

PINTLALA



HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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JULY 2000

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Hope everyone had a very enjoyable Independence Day. What a wonderful time to enjoy our friends and family and to give thanks for our country's rich heritage!

We certainly appreciate our PHA officers' excellent work! Warmest welcome to those who are returning, and as well as those "brand new" officers who have so graciously agreed to serve. We look forward to another great year.

JACK HORNADY
President, PHA

PHA JULY PROGRAM:

Our program for July will be presented by Dr. Daniel L. Haulman, a historian at the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base. He will discuss the history of Maxwell Air Force Base and its connection to the Montgomery community. Dr. Haulman has published two books, three USAF pamphlets and six published articles. If you worked at Maxwell in the past, this program will have special significance for you. Please make every effort to attend and support our visiting speakers who give of their time for our benefit. We will also discuss the October program.

See you on July 16 at 2:30 PM at Pintlala Baptist Church!

HEARTFELT SYMPATHY:

PHA extends deepest sympathy to the families of our members and friends who have recently lost loved ones. These include Mr. V. E. Richey, LaPine, AL, Mrs. Eloise Haigler Stewart, Montgomery, AL, and Mr. Edward Forbus McGehee, Wetumpka, AL (formerly of Hope Hull).

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Welcome to: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Murphree
10600 LaGrone Road
Moundville, AL 35474
Ph: (205) 371-4324

Mrs. Ruth Davis
Miss Theresa David
2535 W. Hickory Grove Rd.
LaPine, AL 36046
Ph: (334) 288-6395

PINTLALA BAPTIST CHURCH CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

On June 4 the Pintlala Baptist Church observed her 40th anniversary with over 500 persons attending. Months of preparation were focused in the 10:50 AM worship service. The day's events were coordinated by Bev Williams and volunteers comprising many celebration teams. In January of this year, the church embraced a goal of 40 new members by the 40th anniversary. The goal was over achieved, with 65 new members by June 4.

The worship service featured inspirational music sung and coordinated by Chris O'Rear, minister of music. Original charter members were recognized. Barnett Perry and Terry Birchfield shared their reflections on the founding days of the church. In addition, Robert Lowery, PBC's first pastor, spoke. Together they commended the influence of Curtis and Katherine Massey in whose home the church first met before utilizing the Grange Hall. The influential legacies of Gus Boyd, Howard Birchfield, and George Etheridge were praised.

Lynn Gowan, Montgomery County Commissioner, assisted in the presentation of the first Strength of One award. The posthumous award recognized the heroism of the late Bobby Evans, who, at great risk to himself, saved a black youth from drowning. The rescue took place on the first week-end of June 1960. The award was accepted by Bobby Evans' father, Colonel Robert Ramsey Evans, Sr. Following a message entitled "Summoned by the Future", delivered by Gary Burton, over 500 persons were served lunch. The entire celebration symbolized the church's rich heritage and bright future.

APRIL 2000 PROGRAM

Members of the Pintlala Historical Association enjoyed meeting at the RSA Pavilion Park, located at the corner of Monroe and Hull Streets in Montgomery. Beautiful artwork depicting significant events in different periods of Alabama history makes this is a very attractive and interesting new landmark.

BETHLEHEM CEMETERY supporters met May 13 at the Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church. The annual meeting is normally held each Saturday before Mother's Day. For information, contact Secretary/Treasurer, Theresa Davis, 288-6395.

PINTLALA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH was recently recognized as the outstanding small church (in the "75 members or less" category) of the Alabama West Florida Conference!

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HERITAGE BOOK:

The Heritage of Montgomery County should be available soon! Many thanks to all of you who worked so diligently on this invaluable project!

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

by

Luther Clark

From American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940
Item 6 of 33 (Washington Copy, 6/3/1938) *(Remember the "furnish merchants" who provided supplies to farmers till their crops were sold? On Papa's last birthday, I found this story on the Internet! He had written it as a WPA project. I had never heard this story before, although Papa had told plenty of other incidents about his adventures with old Butler! jch)*

"Take this load of wood in to Aunt Mary's, and then go by Emmetson's and get us something to eat. Tell Jeffers I'll go in one day next week and make a lien." Papa spoke with a sort of ketch in his voice, and Mal knew what he was thinking; he got all choky mad himself.

