

# PINTLALA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

**Next Meeting:**  
*October 19th—2:30 p.m.*



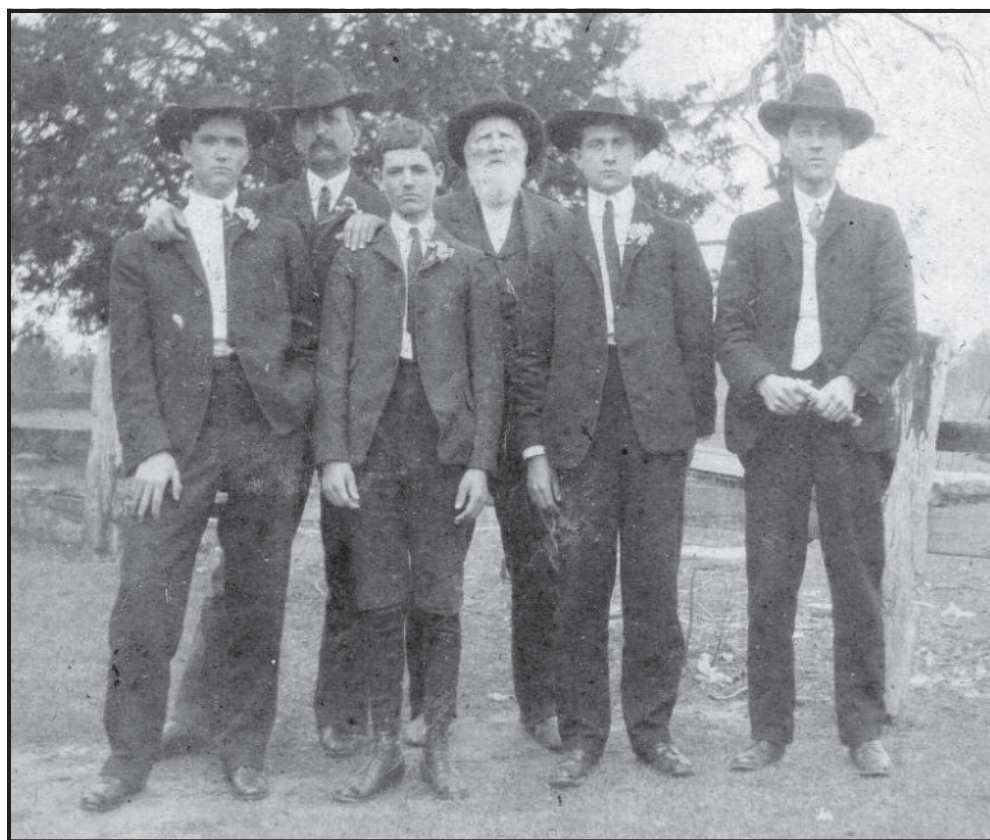
*c/o Pintlala Public Library  
 255 Federal Road  
 Hope Hull, Alabama 36043*

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[www.pintlalahistoricalassociation.com](http://www.pintlalahistoricalassociation.com)

**October 2014**

## Possibly L. W. Davis and Shackelford Brothers



Thought to be L to R, Front: Henry Francis Shackelford, Davis Leroy Shackelford, Clarence Shackelford, unknown;  
 Back: George Henry Shackelford, Dr. L. W. Davis.

Unidentified and undated photo courtesy Davis Shackelford Collection held by Margery and Davis Henry and Patsy Hall Davis

### 2014 OFFICERS

President..... Gary Burton ..... (334)288-7414  
 Vice President ..... Lee Barnes..... (334)288-4855  
 Secretary..... Karon Bailey ..... (334)281-6239  
 Treasurer ..... Ina Slade ..... (334)284-0337  
 Parliamentarian ..... Jack Hornady..... (334)396-2130  
 Program Chairperson... Alice T. Carter..... (334)281-3708  
 Members at Large  
     Place 1 .....  
     Place 2 ..... Daisy Anne Brady ..... (334)612-0766  
     Place 3 ..... Rene Barnett ..... (334)288-0231  
     Place 4 .....  
 Newsletter Designer .... Angeliqye Pugh

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## **From the President**

It has become difficult for me to go anywhere in Montgomery County without thinking of history and its context. Context is crucial to interpreting the facts of history. So much of our local history has yet to be recovered and chronicled. In Pintlala and southwest Montgomery County the ground seeps with significance. The atmosphere exudes importance. In light of the importance of context, consider two issues:

\* Spare nothing to understand the history and heritage of your family but do not stop there. Without the knowledge of one's family heritage, life will always be lived superficially. However, there is so much more to local history than learning family heritage. Our ancestors lived in a social context. Just chronological facts will become a distortion. Those predecessors who lived before us did so in the context of work, school, transportation, religion, war, poverty. We must get the facts right and know something of context too.

\* One way to study history is to learn about the old road systems in our part of Montgomery County. Old maps and abandoned roadbeds tell a story which demands to be heard. In this edition Alice Carter will introduce us to Dr. L.W. Davis. Ponder the map provided and note where old roads once existed in our area and connected Fleta and Old Fleta. People and places defined the context which influenced your family and mine. Make the time to pour over the featured article in this newsletter. Never again will you think that context is unimportant.

One final matter will interest you. The burial site for Dr. L.W. Davis has been unknown for years, perhaps decades. It took the research of Alice Carter for us to learn that Dr. Davis is buried in Tabernacle Cemetery. However, for ninety-two years since his death in 1922, his grave was unmarked. Thanks to the co-conspiracy of Alice Carter and Jack Hornady, the gravesite is now marked. It was long overdue.

Gary Burton, President  
garyburton1@charter.net

### **New Members**

Pintlala Historical Association welcomes new members, Mike and Fran Pugh of Fleta, Alabama.

## PHA Program

Pintlala Historical Association will meet on Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm. at Pintlala Baptist Church. The program will be presented by our friend, author and historian, Col. Jeffrey Benton of Montgomery, who has just penned another book, a companion work to his previous book, *The Very Worst Road: Travellers' Accounts of Crossing Alabama's Old Creek Territory 1820-1847*. The new book, *Through Others' Eyes: Published Accounts of Antebellum Montgomery, Alabama* includes descriptions of travelling to and from Montgomery primarily on the Alabama River. However, it focuses on the travellers' experiences in Montgomery itself.

Jeff will have books available for purchase and signing.

See you on the 19<sup>th</sup>!

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## Pintlala Creek Water Improvement Association

There have been two meetings in the local area regarding the quality of water in Pintlala Creek and how to improve that quality. Details on further meetings and how to procure financial aid to attain goals set by the group may be found through the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District. Laslie Hall of Hope Hull is current chairman of the organization.

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### In Memoriam

The Pintlala Historical Association mourns the loss of long-time member, Jean Mosley Ivy who passed away on August 12, 2014.

## Fleta Post Offices Revisited

A casual conversation with my neighbor and fellow PHA member, Ruth Ward, led to a question regarding the Fleta Post Office of the past. Ruth shared that our neighbor, Bruce Murchison, had created a wall hanging using lumber from the old Fleta Post Office. Which Fleta Post Office?

