

The Museum News

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

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Annual Meeting Edition

This edition of The Museum News is the annual meeting edition. In this edition you will find the State of the Museum report, The proposed Budget for 2006-2007, The Museum Advisory Board's nominees and the Director's nominees for the 2006-2007 Museum Advisory Board, and other important information. Please read through all report information carefully. If you have any questions or suggestions, contact Ronn Hague, Museum Director, at 601-403-1316.

Proposed Budget for Pearl River Community College Museum 2006-07

OfficeSupplies/Postage Mailings

Postage	200	
Office Materials and Supplies	200	
The Museum Newsletter (Printing and Mailing)	250	
		\$650.00

Construction/Exhibits

Building Materials and Exhibit Materials	1,000	
		\$1,000.00

Preservation and Conservation

Preservation and Conservation Supplies	2,000	
		\$2,000.00

Maintenance and Cleaning Supplies

Replacement bulbs and lighting	200	
Carpet Cleaning and Misc. Cleaning	300	
		\$500.00

Promotional

Travel	300	
Promotional Materials	200	
Dues (AAM, AASLH, MMA)	300	
Patrons' Organization Supplies	50	
		\$850.00

Total FY 2006-2007 Budget **\$5,000.00**

PRCAHS' Oldest Known Alumnus

Pearl River County Agricultural High School (PRCAHS) was the college's educational forerunner. The Pearl River County School Board first met in June of 1908 to discuss utilizing the newly passed State legislation, the agricultural high school law, to form an agricultural high school for the county's school children. One of the county's children, born two years earlier, would take advantage of the AHS as the school was known locally. Lena Mae Stewart (who would later marry Charles Ferrill Amacker from Bogalusa) began her tenth grade at PRCAHS in 1923. Mrs. Amacker's story is featured in **Little Known Facts** on Page 2.

The story is taken from a recent telephone interview with Mrs. Amacker, now 100. Mrs. Amacker resides with her daughter, Mary Anne Amacker Hammond, in Phoenix, AZ. Mary Anne is also an alumnus of PRCAHS.

2005-2006 State of the Museum Report

During the 2005-2006 year, we have seen much progress in the museum in spite of the setbacks caused by Hurricane Katrina. During the year we were awarded the prestigious Certificate of Proficiency from the American Association for State and Local History for the documentary, "The Pearl River College Story." We also received the Institute of Museum and Library Services Conservation Assessment Program. This program will provide a conservationist and a preservationist to examine our collection and to examine the building and the environment in the museum. This program represents more than \$6,000 in funding. The reports these professionals write will be used to seek further funding to address the problems they find.

In the spring (2006) the museum co-sponsored "Space Day at Pearl River Community College." The museum featured a new permanent Stennis Space Center Exhibit, and the Stennis team brought in a moon rock for the day. Hundreds of district school students filed in to see the exhibit and visit the museum. The new exhibit was the result of partnering with the Stennis Visitor's Center. The new exhibit features a wall mural more than twenty-five feet in length and a scale mockup of the Space Shuttle (not yet on exhibit). Also during the spring semester, the museum saw more than 500 visitors, including the Poplarville Rotary Club and campus history classes.

(See **State** on Page 4)

Museum to celebrate 5-year anniversary

Homecoming will mark Pearl River Community College Museum's fifth year in operation. The state's only community college museum and the only college-run museum south of Jackson will open its doors to the public at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 21 to help begin homecoming festivities. The museum will close at 11 a.m. for the Alumni Banquet and Annual Meeting but will open again after the noon event (about 1:30) and remain open until game time at 2:30 p.m.

"It's hard to believe that we've been in operation five years," said Ronn Hague, Museum Director. Hague brought the need for a museum to the previous administration's attention. He was given the south office in the south wing of Hancock Hall to store artifacts. "It wasn't until Dr. Lewis became President, that we actually opened," Hague added.

In fact, it was a little over a year before the fledgling museum would open its door to visitors. The event took place at Homecoming 2001 with a crowd estimated at more than 50 visitors. The following year, the museum had to take the north office of the wing. At Homecoming 2003 the museum moved into the old band hall section of the wing. "We now occupy the entire south wing of Hancock Hall," Hague said.

