

PINTLALA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Next Meeting:
October 15th — 2:30 p.m.
 9712 Hwy 31
 Hope Hull, AL 36043



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

Volume XX, Number 4

October 2006

Prairie Place Plantation House



Photograph, courtesy of Fred & Dianne Bush

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Pictured (L to R)
 Mrs. Willis Stone Wright, Mrs. Louise Meriwether Stone (wife of Thomas Benton Stone, Sr.), Aunt Jane (*wearing hat-former housekeeper and cook for the Stone family*), Mr. William Frazier Stone and Mr. Thomas Benton Stone, Sr. owner of the Prairie Place Plantation House. Photograph late 1920s

President's Message

We must embrace the future while preserving the influences of the past. The PHA has been a viable force in the recovery of our history and the preservation of our heritage for the greater part of two decades. Consider the following:

The PHA needs a website, if for no other reason than to archive our newsletters. Four newsletters per year for two decades comprise a treasure trove of information for history-lovers and genealogists. Currently they are housed in the Ethel Tankersley Todd alcove in the Pintlala Branch Library. Wouldn't it be nice to access the information via a website? Do you know someone who could assist in creating an inexpensive, easy-to-maintain website for the PHA? My number is 288-7414.

The Pintlala Elementary School will certainly change within the next two years. The issue of closing the school is settled. Thankfully, that will not happen. Building a new school is now under serious discussion. Recently, interim School Superintendent, Linda Robinson, along with Gerry Adams and Ken Upchurch, met with Jack Hornady, Pat Moseley, Bev Williams, and me. Options were explored. The discussion with thoughtful, reasonable persons was energizing. A process for decision-making and community input will soon be in place. The historical significance of the school will hopefully be retained in some manner as we respond to the needs of students in the twenty-first century.

Gary Burton, President
garyburton1@charter.net

PHA October Program

Pintlala Historical Association will meet on Sunday, October 15, 2006, 2:30 p.m. at Prairie Place Plantation home of Fred and Dianne Bush at 9712 Highway 31, Hope Hull, Alabama. There has been much research done on this home which was part of the Barton Warren Stone plantation. Special guests invited by the Bushes include William Stone (6th generation grandson of Barton Warren Stone who lived in the house as a child), his wife Frances, and his mother, Mrs. Sarah Howard Stone; plus Will and Ann Gardner, the current owners of the Barton Warren Stone home on the Old Selma Road. Included in this newsletter is background information on Prairie Place Plantation provided by the Bushes as an introduction to our tour of their home. William Stone will share memories and information on the Prairie Place home. In addition, the Bush's son, Major Erick Bush, will talk briefly on Civil War curiosities of Montgomery.

Directions to Prairie Place: Driving south on Highway 31 coming from the intersection of I-65 south and 31, the home is on the right marked by a green mailbox and a lovely split rail fence lining both sides of the long driveway. The driveway is the first drive on the right after passing Willow Bend Mobile Home Park. The meeting will convene at the Bush home; there will be no church vans provided.

Please join us for this most interesting tour. We are grateful to the Bushes for their hospitality and willingness to share the results of their hard work with the PHA membership.

Prairie Place Plantation, c. 1858

Prairie Place Plantation was prominent among the Alabama River settlements and was situated along the Old Selma Road in West Montgomery County. This historic Greek revival frame home, with its stately front porch, Doric columns, and Italianate brackets, remains today much like it was in 1858.

Barton Warren Stone built Prairie Place Plantation as a wedding gift to his oldest son, Warren H. Stone, Jr. and his bride, Helen Benton. Barton Warren Stone was one of the wealthiest cotton barons of his day with the Stone family estate spanning 7,000 acres in Montgomery, Lowndes, and Autauga Counties.

Prairie Place Plantation is one of four stately homes built by the Stones in the black-belt region along the Alabama River. The largest was the c. 1845 Barton Warren Stone Plantation. A sister house in design and style, known as the Duck Pond House, was destroyed by fire in 1899. Magnolia Crest, located in Burkeville in Lowndes County, was central to the Stone farming operations and included the Stone gin and riverboat dock from which steamboats transported cotton destined for Mobile and New Orleans. Magnolia Crest and the Barton Warren Stone Plantation were linked by rail. The Stones maintained terminals for steam locomotives and operated passenger and freight rail service between Montgomery and Selma.