It was easy to determine which of the three Post Office buildings provided lumber for Murchison's creation, as I knew that his daughter married the son of Kelly and Cristie Kiernan, who purchased the home of William Caffey and Hazel Norman located in the very heart of the Fleta community. I remembered when I was a child, the Richard Webb Norman store was moved from the southwestern quadrant of the Ada/Union Academy and Pettus Road intersection to north of the Norman homesite in the northeastern quadrant of Pettus Road. I could remember the small, green building sitting on the edge of the Norman homesite, but could not recall seeing it in recent times. A ride to Fleta did not help me locate the building. I just knew that it was gone forever! A call to Ricky McLaney, grandson of Richard Webb Norman, put a search into motion. He contacted Cristie Kiernan and she assured him the building was still very much there. In June Ricky made a trip to see the old building and invited me to come along. We got an interesting tour of the old store/Post Office, which is currently hidden by the tree line. Cristie was a gracious hostess and even

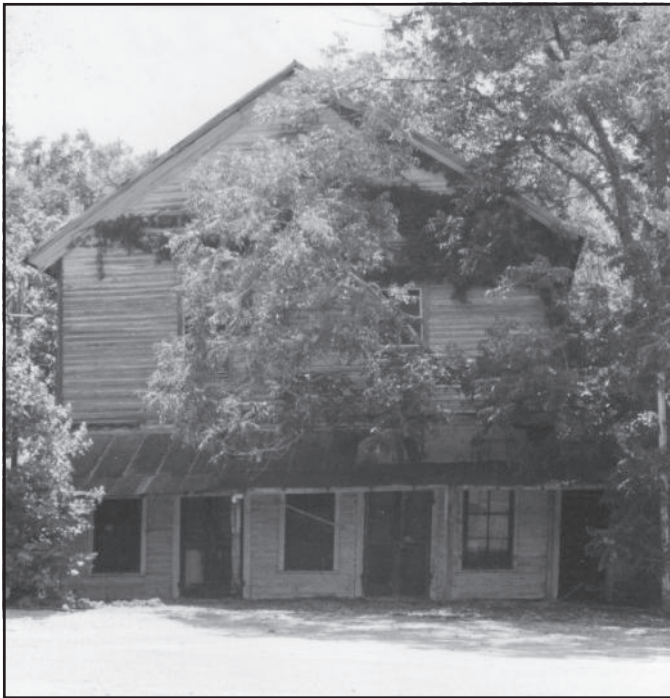


Ricky McLaney, grandfather of Richard Webb Norman, in the door of the third Fleta Post Office/Store. Photo courtesy Trish McLaney



Fleta Post Mark stamped on door of the old Norman Post Office/ Store. Photo courtesy Trish McLaney

shared her "red bugs" with me! One side of the building has caved in, but much of the building is still standing. The Kiernans have removed the doors and shutters and stored them in a safe, dry environment. The pigeon-hole mail boxes had long since been removed and "went to Texas" with Hazel Norman's family, where they serve as storage bins for nuts and bolts in Houston. As we looked at the old doors in a storage area, the Fleta postmark once stamped on the door by an unknown person was readily visible. As long as that door exists the long-ago postmark will always be with us!



Sellers Store, second Fleta Post Office, demolished c. 1988. Photo courtesy Elizabeth Sellers

The Post Office inside the Richard Webb Norman store had been moved there from the Sellers Store, torn down around 1988. The Sellers mercantile establishment was located at the intersection of Pettus and Union Academy Roads, in the southwestern quadrant. Julius Britt Norman who grew up and lived for many years across the road from the Sellers store, listed the store managers in a telephone interview. The Sellers' store was built and first run by Andrew Caffey Norman followed by his son, William Caffey Norman (assisted in the P.O. by his wife, Eubritta), Pierce Duncan, a

Mr. Rhodes and finally, Fred Sellers. Fred began around 1935 and was aided by his father, Will Sellers, when Fred worked for a time at Maxwell Air Force Base. Fred closed the store in 1975. The original Fleta Post Office had been in the Dr. Leroy Washington Davis' store in Old Fleta located 1.6 miles north of Fleta. Joseph Samuel Sellers made the application for a post office in Old Fleta on September 3, 1891 and the application was certified by C. W. Buckley, Post Master of Montgomery. In 1901 the Post Office was moved to William Caffey Norman's store (later called the Sellers' store) followed by the move to its last Fleta venue in the Richard Webb Norman store, at least by 1923 when Richard Webb Norman was listed as postmaster. The Fleta Post Office was discontinued in 1935.

### Dr. LeRoy Washington Davis of Old Fleta

Dr. LeRoy Washington Davis was born in Morgan County, Georgia to George Cook Davis and Jane Montgomery Davis on December 2, 1827 as their ninth child. He graduated from Mercer University, Penfield, in 1848 and from the Georgia College of Medicine, Augusta, Georgia in 1853. Renee A. Sharrock, Curator with the Historical Collections and Archives, Greenblatt Library, Medical College of Georgia, provided a copy of the MCG Trustees Minutes, 1853 documenting Dr. Davis' graduation and listing his thesis topic as Puerperal Fever. This fever was a medical condition in women after childbirth due to unsanitary conditions. Dr. Davis listed his preceptor as Dr. F. (or T.) W. Chiney. During the 1850s, in the state of Georgia, candidates for becoming a physician were only required to complete two sessions of coursework lasting only four months each, study under an established physician or preceptor, and additionally the Medical College of Georgia required a written thesis. So much for the "good ole days"! Pat York Davis in *Davis Trail Tracing and Connections in Walker County—Nauvoo, Alabama* states that Dr. Davis practiced medicine for six years in his home state before coming to



Montgomery County, Alabama in

1858. The Alabama Medical Association records for 1880, which was the first year that Montgomery County records were kept with the State records, lists Dr. Davis, but not as a member of the State Medical Association. He continues to be listed through 1916 along with listing his medical school, but is not listed at all from 1917 forward. There was no mention of his serving as County Health Officer as stated in the *Memorial Record of Alabama*. It appears that he never officially joined the State Medical Association. Unfortunately there have been no personal accounts located detailing his years as a physician in Montgomery County.

Records found on *ancestry.com* indicate that Davis had married Martha O'Neal on December 11, 1855 in Greene County, Georgia. There are no further records for her on internet sources. Dr. Davis married the second time, after being in Montgomery County for one year, to Caroline Fleta Mathews/Mathews (1839-1882) in 1859 by Justice of the Peace, Felix M. T.

Tombstone for Claudia Magdalen Davis Shackelford, Shackelford Cemetery, Pintlala, Alabama. Photo courtesy of Gary Burton

1853.] Miscellany. 255

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the conductor of this Journal at the time Dr. L. published in it his article, the full force of that communication had escaped our memory. We regret the omission to allude, in our remarks, to Dr. L.'s publication, for, on a reperusal of it now, we are free to acknowledge that the Doctor has very clearly established the fact that he did, in 1842, perform several painless surgical operations under the influence of the inhalation of sulphuric Ether,—and that he was thus early and subsequently seriously engaged in experimenting with this agent as an anæsthetic. We really think that Dr. Long has done himself great injustice in neglecting to bring his claims before Congress in competition with those of others. The Doctor's modesty and disinterestedness have concurred to make him rest satisfied with his own consciousness of merit. We trust, however, that he will not longer remain thus quiet, but use every exertion to throw the weight of his claims into the scales by which Congressional compensation is to be awarded—and nothing would give us more real satisfaction than to see the honor of that great discovery fixed upon the brow of a citizen of our own native State.

