

Southwest Mississippi Genealogical Society

P. O. Box 175
McComb, MS 39649



May 2016

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One of the people we learned about on the Port Gibson Cemetery tour was Ellen 'Nelly' Drake, who went to China as a teacher and missionary for the Methodist Episcopal Church. It reminded me of a relative who aspired to be a missionary to Brazil. Anna Clara Chrisman was born December 25, 1860 at Lilore Plantation, the Thomposn family home, the daughter of Captain Thomas J. and Julia Thompson Chrisman. Her father died at Vicksburg and her maternal grandparents, John and Margaret Thompson, helped raise her and her sister Agnes. John was my great, great grandfather's brother.

Their lives centered around their church and Anna Clara developed a love for music. She started school in Wesson, Mississippi then attended Whitworth College in Brookhaven. After graduation she went on to the Memphis Conference (of the Methodist Church) Female Institute in Jackson, TN where she studied piano and graduated with 'its highest degree.' She taught piano and literature at the Huntsville Female College, Huntsville, Alabama for two years then returned to Wesson to teach at the new high school where her mother was teaching.

Aware of the need for missionaries she accepted an appointment to Piracicaba, Brazil in April 1889. On May 18, 1889 she attended the Mississippi Methodist Conference Society's annual meeting in Natchez, and twenty days later boarded a train at Beauregard bound for New Orleans. From there she took an express train to New York City where she was to catch a steamship to Brazil.

During her journey from New Orleans to New York City the train made a stop in Johnstown, Pennsylvania where passengers were served dinner about 3 PM. Shortly afterward "the passengers noticed the villagers running toward the hills, screaming and wringing their hands. The porter said, "The reservoir has burst!"

On May 31, 1889 the center section of the Conemaugh Valley Reservoir's 78-foot-high earthen dam collapsed. A 36-foot wall of water poured down the valley and through the city of Johnstown killing 2,209 people including Anna Clara Chrisman. This became known as the Great Johnstown Flood.

Her body was finally recovered 10 days later and sent home to Copiah County, and on July 16, 1889 she was buried in the Thompson family cemetery.

In 1891 her sister, Agnes G. Chrisman, wrote a book about Anna Clara titled "A Living Sacrifice, Holy, Acceptable Unto God." It's said that she probably received more nationwide newspaper coverage than anyone else.

Mississippi Magazine ran an article on her in 2010 and copies of that article and others can still be found online.

Submitted by Virginia Zeigler

ANNUAL DUES

\$15.00 Individual \$25.00 Family
Due Date: June 1, 2016

Remaining 2016 Meeting Dates

July 26 - Brock Camp
September 27
November 15 - Fall Potluck Dinner

May Meeting

May 24, 2016 at 6 PM
J. J. White Church meeting room

Monica Wilkinson of the
Pike-Walthall-Amite Library System is the
speaker.

President's Corner

..... Rick Penick

We had a great time on the field trip to Port Gibson and their annual cemetery tour 'Whispers in the Cedars.' Wintergreen Cemetery contains some of the oldest and largest cedar trees any of us had ever seen. We had eight members and one guest for the trip and stopped on the way in Lorman, MS at The Old Country Store for a late lunch. The food was good, and it is definitely a unique place to eat!

Jim Freeman's guest, Bobby Lowe, is originally from Port Gibson and arranged for us to tour the beautiful St. Joseph Catholic Church, built around 1849 and the oldest church in the city. We also toured the First Presbyterian Church which has the gilded hand with the pointed index finger for a steeple. The preacher who inspired that steeple, Zebulon Butler, was one of the characters we 'met' during the cemetery tour.

Please note that we are meeting a week earlier than usual due to a conflict in my schedule--May 24 instead of May 31.

New books in the McComb Genealogy Room

Treasure on the Trace: The French Camp Story
by Melinda Burford Livingston and Charles A. Rich

SMCC Yearbook 1978-79

History of Stratford, Connecticut, 1639-1939
By William Howard Wilcoxson

Early Connecticut Marriages
As Found on Ancient Church Records Prior to 1800
Edited by Frederic W. Bailey

History of Bradford County, Pennsylvania, 1770-1878 With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches
By Rev. David Craft

Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania By Rhamanthus M. Stocker

**Revolutionary War Period
Bible, Family, & Marriage Records
Gleaned From Pension Applications**
(We have Volumes 6 & 13 only)

Colonial Maryland Naturalizations
by Jeffrey A. Wyand

Forgotten Black Soldiers Who Served in White Regiments During the Civil War
by Juanita Patience Moss

Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records
by Charles William Manwaring

History of the Towns of New Milford and Bridgewater, Connecticut, 1703-1882
by Samuel Orcutt

Contributed by:

Monica Wilkinson
Reference Librarian/Genealogy

Pike-Amite-Walthall Library System
1022 Virginia Ave.
McComb, MS 39648

601-684-2661, Ext. 4
monica@pawls.lib.ms.us
www.mccombgenealogy.blogspot.com

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President: Rick Penick
Contact: rickpenick@hotmail.com

First Vice President: Jimmy McDaniel
Contact: jimmymcdaniel59@yahoo.com

Second Vice President/Program Co-Chairs: Betty Penick and Jim Freeman
Contact: betty0323@hotmail.com

Secretary: Carolyn Richmond
Contact: carich@bellsouth.net

Treasurer and Newsletter: Virginia Zeigler
Contact: ginyaz@bellsouth.net

Refreshments Committee Chair and Website Search Requests Contact:
Susan Boyd Contact: susanboyd1@bellsouth.net

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Term expires May 31, 2017:

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