But all he said, as he took up the lines and pulled gee on old Butler, was, "All right, Papa."

With the gray mule solemnly pulling him and the load of wood, Mal had plenty of time to think on the three-mile trip to the village. But there was a bitter taste in his mouth, coming up from the feeling in his heart, and running plumb through his think-box as well.

On both sides of the road, the land was fresh-plowed, "To make crops for King George," Mal thought. He had stuck the title on George Emmetson's name himself.

At Aunt Mary's, he unloaded the wood, still mad enough to chew up sawdust and spit out scantlings. Aunt Mary asked about the family, and he couldn't even remember, later on, what he had told her. He got back on the wagon and drove on up to the hitching rack where Main Street went to seed in the west. But he didn't get off at once. He just sat there and boiled over with mad.

Every spring it made him madder and madder for Papa to start his "run" at Emmetson's Store. Every fall he had seen all of the crop money go to pay off the lien, leaving nothing for food and clothes for the winter. This spring his begging had caused Papa to wait two weeks late about opening his account, but now the family was again where Papa could see no other way to turn.

Mal couldn't see any way either; and they did have to eat. Folks just couldn't make a crop on a teetotally empty stomach.

Finally he sort of snorted and got out of the wagon. Might as well get it over with. He just couldn't think of any way to escape the clutches of King George.

He went into the long, barny-looking store with his feet dragging like he was going to get a whipping. It was a whipping, only his spirit must take it instead of his hide. As he entered,

Mr. Jeffers himself whisked by, bumping him, and did not even say "Excuse me," just acted like Mal was a sack of nails or something.

He shut his hands tight, to hide the fury of their jerking, and went up to one of the clerks he knew pretty well.

"How much is flour in 24-pound sacks?" he asked.

"Cash or time?" Gabe wanted to know.

"Both," Mal answered.

"Seventy-five cents, cash; dollar and a quarter on time," Gabe rattled.

Supplies bought on a crop lien are on the merchant's book less than three months, on the average. That meant, Mal figured quickly, more than 260% a year on the food people bought on time to make their crops!

"We'll go hungry before I'll pay that much difference," he announced firmly, and marched back out. Then he stood on the sidewalk with his hands in his overall pockets and started all over again, figuring out what he maybe might do.

While he was standing there, George Emmetson himself parked his car and came toward the store.

"Hello, son," he greeted Mal smoothly. "Where is that daddy yours these days?"

"He's at home, working," Mal answered so short as to be almost disrespectful.

Mr. Emmetson didn't notice the shortness at all. "You tell him to come on in and start buying. He can't make a crop without supplies."

"He sure can't," Mal answered earnestly, but of course the man missed his real meaning.

Mal looked at all the storefronts in the village. He knew all the merchants, and they all knew him. Last of all his gaze lit on the little stable-sized store right at the end of the street. It was where Jeb Whitson, the newest storekeeper in town, kept his little of stock of goods. Jeb seemed to think a lot of Papa and him both, Mal thought, and began to feel a sort of glowing of hope again in his mind. Jeb had several times sold him little things and waited a week or so for his pay. Maybe -

The boy took one long breath, and sort of said a prayer to himself as he started the three hundred yards to Jeb Whitson's "shop." His heart had got so out of hand by the time he got there that if Jeb had had one customer, his resolution would have failed him completely.

But there was not one customer. The old man was sitting on his pet apple box, whittling a stick.

"Howdy, Mal," he greeted warmly, "How's yer Pa and all the folks?"

"They're all up and about," Mal said, "and how is Mrs. Whitson?"

"Oh, she's complaining about as usual," Jeb laughed.

Mal laughed too, then sucked in all the breath he could hold and started his speech:

"Oh - you know, it's cold-blooded robbery the way Emmetson holds people up. After a fellow works the whole year, it sure does hurt to hand it all to that bloodsucker in time charges."

"He certainly is a bloodsucker, Mal. Why, the lowdown crook even tried to keep me from getting my ice dealer's license renewed this year. He is out to rule or ruin this whole country, and he has purty near ruined it now."