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*Medical College of Georgia.*—The twenty-first Annual Commencement of this institution took place on the 1st day of March. The exercises were conducted at the Masonic Hall, in presence of a large concourse of citizens. The Dean reported to the Board of Trustees that there were in attendance upon the Course of Lectures just concluded, one hundred and seventy-one gentlemen—of whom 115 were from Georgia, 29 from Alabama, 21 from South Carolina, 2 from North Carolina, 1 from Tennessee, 1 from Mississippi, 1 from New York, and 1 from Canada.

The Degree of Doctor of Medicine was then conferred upon the following fifty approved candidates:

FROM GEORGIA.			
David Adams,	-	-	Thesis on Gastritis,
W. J. Arrington,	-	-	" " Meningitis,
A. F. Attaway,	-	-	" " Spinal Irritation,
James C. Carroll,	-	-	" " Dyspepsia,
John S. Clements,	-	-	" " Veratrum Viride,
R. J. Cochran,	-	-	" " Pleurisy,
A. G. Couch,	-	-	" " Typhoid Fever,
L. S. Cunningham,	-	-	" " Gastritis,
L. W. Davis,	-	-	" " Puerperal Fever,
W. H. Dean,	-	-	" " Uterine Hemorrhage.
L. C. Fambro,	-	-	" " Veratrum Viride,
W. T. Goldsmith,	-	-	" " Dysentery.

Documentation of L. W. Davis, 1853 graduation from Georgia Medical College, Augusta Georgia Scan courtesy Greenblatt Library, Historical Collections and Archives

Tankersley. After six years of marriage, Caroline Fleta bore a daughter, Claudia Magdalen, on January 8, 1865. Caroline Fleta Mathews Davis died in 1882 and is buried at Tabernacle Methodist Church Cemetery, Pintlala, Alabama. Her grave is marked with an upright, engraved stone inside the only plot at Tabernacle to be surrounded by an iron fence. Also within this plot are Caroline Fleta's sister, Susan Ann Laura (1832-1889) and her husband John Peter Holmes (1816-1890). The Holmes lived in Lowndes County according to census records for 1870.

Claudia Magdalen Davis (1865-1911) married George Henry Shackelford on February 12, 1885. George Henry was the son of Frank and Jane Watts Shackelford of Pintlala. The Shackelford family was one of prominence in Montgomery County and written about often in PHA Newsletters. The first child of Claudia and George and Dr. Davis' first grandchild, Henry Francis Shackelford was born on November 14, 1885. Clarence Watts Shackelford, second grandchild of Leroy Washington Davis, was born in 1887, followed by grandson, Davis Leroy Shackelford, in 1889. (See PHA Newsletter, April 2011). L.W. Davis' last grandchild and only granddaughter, Mary Fleta Shackelford, was born in 1899. She was only 12 years old when her mother died in 1911. Mary Fleta appears on the 1914 through 1916 class rosters for Athens Academy a part of Athens College, Athens, Alabama. The Academy was equivalent to a girls boarding school which admitted girls twelve years and older or who had completed the seventh grade in an Alabama Public School. Mary Fleta went on to attend Florence Normal School in Florence, Alabama, graduating in 1918. Claudia is buried at the Shackelford Family Cemetery in Pintlala as is Mary Fleta who died August 15, 1923 after only seven months of marriage to Benjamin K. Fennell of Leighton, Alabama. Her older brother, Davis Leroy died in 1973 in a Montgomery nursing home and shares the vault with her at Shackelford Cemetery. George Henry Shackelford married in 1912 for the second time to Hermoine Huckabee. She became stepmother to the four Shackelford children. From correspondence found in the Davis Shackelford Collection in possession of Patsy Hall Davis, the children were fond of "Miss Hermie" as the family and this writer called her. Hermine Shackelford had been a teacher at Grange Hall, Pintlala and was sister of Sadie Huckabee Crenshaw who was married to William Crenshaw. Miss Hermie died in 1966, thirty-one years after George Henry Shackelford and she is buried at the Shackelford Cemetery. At some point, Mary Fleta went to stay with her older brother, Henry Francis Shackelford and his wife, Dallis Louise in Brewton, Alabama. A letter from Henry to his father George (Papa), dated July 17, 1915 describes Mary Fleta as "a splendid girl but indeed peculiar." ... "Mary Fleta is no inconvenience to us and thus should remain with us awhile yet. " This visit must have been during her summer break from Athens Academy. It seems a brave thing for a motherless girl of fifteen to leave the small community of Pintlala to attend school in the north Alabama town of Athens.

### Dr. L. W. Davis in Alabama

Why Dr. L. W. Davis came to Alabama in 1858 is unknown. His brother, David Montgomery (Red) Davis also came to Alabama—Walker County—a year earlier in 1857. Perhaps the brothers were simply looking for greater chances of advancement, particularly in terms of land ownership. Dr. Davis' land records have not been easy to trace. He appeared on the Federal Census, September 19, 1860, enumerated by C. C. Wilkins in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Montgomery County with the mailbox listed as Ramah. L. W. Davis was 31

