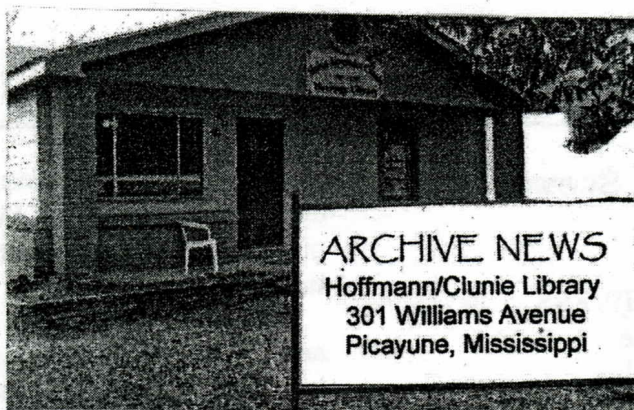


CLUNIE/HOFFMANN

HERITAGE

LIBRARY



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

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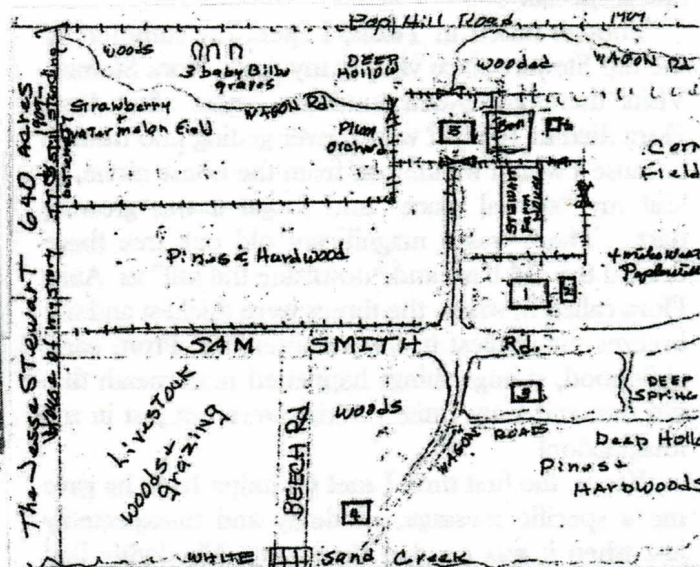
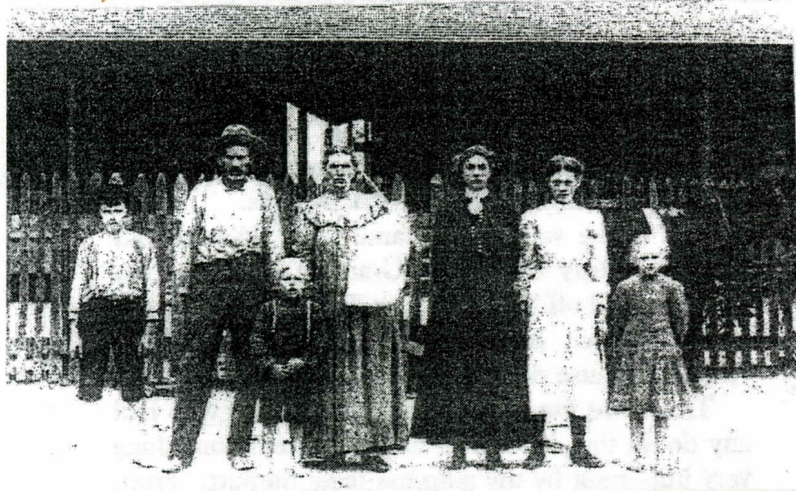
"House of Mystery"

by Sara D. Sheldon - June 25, 2015'

Jesse STEWART (1859-1931), was the fourth child of Hampton Silivan STEWART and Sarah Ann BOURN. Jesse married Martha Ora BYRD (1864-1938) on 17 February 1881. Jesse and Ora STEWART were my maternal grandparents, of Pearl River County, Mississippi, where the river ran wild and my roots grew deep.

Jesse and Ora had eight children and my mother, Verna Louise was the "baby" of the Jesse STEWART family. My mother, Verna (1910-2002) married my father, Harley Clay DILLINGHAM (1900-1965). By the time I was born in 1941, Jesse Stewart's children had divided up his original 640 acres and the place belonged to mother's sister, Flora E. STEWART

This 640 acres and the old farmhouse is where I spent most of my summers growing up and where I got to know Grandpa. Nowhere else on earth have I had the kind of experiences, I've had on that land and in the farmhouse. This is where I heard all the old family stories, genealogy and history many times which caused me to put down my own roots deep.....in Pearl River County.



