

NEWS

History classes use museum as source

POPLARVILLE - Stephen Black, PRCC history instructor, began introducing his students to PRCC's history through a "for credit" visit to the college's museum in Hancock Hall last year. His follow-up of the students' impression was quite impressive, so he repeated the program again this year. To date, more than 75 students have taken advantage of this semester's program and have learned some important facts about PRCC's history, such as: Mississippi passed the first agricultural high school bill in 1908; Pearl River County Agricultural High School first began classes on Sept. 8, 1909; the school's Board of Trustees voted to add freshman college courses to the PRCAS curriculum in 1920; the ROTC program was begun in 1935, changing the look and feel of the campus and changing the everyday life of stu-

dents on campus. Students have been most favorable in their comments to museum staff. Black echoes their response. "It's a good opportunity for the students to experience the museum," Black said. Black became involved with the museum through a viewing of the DVD, "The Pearl River College Story," which is part of faculty orientation each year. Since that time, Black, a museum patron, added the museum visit to his history class. "It allows them to experience the school's past traditions," he added. This year, Black is joined by fellow instructor Jim Walsh. Walsh's classes began visiting the museum in November. Black said that between the two classes "we should have close to 200 students participate." He plans to make this an ongoing part of his history classes.



Pearl River Community College students, from left, Justin Harding of Picayune, Mary Mayzak of Pearlinton and Ashley Gipson of Bay St. Louis look over materials in the PRCC Museum as part of their history class assignment.

Museum receives grant

POPLARVILLE - Pearl River Community College Museum is the recipient of a Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) grant. The program, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and administered by Washington, D.C.-based Heritage Preservation Foundation, provides for an evaluation of museum collections by museum professionals. The \$6,500 grant will provide technical assistance in managing collections in the museum. Artifacts collected by museums are extremely susceptible to damage from a myriad of sources, according to Ronn Hague, PRCC Museum's director. "A professional conservator will spend two days evaluating the artifacts we've collected," said Hague. "They will examine the artifacts and make recommendations as to how to best preserve them. We have a responsibility to our community to maintain and preserve those artifacts that have been entrusted to us." Things as common as too much light or too much moisture affect documents. The museum staff has attempted to maintain museum standards in the facility, but with Hurricane Katrina, the standards were temporarily abandoned. "We didn't have a lot of damage," Hague said, "but we had water in the building." A visit from the American Association for State and Local History's Disaster Recovery Team reported no artifact damage. Even though the team reported no damage, Hague felt that Heritage Preservation Foundation's CAP was necessary to help the museum set up a plan of action to increase security for the artifacts in the museum. Besides giving a report on the current state of the museum's collection, the program's preservationist will help the museum staff formulate a plan of action to maintain a high standard in preserving the college and its six-county district's artifacts and history. The grant will also supply a preservation architect to survey the 61-year old building housing the museum.

Look back in time: missing cars, snakes

The following articles appeared in the May, 1951, edition of the Cadet, Pearl River College's school newspaper at the time.

If your car, bus, or whatever you travel around in comes up missing some morning, don't be alarmed; it will probably turn up sooner or later. Those things do turn up in some of the most peculiar places, though. There seems to have been an epidemic of this sort of thing lately. Bobby Mills got up bright and early Friday, April 20, and went out to take a spin in his little Crosley truck. Upon looking where he had tied it the previous night, he found that it was missing. After making a thorough search of the campus and threatening half the boys with bodily harm, he finally succeeded in finding his wandering jalopy. Where do you think it was? Wrong! It was roosting about midway up the stands in the football stadium.

