. An early example: in 1914, 5-year-old May Pierstorff was mailed from her parents' home in Grangeville, Idaho, to her grandparents' house 73 miles away. The cost of postage was 53¢.

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