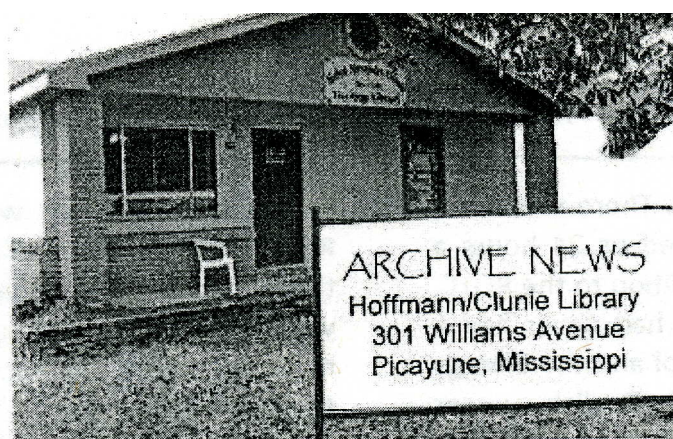


MEMORIAL

HERITAGE

ARCHIVE, INC.

LIBRARY



Oct. - Nov. - Dec. 2014

Telephone: 601-799-5671 - email: hhma1908@att.net

Volume 6 - Page 1

1945

MY FIFTEENTH YEAR

By JACK SPIERS

My fifteenth year was exciting for me but was also one of the most dramatic years in the history of the world!

Wartime Rationing was in effect. Butter, meat, sugar, coffee and many other foods were rationed. Gasoline was also rationed. Appliances, automobiles, tires, inner tubes, silk stocking, etc. were not available. Clothing, shoes, and leather goods, were in very limited supply. Plastic had not been marketed yet. The speed limit was 35 mph and the top half of headlights on automobiles were blackened so that automobile lighting in the Gulf Coast area would not be visible to German Submarines that were known to be operating in The Gulf of Mexico.

The year 1945 began with bad news from the fighting front in Europe. The War went from the successes of the Normandy Invasion and literally overrunning the Axis forces, until the terrible Battle of the Bulge late in 1944. Instead of Victory in Europe by Christmas 1944, the prospect of an early Victory in 1945 was now in jeopardy. Vigorous fighting by the enemy threatened not only to extend the War in Europe but the casualties were rapidly mounting. I knew a number of men that were in that area during this time and everyone in my hometown community of McNeill, MS was concerned about their well-being. However, by early spring, Victory in Europe was again appearing to be close at hand.

I decided to go to Summer School. They had courses offered at Poplarville High School, which was located

on the campus of Pearl River Junior College (PRC). I wanted to take summer courses which would allow me to graduate in three years from McNeill High School. Everyone was in a rush to get out of school in those days in order to get into the Military as soon as possible. Literature from PRC showed some photographs of people I knew who were in their Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. They had a strong ROTC training program and I felt this would help when I got out of High School and entered the Military.

President Roosevelt died in April. There was apprehension about whether or not the new President, Harry S. Truman, could lead us to victory in the War.

However, VE Day (Victory in Europe) came soon after. There was great joy but it was subdued because everyone understood that the men on the fighting front in Europe would have to be transferred to the front in the Pacific. The invasion of Pacific Islands on the way to Japan had demonstrated that the Japanese would not surrender. They fought long after most military men would have given up. Even when their situation was hopeless, the Japanese fought only to inflict more casualties on Americans. They had a new weapon in the Kamikaze, a suicide plane mission that was sinking ships and killing many of our men in the Pacific. The War against the Japanese would be a long, drawn out, bloody affair. There was going to be unbelievable casualties of Americans when we invaded Japan. This was the enemy that, hopefully, the ROTC would prepare us for.

So I went to Summer School at Poplarville High School that had a boarding school at Pearl River College. We stayed in a dormitory, which was called our Barracks.