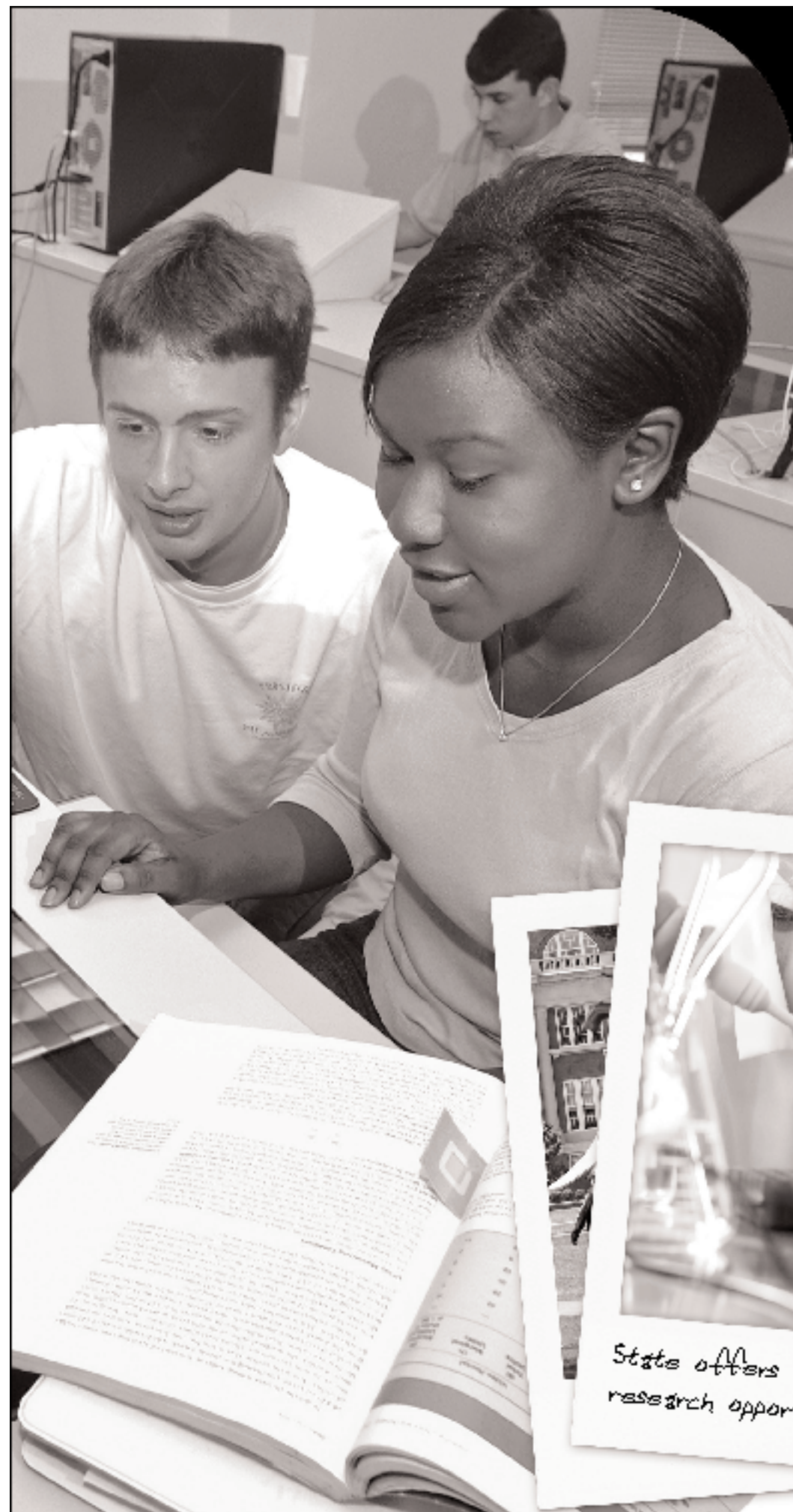
Also missing on that particular morning was a small English Ford belonging to Miss Webb, a math teacher. Miss Webb finally located hers way down in centerfield on the baseball field. It seems the culprits did not limit their activities to little things, either. Also missing from its customary place was the school athletic bus. It was found alongside Miss Webb's car down in centerfield. College students kill record snake On Wednesday night of last week, three Pearl River College students went out on a frog-gigging trip, but instead of bringing home frogs, they brought an extra large cotton-mouth moccasin. The students were Hillman Breland, Glenn Jelen and Marco Bolanos. The snake measured 54 inches in length, 9 inches in girth and weighed 7 1/2 pounds. The snake was killed in the J.S. Moody pond located just north of Poplarville. It is to be added to the college biology collection.

General donates 100-year-old document to museum

Pearl River Community College Museum recently received a Poplarville High School diploma and a photo dated 1906 from Brigadier General John Hawkins Napier, III. The objects belonged to Napier's aunt, Dora Etha Tate, his mother's sister. She was the daughter of Eastman F. Tate (known as the father of Picayune). Although Tate was a long-time resident of Picayune, he moved his family to Poplarville from 1904 to 1908 to take advantage of the schools while he built his Picayune mansion, "Greystone." Though Tate only finished the fourth grade at Aaron Academy in Hancock County, he saw to it that his children had the opportunity to attend college. Before coming to school in Poplarville, Dora Tate was educated by her skull-capped tutor, "old Bill Brooks." He was replaced by a governess, Miss Emma Daniels. According to Poplarville's second newspaper, *The Free Press*, published from 1892 until 1937, high school education in Poplarville began with the founding of Poplarville High School in the spring of 1892. A massive wooden school building was erected and a 1,000 seat

auditorium was later added. The school became an institution of acclaim under the lead of south Mississippi educator, W. I. Thames. Known throughout the nation as one of the finest boarding high schools in the south, it pulled in students from as far away as California. General Napier has strong ties to Poplarville and Picayune. His father, John Hawkins Napier, Jr. graduated valedictorian from Pearl River County Agricultural High School's first class. Beginning his education at Pearl River as a freshman in 1909, the year the school was founded, the elder Napier went on to Mississippi A&M (now Mississippi State) where he received his Bachelor's. He attend University of California for his Master's, and Stanford for his doctorate. He moved the family back to Mississippi in 1943 to become the Superintendent of Picayune Schools. He was married to Lena Mae Tate. The younger Napier is no stranger to Pearl River County. Born in Berkley, CA in 1925, he visited "home" on numerous occasions before his family moved back to Picayune. He graduated from the University of Mississippi in

1949, earned a master's from Auburn in 1967 and holds an honorary doctorate from Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland. He used his degree in history when he researched and wrote the book "Lower Pearl River's Piney Woods: its land and people," a book about the history of Pearl River and Hancock counties published in 1985. "This is important," said Napier about the document he donated, "because my family has always been deeply interested in public education." He went on to say that both his Napier grandparents had college degrees; his grandfather a doctorate from Southern Normal College and his grandmother a B. S. from the normal college at Houston, MS. Napier's mother also held a post graduate degree from Judson College in Marion, AL. The diploma and photo, a few months shy of 100 years old, has been preserved and placed with the museum's artifacts. "It will command a principal place in a planned exhibit on early education in PRCC's six county district," said Ronn Hague, museum director. Napier resides with his wife in Ramer, Ala.



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