"Well, here's what I been thinking, Mr. Whitson: Papa told me to go over there and start an account today on our this year's crop. I went on in and asked some prices, and to you know he wants fifty cents advance on a sack of flour over cash prices? I just wouldn't get a thing."

"Fifty cents extra! Mal, you know if I had the money, I'd run your pa and a few other good men around here, and give 'em a chance to get away from that cutthroat. He ought to be put in jail!"

Mal scuffed the gray-black dirt with the toe of a ragged shoe. "Mr. Whitson, I wonder if you could do this: Let us buy our stuff from you and pay you within two weeks? That, is Papa makes a little money making fishnets, and I pick up a little work here in town after school. By fixing our crop work to give us a little time every week, we can manage to just about keep up with the account, I think."

The old man looked far out across the grove of pines beyond the town baseball diamond. "Mal," he said finally, "here is how I am fixed. I get my stuff on ten days' time. The call it ten days, but actually the salesman comes around every two weeks, and I pay for my last bill of goods and order a new one. If you are sure you can hold it inside two weeks, I can carry you on a cash basis and you can tell Emmetson and Jeffers to go to hell. Just remember that if you fall down, I fall with you. What do you want to get today?"

Mal's heart leaped like a happy dog. The two went into the little store and filled the order given Mal at home. While the old grocer weighed coffee, Mal swallowed the happy choke in his throat enough so that he could say, "Mr. Whitson, we won't fail you. We will be able to work for ourselves this year."

"You must remember one thing though, Mal. Don't let anybody know I am doing this. That infernal Emmetson would stop my credit with every commission house around here. People don't buck him and get away with it very often."

"Shucks, Mr. Whitson, I'm not telling anybody but Mamma and Papa; and they sure won't broadcast it."

"Just the same, son, be careful who you talk to."

Mal's pride of accomplishment was tinged with fear. There were dark rumors going around of terrible things that had happened to those who bucked the power of "King George." Men had been taken out and beaten; others had been ordered out of the district with such force that they had stood not on the manner of their leaving. Two or three had vanished bodily, to furnish food for the river catfish, so these same rumors said.

The boy thought of all this, grimly, as he untied the hitchrope and drove old gray Butler by Whitson's shop to pick up his packages. But none of those known as the "Emmetson bunch" seemed to be noticing him. Emmetson's car, empty, still stood at the curb in front of his store.

On his way out of the village, Mal whirled fearfully each time he heard an unusual sound behind him. But as the gray mule put yard after yard behind them with his slow homeward walk, the boy gradually lost his feeling of terror. This was a civilized land, and no man would dare bother a person for trading with the merchant of his choice. He smiled, a shamed smile, at having allowed himself to believe there was danger in such a simple act as his.

Where the heavy timber growth of Black Swamp crowded close on each border of the roadway, about two miles out of the village, Mal pulled his mule courteously aside at the request of an automobile horn behind him. The loaded car whisked around him, turned across the narrow road and stopped, blocking his way completely.

"Whatcha go in that wagon, Bub?" demanded the dirty, bearded driver as Mal pulled Butler to a startled halt.

"Groceries," Mal snapped. Somehow he was not at all scared now. One slight boy facing five big brutish men, he trembled but with a fury that was overwhelming him.

"Groceries, huh?" the man, followed by the other four was crowding up to the wagon. "We was sent to find a feller that robbed Old Man Beckman's store a little while ago. Where'd you buy these things?"

Mal throttled his voice down to a very even tone as he answered, "Mister, I bought these things - and I don't know as it is one durned bit of your business where. Unless you're looking for more trouble than you every thought could happen to you at one time, you better get yourself, your buddies, and your stinkbuggy out of my way. It's getting right close to feed time, and I not only ain't used to being late - I don't intend to start with tonight."

The big car driver threw back his head and laughed, "Hard little devil, hain't you? Well, we can soon soften you up. Git off that wagon!" He lunged viciously at Mal.

Like most gray mules, old Butler had a definite personality. One of his strongest personality points was an extremely sensitive tail. A mere touch on that appendage when he was not expecting it made him a snorting demon.