The three surviving historic Stone Plantation houses are fully restored for future generations of Alabamians. Architecturally the three homes are very similar. The paneled doors and window frames, baseboards, and mantles are similar in all of the houses. The Barton Warren Stone Plantation and Prairie Place Plantation are two of the very few historic homes in the entire South to retain their original design drawings in the National Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

In the 1980s Fred and Dianne Bush made the decision to eventually retire in the Montgomery area. Working closely with the Alabama Historical Commission they identified historic homes throughout the state that were in danger of disappearing forever. They had often admired the stately, but abandoned, house on the Old Selma Road and after successful negotiations with the then owner, relocated Prairie Place Plantation to its present site on Highway 31 in Hope Hull, Montgomery County. Concluding a thirty-year US Air Force career, that included diplomatic postings in London, Helsinki, and Estonia, the Bushes turned their attention to the restoration of Prairie Place Plantation. Their goal was to create an environment that would come to be viewed as the "destination of choice" for family gatherings and a place that children and grandchildren would consider as their own "home place" in this increasingly mobile world.

As with most restorations, Prairie Place Plantation remains a work in progress. The Master Plan includes the restoration of The Federal House c. 1820, a dogtrot structure now situated behind the big house. This house was moved from the Federal Road within sight of Tabernacle Church in Pintala and was on property purchased by Ray Scott. The exact date and builder of this house are unknown, but it was occupied for many years by Molly Lassiter Tarver (1868-1951, buried Bethel Cemetery) and in the 1930s she was joined by her nephews, John Brady Lassiter and Clarence Lassiter. J.B. Lassiter built a new home for his family on Highway 31 in 1947 and moved there. He built a small house on his property for Molly. In the ensuing years the c. 1820s house was rented to other families until purchased by Scott.

Interpretive Signage Program

The Executive Board of the PHA met on Saturday, September 9, 2006 and voted to contribute \$500.00 to Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery for their Interpretive Signage Program. Dr. Thomas Duncan's medical office, located in Fleta until 1979 when it was moved to Old Alabama Town, was one of two buildings with Pintlala area roots in need of signage. Grange Hall was the other and it already had a sponsorship from a Montgomery realtor. The Board felt it very appropriate that one of the buildings have a Pintlala sponsorship, thus Pintlala Historical Association became the sponsor for the Doctor's Office at Old Alabama Town. We are currently seeking donations to replenish the coffers from members and others who have an interest in seeing local history preserved. Please make any donation that you can to Pintlala Historical Association, and give or mail to Thomas Ray.

The text approved by the Foundation is as follows:

Country Doctor's Office

Circa 1892

This small building served as the medical office for Dr. Thomas Duncan at the time of his graduation from the Medical College of Alabama in Mobile in 1892. From this office originally located in the Fleta community near Pintlala, he made house calls in his buggy, on his horse and later in his automobile. Hookworm, diphtheria, malaria, pellagra, typhoid fever, and measles were common ailments that he treated. He concocted medicines, stored medical instruments and supplies, and reconciled his accounts in this building. Dr. Duncan was also a pharmacist, dentist, surgeon and even a veterinarian until 1938.

Dr. Duncan's medical office was moved to Old Alabama Town and restored in 1979.

The Pintlala Historical Association

Announcement

The Alabama Department of Archives and History announces the resumption of Saturday services beginning October 7, 2006. The Research Room and Museum will be open each Saturday, 8:30-4:30. The Archives will remain closed on Sundays and the Research Room is closed on Mondays.

Correction in regard to an article in July 2006 PHA newsletter:

Announcement was made for the placement of a marker in the Mosely, Luckie, Supples, Tankersley cemetery on Tabernacle Road, Pintlala, AL commemorating the service of Robert D. Moseley, Revolutionary War soldier originally of South Carolina, who settled in Pintlala. Clanton Mosley asks that we inform readers that Robert Moseley is not buried in Pintlala, but rather in Edgefield County, SC (Robert D. Moseley is likely buried in an unmarked grave in the Pintlala area). Robert and Robert D. Moseley were both Revolutionary War soldiers who are not to be confused. (PHA Newsletter, V. XX, No. 3, p.3)

The Family of Joel D. Davis by Clydetta Fulmer

My great grandfather was Joel Dawson Davis. He was born on October 29, 1852, in Montgomery County, Alabama. He was the son of David Davis and Eliza Suggs Davis. Joel Davis was eight years old when his father went off to war.

I do not know any of the details of David Davis' service in the Confederate Army. I know that his twin brother, William Davis, was shot and killed and was buried in Newton, Georgia. I have only heard stories of the terrible hardships that his family suffered. David Davis did eventually return from war.