14 STATE NORMAL SCHOOL	
Graduates from June 1, 1917, to June 1, 1918	
Almon, Nathaniel -----Moulton	Horton, John H.-----Choctaw
Armor, Irene -----Mt. Hope	Hudson, Addie Lou-----Rogersville
Atkinson, Myrtle -----Harpersville	Jackson, Martha -----Florence
Baird, Clemmie -----Guin	Ingram, Lily Susan-----Birmingham
Barfield, Vera -----Lineville	Johnson, Annie F.-----Bessemer
Bendall, Bertha -----Tusculumbia	Johnson, Marguerite-----Florence
Bendersky, Minnie -----Selma	Jones, Corinne -----Cottonwood
Bendersky, Rose -----Selma	Jones, Mary -----Cottonwood
Billingsley, Esther-----Healing Spgs.	Julian, Reese -----Sheffield
Blalock, James -----Florence	Kackelman, Bessie-----Florence
Boazman, Mildred -----Lineville	King, Bennie Frank-----Union Springs
Bogue, May Ce -----Mobile	Knight, Marvin J. -----Lineville
Bragg, Fannie Lou -----Huntsville	Knudsen, Louise -----Mobile
Brown, Maud -----Florence	Lawler, Lucile -----Brownsboro
Bullington, John C. -----Athens	Lile, Lucile -----Leighton
Burleson, Annie -----Hackleburg	Lile, Sue -----Leighton
Burleson, Ollie -----Hackleburg	Marsh, Myrtle -----Florence
Butt, Lily -----Mobile	Neville, Annie Laurie-----Trinity
Cain, Mary Slaughter-----Madison	Poole, Effie -----Trinity
Carnes, Icie Lou -----Hamilton	Quinn, Annie -----Anniston
Carr, Kathleen -----Uniontown	Ratliff, Anna -----Hanceville
Carswell, Virginia -----Decatur	Rice, Sue Ella -----Eutaw
Caruthers, Jaxie -----Prattville	Roberts, Mary Mozelle-----Clayton
Caruthers, Ora -----Prattville	Robertson, Ruby -----Gordo
Cater, Frances -----Greenville	Ross, Johnnie -----Dothan
Christlieb, Lillie Mae-----Bessemer	Samford, Marynelle-----Opelika
Coker, Mattie -----Irontdale	Seaman, Charley -----Geneva
Cooper, Johnnie Winston-----Grove Hill	Sellers, B. A.-----Chalce
Copeland, Mrs. Susie Hale-----Florence	Sentell, Winnie -----Opelika
Corbin, Lela -----Double Springs	Shackelford, Mary Fleta-----Hope Hull
Craig, Turner -----Jasper	Simpson, Genevieve-----Florence
Darwin, Sudie -----Chase	Springer, Reeder -----Lexington
Davis, Cynthia -----Trinity	Stewart, Mabel -----Florence
Dorroh, Zora -----Kennedy	Strickland, Winnie Davis-----Union Springs
DuBose, Alge -----Selma	Tate, Claire -----Newton
Duncan, Ovia -----Sheffield	Tatum, Katie Lou-----Prattville
Durham, Mary -----Florence	Taylor, Lillian -----Roanoke
Eberhardt, Marguerite-----Selma	Taylor, Lulian -----Roanoke
England, Louise -----Marion	Taylor, Pauline -----Sheffield
Esslinger, James N. -----Gurley	Thigpen, Judith -----Uchee
Ezzell, Florence -----Belgreen	Thorn, Luther D. -----Mingo, Miss.
Findlay, Katie -----Birmingham	Thweatt, Troy -----Talladega
Heflin, Sarah Foster-----Heflin	Waddell, Vona -----Rogersville
Gardner, Gladys -----Childersburg	Weeks, John E. -----Hanceville
Glover, Elder E. -----Addison	West, Eileen -----Uniontown
Grubbs, Birdie -----Florence	Williams, Juanita Thornton-----Rogersville
Gunn, Julia -----Calera	Willingham, Clyde-----Florence
Haines, E. E. -----Roanoke	Wills, Hermione -----Catherine
Hampton, Cecil -----Huntsville	Wynne, Velma -----Delrose, Tenn.
Hardy, Lula Mae -----Sheffield	
Harraway, Bayless S.-----Rogersville	
Hodges, Charlotte -----Florence	
	Total 101.

Documentation of Mary Fleta Shackelford's attendance at Athens Academy, Athens, Alabama Scan courtesy Athens State University Library, Archives

years of age, a physician and married to F. Davis, 19 years of age. There are no details of his property ownership but his personal estate is listed at \$5000.00. It is interesting that in the course of these research efforts no records of Civil War service in Montgomery County for L. W. Davis were located.

The census of 1870 is difficult to read but may list L. W. Davis as 44 years old, residing in Township 14, Range 17 of Montgomery County. This Township was comprised of Beat 10 or the Killough area of Montgomery County.<sup>1</sup>

In 1880 an agricultural census for Beat 16, Montgomery County (includes Pettus Road) enumerated by H. H. Norman listed Leroy Davis owning 23 acres of tilled acreage, 25 acres of woodland, and 3 acres unimproved acreage. The value of farm land including fences and buildings was \$500.00, farming implements were valued at \$5.00, livestock was valued at \$25.00, estimated value of all farm production for the previous year was listed at \$175.00. The Federal Census for 1880 was enumerated by F.M.T. Tankersley on June 1, in Beat 10, Keelers, Montgomery County for L. W. Davis, age 54. A Montgomery City Directory for 1880-81 included residents of Snowdoun, which encompassed residents of the Pintlala area. L. W. Davis was listed as owning 306 acres.

By the 1900 Federal Census, L. W. Davis was listed as 72 years old, widowed, and living in the household of his son-in-law, George Henry Shackelford and his wife Claudia Magdalen (daughter of Davis) plus the Shackelford's four children at Killough, Montgomery County (house located near Mosley's Store).

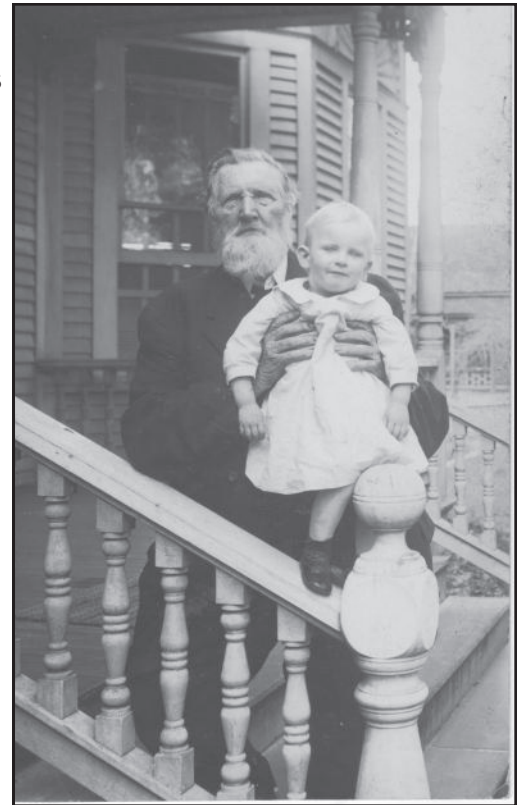
Federal Census records for 1910 enumerate Leroy W. Davis, 82 years old and remaining in Killough, Montgomery County in the household of his son-in-law, George Henry Shackelford.

The 1920 Census lists Dr. Davis in Nauvoo, Walker County, Alabama living in a rented home with his two grandsons, Henry Francis and Davis Leroy Shackelford along with a nurse and a boarder. This census was taken only two years before Dr. Davis died at Nauvoo on March 28, 1922.

### **L. W. Davis—Businessman**

Leroy Washington Davis presents the image of a businessman who made many "deals." Land conveyance records found in the Montgomery County Archives, Probate Court of Montgomery County, attest to this fact. Examples of his business dealings are presented here:

- 1867--Felix M. Tankersley and Samuel Jordan witnessed a promissory note due to L. W. Davis by Henry I. Neill, who was indebted to Davis for \$177.00. The note was due on October 1, 1867. If not paid on said date Neill would convey to Davis the following property: one mare mule, one cow, one yearling, one bale of cotton from the current years crop to be delivered on the first of October.
- 1868--A chattel mortgage dated 1868 by Ned Guy to L. W. Davis to satisfy a debt of \$57.00 and another debt of \$40.00 states that Guy conveyed to Davis one mule, two shoats, one sow, four pigs, all the cane fodder and potatoes which may be raised by said Guy.
- 1884-- Ed Durden, Jr. (father of Eula Durden Sellers, mother of Fred Sellers, Fleta, Alabama) served as Administrator of the estate of Hamilton Tarver. Durden obtained from the Montgomery County Probate Court an order to sell the land from the Tarver estate. This land was thirty acres off the



Believed to be image of Dr. L. W. Davis and unknown child, date unknown. Photo courtesy of Davis Leroy Shackelford Collection, now owned by Patsy Hall Davis.

south end of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  and thirty acres off the south end of the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the south east all in Section 33, Township 14, Range 17 and the north east  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the north east  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 4, Township 13 and Range 17. It was sold to L. W. Davis for \$900.00 as highest bidder for advertised land.

