

PINTLALA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Next Meeting:
July 16th —2:30 p.m.
Pintlala Baptist Church



*c/o Pintlala Public Library
255 Federal Road
Hope Hull, Alabama 36043*

Volume XX, Number 3

July 2006

1940's Talent Show at Pintlala School



Photograph, courtesy of Margery Boyd Henry

2006 OFFICERS

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Place 2	Mary Ann Venable.....	(334)288-3234
Place 3	Rene Barnett	(334)288-0231
Place 4	Judy Burton	(334)288-3585

Pictured (L to R)

Front Row: Frank Stewart, Ted Newell, Durward Newell, Nat Venable, Gene Langford, Johnny Reddoch, Mrs. Mae Langford, Elaine Hall, Dorothy Dugger and Floyd Smith.

Second Row: Claire Hall, Elizabeth Hall, Joy Langford, unknown, Davis Henry, Eloise Hall, Ann Chesnutt, Jean Hornady, Rae Venable, Rebecca Hatfield, Jane Windham, Margery Boyd, William Hobbie, Felix Lassiter, Bobby Chesnutt.

Third Row: Jamie Henry, George Henry, Alton Hall, Jean (Humphries) Henry, Elizabeth (Hobbie) Chesnutt, Mae Chesnutt, Mary Virginia Lassiter, Glenn Lassiter, and Jack Hornday.

Cover Photograph

The front cover photograph was provided by Margery Boyd Henry (Mrs. Davis G. Henry). It was taken at Pintlala School of a loosely organized group of young people from the Pintlala community who met for recreational activities during the late 1940s. This photograph is of a talent show put on by the youth group--thus the costumes. Mrs. Mae Langford was the adult leader at the time of the photograph.

The group participated in hayrides, wiener roasts, swimming and games. They met at different homes of those enjoying the fellowship of community young people. Some of the popular games of the day were "Spin the Bottle" and "Electricity." Refreshments were enjoyed at the homes hosting the gatherings. Mr. and Mrs. Gus Boyd and Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Henry would use their one and a half ton farm trucks for transporting the youngsters on their hayrides.

Swimming was a popular summertime activity as a destination after the hayrides. Bodifords pool (below Highland Home), The Narrow Lane Inn pool at the corner of Seibles and Narrow Lane Roads, Harrogate Springs pool at Wetumpka and sometimes the Oak Park pool in Montgomery were enjoyed by all.

President's Message

If you have the slightest interest in what life was like in the Black Belt of the antebellum South, then you cannot afford to miss our program this month. Alice Carter has invited Dr. Gary Mullen of Auburn University.

Professor Mullen will speak to the life and work of Philip Henry Gosse (1810-1888), an English naturalist. Both verbally and visually Dr. Mullen will share insights regarding plantation life and the surrounding flora and fauna of central Alabama. I can't wait to hear Mullen.

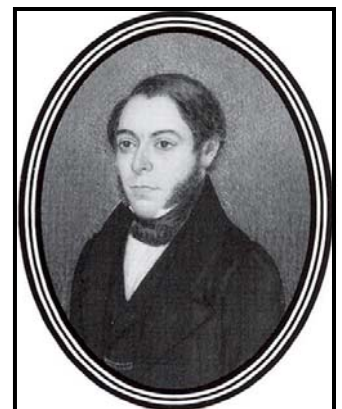
Why is all this important? Thomas Jefferson once expressed the hope that education in America would be "chiefly historical." He concluded, "The people are the ultimate guardians of their own liberty. History, by apprising them of the past, will enable them to judge of the future. It will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men."

The founding fathers believed that good judgments were based on values learned from instructive examples of history which reinforced the rights of individuals, regard for the law, participation in civic life, and concern for the common good. How responsible can citizenship be without historical precedents? David McCullough gets to the point. He says, "Indifference to history isn't just ignorant; it is a form of ingratitude."