Key to Map of Jesse Stewart's 640 Acres
1957 Map drawn by Sara D. Sheldon

1910 FAMILY OF JESSE STEWART & ORA BYRD

From Left to Right:
Louie "Pinky", Jesse, Heber T., Ora, *Verna (in Ora's arms), Flora
E., Inez and Lillie.

(Note: *Verna the baby is Sara D. Sheldon's mother.)

1. House of Elijah Byrd & Laura Ann Hall (Harvey) Byrd, Widow of James A. Harvey (killed by the Copeland Clan)
2. Byrd Kitchen
3. School Teacher House
4. Blacksmith Shop of Elijah Byrd
5. Barn
6. Outhouse

Ghosts of the Jesse Stewart

Farmhouse

THE PEARL RIVER SHIVERS

Story Number One

By Sara D. Sheldon

December 7, 2008

I don't believe in ghosts. Do you? But I do believe the old Jessie Stewart farmhouse in Pearl River County four miles west of Poplarville is where I came to meet a number of ancestors who died long before I was born!

I've met Grandpa Jesse Stewart, Grandma Ora Byrd Stewart, and Great Grandpa Elijah Byrd (1828-1910), among others. The Jesse Stewart farmhouse, built in 1909 is where my mother Verna Stewart Dillingham was born and raised, along with her eight brothers and sisters. It still stands today though it is vacant and just about to fall over backwards. Jesse and Ora both died there and Great Grandpa Elijah Byrd lived and died right next door on the same piece of property. Many are the stories I could tell about "happenings" I've experienced there but this one is special.

Though raised in Texas, I spent my summers at the old Stewart place visiting my Aunt Flora Stewart. Visits there continued until two years after Aunt Flora died in 1973. I was forever getting into trouble because I would wander off from the house alone, to visit my "special place" and forget it was growing dark. There was a magnificent old oak tree there behind the old barn and "downside the hill" as Aunt Flora called it, where the trees were thickest and the breezes the coolest in the summertime. From early childhood, strange things happened underneath that old tree and I am quite positive were not just in my imagination!

Yessir, the first time I met Grandpa Jesse he gave me a specific message, suddenly and unexpectedly just when it was needed the most. My daddy had died unexpectedly just a few weeks before and my mother had become extremely depressed. Family members decided she needed a trip back home to Mississippi thinking it might help her get a better perspective on what to do or where to go from there.

Upon our arrival at the old place, Mother took to the bed and didn't get up for three days. We were

all very worried for this was not like her at all. By the evening of the third day, I was so distraught that I set off alone to find my quiet spot underneath the old oak.

With the wind picking up in the pines overhead and the woodland animals beginning to stir in the late evening, I was sitting there worrying and trying to deal with my own grief.

I had been looking up through the big oak limbs and just as I lowered my eyes to look straight ahead there appeared a man.....right in front of me... straight out of the blue. He was tall with light blue eyes and black hair. He was dressed in coveralls and a red and blue shirt with long sleeves. Had on the worst looking shoes I think I've ever seen. It should have scared the dickens out of me; instead, I felt perfectly calm.

As I looked into his face he smiled a little and just as plain as day he spoke these words to me....

"Go tell Baby that she is going to be fine." I asked, "Who is baby?", but he was gone just as suddenly as he had appeared. I didn't know who he was or what his words meant nor who "Baby" was.

Afterwards, frightened and I must have cleared every briar and bramble out between down the hill and the house. I was twenty-four years old and WOW, did I run that day.

About half way to the house I tripped and fell---hard.....and someone gently picked me up and set me back on my feet. I can still feel being lifted and it was at that instant - when he touched me - that I knew who it was.....Grandpa Jesse! But wait! The mystery wasn't solved yet. I had to get back up to the house and ask somebody who "Baby" was.

The house was full of family and when I told them my story and what Grandpa had said my mother eased off her bed, knelt down beside me and whispered that her papa had always called her "Baby", because she was his youngest child.

There was not a soul there that evening who had any doubt that I had met and been told something very important by my grandpa Jesse Stewart. From that moment on my mother pulled herself together and accomplished many fine things before she died at ninety-two in 2002.

Mother told me later she thought her "papa" had delivered his message to me because I was the "only young'un he knew who (like herself) never had sense enough to be scared of anything."