- 1891--One of the most valuable sources of information on L. W. Davis' business enterprises comes from a deed issued in 1891 from L. W. Davis to Sellers & Davis. ... *that for and in consideration of the purpose of having a **steam gin and mill** erected by the firm J. S. Sellers and L.W. Davis to hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said firm of Sellers and Davis the following described parcel of land. Commencing at the corner of J. S. Sellers land on the west side of the Pettus Road running north of said road one hundred yards **beyond the pool at the mill & gin erected by the said Sellers and Sons** thence due West one hundred yards thence south to the line between J. S. Sellers & L. W. Davis along said line East to the place of beginning containing six acres more or less said land situated & being in the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section three, Township thirteen, Range Seventeen in Montgomery County.... **To have and to hold to the said Sellers and Davis and to their successors as long as the said land is used for gin and mill purposes, but in the event the above described ? shall cease to be used for the purpose above mentioned they are to revert back to the undersigned.** Signed L. W. Davis, July 1891 and attested to by H. H. Norman, Justice of the Peace.*



Enlarged pool at the site of the Sellers/Davis steam gin and mill, Pettus Road, Old Fleta. Photo courtesy Gary Burton

From this legal document it is clear the two men agreed to become partners in business under the name Sellers and Davis for the purpose of building a steam mill and gin. The document goes into great detail listing the ramifications of all business divisions of the partnership. This is documentation that the two men were in business at the current site (2014) of the home of Claude and Cindy Bowden, Pettus Road. The pool is still extant but in an enlarged form near the edge of Pettus Road. Cindy Bowden recalled digging out the pool and seeing a brick and mortar foundation in the pool bed. This surely must have been the base for the steam gin and mill. The Post Office notebooks compiled by Laurie Sanders and found at the Pintlala Library document the application for a Post Office in Township 14 of south Montgomery County on September 3, 1891 by Dr. Davis' business partner, Joseph Samuel Sellers. The proposed name for the P.O. was Fleta and Sellers the proposed postmaster. By 1901, well after the death of Fleta Davis and the census listing Dr. Davis as living with his daughter and son-in-law on Highway 31, the Fleta P.O. moved to the Andrew Caffey Norman Store in Fleta. Perhaps by this time the Davis store had gone out of business necessitating the move of the Post Office. Records show that the P.O. moved again in 1905 to the Richard Webb Norman store discussed earlier in this article.

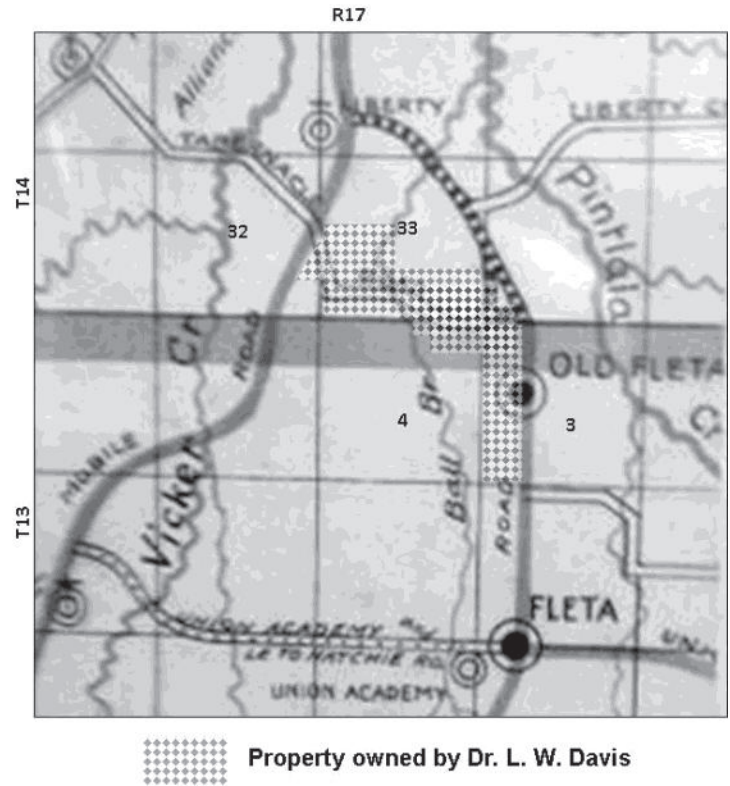
- In 1898, seven years after the formation of the Sellers and Davis partnership in 1891, Dr. L. W. Davis deeded acreage to his daughter Claudia Magdalen Davis Shackelford. The deed states that *I, Dr. L. W. Davis for and in consideration of the love and affection which I bear towards my beloved daughter Claudia M. Shackelford convey the following real estate and personal property: S  $\frac{1}{2}$  of NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  and N  $\frac{1}{2}$  of NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 4, Township 13, Range 17 containing 100 acres plus ten acres in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of NW $\frac{1}{4}$  in Section 4, Township 13, Range 17. **(All of this property falls at Old Fleta).** He also gifted her with two mules, Mack and Charley.*
- 1899--A business transaction that is important in the history of the Old Fleta Post Office took place in June 1899 when W. W. Brooks and P.J. Neal executed a mortgage to L.W. Davis conveying land (to be later described) and stipulating in the mortgage that should default be made in payment the



property could be sold at auction for cash at the Artesian Basin (Court Square Fountain, Montgomery) after a four week ad in a Montgomery newspaper. In August of 1899 the mortgage held by Brooks and Neal was transferred to Winter Loeb & Co. Default of payment by Davis lead to said property being auctioned off by E. H. Ollcott, auctioneer. L. W. Davis was the highest bidder and became the purchaser for the amount of \$175.00. The mortgage had stipulated that the mortgagee (Davis) could in fact become purchaser at public sale. The auctioneer (Ollcott) executed a deed to Davis on the premises for the property described as: **one half acre bounded on the south by colored church (Mt. Sinai Church), on the north by land of G. W. Thompson and running west from the Pettus Road seventy yards, then north thirty five yards. This property was known as the Fleta Post Office with all improvements therein. The deed to Davis was notarized on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, 1901. This establishes the location for the first Post Office in Old Fleta named in honor of L. W. Davis' wife, Caroline Fleta, who had died in 1882.**

- 1908--A mortgage note dated January 13, 1908 and signed (marked) by Robert Norman for \$531.00 at eight per cent interest by Norman who secured his loan with the following property: two black mare mules, all crops of cotton, corn fodder, cane, potatoes, peas or any other crops grown by said Robert Norman.
- 1916—This was the last year in which L. W. Davis was listed as property owner paying property taxes in Townships 13 and 14 of Montgomery County. He was succeeded by his son-in-law, George Henry Shackelford, in 1917 for the same property.

