

The Museum News

The official newsletter of the Pearl River Community College Museum Patrons' Organization

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First annual Museum Patrons' Organization meeting set

Meeting to be held Oct. 9 at Homecoming

The Museum Patrons' Organization will meet for its first annual meeting on October 9, 2004, the Museum Advisory Board announced. This first meeting will be held in the Board of Trustees room of the Olivia Bender Cafeteria immediately following the annual Alumni Association's luncheon. The October 9 date was chosen because many of the museum patrons are involved with or plan to attend the Homecoming festivities. "This will mean that some of our out of state patrons will be able to attend," said Ronn Hague, museum director.

The Museum Patrons' Organization was established in October 2003. Since that time the museum has received more than \$14,000 in funding and has gained more than 60 patrons. Prior to the organization's founding the museum was supported only by occasional contributions and several faculty who had monthly contributions deducted.

At the meeting, the patrons will vote on important issues and conduct the museum's business. The Museum Advisory Board, the governing arm of the patrons' organization will be elected during this meeting. This board is composed of 2 members from each county and 5 at large members. A nominating committee will provide a list of eligible members at the meeting. A state of the museum report will also be given.

2004-2005 Budget Approved by MAB

The Museum Advisory Board approved the 2004-2005 budget at a meeting held August 27. The \$5,000 budget is the museum's first. The approved budget included:

Office/Postage/Mailings	
Postage - \$200.00	
Office Materials and Supplies - \$200.00	
The Museum News - \$250.00	
	Total \$650.00
Preservation and Conservation	
Preservation and Conservation Supplies - \$2000	
	Total \$2000.00
Maintenance and Cleaning Supplies	
Replacement bulbs and lighting - \$500	
Carpet Cleaning and Misc. Cleaning \$500	
	Total \$1000.00
Promotional	
Travel \$100	
Promotional Materials \$500	
Subscriptions/Dues (to other organizations) \$200	
Patrons' Organization supplies, meals, etc. \$500	
Fund raising \$500	
	Total \$1800.00
Miscellaneous	
Miscellaneous or unbudgeted expenses - \$650	
	Total \$650
FY 2004-2005 Budget Total - \$5,000.00	

Museum Mission and Purpose Statement Adopted

The Museum Advisory Board adopted the museum's Mission and Purpose statement during their quarterly meeting on August 27. These statements were drafted at Department of Archives and History State Field Curator, Cindy Gardner's recommendation. These documents state the museum's intent and make the institution eligible for grant application.

Mission Statement

The Pearl River Community College Museum is a repository for historical artifacts that reflect the history and legacy of Mississippi's oldest public two-year institution of higher education and the six-county area that provides financial support for its operation: Forrest, Hancock, Jefferson Davis, Lamar, Marion and Pearl River counties. The mission of the Museum is dedicated to the discovery, preservation and interpretation of materials and memorabilia related to the institution's history and the lower Pearl River valley, which it serves. The Museum seeks to provide the institution's students, employees, alumni and the general public with factual information regarding the unique history of Pearl River Community College and the history of the supporting district.

Statement of Purpose

- To provide a suitable environment for preservation and displaying of artifacts owned by or loaned to the museum.
- To record responsibly all objects donated to or loaned to the museum.
- To exhibit artifacts in such a manner as accurately to chronicle the history of Pearl River Community College and the six-county district the college serves.
- To educate the public through exhibits, the media, and any other means at its disposal.
- To conduct interviews and do research and discover the history of Pearl River County Agricultural High School, Pearl River County Agricultural High School and Junior College, Pearl River Junior College, Pearl River Community College, and the six counties that make up the Pearl River Community College district.
- To work with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, state and local historical societies, and local governments to preserve the historical records and artifacts of Pearl River Community College and its six-county district.

Telephone installed in Museum

If an organization's validity is measured by whether or not it has a telephone, then the Pearl River Community College Museum has attained validation. The museum now has a phone located in the Reading Room in the rear of the museum. The new number is 601-403-1169. If you need to contact the museum, you may also call Ronn Hague at 601-403-1316.

Pearl River College:

Little Known Facts and Information

(This excerpt was taken from "The Pearl River College Story")

By 1915, the state's Department of Education was headed by a man of unparalleled vision, W. H. Smith. Smith looked at the need to provide a high school education to Mississippi's rural children and began formulating a plan of action.