Gary Burton, President
garyburton1@charter.net

PHA July Program

On July 16 the PHA will have a special program arranged through the Draughon Seminars at Auburn University's Center for the Arts & Humanities. Dr. Gary Mullen will present a program on the Alabama connection to the life and work of 19th-century naturalist and artist Phillip Henry Gosse. Gosse spent some time studying and illustrating Alabama insects and flora in Dallas County. Dr. Mullen has just returned from London where he interviewed the great granddaughter of Gosse who was a native of England. His slide presentation should be quite interesting. Please plan to attend and invite guests, as we like to have nice audiences for our speakers. See you in July!



Phillip Henry Gosse

New Family Histories At Pintlala Library

PHA member and Phenix City resident, Lewis E. Jones, has done an absolutely outstanding job of researching and compiling the histories of his ancestors.

These families have connections to many in Crenshaw, Butler, Bibb, and Montgomery counties. The volumes assembled by Lewis are now in the Historical Section of the Pintlala Library. Descendants of families that Lewis has documented may find his information meaningful and useful. Family volumes include: Taylor, Brack, Cottingham, Willis and Townsend.

We are indebted to Lewis Jones for sharing this information with our organization. His meticulous research is quite valuable--thank you Lewis for your efforts and friendship!

Help Needed to Save Pioneer Concord Methodist Church Cemetery

A meeting of the Concord Cemetery Memorial Association is set for Saturday, August 26, 2006, at 10:30 a.m. at Tabernacle Church on Federal Road in Hope Hull (Pintlala), Alabama. The Cemetery is in desperate need of help in cleaning and restoration. The earliest grave marker found so far is dated 12 MAY 1841. Attendees are asked to bring a picnic lunch to share prior to going to Concord. Drinks and paper goods will be furnished. All interested persons are cordially invited to attend in clothing suitable for touring the cemetery after the meeting and assisting with clean-up work if so inclined. Concord Cemetery is located in the Lowndes County Industrial Park just off County Road 26 near Tyson. Family names found on tombstones are: Banister, Elsberry, Grant, Hargrove, Kelly, Ledbetter, McGehee, Powell, Ramey, Sellers, Starks, Venable and Williams. For further information, call (334) 288-3234.

Marker Placement

On Saturday, June 24, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. a marker commemorating the lives and service of Robert D. and Margaret Vann Moseley was dedicated. Robert D. Moseley served in Col. Leroy Hammond's militia regiment of South Carolina during the Revolutionary War. He and his wife eventually became a residents of Pintlala. Robert D. is not to be confused with Robert Moseley (also a Revolutionary War veteran and also buried in the same cemetery). Inspiration and leadership for the ceremony originated with W.C.(Clanton) Mosley, a resident of South Carolina with deep Pintlala roots. Speakers included Gary Burton and Clanton Mosley. An instrumental trio featured Clanton Mosley, Ben Mosley, and James Whitlaw.



Photographs Requested

If you have photographs of events from the past in the PHA coverage area the editors would like to see them for possible use in the Newsletter. We are especially interested in large group pictures. Contact Alice Carter or Gary Burton. Photos will be returned.

Grant-Mims-Moore House

The Pintlala Historical Association met on April 30, 2006 and visited the home of Dr. and Mrs. Paul Moore on West Old Hayneville Road. Their lovely home is an adaptation of a house that is thought to have been built around 1836 near Hayneville, Alabama (Lowndes County). The original dog-trot style house is the core of a modern home designed to accommodate an active family with children and pets. The living room, dining room and entrance hall are for the most part all original to the 1836 home with other rooms including a second story added in a most harmonious style. It is sometimes difficult to see which is the original and which is the new. Old materials have been used where possible in the addition.



Home of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Moore—Front

Dr. Moore shared with the group that the original home had a second story which was destroyed by a tornado. Before being rescued by the Moores the house had been used to store hay for many years.