While Joel Davis was still a young man living in his father's house, one day he was out in the field plowing. A man who was riding by in a horse drawn buggy stopped and called him over to the fence and invited him to come hear a gospel sermon in a school house that night. The man was J.M. Barnes, the preacher who would deliver the sermon. With his father's permission, Joel Davis went to the meeting and later that week was baptized and gave his life to Christ.

He gave himself to the study of the scriptures. He wrote down verses of scripture on pieces of paper and carried them with him, and as he plowed he memorized the scriptures. While the mule turned at the end of the row he reviewed the verse he was learning and read a new verse which he repeated in his mind for the length of that row. When he was not working he was studying the Bible.

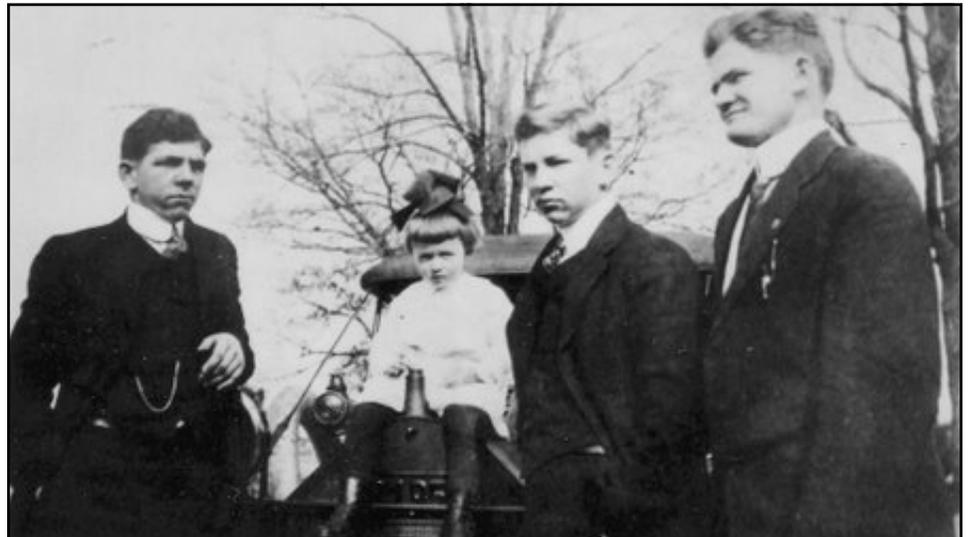
I have a small trunk in which Joel Davis packed all his worldly possessions when he left his father's house to seek his fortune. He plowed by day for others and by moonlight for himself. God blessed his labors and his careful stewardship and enabled him to buy and farm his own land.

On September 13, 1885, Joel Davis married Leona Sanderson who was the daughter of Almon and Elizabeth Stuart Sanderson. (Almon and Elizabeth Sanderson donated the land for the Tabernacle Methodist Church that is still standing beside the Federal Road in Pintlala.)

L-R: Perry Davis, Constance Renfro, Glen Davis & Frank Davis (Editor: Frank was long time mail carrier in Pintlala & Hope Hull)



Joel Dawson Davis & Leona Sanderson Davis



Joel Davis and Leona Sanderson Davis had five children. They were:

- Eunice Leona Davis Renfro (October 20, 1887- October 19, 1959)
- Ruth Davis Chesnutt (July 2, 1891- August 25, 1960)
- Joel Franklin Davis (September 15, 1895- December 7, 1963)
- Perry Almon Davis (February 24, 1898- May 28, 1972)
- Glenn David Davis (February 11, 1901- June 7, 1950)

Before moving to the Butler Mill Road, the Davis family lived in Highland Home, Alabama. The house in which they lived is still standing beside Highway 331. The Davis home was directly across the road from the Highland Home College. The site of the college is marked by a historical marker

on the grounds of the Highland Home school.



The Davis Home, 1910 & Historical Marker

Joel Davis was a farmer, a preacher, and an elder in the Highland Home Church of Christ, and a trustee in the Highland Home College.

In 1910, Guy Irving Renfro, a native of Kentucky, came to Highland Home, Alabama to teach Latin and Greek

in the Highland Home College. He was met at the train station by Joel Davis. Soon thereafter Guy Renfro met Eunice Davis. On September 13, 1911, Guy Renfro and Eunice Davis were married. They had two children. They were:

- Constance Renfro Fulmer (June 20, 1912-January 6, 2001)
- Guy Luck Renfro (October 14, 1915-August 19, 1991) (The name Luck was in honor of his paternal grandmother who was Eudora Luck Renfro.)