Smith began his work as a school superintendent in Holmes County, Mississippi where he organized a corn club in 1907. Although several other states are credited with starting clubs as early as 1902, Mississippi was the first to receive federal funds from the U. S. Department of Agriculture to support boys' corn clubs and girls' tomato-canning clubs (the forerunner of the 4-H Clubs). When he became the State Superintendent of Education, he sought to provide the same education for the rural school children as the state's municipalities were providing for the children living within their city limits.

Mississippi, largely a rural state, had a system that consisted of one-room schoolhouses. These rude schools were usually taught by teachers with little more education than their pupils. The rural school term ran from four to six months each year, and only took the students as far as the eighth grade. Most schools did little more than teach the students how to read and write and do basic mathematics. School consolidation had been tried elsewhere and proved successful in some cases. The question of the day was, would it work in the rural schools in Mississippi.

Supporters of consolidation felt that a child's experience in education would be better served if there were more children to provide competition. The larger classes would also allow better trained teachers to be provided. The opponents of consolidation felt that the locally available one-room school was better able to serve remote rural families. At the turn of the century, travel was not easily accomplished. As road conditions improved, the possibilities for consolidation improved as well.

Consolidation efforts in Pearl River County began around 1911 when several schools were consolidated. At the beginning of that year there were no fewer than 86 one-room schools in the county. By 1916 the 23 consolidated schools replaced all but two one-room schools. Of those 23 consolidated schools, most were brick structures.

Smith conceived the idea of a model county school program and presented it to the Spring session of the Southern Education Board held in Chattanooga that year. He proposed that they select a county in some southern state whose schools could be conducted on the model plan, which would be watched by educators in the south as a model. Members of the General Education Board, an educational funding arm of the Rockefeller Foundation, were in attendance at the session, and upon hearing the program, immediately offered funding for the model school program, suggesting it be tried in Mississippi. The conditions imposed on Smith was that the county would offer matching funds and show the best spirit of school development, measured by the progress already made. Smith fielded his idea among Mississippi's counties. ("Rockefeller Helps Mississippi With School Experiment." *Montgomery Advertiser*. January 16, 1916.)

When Pearl River County heard about the model county program, they were enthusiastic. Having already consolidated most of the county's one-room schoolhouses into larger schools, the county people were already geared toward educational innovation.

A mass meeting was held on July 7, 1915 to announce the program. C.E. Bass, county Superintendent of Education explained the school plan and committees were appointed to plan a political and educational rally to be held in ten days. ("Pearl River Seeks Rockefeller School." *Free Press*. July 8, 1915.)

The *Free Press* reported on the meeting in the next paper, stating, "Although one of the weakest counties in the state financially, Pearl River has for several years enjoyed the distinction of being a leader in educational work, having more consolidated schools and a better

The people of Pearl River County were united in their resolve, feeling they deserved the model county because of the inroads into educational excellence they had already made. They were not alone

in their feelings, either. W. T. McGowin, an official from Washington felt likewise. In an open letter to county superintendent, Bass, McGowin said,

"I have just completed a tour of the South, feeling its educational pulse and making a personal examination of each State as to its activity along practical, progressive, scientific and educational lines. In making my report to the Department, I am compelled to concede to Mississippi and Pearl River County the position of front rank; a position of which not only you, as County Supt. but all the people of Pearl River County and of Mississippi at large can well afford to be proud. . . Now the only thing, to which I can attribute this forward movement on the part of your people is the up-to-dateness of your school system. . ."

At the end of September, State Superintendent of Education Smith traveled to New York to meet with the general education board and the Rockefeller Foundation concerning the program. (Smith Goes To Hear Of School." *Free Press*. September 30, 1915.) By the end of October, Smith published the qualifications for the model county program as agreed upon during his visit to New York. The qualifications included: the county must have an agricultural high school, which would be made the chief school in the county; must have a common meeting place for all county organizations; must serve the adult population as well as the student population; must have a place where all ages could get together for short courses under the leadership of competent instructors in all phases of farm and home life. He explained that the county superintendent would be the CEO and would be provided with an assistant. Also, the county agricultural commissioner (equivalent to the county extension agent) and home economic agent would have headquarters in and be members of the faculty of the school. Smith also announced that he was ready to begin the selection process. ("Furnishes Basis for Final Action on Model County." *Free Press*. October 28, 1915.)

The commission was held at the home of the state's chief educational officer, and was comprised of Smith, J.T. Calhoun, the state's rural school supervisor; Dr. W. S. Leathers, University of Mississippi; J. C. Fant, State Supervisor of High Schools; Susie V. Powell, state head of extension work for women; and R. S. Wilson, state farm demonstration agent.