The ROTC was just like the Military. There was strict military discipline and they controlled us 24 hours a day. I took English and Biology in addition to the ROTC. This curriculum was very difficult. I had never had a Science course at McNeill High School and the Biology was exciting but very demanding. My English courses at McNeill did not adequately prepare me for the fast paced Summer course at PRC. It took all that I could muster to keep up in these courses. My English teacher's husband was a Lieutenant overseas in the Army and she was very stressed while teaching that summer.

The ROTC was another matter. It was similar to military Boot Camp conditions. We had a bugle reveille at about 5:00 AM with 10 minutes to fall out for inspection. Your brass belt buckles, brass belt tips, shoes and gold insignias had to shine brightly with no fingerprints. The trousers had to have a crease down the front of the legs. They inspected you for a tie properly knotted and in place, your hair trimmed closely, and permitted absolutely no trace of a beard. Next was breakfast, then fall-in with a heavy WWI vintage Army issue 30/30 rifle. We marched for an hour. Every step and turn was monitored closely. If you got out of step or out of line, you were punished with demerits. You were later required to march one hour for each demerit received. After the morning march for an hour, we would line up in front of the barracks and stand at attention for 1/2 to one hour. It was not uncommon for someone to faint and keel over on the asphalt street. It was rigorous. Then we went to High School classes and later had lunch.



Jack Spiers
Aug. 15, 1945
ROTC
Poplarville
High School

During the afternoon we had athletic activities and ROTC classes. We studied about giving First Aid to those seriously wounded in battle, learned about venereal diseases, dismantled various weapons, and reviewed topics relating to the War. We would often go to a firing range and target practice with .22 rifles that were built to simulate the M-1 Army rifles. On occasion we would use larger weapons such as firing a tank grenade or a bazooka.

Later in the afternoon, you would march off any demerits, or go clean your room in preparation for imminent inspection, which could come at any hour of the day or night. They gave "white glove" inspections that were critical of the cleanest room.

After dinner, we would go to our barracks room for study hour between 7:30 and 9:30 PM. Woe to anyone found not to be studying during those times. We then showered and hit the sack. A bugle played taps at 10:00 PM. Believe me; we were tired and would promptly go to sleep.

It was not unusual to have to fall out in the hallway during the middle of the night for some sort of inspection. One night, we had to stand at rigid attention for about two hours in the hall wearing only our under shorts while our rooms were inspected to find out who had stolen a 3-cent postage stamp. They never found the stamp.

If you had any demerits that had not been "marched off" during the week, you were restricted and could not go home for the weekend. My cousin, Jerry Spiers, was my roommate. He would sometimes get demerits that would go on the record for J. Spiers. Since Jack was alphabetically before Jerry, the demerits would often get entered on my name. When that happened, I would try to go "On Leave" for the weekend but would find that I was restricted and would have to march off the demerits, Jerry's demerits, hour by hour, on Saturday. It took a while to get that straightened out.

It was a long, hot, tough, summer. There was no air conditioning in those days. I felt out of communication with home. We had no telephones but it was not far enough from home to write letters. Elvis Smith (of McNeill) was killed in Germany that summer even

though the War had ended. Everyone had loved Elvis. I felt a strong need to know what had happened. Homesickness became a terrible problem.

News from the front in the Pacific was often not very encouraging. Kamikaze attacks, island invasions, heavy losses from bombing raids over Japan all pointed in the direction that we were headed: For The Invasion Of Japan!

One hot August day at lunch, someone said that a big bomb had been dropped on Japan. Someone else commented that a "big bomb" would have no affect on the "Japs". But the person talking said that they had read it in the newspaper, this was a very big bomb, an Atomic Bomb. No one knew what an Atomic Bomb was and it was presumed that this was another story from the Rumor Mill that was emitting so many spectacular but untrue stories during the War.

We weren't allowed to have a radio and only a few of us had access to newspapers, so our source of news was very limited. However, it was becoming apparent to everyone that something dramatic was happening in Japan. Then a second Atomic Bomb was dropped. We became optimistic that if we had enough of those bombs, the War could end fairly soon, possibly within a year or so.