Home of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Moore—Rear

The property on which the home sits was at one time in the Sharpe family. Some members on the tour remembered a Miss Mandy Sharpe living in that location. A section of the Peter Mastin McIntyre home, originally built on Highway 331 near Providence Presbyterian Church, has been moved to the Moore acreage with intentions to be used as a guest house. We eagerly await the reconstruction of this home!

We are appreciative of the Moore's hospitality, keen interest in history and successful efforts to preserve a portion of rural Alabama history.



Lucy Moore and resident pet



Dr. Paul Moore shares historical records with PHA Members

CAESAR (1769-1845) by Gary Burton

The Work and Times of Central Alabama's Nineteenth Century Slave-Evangelist

The following condensed article is extracted from one by Gary Burton and submitted to the *Alabama Baptist Historian* for publication. Endnotes are included in the full article.

Introduction

Caesar Blackwell lived a slave and died a slave. No one, however, was as influential within the slave population in central Alabama as Caesar. Although he lived and died in slavery, ownership changed from John B. Blackwell to the Alabama Baptist Association. The early, creative attempt at missions was quite impressive. Sadly, most historical treatments of the ministry of Caesar Blackwell have been expressed in one or two paragraphs.

The effectiveness of the slave-evangelist, Caesar, indicated by the surviving references to the high demand for his preaching and related services, is a powerful confirmation to his skill as a communicator. Caesar's itinerant ministry was widespread within the association and sometimes beyond.

John B. Blackwell

When the Alabama Baptist Association in the central part of the state met at the Mt. Gilead Church in Lowndes County on October 12, 1829, a report from the trustees was approved. The report called for the purchase of Caesar at the price of \$624.00. The slave, owned by John B. Blackwell, was given some degree of freedom to preach and minister within the slave population and he was managed by a small group of trustees.

While records are unavailable, it is apparent that the trustees were charged with the task of acquiring Caesar in 1828, the previous year. Interestingly, the Last Will and Testament for John B. Blackwell was probated on May 5, 1828. The document (Will Book 2:66) partially reads:

"I give to my well beloved daughters, Anabella Hayes, Henrietta Menase, and Lucy Thomason and to the issue of their bodies (sic) the following property Viz: One Negro man Ned and *Cesar*, Phillis, Betty, Jane, Martin, Amos, Dave, Jim, Silves, Naral, and Ana and their increase forever."

Apparently the transaction to purchase Caesar was accomplished after Blackwell's death and transacted by his sons-in-law, John Thomason and Thomas Haynes, executors of the estate.

By the time the trustees made their report to the association in the fall of 1829, subscriptions from local churches had been solicited. Bethel Baptist Church in Pintlala (southwest Montgomery County) may have been the first to do so having voted in the May conference. New Bethel Church of Lowndes County followed suit in September. Surely other churches joined the cause too.

The Federal Road and Pintlala's Bethel Church

James McLemore, Caesar's primary trustee, had been Bethel's pastor since the church's beginning in 1819. The east and southwest portions of Montgomery County were connected by a major travel artery, The Federal Road. James McLemore owned vast acreage in east Montgomery. So did John Blackwell and Wade Allen who witnessed the Blackwell last will and testament. Today township 16 North and Range 19 East include Arrowhead, Mitylene, Halcyon, and other large areas in east Montgomery County. However, one must travel the Federal Road to the Southwestern section of the county to Pintlala (Township 14 North and Range 17 East) where Blackwell and Allen also owned property. The Federal Road witnessed an immense amount of commerce, including the transportation of slaves. Only vestiges remain of the historic road, but it was the means by which Caesar worked, ministered, and found connections with both the eastern and southwestern extremes of the county.

Indeed, the minutes of the Bethel Church record a most unusual occurrence. On four occasions, September 1829, April 1830, August 21, 1830, and February 26, 1831, Caesar (variantly spelled, "Saesar," "Siser") opened the church's monthly conference. Publicly and personally, Caesar surely endeared himself to his Baptist constituents.