The commission went on for the better part of the day and into the night. Several counties were represented during the selection process. Represented were: Panola County, Tate County, Forrest County, Clay County, Lauderdale County, Harrison County (represented by J. A. Huff), Pearl River County (represented by Will Jacobs), Holmes County, Madison County, and Jones County.

At the end of the long day, Pearl River County came out the victor, and was selected the Model School County. ("Pearl River Selected Model School County in Mississippi." *Free Press*. November 18, 1915.)

It was hinted in the *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* editorial that Pearl River won the selection because its native son was Mississippi's new Governor Elect, Theo Bilbo. They did not know of the numerous visits by educational dignitaries, including the top U.S. educational official and how each visitor had opined the county's educational quality and how well the people, individually and collectively, believe in education and they have always co-operated with the authorities in every movement for educational advancement." Even if they had known, it would have made little difference, since they had a political axe to grind, and they were adept at grinding axes. ("A Merited Honor." *Free Press*. November 18, 1915.)

The Model School County plans were explained at a mass meeting at the courthouse on a cold January day with more than 1200 Pearl River County residents in attendance. State Superintendent

of Education, Smith, explained the program to the citizens. (Hear Model County Plans Explained." *Free Press*. January 6, 1916.) For the summer, a session was planned which would include two weeks dedicated to boys and girls involved in the clubs and four weeks dedicated to teaching farming methods to adult men and home economics to adult women. ("Teacher's Course at A.H.S." *Free Press*. March 9, 1916.)

Editor's Note:

Because of the incredible resourcefulness of the county's citizens, Pearl River County became the acknowledged leader among Mississippi counties in regard to education. Outside educators were often visiting the county's schools, especially the county's agricultural high school. Visitors included William Buttrick, the Secretary of the Rockefeller Foundation's General Education Board; Burton W. Currie, with the "Country Gentleman," the sister publication to the "Saturday Evening Post"; and Dr. P. P. Claxton, the United States Commissioner of Education (a post similar to the current Secretary of Education).

At the end of the Model School County program and after earning numerous accolades from educators and administrators, including several feature stories in national publications, Pearl River County Agricultural High School again set the standard for Mississippi education by adding freshman college classes to the curriculum. In 1921, six of the high school's graduates were admitted to the first college class held at an agricultural high school in the state. Setting the precedence, Superintendent Huff and Board President, C. E. Bass, went with former governor Bilbo (he was between gubernatorial terms) to Jackson to speak with the State Board of Education concerning the Junior College bill. This bill became law in 1922 making Mississippi the first state in the nation to pass such a law. The Board of Trustees immediately voted to add sophomore classes to the school's curriculum, but this would not take place until the 1925-26 school year.

Director's Corner

In June, we were fortunate to have a member of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History pay us a visit. Cindy Gardner, State Field Curator, did an assessment of the museum. Her findings reflected the work that we need to do in order to bring the museum up to standard.

Ms. Gardner was very complementary of the work already done, with just a few exceptions. In her report, she recommended a stringent conservation program to preserve the artifacts that we have in our possession. This program included the preservation of paper documents with a de-acidification coating on those highly acidic papers and the encapsulation of all papers in a mylar case. Since that time, we have been working toward treating and enclosing all our papers.

She also recommended a comprehensive program of recording all our artifacts. We had been recording our accessions, but not in the detail that is required. We have begun upgrading our methods to meet standards. In the accession process Ms. Gardner also recommended that we require a deed of gift be signed by the donor. This is to protect the wishes of the donor.

Pearl River Community College Museum is now a member of the American Association of Museums, the American Association of State and Local History and the Mississippi Museum Association. The reason we sought membership in these organizations was largely to give our museum credibility in seeking grant funding. We are now receiving some very enlightening publications and technical papers from these organizations and are eligible to attend workshops and clinics.

Although we will not be able to unveil our remodel (as we had hoped), we will be introducing some other changes for the enjoyment of our patrons and guests at Homecoming on October 9, 2004. These will include: New drapes in the lobby, new lighting in

the media room and the lobby, a new exhibit on the south wing of the main exhibit hall. We will also give our patrons access to the new Reading Room during Homecoming.

Speaking of the Reading Room, we now have more than 30 years of press releases bound and displayed in the room. Also, we have excerpts from the Poplarville Free Press, the city's second newspaper. These are copies of newspaper articles about the early history of the town along with articles about the school. These are also bound into journals and date from 1892 until 1929. Also in the reading room, the interested can find newspaper clippings, past catalogs and football programs as well as six volumes of photos from various eras.