My grandmother, Eunice Davis Renfro, wrote the following in her history of the Butler Mill Road Church of Christ:

Because of the passing of Highland Home College in Crenshaw Co. in December 1915 Joel D. Davis decided to move back to his farm in Montgomery



Guy Irving Renfro & Eunice Davis Renfro

Co. which he had left in 1891 to give his children the advantages of scholastic and religious training at Highland Home College and church.

Early in 1916 he built a store in front of the site on which he planned to build a residence later the same year. He moved his wife and three sons, Frank, Perry, and Glenn into the store house so as to be near and better supervise the building of his house. He next built a church house and Guy Renfro and wife Eunice and their two small children, Constance and Guy Luck moved into it.

The second child of J.D. Davis, Ruth, had married E.B. Chesnutt and was living at Hope Hull at this time.

This was a busy and a trying year for every one concerned. The two families went back to Highland Home to worship until the dwellings were completed in the fall of 1916.

As soon as the two families were settled in their new homes the church was opened for worship every Sunday afternoon. It was called "Longview" and Guy I. Renfro did the preaching.

Leona Sanderson Davis wife of J. D. Davis was stricken with heart trouble in October 1916 and passed from this life March 11, 1917.



Longview Church, 1916



Joel Davis & Charlie

While the adults bore the burden of farming, the children had a different perspective. My mother, Constance Renfro Fulmer, described the scene of autumn in the 1900s here in her lesson, "Serving God in the Autumn of Life." She wrote:

"My grandfather (Joel Davis) was a colorful character. He had white hair, a short white beard and a florid complexion. He was a rather small man with a big, booming voice and a hearty laugh. He always wore a stiff, white collar and shirt, with a black bow tie. He personally supervised his large farming operation, riding horseback.

Crop gathering made fall an exciting time of the year when I was a child, because there would be a steady procession of mule drawn wagons going up the hill. The corn had to be weighed at the barn and I would get in the basket to be weighed with steelyards at least once a day. The bales of cotton were thrown out in a haphazard way on the top of the hill that my brother and I would convert to boats or islands or houses in our play. The cotton seed would be stored and we, and sometimes our cousins, would dig caves and tunnels in it



Guy L. Renfroe playing on cotton bales

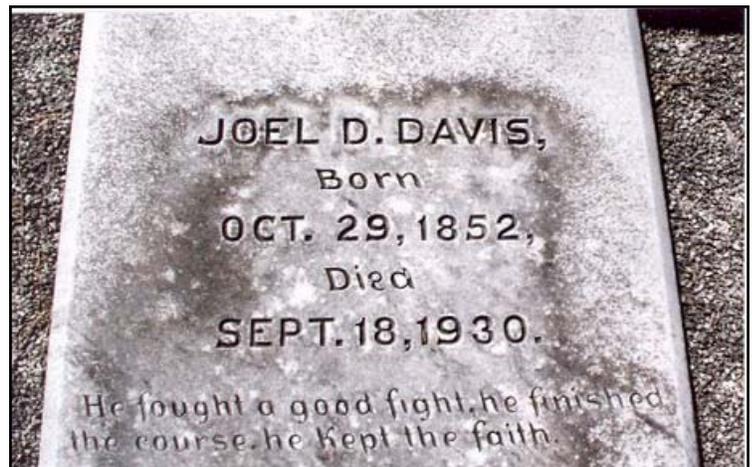
and nearly be stifled by the lint, but it was fun anyway. It was a happy carefree time for us, but it was a serious time for the tenants because it was 'settling up' for the year. My grandfather kept an accurate account book, which I now have. He would let the tenants borrow cash for the living expenses during the year, so they didn't know how they stood until the accounts were settled in the fall."

The store house my grandmother mentioned (and the place my mother said she and her brother played in the cotton seed) was located about fifty yards south of Longview. That building burned down in the late 1920s. It was being used to store cotton seed and was thought to have been ignited by internal combustion.

Joel Davis died September 18, 1930.

The Longview church building that my grandmother mentioned was later called

the Butler Mill Road Church of Christ in the 1950s. When the congregation outgrew that facility, they built a new building about one half of a mile south on the Butler Mill Road. The first meeting was held in their new building of the Butler Mill Road Church of Christ on June 13, 1954. The last meeting was held November 1, 1987, after the congregation decided to merge with sister congregations.