THE PEARL RIVER SHIVERS

Story Number Two

By Sara D. Sheldon

I am here to tell you that there is something about the Old Jesse Stewart home place near Poplarville in Pearl River County, Mississippi where strange things happen to me. Oddly, I've never had one of these eerie experiences anywhere else on earth I've ever been.

My husband, Bill and I were at the old farm house together in 1975 and it was the very last time anyone in the family would ever stay there. The property had all been sold "outside the family" and I was heartbroken. We made the trip from Texas to haul back some of the furniture and clean up the place for the new owners.

The evening of the last day we were to be there, the U-Haul truck was all loaded and we were to take off the next morning for Texas. Bill suggested we take a walk down past the field and see if we could find anything left of my favorite old oak tree that Hurricane Camille had destroyed. So we set off.

When we got to the back part of the field, we could see that the gigantic trunk was still lying across the undergrowth about four feet off the ground and all around it, under it and over it were briars, vines and new growth from the forest floor.

Bill never left for the woods without either a pistol or his machete or both and he suggested I sit and rest and he would try to hack his way in to the base of the old trunk where my "magic" spot was and where things always happened. I sat down and chewed on a piece of red clover and listened to his chop-chopping and cussing down the length of the fallen tree. Not a breath of air was stirring and pretty soon it got so quiet I began to wonder if Bill had passed out or something.

All of a sudden there was the most horrible racket you ever heard with limbs a cracking and here came Bill tearing out of there like his pants were afire! "What is it honey?", I hollered.... "What's the matter?!"

He stopped right in front of me with sweat running all down in his eyes and across his forehead, swinging his machete and looked me squarely in the eye with an expression on his face I've never seen before nor since.

"Sara, Sara, I got right to the broken trunk of your tree and some man said, real loud in a gruff voice, "*What seek ye here?*" I swear it!" Who would talk like that?" With that, Bill hastily headed back up to the safety of the house and left me there, far behind..

Later the same night, when we were about ready to go to sleep, I started bawling about the place being sold and I'd never be able to stay there again. I got up from the bed and tip-toed into my grandparents old bedroom, the room I loved the best (next to the front porch), just to sit a spell in the one rocking chair we hadn't packed to calm myself.

What happened next I can see now just as plain to me as when I lived it thirty-three years ago. I walked Aunt Flora Stewart who had died two years before, my daddy who had died ten years earlier, two or three others I could not see clearly enough to identify, and Grandpa Jesse himself. Unlike the first time I "met" him I knew who he was this time. He stood directly in front of me about three feet away with one hand on the high mantel above the fireplace and the other on his hip, just as he must have stood thousands of times in life. He had on overalls and a green colored shirt and an old beat up hat. He just stood there and was smiling at me.

Just as I thought he was about to say something to me, Bill walked in and stopped exactly where Grandpa Jesse was standing and started to strike the same pose. "Quick....Move Bill. You're not to stand there; it might not be safe", I hollered as loud as I could. Just as Bill moved away everybody was gone.

I strolled outside and picked one of the sweet smelling gardenia blossoms from the front yard, found an old broken saucer, filled it with water and reverently placed them into the fireplace before closing up. It was just something I felt I was supposed to do.

Bill had heard me tell stories about the strange things that happened to me over and over the years at the old Jesse Stewart home and he always looked at me askance whenever I told one. I promise you this, Mr. Bill never again doubted my "ghost" stories from South Mississippi! To this day he will tell you it really happened and like me, he did not imagine it. Every encounter like this produces the "shivers" just the same.



EDITOR NOTES

We trust and hope that each of you enjoyed your summer, no matter where you went or how it was spent.

Since the Archive did not close down during the summer, we are still trying to find ways of putting more money in the till to pay rising costs of insurance and upkeep. We are in the same boat as most of you with cost of living going up and up..

Basically at the present time, our Archive/Library upkeep costs are exceeding our income from donations and dues. We still would welcome any suggestions or ideas any of you might have.

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 your interest in our cause and for your continued donations and annual dues that helps keep us going.

Our quarterly newsletter is mailed out the last month of the quarter and in this case our Jul-Aug-Sep "Archive News" will go out the second week in September. We have included Ghost Stories in this issue and hope you will enjoy Sara Sheldon's wonderful renderings regarding Ghosts in the Jesse Stewart Farmhouse.

POSTSCRIPT FROM SARA D. SHELDON THAT WE DID NOT HAVE ROOM TO PRINT WITH HER STORIES.