Artifact donation and new patrons membership has waned over the summer, but I believe that as school begins again and we have more activities that involve alumni, we will see interest go up. Work on the history of Pearl River College is progressing nicely. We are including an excerpt in this publication for your enlightenment. Over the months I've spent researching this history, I've discovered many new interesting things about our school's history, and with each new find, I've been encouraged in the fact that Pearl River truly is an important part of the history of education in America. I have seen this school set the stage for change, influencing our state and nation.

Please remember that I am always available to discuss our college's history as well as the history of our district counties, and my office is always open to you.

As always, we are interested in obtaining artifacts from our college's past. We welcome your contributions, both financial and articles for the museum.

Artifacts contributed this quarter

Even though contributions were lower this quarter, we did receive a number of interesting additions to our museum:

2001 *Wildcat's Roar* football program, September *RiverSide* magazine, 2001-02 *President's Report*, 2000-01 *President's Report*, March 2002 *RiverSide* magazine, all donated by the Office of Public Relations; 1944-45 PRJC and HS catalog, donated by Mrs. Billie Smith; *The Magic River*, first through seventh Editions, donated by the Office of Public Relations; 1923 PRC AHS graduation program, 1923 PRC AHS commencement announcement, 1921 PRC AHS graduation program, 1925 PRC AHS graduation announcement, 1936 PRC graduation program, 1925 freshman chapel program, "Friends", numerous photos, programs and souvenirs dating from first two decades of the twentieth century donated by Martha Willoughby; Commodore 64 (c.1980) computer donated by Charles Jordan; 2003 State and Region 23 Championship soccer uniform autographed by the players, "Day at the Capitol" plaque honoring PRCC coaches for their unprecedented win of four state championships in one year, designed by Mitch Deaver, photocopy of House Resolution #8 honoring PRCC for their win of four state championships in one year, 2003 State Championship football jersey autographed by the players, 2004 State Championship basketball jersey (men's) autographed by the players, 2004 State Championship baseball jersey autographed by the players, 2003 State Championship soccer game ball autographed by the players, football autographed by the 2003 State Championship Football team, baseball autographed by the 2004 State Championship baseball team, plaque honoring the 2003 State Football Champions, commemorative magazine honoring the 2003 State Football Champions, plaque honoring the 2004 State Baseball Champions, all donated by the PRCC Athletic Department; 2003-2004 t-shirt commemorating the

(see **Artifacts** - page 4)

If you have information you would like to share for this news letter, or if you have a particular question you would like for us to research - call Ronn Hague at 601-403-1316.

Welcome to New Members

We want to welcome the following members new members to the Museum Patrons' Organization: Dr. George Leggett, Peggie Jo Daniels, and W. Robin Schlaudt, Jr. Our Patrons' Organization continues to grow. Membership dues are \$25 per year and the dues go toward funding the Museum.

Artifacts (continued from page 3)

winning of four state championships in one school year; 1975-76 cheerleader's uniform worn by Jeanne Daniels Williamson, donated by Peggy Daniels, newspaper clipping from the Nov. 8, 1949 edition of the *Cadet*, Oct. 20, 1956 edition of the *Dixie Drawl*, Oct. 24, 1947 Football program, Oct. 1, 1949 football program, Nov. 5, 1949 football program, Dec. 15, 1949 newspaper clipping from *Picayune Item*, photocopy of charter night Rotary Club program dated March 25, 1926, Original photo of the first building (c. 1909), 1917 PRC AHS Junior Girls Cookbook, 1909 (first) PRC AHS catalog, all donated by the PRCC Alumni Association and Development Foundation; 1936 PRC AHS class ring donated by Shirley Riley; Portrait of Heber Ladner donated by Alex and Webster Ladner; 2 Heber Ladner photos donated by Kathryn Moody; May 12, 1987 edition of the *Dixie Drawl*, Inauguration Address donated by Dr. Ted J. Alexander; Wendell Magee Baseball Card collection donated by Chuck Underwood; double sided, mounted photo of the 2003 State Championship football team, 1974-75 *'Cat Country Guide*, 1993-94 *'Cat Country Guide*, 1989-91 PRCC catalog donated by the Office of Public Relations.

The Museum News is a publication of the **Pearl River Community College Museum Patrons' Organization**. If you wish to receive a subscription to this publication, you must be a member of the Museum Patrons' Organization. Membership dues are \$25 annually. For more information, call Ronn Hague at (601) 403-1316.

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