Mal chose that precise moment to punch Butler's tail, hard, with his small wagon switch, and at the same time kick the burly man in the face, while he pulled hard on the left guide line. With a wild snort, the mule started. Men rolled like peas in a jolted jug. The frantic animal, forced in spite of his wildness to heed the tight guide line, turned the cumbersome wagon around on a dime and left seven cents change.

A plowman working near the woods heard the racket and looked up in time to see the mule going back toward the village, "traveling like hell after a yearling, and with Mal and the wagon floatin' along behind him in the air."

Another car, which Mal recognized, was racing to meet the runaway. King George was coming, really batting the ball. Mal clung to the sideboards of the wagon and did not try to turn the mule. At the last second, Emmetson's car flipped from the ruts of the road in a wild dive down some man's cotton rows.

Butler just about had his run out. In a few yards, he dropped to a sedate walk, then obediently stopped at Mal's short-winded, "Whoa!" Carefully, Mal guided the mule around and drove him back to where Emmetson was backing cautiously into the road gain. The time merchant was thoroughly upset, his always florid face now the color of scorched brick.

Leaving space for him to get the car back into the road, Mal stopped his wagon and waited. Then he got out and went over to the man.

"Look here, Mr. Emmetson, he said hotly, "you may be the big booger in this county. We all admit you are. You may have mortgages on all the land you don't already own. I know you have a mortgage on our place. But that mortgage is not due for three more years, and there's nothing anywhere in it that says we've got to eat groceries out of your stores. And there's nothing in it that says your hired beat-uppers can stop our wagon on the road and threaten me. And I want you to please remember this: We will deal with anyone we please, any time we please, and any way we please, without regard to your wishes. And my Mamma and my Papa and I are all sure shots, and we like each other. If anything happens to one of us, the others will be purty darned likely to return the favor to you, so you better take the hint and pick on a goose for a while."

"Son, you've got me all wrong. I don't know what got you all worked up this way, but I certainly haven't done anything to you. In fact, I have a very high regard for all your family, and wouldn't think of doing any of you even the slightest injury."

"Your words sound good, Mr. Emmetson, but I've heard words before that didn't mean a thing. You go on and collect your trash out of the way up yonder in the woods - and don't forget what I told you. It's time for me to get on home."

Something like respect shone in the eyes of the domineering time merchant as he started his motor up again. "I don't blame you for getting hot, son," he said thoughtfully, "and from now on I'll keep to my own side of the road with you. But damn your hardheaded time, if that mortgage is not paid the day it is due, I'll sure get a lot of pleasure out of throwing you into the middle of the road!"

"Go to it, and welcome," Mal answered, as he picked up the lines and clucked to old Butler.

"You know, Old Mule," Mal said reflectively as the automobile sped away, "I've got a strong idea King George meant what he said!"

SPECIAL OCTOBER PROGRAM

The October program for the Pintlala Historical Association will be a special event. We will be making a trip to "The Hill," the 18302 home of Thomas and Becky Pickens in Collerine, Alabama. We will have dinner and Becky will share the history of "The Hill" with us. We will meet at Pintlala Baptist Church at 4:30 PM and divide up for transportation, depart Pintlala at 4:45 and arrive at Collerine around 5:30. We will make this trip on two different dates. The first trip will be on Saturday, October 7, and the second will be on Saturday, October 28th.

You will be responsible for making your reservation with Alice Carter by September 16. Once you make a reservation there will be NO changes. This program is for **members** of the PHA **only**. Make your reservation by mailing the form below to Alice Carter. Mrs. Pickens can accommodate only 24 guests at a time, thus the two different trips. Reservations will be filled on a first come first served basis as far as dates are concerned. Total cost of the meal is \$18.00 per person. The PHA will pay the cost of the first \$9.00, leaving members responsible for **\$9.00** per person. Please make checks payable to Pintlala Historical Association. Payment and form must be received absolutely no later than September 16. **Mail to: Alice Carter, 621 Pettus Road, Hope Hull, AL 36043.**

Reservation for Dinner at "The Hill"

Name(s) of person(s) attending: _____

1st choice of dates: _____

2nd choice of dates: _____

Payment enclosed for _____ person(s) Phone number for contact: _____