The museum opens regularly from 9 to 11 a.m. and from 1 to 4 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

In this issue: PRC - Little Known Facts, page 2; MAB meets; Voting Procedures, page 3; Museum receives artifacts, page 4

Pearl River College: Little Known Facts and Information

(This article is a result of research and interviews done for *100 Years of Educational Excellence: The Pearl River College Story*)

Lena Mae Stewart Amacker: PRCAHS Class of '26

Lena Mae Stewart Amacker was born in Pearl River County in 1906. That was the same year Poplarville decided to found a college and then lost it within one month. The citizens of Poplarville voted in a town meeting to raise the money necessary to construct a three story college building close to the high school (where the present-day grammar school is located) by raising \$15,000 of the \$20,000 necessary to build the new college building. They would have used the high school's dormitories for the college dorms, (the two buildings were owned by a private Poplarville company). That was before the fire that destroyed both dorms, Poplarville's Power and Light plant and the Methodist Church building all in one night. What makes this significant to the story is that Poplarville, all set to begin a college, lost it to Hattiesburg (South Mississippi College burned in 1910 and was re-founded and eventually became William Carey University.) When the opportunity to found a new agricultural high school arose, the citizens of the town jumped at the chance. That was two years later. By 1909, the school was open and doing well, then the agricultural high school law was declared unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court. Amacker was three the year that happened.



Lena Mae Stewart Amacker on her 100th birthday.

Undaunted, the citizens of Poplarville, still burning from the loss of their college to rival town Hattiesburg, put up the money necessary to fund the new school until such time as a new agricultural high school law could be passed by the State Legislature.

By the time Amacker began school a few years later, the new agricultural high school (called the AHS by the locals) was already beginning to garner national attention as the centerpiece of Pearl River County's consolidation efforts.

Amacker, was the eighth of ten children born to Mary Ann Pearson and George Bruner Stewart at their home in Caesar community about eight miles east of Carriere. Her older siblings attended the AHS in Poplarville, boarding there during the school term. Several of her brothers were on the football teams coached by the likes of "Daddy" Huff, "Goat" Hale, and "Rat" Stuart.

Amacker attended grammar school at the Milton Line School. This was a school on the Pearl River and Hancock county line. She missed two years of school. The first year was due to having the German Measles and Red Measles at the same time. She said that the doctor could smell both kinds of measles in the room and knew she had both. After she got over the measles, she took pneumonia and her parents kept her at home because the days were rainy and damp. That was in 1917. In 1918, the Spanish flu hit, and people were afraid to allow their children to venture from their homes. The school was all but closed during that year since the parents were reluctant to have their children around other children to catch the killer influenza.

By the time Amacker finished the ninth grade, she was ready to go off to school in Poplarville. She came to PRCAHS in 1923. James A. Huff was the superintendent. The school had, just two years earlier, begun the experiment of adding freshman college classes to the curriculum.

Amacker remembers her time at the AHS. She remembers the royal blue dress (uniform) she had to wear. She remembers having to get up early enough to be dressed for breakfast at 7 a.m. every day. She also remembers how the students would make the comment that the cooks had a "chicken walk through the gravy with boots on" for its flavor. She told of the "Taylor made" biscuits (the cook was a Mr. Taylor), and how she and three of her friends would each put half a pat of the butter on their biscuits and then jam a saucer with the remaining butter under the table, saving it for the noon meal's cornbread.

Amacker said that during her last two years, she got a job sweeping the halls in her dormitory (Batson Hall) to help on her room and board. The boys and girls were not allowed much interaction. Sometimes Amacker would rollerskate with her friends on the paved sidewalks next to their dorm (they were not allowed near the boys' dorm). There were very few activities in town other than church and the occasional program held in the grammar school auditorium. Even the graduations were held in the grammar school auditorium, because the AHS did not have an auditorium large enough. (This was before Moody Hall was built in the spring and summer of 1926.) The Literary Club occasionally held debates, which Amacker would attend.

Discipline for the girls was grounding, but for the boys, it was often served by Superintendent Huff's belt. In the early years, when Amacker's older siblings were attending school, the boys who misbehaved often found themselves out on the school's grounds digging up pine stumps left over from the days when the campus was an old growth long-leaf pine forest.

Amacker remembers her teachers. Evidently she admired them, since she would later become a school teacher in Pearl River County. Miss Dixie Pigott (who later married Amacker's Chemistry professor, Joseph Ford) taught her home economics. Miss Ferris (daughter of the Experiment Station head and PRCAHS's original board of trustees member, Eugene B. Ferris) taught her English, Mr. J. C. Hardin was her Plane Geometry instructor, Mr. Hillman taught her Geometry, and Rev. (Dr.) J. P. Culpepper was her history professor. Rev. Culpepper also pastored First Baptist Churches in Poplarville and Picayune and the Baptist (now Union Baptist) Church in Caesar.