All of the sited property conveyances real and other wise found in Montgomery County legal documents, indicate that Dr. Leroy Washington Davis was quite the “wheeling and dealing” businessman. This trait continued into his days as a coalmine owner in Walker County, Alabama. The L. W. Davis, Old Fleta, property passed to his son-in-law and grandsons around 1917, and finally into the hands of John David Johnson, married to Willie Amanda Sanderson (1881-1938, Tabernacle Cemetery). Johnson was father of Fannie Ganey whom many PHA members recall. Up to this point in time (2014) portions of the Fleta property remain in the Johnson family and other parcels to a land holding group, Burwell Investments and the Venable family (Highway 31 portion).



Property owned by Dr. L. W. Davis  
 Montgomery County Map indicating property once owned by Dr. L. W. Davis, Collection of Butch and Pat Moseley, Pintlala, Alabama. Photo courtesy Gary Burton, Adapted by Jerrie Burton

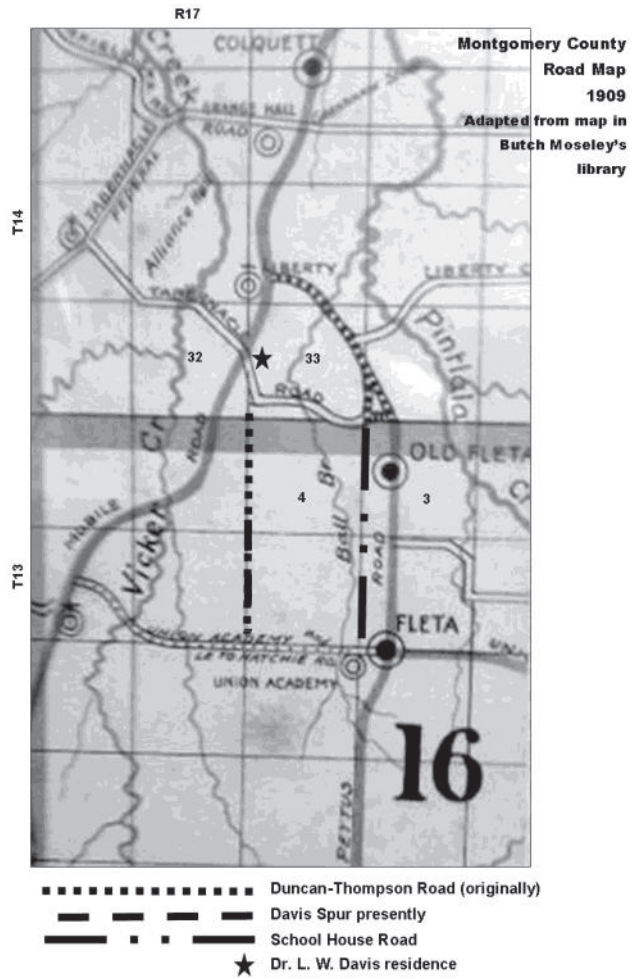


Photo courtesy of Gary Burton, adapted by Jerrie Burton

## Walker County Ties

Leroy Washington Davis developed a relationship with the town of Nauvoo in Walker County at an undocumented date. It is known from the book *Davis Trail Tracing with Connections in Walker County, Nauvoo, Alabama* by Pat York Davis that his brother David Montgomery "Red" Davis moved there from Rutledge, Georgia to an area near the Bluff Spring in the Slicklizzard community in 1857. This was a year before L. W. came to Montgomery County. Did his brother influence the move to Alabama? Ann Davis of Tifton, Georgia has done much research on the Davis family and located a land patent for 160 acres purchased by Lee Roy W.

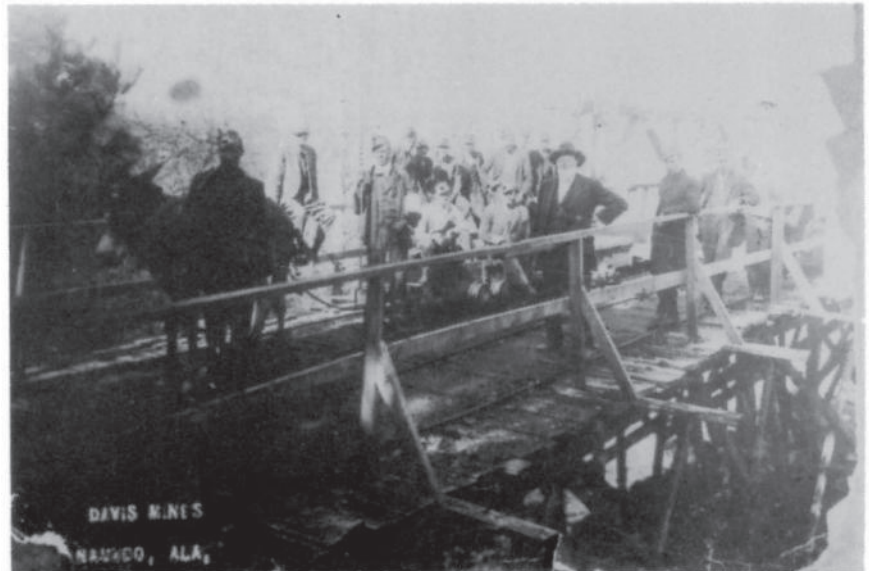
Davis (difference in previous spelling) west of the Huntsville Meridian (lands falling west of Huntsville including Walker County). This

1884 transaction is the earliest documentation tying Davis to Walker County. A property tax receipt dated December 18, 1905 to Dr. L. W. Davis for \$135.45 is in the Davis Shackelford Collection. The town of Nauvoo, named for a town in Illinois, was incorporated in 1906. Dr. Davis left Pintlala/Fleta (date unknown) for the small town that changed from a mainly agricultural community to one that would be based on two of its natural resources: coal and timber. The Northern Alabama Railway came to Nauvoo in 1888 according to Margaret Earley Lee. This made mining efforts more efficient than the mule and wagon system of getting the coal to markets. She adds that by 1890 Nauvoo was thriving. Lee also states in her book, *Memories of Nauvoo*, that probably around 1894 Dr. Davis was operating under the name Nauvoo Coal Co., which owned both surface and mineral rights. This company was also known as Davis Mines, located in an area named by the miners as Pinetucky. Davis built a large commissary, a home and many company houses for the miners. He backed his two grandsons, Henry Francis and Davis Leroy Shackelford in a mining endeavor at Slicklizzard named Shackelford Brothers Coal Co. Pat Davis states further that the brothers built the first mining camp in Nauvoo. Success seemed difficult, particularly after the miners attempted to establish a union. It was a violent time in Nauvoo and in 1920 Governor Thomas Kilby called in the state militia to maintain order. Those called to do that ultimately caused problems when one militia member shot and killed a leader of the union efforts. Dr. Davis died in Nauvoo in 1922 and by the late 1920s the Shackelford brothers ceased operations in Nauvoo. After the passage of laws granting collective bargaining rights to miners in 1935, the Shackelford Brothers fell into bankruptcy. Eventually the Tennessee Paper Company gained ownership of the property, according to Pat York Davis. It is unknown when Dr. L. W. Davis Walker County mining endeavors came to a close.