Joel Dawson Davis' Grave, Rocky Mount Cemetary, Highland Home, AL

The house my grandparents, Guy and Eunice Renfro, built was their home. My grand parents were known to many in this area. My grandfather, Guy Renfro, preached two Sundays a month at the Strata Church of Christ and two Sundays a month at the Industry Church of Christ near Georgiana, Alabama. He did that for more than sixty years.

My grandparents were firm believers in the value of Christian education and sent their children to David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee. While a student there my mother met Clyde Edward Fulmer who was also a student from Marietta, Ohio.

On May 15, 1935, Clyde Edward Fulmer and Constance Renfro were married.

They had three daughters who are:

- Constance Marie Fulmer
- Eunice Myrtle Fulmer who married Carroll Glenn Wells, on May 20, 1972 and they have two children:
 - Joel Dawson Wells
 - Carolee Martin Wells
- Clydetta Fulmer

My father, Clyde Fulmer, was the minister of Capitol Heights Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama for thirty-three years and University Church of Christ for ten years, and he preached throughout this area for more than forty years.

My mother's brother Guy L. Renfro met Iantha Bradford in Montgomery and they married on June 11, 1939. They had two children who are:

- Antha Renfro who married Edward Perry Taylor on June 17, 1967, and they have two sons:
 - Ethan Perry Taylor who married Karen Hinkle on May 20, 2006.
 - Logan Ryan Taylor who married MaryAnne Walters on November 8, 2004. Their twins were born on March 13, 2006. MaryAnne died on May 10, 2006. Their children are:
 - Luke Ryan Taylor
 - Melina Kathryn Taylor
- Guy Joel Renfro married Janet Brolund on September 1, 1973 and they were divorced on April 17, 2005. They have three children:
 - Lauren Elizabeth Renfro who married Dustin Overbeek on August 30, 2003
 - William Guy Renfro
 - Joel Robert Renfro

My grandmother, Eunice Davis Renfro, died October 19, 1959, and my grandfather, Guy I. Renfro died October 29, 1972.

My mother inherited the house in which she had been reared. In 1978 my father, Clyde Fulmer, suffered a disabling stroke. My mother and I cared for him in our home in Montgomery. My mother decided that she wanted to return to her home place. She had the front and back porches enclosed and added a downstairs room to the house. In 1980 my father, Clyde Fulmer, my mother, Constance Renfro Fulmer, and I moved to my mother's "Home Place." Since my father was confined to a hospital bed, we moved him here in an ambulance. We continued to care for him here. My father died peacefully in this house on March 27, 1981. My mother lived here until she passed from this life on January 6, 2001. Although she was an English teacher at Alabama Christian Academy for many years, she was known to those who drove by on the Butler Mill Road as "the lady on the tractor," because she enjoyed clearing and maintaining the land and spent so much time mowing and working outdoors. I now live in the house that my grandparents built.

The dwelling built on Butler Mill Road by Joel Davis for his family also served as a home for two future generations of Davises. It served as a residence for the family of his daughter, Ruth and her husband Edwin Bowen Chestnutt; and for the family of



Davis family home on Butler Mill Road

his grandson, Alex Davis Chesnutt and his wife Odessa Davis Chesnutt. The house is still standing but is no longer owned by Joel Davis descendants.

When the Longview building was no longer used for a church, it was used for storage and as a residence. Then it was abandoned and fell into disrepair. In 1977 my mother purchased the building and grounds from Ruth Chesnutt Coats, the daughter of Ruth Davis Chesnutt, who had inherited that property. My mother and I had the building restored to usefulness, and in 1980 I began to use it as my art studio. I continued to call it "Longview" in honor of its history. In 1991 while we were away on vacation, Longview was struck by lightning and burned. Although it was declared a total loss, my mother and I wanted to preserve its history and the part that had been salvaged by the firefighters. By 1992 Longview had been rebuilt and was being used as my studio again.

This fall is the ninetieth anniversary of the return of Joel D. Davis and his family to this area and the building of Longview and the Davis home and the house where I now reside.

Descendants of Joel Davis and Leona Sanderson Davis now live in Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Texas, and California. Their only descendants now living in the Hope Hull and Pintlala area are: Clydetta Fulmer who is the daughter of Constance Renfro Fulmer who was the daughter of Eunice Davis Renfro; Antha Renfro Taylor, the daughter of Guy Luck Renfro who was the son of Eunice Davis Renfro, and Antha's son Logan Ryan Taylor and his twin son and daughter, Luke Ryan Taylor and Melina Kathryn Taylor; and the son of Alex Chesnutt who was the son of Ruth Davis Chesnutt, William Bruce Chesnutt who married Jodi Kennington Chesnutt, and their sons Jacob Davis Chesnutt and Scott Kennington Chesnutt; and the daughter of Frank Davis, Dorothy Davis Cline who married James Lawrence Cline.