- On July 2, 1831 Robert Rives wrote a lengthy personal letter to Green Rives, II, from Church Hill/Tricken, Dallas County. He is very descriptive in telling about his cotton crop, especially after his militia wreaked havoc in a confrontation leaving several killed and wounded. While it is difficult to ascertain the

identity of the enemy, Robert Rives conveys the incident as an expected part of life, along with hunting opportunities and plans for the upcoming Fourth of July. Then he comments on the religious life in the area:

“We have plenty of preachers here. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and houses for all three denominations but methinks you would not like to draw off your shoes and sox and have your feet washed in church. Neither do I think you would wash anothers feet in church. I have been to church once since I came here and the preacher was a size over Berry Harris in his prime. He introduced his subject by saying he was going to take an off hand shot. Before he ended I thought his mark was on the wing after he shot. And other one got up and gave out some appointments and amongst the rest was our dear and well beloved Scezar and dismissed a congregation of about 300 and I understand it was but a common congregation. I wished to know who Scezar was and upon inquiry I found he was a cole black Negro. He is here permitted to ascend the pulpit and preach an introductory sermon at the association. As to myself I would not let my family go to hear him. I need not say anything about my religious principles as you are aware of them already. Amelia is pretty much after the old sort.”

- The Baptist Church in Montgomery (FBC) had survived a shaky first decade of its existence. The second attempt at starting the church in 1832 proved to be successful even though there was a turn-over of pastors before William Carey Crane arrived in 1839. He would not leave until 1842. On the last day of 1839, Crane wrote, “The church has increased from 86-172. I have baptized 24 whites and about 10 blacks.” Crane’s annual salary was \$1200.00.

Crane relied on the leadership and support of deacons Dr. R. C. Armstrong and Dr. A. B McWhorter. It is not surprising that Crane’s journals indicate his pleasure with the ministry of Caesar. Some extracted comments read:

“Afternoon Caesar preached”. “Baptism of 7 or 8 negroes in the afternoon by Caesar.” “Heard Caesar in the afternoon. Saw Him baptize three – Bro. DeVotie preached at night”.

The impression left by Caesar was indelible in the mind of William Carey Crane, for thirty-five years later *The Religious Herald* in Richmond, Virginia published a series of articles titled “Then, Not Now.” In Article 13 Crane gives Caesar high praise:

“He was a tall, ungainly looking African, brought up in the carpenter’s trade. He had been converted under the preaching of a noted self-made, but singularly shrewd preacher named McLemore, whose opinions and illustrations he had studied and adopted in a good degree. He had the failings of preachers of his time and race, who were illiterate, still sometimes, he astonished his hearers by the vigor of his language, acuteness of his distinctions, the soundness of his logic, and the correctness of his theology. He so far obtained the confidence of his white brethren, that members of the Alabama Association made up a purse and purchased his freedom. Set free, he traveled on horseback and on steamboats, preaching far and wide to his race. The churches in Mobile and Montgomery will long remember him”. . .

The 1830s introduced several years of fear and uncertainty among Alabama slaveowners. Three events within a national context triggered the anxiety on many plantations and certainly affected the relationship between Caesar and the Baptists of Alabama: the 1831 Nat Turner’s Rebellion, William Lloyd Garrison’s publication of *The Liberator*, and the celebrated Amistad case.

In light of such influences, one can easily understand the ebb and flow of restrictions placed on the travel and preaching of Caesar Blackwell. Like Nat Turner, Caesar was a convincing and charismatic Baptist preacher. While records indicate nothing but compliance on the part of Caesar with directives issued by his associational trustees, Baptist slaveholders were nonetheless nervous.

Restrictions on Caesar by the Alabama Baptist Association

Although Caesar had been purchased from the estate of John Blackwell by the Association in 1829, he was not a free man. The fact was stressed emphatically in the 1835 associational minutes which also confirmed that the subject of emancipation had preoccupied the conversations of those in the south. So what did the Baptists in central Alabama do with Caesar during this decade of unrest? A series of resolutions was presented to the annual meeting which required that Caesar be silenced during the next year, and “as he is the

property of this association,” that any monies, after expenses, be placed in the common treasury, certainly not to be used by Caesar.