One afternoon, I was in the barracks cleaning my room when I heard some shouting. I knew something was very wrong because we were strictly forbidden from shouting in the barracks. There was a clamor outside and I went out to witness one of the most dramatic scenes of my young life. - - - Everyone was shouting, jumping, clapping, dancing, running and screaming to the top of their lungs "The War is over!".

The Army Master Sergeant, who lived in our barracks and was like God to us, came out screaming like a child. He had a fifth of whiskey and was guzzling it down to celebrate. People were running and screaming everywhere! Everyone had gone absolutely crazy! The War was over! The War was finally over!

I guess that I was too numb to think clearly about the gravity of this moment. However, I began to think of the implications of the War's end. All the people we

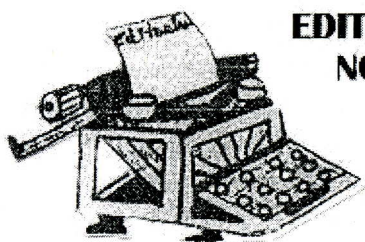
knew that were in the Military would be coming back home! All the men that had been gone for so long would return. It was difficult to imagine how life would be with everyone back home. Also, we would no longer have to "worry" about the men who were in the Military. My brother, (Robert) Junior, would be coming back home from the Navy! Everyone would be coming back from the War!

We would be able to get things without ration coupons. Automobiles would become available again. All the things we had done without, during the duration of the War, would now be over. All the restrictions on our life style would now be lifted. What a wonderful world it was going to be!

Shortly afterward, I finished Summer School with good grades. I was in the best physical condition of my life and felt that I had learned a great deal from the academics, as well as from the ROTC program. Back at home, life was changing. I entered the eleventh grade at McNeill High School.

That fall my brother's ship, the USS Detroit, came back from the Pacific to the East Coast. While in port, (Robert) Junior was injured in some sort of accident on board his ship. He later came home on leave. Men began to come home from the Military. Men and women who had civilian jobs in various other parts of the country were coming home. Everyone was waiting in anticipation. There was great joy as a bus or train would come in with a veteran returning home. I remember a white man walking over to a returning black veteran and welcoming him home by shaking his hand. Times were changing. Some of the men had been wounded. All of them had great stories to tell but those that had seen combat usually did not want to talk about it. These were times of great excitement and happiness. As 1945 came to a close, almost every service man had been discharged or had been home on leave.

So it went in my fifteenth year. It was a year like all other years filled with tremendous excitement, happiness and joy. It was a great year for me. It was an unforgettable year in the history of the world.



EDITOR NOTES

As we close down "Archive News" for the year, we hope you have enjoyed our quarterly newsletters and have a better knowledge what the Volunteers, Board Members and membership in general contribute collectively to keep our young Archive going. Your dues, donations, visits and family history binders/books all contribute to any success we've achieved. And, we sincerely thank each of you for being interested in our cause and for your continued donations and annual dues that helps keep us going.

Our Archive Newsletter is sent to our 140 Archive Donors and Members. These Donors and Members not only live in Picayune and surrounding towns, but a total of 16 States, plus 1 in Canada.

I thought that you might be interested in knowing the many states and cities where all our wonderful members live and perhaps you might even know someone in one of the 16 states and/or 47 cities. So, here they are: ALABAMA:

Haleville; Huntsville; Ramer

ARIZONA: Hereford; Phoenix

CALIFORNIA: San Diego; Trukee

FLORIDA: Panama City

GEORGIA: Atlanta; Lagrange; Newman

ILLINOIS: Ashmore

KENTUCKY: Prospect

LOUISIANA: Baton Rouge; Bogalusa; Kenner; Mandeville; Metairie; Pearl River

MISSISSIPPI: Bay St. Louis; Biloxi; Diamondhead; Escatawpa; Gulfport; Hattiesburg; Heidelberg; Laurel; Lumberton; Perkinson; Poplarville; Waveland