"That singular experience is what taught me that.....love never dies. And if we listen with our hearts and not our brains, we'll find that when we need it most that love returns to us...just as pure and sweet as it was when there was a body attached. We need not always be afraid of what we do not understand."

HEARTFELT THANKS FOR YOUR DONATIONS JUL-AUG-SEP IT'S SO APPRECIATED!

John & Debbie Braswell
Bob Clunie
Helen Clunie
Douglas Dike
Regina Stuart Lenoir
Ernest Serpas
Wade Stewart
Carolyn Williams

.....



JULY EVENTS

It seems July is always associated with the 4th of July festivities everywhere from the Gulf Coast to Arizona to Colorado, Nashville and almost every state around, many include these festivities in with their vacation.....If any of you took interesting trips, let us hear about them.

JULY VISITORS

After our slow June, July came back with a whopping 24 Visitors. We want to thank all our members and visitors that stopped by. One visitor was from Vancouver, WA; two from California: West Sacramento and the other from Chico, CA; a couple from Pearland, TX; one from Hattiesburg; and member Gayle McCants from Bogalusa, LA, not only visited, but brought several bags of items for our upcoming Yard Sale. Thanks Gayle!

Some people look for a beautiful place - Others make a place beautiful...

OLD ARCHAIC WORDS

"STOCK"

Trunk or Stump of a Tree

If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind, of what, then, is an empty desk a sign? (Albert Einstein)

THANK YOU CHARLES.....

We appreciate the letter Mr. Charles Wentworth sent in June offering his help to new member, Diane Seal. She earlier sent a note with her dues, saying she hoped to find other family members so they could help build their family history together. Which we mentioned in the Archive News last issue. We have sent Charles Wentworth's letter on to Diane Seal and hope she can avail herself of his kind offer to help. He did mention that he has the Book "A Seale Anthology" by Nancy L. Kuehl published by Twin City Publishing Co., 1990, stating that "the book is well documented and goes back to before the time on Henry Seale, the Royal Stationer of King Charles I and King Charles II." If anyone is part of the family, this might be of interest to you.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

OLD TIME ILLNESS

"HORRORS"- Delirium tremens

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

REDNECK MEDICAL TERM: "TERMINAL ILLNESS"

Getting sick at the Airport

~*~*~*

Someone sent me "Redneck Medical Terms and meaning no disrespect to anyone, I think the humor of it and it's play on words is worth repeating, so occasionally I would like to add one.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Bill Edwards informs us that the Facebook Address for the Archive is:

<<https://www.facebook.com/HildaHoffmannArchive>> (type in as one line, do not space or separate)



WE STILL NEED VOLUNTEERS

~~~~~  
 We want to "Thank" those Volunteers and Board Members for answering our call for help and each working a morning Shift (10-12:30) each Wednesday during the month of July, for Don Wicks who had neck surgery and was recovering. They are: Bill Edwards, Lorraine Harper, Clara Howard, Gloria Penton and Marilyn Weston. "Special thanks" to Helen Hunter Knight and Annette James for holding down the fort each Wednesday afternoon during the month.....  
 ~~~~~

On to another subject,
"The need for more volunteers"
 We were hoping that someone might contact us about volunteering, even part of a day (two and one half hours), but not a single person has contacted us.

So we are sending out another plea for help. We need someone to fill in on emergencies for an hour or two on occasion.

No experience is necessary, just anyone that likes to meet and talk to people. If you are interested please call any of our working days..... 601-799-5671 and one of the Volunteers will tell you all about volunteering and take your information. (Our Volunteers are: Mae Foster; Lorraine Harper; Clara Howard; Annette James; Helen Hunter Knight; Gloria Penton; Marilyn Weston and Don Wicks) PLEASE GIVE US A CALL!

~~~~~  
 I really think that tossing and turning at night should be considered as exercise.  
 ~~~~~

MEMORIES.....

Ladies Chenille Robes; Red Racer Metal Wagons; Leg clips for pants to use on bicycles without chain guards; Mimeograph paper; and Packard's.



AUGUST EVENTS

The phrase "Dog Days" conjures up the hottest, most humid and most sultry days of the year. Dog Days starts according to ancient Rome and in many European cultures from July 23 or 24, through August 23rd or 24th, yet The Old Farmer's almanac lists the period as the 40 days beginning July 3 and ending August 11. Those of us here in the deep south can testify to how hot and humid this particular season has been.