## Final Years

Dr. Davis' last years must have been fraught with health issues and perhaps dementia. By 1913 he must have spent extended time in Nauvoo and visited among his grandchildren. A letter dated October, 1913 from grandson, Henry Francis to "Pa Davis" tells Pa that his clothes will be sent by express to Nauvoo, money had been deposited to his credit, Davis Leroy was keeping "your room" in good shape and they all missed him and hoped he would return. Davis Leroy Shackelford had moved to Brewton to work at his brother Henry's drug store.

Henry Francis described his grandfather in a letter to his father (George Henry Shackelford) in July, 1915: *Now, Pa Davis is nigh with death and I am doing as much for him as I can under the circumstances. The only nourishment he can take now is ? and having to stimulate him, unless there is immediate improvement he can be with us but a few days more.* However, he lived seven more years, indicating that he must have



Davis Mining Company, Nauvoo, Alabama; man at top right thought to be Dr. L. W. Davis Photo scanned from book cover of *Davis Trail Tracing and Connections in Walker County—Nauvoo, Alabama* by Pat York Davis

been a tough old man. By 1920 he had improved enough to live in Nauvoo in a rented house with grandsons, Henry and Davis and a nurse as recorded in the Federal Census.

In this same letter Henry recalls the last words to him from his mother, Claudia Magdalen, in which she lists the eccentricities of her father, confessing that... "I don't know him, take care of him and use your persuasion to get him to unite with some church." Claudia felt that her death was imminent and she went further to express her concern for her baby, Mary Fleeta, and the regret that she would not live to raise her. She also confided that she did not understand Mary Fleeta and asked Henry to take care of her also.

Henry was a graduate of the School of Pharmacy at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (Auburn University) and was part owner of the Peoples Drug Store in Brewton until 1920 when he moved to Walker County and later to Birmingham where he entered the insurance business. At the time of his death in 1941, he was working with the Alabama State Employment Agency. Grandson Clarence Watts Davis was a physician and at some point moved to West Palm Beach, Florida where he died in 1980 at age 93—he must have inherited the Davis genes for longevity!

### Premature Burial Plans

The most interesting and unique document found for this study was a letter from George Henry Shackelford to his son, Henry Francis Shackelford, in 1914 in which he discusses plans for Dr. Davis' funeral. This leads to the conclusion that Leroy Washington Davis had been in really poor health for many years and the family had been prepared for his demise in 1922.

*Hope Hull, Ala.  
Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> 1914*

*Dear Henry:*

*Since thinking over the matter I have decided it best to have doctor brought to McGehees instead of Tyson. Winter has set in and there will hardly be any more good roads to Tyson this season, always bad at best. I will have hearse to come to McGehees and if only 3 or 4 accompany the remains I guess I could manage to get them over, if not, have one or 2 hacks (hired transportation). While money is very scarce I guess it best to do this. Every negro that dies now has a hearse to come and carry them to the graveyard. Your negro Osborn's brother died in Montgomery this week. A hearse and five hacks came down. Lets eliminate Tyson, and have him brought to McGehees. Notify Clarence of this at once. I also suggest that if weather is bad the women and children had better not go besides weather conditions it would cost me to get them over unless I had ? to come down. I don't want you all to wire Mary Fleeta, for I think it best for her not to come. Mention this to Clarence. When you wire or phone me give me dimensions of box (coffin). Everything frozen here today with thermomter down to 24. Write Clarence at once and when you phone me say how many to ?*

*Lovingly,  
Papa*

*In case you phone and can't get me, phone one of the stores. **Crenshaw 7-8-1-1, Mosley 7-8-2-1.** Write Clarence at once to come to McGehees And not to telegraph Mary Fleeta.*

*GHS*

*Notify Edd Holmes when he dies. Also Georgia kin.*

This letter is a cultural study of the times not far removed from the turn of the twentieth-century in the rural south and gives a personal glimps into the character of George Henry Shackelford. I treasure knowing the phone numbers for two local stores in 1915! References to "McGehee's" is McGehee's Switch (Hope Hull) where there was a train stop and Tyson, Alabama near (in 2014) the Flying J Truck Stop, Lowndes County. There was apparently a train stop there and it would have been closer to Tabernacle Methodist Church

Cemetery where Dr. Davis would be buried very near his wife Caroline Fleta. After his death and burial in 1922 at Tabernacle, the two are separated by mere inches and the iron fence around the plot of Fleta, her sister and brother-in-law. His grave was unmarked and discovered only after the obituary for Dr. Davis was found in the newspaper by Gary Burton. I am grateful to Jack Hornady for securing and installing a headstone for Dr. Davis. Found at last!



Tombstone for Dr. L. W. Davis at Tabernacle Methodist Church Cemetery, before and after placement of headstone. Photo courtesy of Gary Burton

## Dr. Davis and Pettus Road

The Pettus Road has changed in appearance over the decades of its existence. Curves have been slightly straightened, parts of the road realigned and of course black top has replaced the dusty red dirt that submitted to the blade of a roadscraper run by men such as Ronald Sellers. There were two roads closely associated with the Pettus Road which are no longer visible. The Tabernacle Road (2014 name and apparently referred to as Federal Road at some point) at one time crossed over the Mobile/Highway 31/Greenville Road and continued for an unknown distance in a southeastern direction and became part of what is known today (2014) as Davis Spur. The portion of the road, which crossed Highway 31 ran through property belonging to L. W. Davis, then George Henry Shackelford and heirs, then John David Johnson and today belongs to heirs of Julian Venable. This road was called the Duncan-Thompson Road around the turn of the twentieth century. This name is not seen on early road maps held by the Montgomery County Engineering Department. Their earliest map being 1901, however, the name was used by Ethel Tankersley Todd in a PHA newsletter of 1988. She also stated that this was the site of Dr. Davis home, which was now covered over by a pond. Mary Ann and Allison Venable confirm that there is a pond on their property and remnants of a house were seen near the pond many years ago. Another road which (in 2014) is called School Spur on a county road sign and comes off Pettus Road to the south, at one time continued to Union Academy Road at the site of the old Academy. This road passed to the west of Old Fleta near the site of the Davis Store/Fleta Post Office. At some point between 1901 and 1910, Pettus Road was realigned near Old Fleta when School Spur was no longer used at its southern end.



Remnant of Duncan-Thompson Road bed, possible location for L. W. Davis home, Pintlala, Alabama. Photo courtesy of Gary Burton

**Acknowledgments**

So many people have worked to establish a history of Dr. L. W. Davis—I am afraid to attempt to list and thank them for fear of omitting someone, but here goes:

Robert Boggan representing Burwell Investments, Cindy Hawkins Bowden, Amy Jeffers, Mary Ann Venable, Ruth Ward for sharing the abstracts to their property and Allison Venable for a trip down the now non-existent Duncan-Thompson Road

Gary Burton to hours spent on map study, editorial advice

Jerri Burton for scan after scan of photographs and for adapting the maps used in this study

Terri Dingler, Director, Montgomery County Medical Society, for searching records at the Alabama Medical Association

Margery Henry for keeping all kinds of family related history and sharing it with me

Kevin Hollis, former Archivist, Montgomery County Probate Court, for pulling out so many very old, large and worn books of land conveyances

Jack Hornady for securing and installing a headstone for Dr. L. W. Davis, who for so long was in an unknown and unmarked grave

James Kelly, Assistant Montgomery County Engineer, for providing maps

Cristi Kiernan for sharing the old Webb Norman store/Post Office

Pat and Butch Moseley for sharing their 1909 Montgomery County map

Julius Britt Norman for Norman family and Fleta community history

Elizabeth Sellers and Fran Pugh for sharing Sellers family and Fleta community history

Thank you all for your generosity, inspiration and knowledge!