NEW MEXICO: Las Vegas

SOUTH CAROLINA: Goose Creek; Prosperity

TENNESSEE: Columbia; Maryville

TEXAS: Houston; Katy; League City; Plano; San Antonio; The Woodlands

UTAH: Salt Lake City; Washington

VIRGINIA: Salem

WASHINGTON STATE: Everett

CANADA: Windsor Ontario

Special personal "THANKS" to each of our "feature writers" for their wonderful contributions: Gloria Penton; Don Wicks; Mike Fitzwilliam and this issue that Jack Spiers sent to me within two days.

And finally, my personal "THANKS" go to the rest of our Newsletter staff who help me proof read, shrink pictures, print, collate, seal, stamp and attach mailing labels for several hours to get the "Archive News" out - Gloria Penton, Don Wicks, Helen Hunter Knight, Annette James and Clara Howard has also helped.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a safe New Year.....God willing we'll be back next year...Marilyn Weston

DID YOU KNOW?

1904: Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa & Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California.

HHMA BOARD MEETING

October 18, 2014

Seven of the eight members (Sara Sheldon via telephone) of the Board met on Saturday at 1 o'clock at the HHMA on Williams Avenue.

Minutes were read by Secretary, Gloria Penton and Treasurer's Report by Lorraine Harper both approved.

Election of Board Members for the 2015 & 2016 years will be held in December, Volunteer Mae Foster was asked to chair the Nominating Committee.

A Membership meeting will be held in January 2015 and it is hoped that Ernestine Thompson will be able to be the guest speaker.

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## OCTOBER

October was the eighth month of the Old Roman Calendar .....

October's Birthstone is Opal or Tourmaline. You are a "Libra" if born Oct 1st thru 22nd, or a "Scorpio" if born Oct 23rd thru Oct 31st.

October has more than just Fall Festivals and Halloween to celebrate:

- 03: "Captain Kangaroo" (with Bob Keeshan) was broadcast for the first time
- 10: Columbus Day
- 16: Boston- "Ether" demonstrated as anesthetic for surgery
- 24: United Nations Day
- 26: 1826-Erie Canal opened- Albany N.Y.
- 29: Wall Street Stock Market Crash

## ~~~~~ ROBERT & ANN ROGERS DONATE BOOK

Member, Robert & Ann Rogers, Metairie, LA, visited the Archive October 27th and presented us with another Book, this one is entitled, "Lumpkin Family History". Gloria Penton, Monday Volunteer accepted for the Archive.



Gloria Penton - Robert & Ann Rogers

Robert & Ann visited along with member, Carrie Byrd from Poplarville, MS. They stay most of the day and are helping us with the Smith Family Material stored in several boxes in "Hilda's Room". They are always a delight to see.



SPECIAL THANKS to Susan (Smith) Ashley, The Woodlands, TX., and Rosemary Lovell, Picayune for your great donations in October

### "MAC" McDONALD VISITS ARCHIVE

It was a pleasure to meet the man that set up our website and maintains it for us free. "Mac" McDonald and wife Phyllis from Prospect, KY, visited relatives in the city and came to the Archive several days: October 23rd, 24th & 27th. So he not only met Clara, Mae, Gloria & Marilyn during his visits, he worked with Mae often getting ready to include the obits on the HHMA website that he set up for us. Please check out our Website at:

<<http://hildahoffmanarchive.com>>



Mac McDonald - Volunteer, Mae Foster

### OCTOBER ARCHIVE VISITORS

We had 21 visitors visiting the archive in October that includes: 15 from Picayune & Carriere, 2 from Louisville, KY., 2 from Holden, LA, 2 from Metairie, LA, and 1 from Poplarville, MS.

### OLD ARCHAIC WORD

**FORTNIGHT:** A period of two weeks.

If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd probably grab ours back.

## GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH OUR BOARD MEMBERS

### "DECEMBER SPOTLIGHT"



LORRAINE  
HARPER



Lorraine became involved with the Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive because she was a friend of Hilda's for about 15 years. She knew how much it meant to Hilda to have her work preserved and made available to the public for others to research their roots.

Lorraine has been on the Board of Directors and serving as Treasurer of HHMA for three years. She states that she is not an accountant, but has worked in accounting departments for about sixteen years. She also is one of our Volunteers and works on Tuesdays with Marsha Ladner.

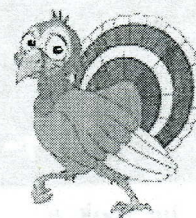
Besides the Archive, Lorraine is involved with the local Picayune on Stage group. Although not one of the actors, she works in the background. She helps paint sets, work lights and even has served as Stage Manager for a couple of their plays. She further serves as their Historian and keeps scrap books covering all the plays.

Lorraine and husband Joe moved from Metairie, Louisiana, and have been residents of Hide-A-Way Lake for nineteen years. She was employed at Xpress Copy Centre in Picayune for twelve years until her retirement. Incidentally, she met Hilda while working at the Copy Centre.

Lorraine & Joe are members of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church. They have three children, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She says, "unfortunately they all live away in Texas and Florida."

Joe being a '67 graduate of SLU, they naturally are big supporters of the Louisiana University football team, as such they have season tickets and make all the home games.

We were sad to learn of Mr. A. D. Richbourg's death October 12, 2014, husband of 71 years to HHMA member Mildred Penton Richbourg, Panama City, Florida. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mildred and family.



## NOVEMBER

November's Birthstone is the Yellow Topaz or Citrine. And you are a "Scorpio" if born Nov 1st thru 21st, or a "Sagittarius" if born Nov 22nd thru 30th.

November has many other notable events besides Thanksgiving that falls on the 27th this year:

- 01: All Saints Day
- 10: 1775-U.S. Marine Corp. Birthday
- 11: Veterans' Day
- 29: Louisa May Alcott born in Germantown Pennsylvania known for her "Little Women" story.
- 30: Sir Winton Churchill born. It is said he was born in the ladies restroom during a dance.

**Thanksgiving** is when one species ceases to gobble and another begins.....

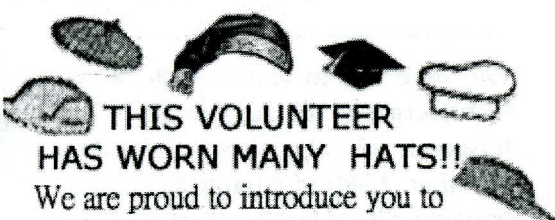
### NOVEMBER ARCHIVE VISITORS

The Archive was not very busy in November having only 7 visitors, 1 gentlemen from Perlington, MS, and the rest from Picayune area.

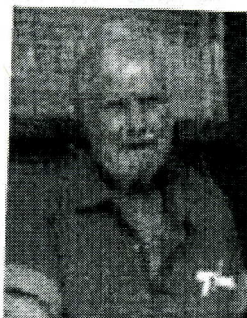
### MEMORIES.....

Bean Bag Ashtray, pull apart plastic beads, Rubik's Cube, Recipe Cards in filing box, cork popguns.





## DON WICKS



Don as you know has worn many hats. Don was born and raised in New Orleans. After graduating from LSU, he took a job at Michaud as an Aerospace Design Engineer with Boeing. After several other engineering jobs he went back to Michaud and then to Stennis with NASA, moving to Picayune in 1985, then back to Michaud and took an early retirement in 1996.

Don has two children. After a divorce and marrying the love of his life, Suzanne Spiers, they bought property and built their current residence in Caesar.

In 2003, he became interested in writing again and helped form the Picayune Writers' Group. After Katrina, the group decided to have a contest and published an anthology of local writers in 2006. Don chose Pearl Rivers as the cover and became enamored with her, and spent the next three years researching her life, planning to publish her biography.