When asked what the times were like when she was a student at PRCAHS, Amacker responded: "My rural home had no electricity or telephone, but Poplarville did have electricity and telephones. My family had a car, but there were very few cars. We walked in groups to town to shop, to church and to the grammar school for any big programs..." She also said, "...the railroad came to Poplarville in 1883 and thus started the big lumber industry, which perked up the economy. Main Street was gravel with a big horse watering trough in the middle of the street in front of the Masonic Lodge. Archie and Allen Rawls had a general store and Mr. McCoy had a shoe store. Dr. Arledge was the dentist I went to. Rev. J. P. Culpepper's brother, C. C. Culpepper had a business in town. C. C.'s son, Cecil was in class with me."

Amacker was James Pascal ("Poplar Jim") Smith's great-granddaughter. When asked about how Poplarville got its name, she told how Jim Smith, one of many Jim Smiths in the county, lived by Poplar Springs Creek, so named because of the many poplar trees at the springhead. Early settlers, she explained, built near water or had to dig down to the water table and put in a well. "Poplar Jim" homesteaded at the south end of what is now Main Street, across from where the Sunflower store now stands. After the railroad came, he moved further south (where the Land Bank now stands) because he was afraid the trains would kill his chickens and livestock. When the population of the community grew, he established a general store, and because the residents had no post office, Jim's daughter-in-law's brother, Peter John Harvey, who ran the store, wrote the Postmaster General requesting a post office be established in the community. The post office needed a name, so Harvey suggested Jim Smith's nickname, stating that

the man was well-loved by the whole community, and the town became Poplarville.

After Amacker graduated from Pearl River County Agricultural High School in May of 1926, she packed her bags for college, where she attended Mississippi Women's College (now William Carey University) in Hattiesburg. She graduated with a degree in chemistry and a minor in mathematics in 1929.

Amacker first taught junior high English in Nicholson, just south of Picayune, for one year, then she took a position teaching junior high mathematics at Steep Hollow Consolidated School, eight miles to the southeast of Poplarville. She stayed there a year also. After meeting her husband, Charles Ferrill Amacker, a Bogalusa oral surgeon, Amacker quit teaching.

The couple had two children, a daughter, Mary Anne Amacker Hammond, and a son, Charles, Jr. (deceased). Both attended PRC AHS and Pearl River Junior College. In 1945, Charles, Sr. retired due to Parkinson's disease. The family moved to White Sand, then in 1948, they moved to Poplarville into a house where the Baptist Church Amacker attended as a student at the AHS had been located before it burned in 1930. When Charles, Sr. died in 1960, Amacker returned to teaching. She taught mathematics at Pearl River Central (Carriere) for four years.

Amacker became interested in genealogy and authored six books on her family, including one about Poplarville's founder and namesake, "Poplar" Jim Smith. She also co-authored *Educable Children of Pearl River County in 1896*, a book which serves genealogists as a substitute for the missing 1890 census.

Amacker recently turned 100. That has slowed her but a little. She currently lives with her daughter in Phoenix, Ariz.

MAB meets; voting procedures

At the September Museum Advisory Board meeting, the board nominated Pat Riley, Alex Ladner, Peggy Ladner and Earlora Holden to replace the members rotating off. The director also nominates Mr. Stephen Black, PRCC history instructor. These five names will appear as nominees on the annual meeting ballot. In order to vote, please check beside the name of the nominee you wish to vote for, or write in the name of a Patron member you wish to vote for. Each member may vote for a total of four.

Under the budget section, you will only have two choices. One for "Yes, I approve of the budget as printed," or "No, I do not

approve of the budget as printed." The FY 2006-2007 Budget is located on the front page.

If you and your spouse are both members, vote in both check boxes. If you are the only member in your household, use only one check box per choice.

When you have finished voting, place the ballot in the self-addressed, stamped envelope and place it in the mail. If you are not a member in good standing, you will not receive the voting package.

If you are a member in good standing, and you did not receive a voting package, please call Ronn Hague at 601-403-1316, or email him at rhague@prcc.edu