Much latitude and freedom had been granted to Caesar, but by 1835 the world had changed. Baptists in central Alabama were affected by three main currents of change:

- First, anti-missionary sentiment had picked up steam. Within the next two years a major division in the Baptist family would occur over this issue.
- Secondly, emancipation and abolition were gaining in popularity even in the South.
- Thirdly, James McLemore, Caesar’s primary trustee, had died. As long as McLemore was Caesar’s guardian, Caesar found a high degree of acceptance. McLemore gave Caesar a sense of legitimacy. It is hard to tell if McLemore opened doors of opportunity for Caesar or perhaps Caesar opened doors for the Rev. McLemore. With McLemore gone, the screws were turned tightly on Caesar.

The following year, 1836, found the Alabama Baptist Association rejecting the Constitution and Abstract of Principles which had been approved in the previous year. Representatives from various churches renewed their attention to Caesar who presented to the Association a \$120.00 gain over his expenses. A resolution was adopted returning \$50.00 to Caesar and retaining \$70.00 to be dispersed to Caesar by the trustees charged with managing him.

Then the Association voted to reinstate the liberty to travel and preach, a liberty which had been denied over the past year. Had the enthusiasm for emancipation died down? Not at all. Liberating Caesar may have been in response to the escalating tensions by the anti-missionary movement. One could possibly contend that the advocates of the anti—missionary movement strengthened their influence in the association during the year Caesar was forbidden to preach. Further, it was stipulated that Caesar’s renewed freedom to preach was restricted by “the laws of our country.”

Caesar’s Death and Burial

The year of 1846 brought about a strong alliance with the Alabama Baptist Association and the newly created Southern Baptist Convention. It was also the first year without the legendary harbinger of the gospel, Caesar Blackwell. The trustees reported on “our late colored brother, Caesar.” The report was referred to the Committee on Documents. The committee encouraged the trustees to finalize Caesar’s affairs by next year and expend the necessary money for a tombstone. The status quo prevailed the next year. Caesar’s affairs were not resolved. The tombstone had not even been ordered. Once again the trustees were encouraged to bring the matter to closure.

In 1848 the cause of delay was revealed. A “Mr. Dougherty” had partially purchased Caesar’s land but not entirely. The Association agreed to forgive the debt if Mr. Dougherty would provide enough money for the tombstone.

When Caesar died in 1845 the Alabama Baptist Association took note of his death and did so with profound appreciation. His trustees were authorized to sell his house and real estate in Montgomery. Proceeds were used to furnish his grave with a marble slab inscribed:

*“Sacred to the Memory of
REV. CAESAR BLACKWELL,
Who departed this life Oct. 10, 1845.
in the 76th year of his age.
He was a colored man, and a slave;
But he rose above his condition, and
was for 40 years a faithful and accep-
table preacher of the Gospel.
The stone is reared as a tribute of respect to his memory,
by his brethren of The Alabama Baptist Association .”*

Today the marble slab is obscured by shrubs only a few feet outside the fence which encloses the McLemore-Taylor Cemetery located in the posh neighborhood of Greystone in East Montgomery.



**Pintlala Historical
Association**

c/o Pintlala Public Library
255 Federal Road
Hope Hull, AL 36043

NEXT MEETING

JULY 16, 2006

2:30 P.M.

PINTLALA BAPTIST CHURCH

Join the Pintlala Historical Association

Please mail completed form, fee & dues to :

**Pintlala Historical Association
c/o Thomas Ray
2995 Pettus Road
Hope Hull, AL 36043**

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Phone (Home & Office) _____

E-Mail Address _____

Areas of Interest _____

If you are interested in genealogy, please indicate family surnames _____

\$5.00 Registration Fee (One Time) - \$10.00 Annual Dues