
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 276

Brewton, Alabama 36426

ESCAMBIA ECHOES

July 7, 1975

Mrs. Carolyn Pugh McLendon, Editor

Annual dues - \$6.00

NOTICE OF MEETING -

Date Tuesday, July 15th

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Jefferson Davis Junior College, in
Student Center

Speaker: JAMES F. SULZBY, JR., Secretary,
ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION,
Birmingham, Alabama

Mr. Sulzby was the first president of the Alabama Historical Association when it was organized in 1947 and after completing his tenure as President was elected Secretary which office he continues to hold. He is a Phi Beta Kappa, operates Sulzby Realty in Birmingham, and has authored nine books, all of which are collectors' items. While here in Brewton he plans to meet with the people who have agreed to open their homes for the Alabama Historical Association Pilgrimage to be held on October 4, 1975.

NEW MEMBERS: Mrs. Howard E. Palmer, Cupertino, California; Duncan Merriwether, Chester Springs, Pa.; and Mr. Ronald A. Stratton, Pittsfield, Mass.

EIGHTH ANNUAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE of the Alabama Historical Commission of Montgomery, will be held beginning Friday, July 18, with a full day of outstanding speakers and ending with "Montgomery by Moonlight" in the Top of the Star, Midtown Holiday Inn, (registration fee \$10.00), and the Saturday Session from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Distinguished Service Awards will be presented during the sessions by Lt. Gov. Jere Beasley, The Hon. Henry Steagall II (Executive Secretary to Gov. George C. Wallace), and by Mrs. James B. Allen. If any of you are interested in attending these sessions please notify Carolyn McLendon at 867-4881 or 867-2382 at once. The notices for this conference were received after June 20th and required registration before July 12th. We will ask for special consideration for your registration if any of you wish to attend. This Society did not nominate anyone for Distinguished Service this year.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Volume III of the Correspondence of James K. Polk (1835-1836), Has been given to the Society for its library by Dr. Herbert Weaver, Editor. Dr. Weaver is a native of Escambia County and is head of the History Department of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. This fine addition to our growing collection of books is greatly appreciated.

"Sheep Country, Bradley, Alabama" submitted by Mr. J.F.Elliott, 2600 Poplar Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36107, has been received and will be published in the August newsletter. You will recall that Mr. Elliott has sent in several articles regarding the Bradley area, all of which have been appreciated and enjoyed by our readers.

"Peter Lazarus Johnson-His Song" submitted by Ronald A. Stratton, President of Berkshire Chapter, Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, 95 Holmes Road, Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201, and published herewith. The families mentioned in this brief history are Conecuh, Escambia, Monroe and Santa Rosa County residents' ancestors. The Parkers are of Escambia County. We appreciate this contribution to our records.

PETER LAZARUS JOHNSON - His Song

by Ronald A. Stratton
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Peter Lazarus Johnson was born in Conecuh County, Alabama, March 12, 1828 to pious and prominent farm stock. He was one of four brothers and one sister--children of William B. Johnson and the former Elizabeth Parker.

William B. Johnson and his brother, Washington Johnson, arrived in Conecuh County in 1818 from South Carolina and established a farm on land north of Evergreen near the Chapman place.

Elizabeth Parker, Peter's mother, has revolutionary service in her family history. Elizabeth was granddaughter of John Parker of Sussex County, Delaware, and later of Hancock County, Georgia. John Parker was born September 25, 1740 and died in Hancock County March 3, 1793. His war service is well documented in the Delaware archives department. His daughter, Mary, born August 20, 1774, married her cousin, Samuel Parker, and the family moved to Conecuh County from Hancock, Georgia before 1820.

Peter Lazarus Johnson's brother, Samuel C. Johnson (1821-1900) was educated at Howard College at Marion, Alabama (now Samford University), served in the Baptist ministry in Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Texas. He served with the Texas Rangers in the Mexican campaign and in 1894 published a book entitled "The consistency and Harmony of Election, Predestination and the Accountability of Man." He died in Angelina County, Texas.

Another brother, George N. Johnson (ca.1830-1864) was a victim of Civil War Service. He was wounded in the Ridge Battle in Tennessee, taken prisoner, and died June 9, 1864 while a prisoner of Union forces at Rock Island, Illinois.

The fourth brother in this family was William W. Johnson who lives in Conecuh County until his death. He was a member of the Conecuh Guards and was wounded in the Gaines Farm Battle, subsequently receiving a state pension.

Peter's sister, Mary Johnson, married John Diamond of Conecuh County and the couple moved to Santa Rosa County, Florida, raising a large family.

The apparent piety of the entire Johnson family was likely attributed to the influence of the Rev. Alexander Travis who ministered the Missionary Baptist Church at Evergreen for many years. Peter Johnson made his "good confession" and became a member of the church at the age of 12 and was baptized by Rev. Travis.

On November 4, 1852 Peter married the widow Caroline Elizabeth Murray, formerly Pugh, of neighbor Monroe County. She was daughter of William and Sarah Pugh. William Pugh's will is on file in the Court house of Monroe County.

In 1854 Peter and his family moved to Panola County, Texas with \$7 in his pocket and became a well-known citizen whose activity in community and church affairs is well documented. His homestead was near the tiny south Panola County community of Woods. His children were George P., Saray, William, Laura, Henry, and Samuel.

He served in the Confederate Service in the 7th regiment of the Texas Calvary, serving two years as a Lieutenant, before being captured at Camp Pratt and interred at the Rampart Street prison.

His years near the woods community in west Texas are distinguished by many acts of civic involvement which undoubtedly led the Panola Watchman newspaper to chronicle his life in glowing terms saying "A good citizen.. pioneer...generally found working shoulder to shoulder with the best element of society...and note their passing with reverence."

He is credited with forming the neighborhood's first Sunday School in 1855 and joined with others in establishing the Independence Baptist Church at Woods the following year.

He was a long time Mason, helped to organize the South Panola Agriculture Society, was an original member of the Eureka Grange, was president of the Grange Association of Panola County, served a term as County Commissioner, Superintended the Grange Store at Teneha for many years, taught school, served as secretary of the community church, was an active debater, and was active in the Buena Vista and Shelby County Associations.

Peter Lazarus Johnson died October 31, 1904 at Woods and he is interred in the Old Center Cemetery.

Sources:

- Obituary Panola Watchman, November 30, 1904
- Samuel C. Johnson obituary, Texas Baptist Standard newspaper 1906
- Historical notes, Conecuh-Escambia Star, October 2, 1879
- 1820-1900 census returns, Conecuh County, Alabama
- Georgia Revolutionary Soldiers by Etta McCall 1952
- Delaware Archives Department
- Student Directory, Howard College 1918
- Samuel Johnson pension application - U.S. Archives
- Angelina County Census Texas 1880
- George N. Johnson civil war service - U.S. Archives
- William W. Johnson in History of Conecuh County
- William W. Johnson Civil War Pension application - Alabama Archives
- Monroe County Marriage Book A
- Monroe County Probate Office for will of William Pugh
- Panola County census 1850-1900 Texas
- Peter Johnson Confederate Service - U.S. Archives
- Peter Johnson Masonic Records - Grand Lodge Waco, Texas
- Peter Johnson letter to niece Sally Chunn of New Orleans
- Peter Johnson tombstone, Old Center Cemetery, Woods Texas