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Georgia Medical College, Macon, Georgia. Historical Collections and Archives, Greenblatt Library.

Land Conveyances of Montgomery County, Alabama, Montgomery County Archives, Probate Court of Montgomery County, Alabama

Letters and Photographs from the Shackelford family held by Davis and Margery Henry; Patsy Hall Davis

Montgomery County Map, 1901 provided by James Kelly, Assistant Montgomery County Engineer

Montgomery County Map, 1909 in collection of Pat and Butch Moseley

Property Abstracts belonging to: Bob Boggan representing Burwell Investments, Cindy and Claude Bowden, Amy Jeffers, Mary Ann Venable, and Ruth Ward

University of North Alabama, Florence, Alabama. Archives and Special Collections, Collier Library, Louise Huddleston, Archivist

Research efforts by Ann Davis of Tifton, Georgia

**Interview:**

Cindy Hawkins Bowden, August 18, 2014 and September 5, 2014

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> At least by the turn of the twentieth century, Montgomery County was divided into sections for the purpose of voting precincts and bridge and road upkeep. These sections were referred to as Beats. Beat 10 of Montgomery County included the Pintlala community and was referred to as the Killough Beat, which in writings is often called Keelers. The Post Office located in this Beat was named Colquitt because the Post Office was in the store belonging to the Colquitt family. Beat 16 of Montgomery County included the Old Fleta and Fleta communities.

## Hazel Norman's Memories

Hazel Norman and William Caffey Norman (Bill, to Hazel) were married in 1942 in Fleta, Alabama. Hazel, born in 1920, will be 95 on her next birthday in May, 2015. She has been a long-time member of the Pintlala Historical Association. I had an enjoyable visit with her in June seeking her memories of the old Richard Webb Norman store/Post Office located on the site of the home she and W.C. built in Fleta. She shared some of her memories of her home in Texas and of her meeting W. C. in Galveston, Texas.

Hazel was working in the private sector in Galveston, Texas in 1938 where she lived with her brother and sister-in-law. Her friends Dorothy and Florence often visited the Galveston USO and tried to get Hazel to go along. She did not dance and felt she would be out of place, but finally relented and attended. There she met Bill Norman (from Fleta, Alabama who was working for the government in Galveston), where they chatted and Bill asked for her phone number. Hazel, not being too impressed with the young man, gave him the wrong number—not hers but one belonging to one of the friends. She left Galveston shortly after the encounter to visit her family in

Grapeland. Bill Norman was persistent and kept calling the friend who finally gave him the correct number for Hazel's brother. When Hazel returned to Galveston, her sister-in-law told her a gentleman had been calling for her on a regular basis. The two finally reconnected and went to a volleyball game together. Bill got his automobile from Jacksonville, Florida, where he had been the manager of an A & P grocery. The girls enjoyed having him take them to places in Galveston. Hazel's two friends told her if she was not interested in Bill Norman they were! Cupid's arrow ultimately pierced Hazel's heart; Bill and Hazel were married in Fleta at the Methodist parsonage at Mount Carmel in 1942. They had an apartment on the lower level of the Andrew Caffey Norman store then run by Bill's father, Mr. Will Norman and his wife Miss Britt (Eubritta Duncan). Miss Britt had kept toddler, Bill, in a make-shift playpen created from a box in which groceries had been delivered while she tended the store and post office.



Hazel Norman. Photo courtesy Trish McLaney

The young couple enjoyed their years in the small apartment comprised of one bedroom, kitchen, living room and an outhouse. Once Hazel's brother and his wife came for a visit on their way to Baltimore. His wallet with all of the travel money got dropped into the one seat toilet! Bill got a rake and rescued the wallet. After a good bath—for wallet, money and Bill—the money was clipped to the outside clothesline to dry!

The store had become a two-story building in order to accommodate the Mason's, Fleta Lodge 223. Hazel related that on meeting nights she and Bill would spend the night with his parents to avoid the noise and wafting dust from the stomping Masons above them.

The couple built a home diagonally across the road from the Will Norman/Fred Sellers store where they reared their son, Caffey. Hazel worked as the Administrative Assistant for the Montgomery Post Master —

in fact, five different ones. She retired in 1977 to look after W. C. whose health began to wane. After Bill's death in 1978, Hazel sold the home and moved into Montgomery in 1980. Hazel says with emphasis that she is a Texan by birth and an Alabamian by marriage!

Hazel also shared an article she composed about her 1938 high school graduation. It reveals that graduations in either Texas or Alabama sounded very much alike in 1938!

### Hazel Norman 1938 Grapeland, Texas High School Graduation

In school we had a minimum of dropouts for we were determined. Some dropped back but not out. Even then we knew it was "us against the world." We didn't blame anyone for our situation. We were all in the same boat. The Great Depression hit just about every family— some harder than others.

Finally our graduation night arrived. It was to be so great. Miss Elliot played the march from *Aieda* that we recognized from our recent musical exposure. We had practiced a measured pace and knew how to change the tassel on our mortarboards to the other side. The stage, arranged with table and flowers, was ready for us to walk across, but the light seemed strangely dim. J. C. Frisby gave the valedictory address. (He always was the "brain" of the class.) Henry Lively gave the salutatory address and I read the contrived prophecy. We marched to the recessional and turned in our caps and gowns. It was a relief to be graduating but our happiness was tinged with sadness for we knew we would not come this way again and some of us were parting forever.

We were before television, before tape recorders, Xerox copiers— even before cyclamate and aspartame—almost before calories! Scotch tape had barely made its appearance. We had no such easy ways to fix things.

In our group we had entrepreneurs: Dick Kent was before McDonalds. We had strategists: Will Olan Brimberry was watching every move in Europe and laying a background for his military career. He and Mr. Reed discussed world news and politics, while the rest of us listened. We had visionaries: Elton Brimberry was planning to become a millionaire while he was still in the cotton patch. We had futurists: Liston Beasley must have been thinking artificial heart and transplant while he was counting our pulse. Through no effort of their own, some had "looks". If it hadn't been for the war, Jake Lively and Clifford Pennington might have found themselves in Hollywood.

We had a doctor, a lawyer , business men and educators. We had soldiers, sailors, musicians and—most important of all—we had mothers and fathers of nice children.

We experienced hard times but hard times mold fine people. We had been deprived but we had SURVIVED. We were headset on succeeding. Looking back, we now know that in human potential, we had it all. We were the *Darlings of the Depression*.



**PINTLALA HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION**

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

**NEXT MEETING**

**OCTOBER 19, 2014**

**2:30 P.M.**

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