Eligible Museum Patrons list

Listed below are Museum Patrons' Organization (MPO) members who are eligible to serve on the Museum Advisory Board. Those with an asterisk by their name live out of state or out of the district. The MAB meets once per quarter and the nominee would need to be able to travel to board meetings. Meetings are called by the director and a letter is sent to each MAB member at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Those eligible Patron members are: Stephen Black, Bob or Bonnie Boyce, Jane Marshall Brister*, Helen Buel, Verlene Cole, Dr. or Mrs. B. H. Daughdrill*, Dr. Wellington or Mrs. Dora Estey*, Hattie B. Gentry, John W. Hall* (currently living in Poplarville), Dr. or Mrs. Travis J. Harrison* (New Orleans), Dr. or Mrs. Thomas E. Holden*, Alex Ladner, Peggy Ladner, Webster Ladner, Carole or Daniel Lund* (Mandeville, LA), Dr. James Moore, Ann or Herbert Morris, Lewis or Fran Murray, Brig. Gen. John H. Napier, III*, Mr. or Mrs. W. C. Pahlman, P. W. Polk, Ralph P. (Pat) Riley, W. Robin Schlaudt*, Delores P. Schultz* (Covington, LA), Ann Shirtz*, James P. Walsh, Lampton or Suzy Williams, Linda L. Foster*, Adam Grimsley, John D. Broome*, Margaret Smith, Robert A. Southerland, and Martha Willoughby.

If you would like to vote for someone other than those nominated by the MAB or the Director, please use this list of eligible members. (Those already serving on the board are not listed.)

Remember, if you choose to vote by writing in a member's name, you should choose someone from Hancock or Pearl River county to represent those specific vacancies. If you need further information, call Ronn Hague at 601-403-1316.

The Pearl River Community College Museum depends solely on contributions for new exhibits, improvements, and preservation supplies. We have no other funding source except you. Make your contribution to the museum today! Cut out this form and send it with a check payable to the PRCC Development Foundation (write "museum" in the for space on your check).

I would like to contribute \$_____ to (check one)

Historical Marker for the College

General Fund

Holden Exhibit Fund

I would like to purchase ___ DVD(s) "The Pearl River College Story" (\$25 each), winner of the AASLH Certificate of Commendation

I would like to become a member or renew my membership. (\$25 per year single membership, \$35 per year for 2 members of the same household.)

Please fill in the following information:

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Ph. _____ - _____ - _____

Alumni? Yes No Years attended _____ to _____

Please allow 2 weeks delivery for items ordered. Please include \$3 for postage. Mail this order/donation to:

*Pearl River Community College Museum
101 Highway 11 North
Poplarville, MS 39470
visit us at www.prcc.edu/museum/*

Have an article of clothing, a catalog, photos, or other memorabilia you would like to share? The PRCC Museum is always looking for items of interest from the past. Call 601-403-1316.

Museum receives historical instruments from Mathematics-Science

During the last week of the spring semester, the museum received 10 cases of teaching aids from the Department of Science, Mathematics and Business. The cases contained teaching aids and instruments dating back to 1911, according to Ronn Hague, Museum Director.

"We were pleasantly surprised to receive a number of microscopes," Hague said. "The oldest was patented in 1907, and we believe it was the first microscope purchased by PRCAS." The microscope, according to Hague, was a rare Bosch and Lomb projection instrument. He contacted an expert in Bosch and Lomb microscopes on the Internet, who confirmed Hague's suspicions. Although the carbide projection lamp was not located, the microscope represents a very early example of a teaching microscope.



Bausch & Lomb Model 416 projection teaching microscope

Also included in the donation were physics lab demonstration equipment and teaching aids, ranging from fuses and World War II radio tubes to glass enclosed scales for preparing chemical mixtures.

All of the items were accessioned, inventoried, tagged and prepared for exhibition. The museum hopes to have the items exhibited by the first of the year.

"We are fortunate that these items have been so well preserved," Hague said. "Many items have been discarded without concern for their historical significance." The donated artifacts were stored in glass fronted cases, and were in very good shape. This collection represents the largest artifact donation to date.

Did you miss an issue of *The Museum News*?

You can find back issues on the PRCC web site at:
<http://www.prcc.edu/museum/news.html>

State (continued from page 1)

The summer schedule saw a massive inventory in the museum. This inventory listed, marked and cataloged every item of every collection in the museum. The museum inventory grew from 23 pages to more than 58 pages, with more than 1,000 items. This work was done in preparation for the conservationist visit in November.

The welding class built frames for six new exhibits during the Spring 2006 semester. These frames will be finished out and the exhibits will be ready shortly after Homecoming.

During the past year, contributions have been steady, but, as always, we could use more members in the Museum Patrons' Organization. We currently have approximately sixty members. A membership drive will be undertaken during the 2006-2007 year.

Financial Report

Donations for the year were \$10,547 in the Development Foundation *Museum General Fund* with \$4,148 in expenditures, leaving a balance of \$6,360. Donations for the *Dobie Holden Exhibit Fund* were \$3,375 with no expenditures and a balance of \$11,095. The *Brownstone Museum Fund* saw \$2,341 in expenditures, leaving a balance of \$2,645.

The total of all unrestricted funds is \$11,095. The total of all funds (including the *Dobie Holden Exhibit Fund*) is \$20,100.

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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