This effort awakened an interest in local history. He joined the PRC Historical Society in 2007, became President in 2008 and transformed a group of half a dozen to over 200 by the end of the year.

In 2009, Don went back to research. He became chairman of the Main Street Historical Committee that placed historical plaques on the McDonald Funeral Home and the C&R Store. Then, in concert with Reba Beebe, Main

Street Manager, he produced History Cards which presented a group of Picayune's prominent residents. To date, over 4000 sets of these cards were given free to businesses, residents and visitors.

With his association with Reba, they discussed forming an arts council. Reba called a meeting, a group got together, formed a non-profit, and the Greater Picayune Arts Council was formed which is still thriving today.

Selected to the Board of Main Street, which was focused on playgrounds. A committee was formed to renovate Friendship Park, Allen Hickman, headed up the original group. Don was Design Coordinator, and along with hundreds of local volunteers in 2011, spent four months of their life as part of the construction crew. Don's wife Suzanne headed up the medical unit provided by Highland Hospital.

Hilda Formby Hoffmann died July 4, 2010. Sara Sheldon was given legal authority for the massive archive of family history collection and she and Helen Clunie temporarily moved the collection to a metal building owned by Helen.

October 2010, Arrangements were made to have the collection again temporarily moved to a safer climate controlled building at Stennis Space Center.

October 29, 2010, Sara, Helen and Don organized the Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive, Inc. Sara being the Chairman, Don - Secretary and Helen - Treasurer. Papers were also filed for non-profit status. They then started soliciting members.

Don became the Chairman of the Board and Archive in 2011 and stepped down in 2013.

Helen Clunie donated the house on Williams Avenue to the Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive, Inc. Don along with others worked many hours tearing out walls, building shelves, painting, etc., and they moved all of the collection from Stennis to it's new

home in downtown Picayune.

When Don organized the Volunteer program the beginning of 2012, he assumed the role of a Volunteer, in addition to serving as Chairman of the Board.

While not a genealogist himself, he says, "From the beginning, he realized the vital importance of the collection to the community and has dedicated his efforts to keep it open and available to the public." **YES, he certainly has worn many hats**

\*\*\*\*\*

Our THANKS to Jack Spiers for stopping by the Archive and donation of Two Notebooks:

One on "Old Railroad Depots in Mississippi", compiled by Jack Spiers. The other on his father: "Robert S. Spiers, Sr - Oct 11, 1903"

\*\*\*\*\*

## ABBREVIATED GIVEN NAMES

Arthur: Arf, Arh

Robert: Rob, Robt

Barbara: Barb, Barbr

Hannah: Hanah

## VARIABLE SURNAME SPELLINGS

LOVELL: Lovel, Lovewell, Lovett

MITCHELL: Mitchel, Minshall

NEVILLE: Nevil, Nevill, Nevills

SMITH: Schmidt, Schmitt, Smit

## SOME SURNAMES

## MEMBERS

## ARE RESEARCHING

Adams, Byrd, Danley, Dossett, Formby, Holden, Holder, Kirkland, Lumpkin, McDonald, Penn, Russ, Seal, Strahan, Whitfield, and Willis.

It's possible we not only might have some information in our files that can help you, but other members might be researching the same family.

\*\*\*\*\*

The trouble is not what man descended from - but what he descends too.....



Marilyn Weston, Gloria Penton, Don Wicks, Helen Hunter Knight, and Annette James



## Support & Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Family & Surname Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ (enclosed) Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (enclosed) Volunteer: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Please share my contact information (with other members only): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Send Newsletter Emailed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Use the Membership Application above only when you renew your membership.**

**WHEN IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES - DUE?**

### CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL

—————> **12-01-2014 - This date tells you when it's "time to renew"**

Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archives, Inc.

301 Williams Avenue

Picayune, Mississippi 39466

**Clunie/Hoffmann**  
**Heritage Library**  
**301 Williams Ave**  
**Picayune, MS 39466**