While my great grandparents and grandparents and parents have passed from this life, their influence remains. The memories of their teachings and the examples of their lives are a constant source of wisdom, strength, encouragement, and inspiration in my life.

As I write this article on September 13, 2006, I realize that today is the one hundred eleventh anniversary of the wedding of Joel D. Davis and Leona Sanderson Davis. It is the ninety-fifth anniversary of the wedding of Guy I. Renfro and Eunice Davis Renfro. I appreciate this opportunity to honor them and my parents and their legacy. I am thankful to be a part of this family and in this place.

In preparing to write this article, I visited the graves of Joel D. Davis and Leona Sanderson Davis in Rocky Mount Cemetery in Highland Home, Alabama. Carved in the gravestone of Joel Davis are the words, "He fought a good fight, he finished the course, he kept the faith." It is my fervent prayer that in the end the same may be said for every one of his descendants.

Sources:

- The unpublished history of the Butler Mill Road Church of Christ by Eunice Davis Renfro
- The unpublished family history by Eunice Davis Renfro
- The unpublished notes about our family by Constance Renfro Fulmer
- Photographs saved by Eunice Davis Renfro and Constance Fulmer
- The unpublished genealogy of the Davis Family by Milton Slauson that dates back to 1755
- The published genealogy by Rae Venable Calvert, *Richard Sanderson (1641-1718) Of North Carolina And Some Alabama Descendants*

All photographs relating to Joel Davis, courtesy of Clydetta Fulmer

Copyright Pending

Transcription of obituary for Joel Dawson Davis published in the *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 20, 1930:

Joel Dawson Davis Buried Yesterday

Last Rites For Pioneer Citizen of Montgomery County

Highland Home, Ala. Sept. 20--(Special)-- Amid friends that came from many parts of the State, and masses of flowers that banked the chancel and casket, the last rites were pronounced at Highland Home Church of Christ this morning for Joel Dawson Davis, picturesque figure of the pioneer life of this section, who died at his home at Snowdown Thursday. T. B. Thompson, pastor of the Catoma Street Church of Christ of Montgomery, conducted the services, assisted by Samuel Jordan, pastor at Highland Home, and lifelong friend of the deceased.

Mr. Davis was an elder of the Highland Home church and at times filled the pulpit in local churches, though he was never a regular pastor. Though 78 at the time of his death, up till two years ago, he was in good health, drove his own car, and went alone to fill his appointments. No more familiar figure was known to the people of the county than Mr. Davis, with snow white hair topped by a broad brimmed hat, and flowing white beard.

Always a gay greeting, no one realized that he had passed his threescore and ten. Two years ago, he began to be troubled with his heart, and since then suffered attacks at various times.

Only two weeks ago, he met J.P. Ruff, of Lapine, on the road and gave him \$2 toward the care of his lot in Rocky Mount cemetery, saying he feared he would not live much longer. In compliance with an often stated request, the body was kept two days before burial, and brought to the Highland Home church.

Mr. Davis lived at Highland Home as a farmer for many years, moving to Snowdown in 1917 to make his home. During his residence here, he was a staunch supporter of the local church and of the former Highland Home College, which was discontinued the year he moved. In that year also, he lost his wife, the former Miss Leona Sanderson. Surviving are three sons, Dr. Glenn B. Davis of Fairfield; Perry A. Davis of Snowdown, and J. Frank Davis, of Selma; two daughters, Mrs. Edwin Chestnut, of Montgomery and Mrs. Guy Renfro, of Snowdown; one sister, Mrs. Thomas E. Price, of Ebenezer, near Ramer; and one brother, J. T. Davis of Highland Home.

Serving as pallbearers were eight friends of long standing, two from each church with which he had been most closely associated. They were Dr. A. J. Jones and Prof. George S. Clarke, of the Highland Home Church; L.D. Cauthern and E. R. Barnes, of the Catoma Street Church; Dr. George Shackelford and A. R. Garrett, of Liberty Church, and Floyd Decker and A. R. Dillard, of Highland Avenue Church.



**PINTLALA HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION**

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

NEXT MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2006

2:30 P.M.

PRAIRIE PLACE PLANTATION

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