The noblest dog of all is the "hot--dog".....it feeds the hand that bites it. (Reminisce)

AUGUST ARCHIVE VISITORS

We had 13 members and guests to visit the Archive in August. Visitor Beverly Kellar brought Yard Sale items; Visitor Cassandra Farve from our local newspaper, the Picayune Item also interviewed Volunteer, Gloria Penton. Members visiting for the month were Bill Leamont, Picayune; Carole Holden Lund, Mandeville visited and donated a copy of her book; and Mac McDonald, Prospect, KY., who donates and maintains our HHMA website visited the archive on the 24th & 25th. He was in town visiting his brother, HHMA member: John A McDonald.

If you haven't visited our website, give it a try it has lots to offer.

The site is at:

<http://hildahoffmanarchive.com>



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MET WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12 AT 1:00 P.M.

Board Members present were: Helen Clunie, Bill Edwards, Lorraine Harper; Wade Stewart and Don Wicks and by telephone: Sara Sheldon. Absent were: Carol Phares and Ernest Serpas.

Discussion followed concerning the following:

.....Serious concentration on Archive finances and ways of raising needed funds, and getting more members.

.....To concentrate efforts also on the upcoming Yard Sale November 7th, held in conjunction with the Picayune Street Festival.

.....Plans to have a program for the General Membership Meeting in November and Election of Board Members.

.....Don Wicks was appointed to serve as Nominating Committee Chairman for the Board of Directors Election.

.....Thanks to Bill Edwards for ordering new Archive business cards and donating the cost thereof.

.....Don Wicks has donated a color printer to the Archives.

Please keep Board Member Ernest Serpas in your thoughts and prayers. He is still recovering from his operation and hospitalization.

~~~~~  
**Get Well Cards have become so humorous that nowadays if you don't get sick- you end up missing half the laughs in life.**



~~~~~  
THANK YOU DR. CAROLE HOLDEN
LUND FOR DONATING AN
AUTOGRAPHED COPY OF YOUR BOOK
 "The Spirit of the Pearl: The Life,
 Legend and Legacy of T. D. 'Dobie'
 Holden" on August 6th when you
 visited the Archive and presented it to
 Volunteer, Gloria Penton.

~~~~~  
**Friday, August 14, 2015**  
**The Picayune Item**

For those of you who do not  
 have access to our Picayune  
 local newspaper, there was an  
 article by Cassandra Favre under  
 a new byline, "The Dart" where  
 they feature local business or  
 Clubs, and the Pearl River  
 Genealogy Club was picked.  
 HHMA Secretary and a  
 Volunteer, as well as a Charter  
 Member of the Genealogy Club,  
 Gloria Penton offered to be  
 interviewed about the Club.

The Club was founded in 1999.  
 The Clubs first meeting was held  
 on Jan. 19, 2000 and charter  
 officers included President:  
 Marilyn Weston (who also is the  
 present Editor of Archive News),  
 Co-Vice Presidents: Josephine  
 Megehee & Mary Nolte,  
 Secretary: Pat Hesse, and  
 Treasurer: Fred "Buddy" Hess.

Gloria not only told about the  
 Clubs purpose, meetings, field  
 trips, programs, and day we met  
 each month (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday) she  
 gave a great plug to both  
 Margaret Reed Crosby Memorial  
 Library and "The Hilda Hoffmann  
 Memorial Archive". She told the  
 address of the Archive, gave the  
 web page as well.

Gloria's picture appeared with  
 the article and was taken at our  
 HHMA Archive where she was  
 volunteer for the day.

**THANKS GLORIA - GREAT STORY**

~~~~~  
OLD OCCUPATIONS:

Vulcan - Blacksmith

~~~~~

### ABBREVIATED GIVEN NAMES

Thomas - Tho<sup>s</sup>, Thos.

Margaret - Marg<sup>t</sup>

### NICKNAMES

Andrew..... Andy, Drew

Gerald. .... Jerry, Gerry

Belinda..... Belle, Linda

Elmira..... Elly, Ellie, Mira

### VARIABLE SURNAME

#### SPELLINGS

**CORBITT:** Corbet, Korbet

**NAGLE:** Nagel, Naugel, Naill

**PETRIE:** Petree, Petry

**RYE:** Rie, Wry, Ray



### **SEPTEMBER EVENTS:**

07: LABOR DAY

07: 6-9 P.M. Stockstill Family  
 Event

13: GRANDPARENTS DAY  
 (1<sup>ST</sup> Sunday after Labor Day)

17: Citizenship Day

17-23 National Constitution Week

23: Autumn Begins

~~~~~

The quickest way to be convinced
 that spanking is necessary is to
 become a grandparent.....

~~~~~

### **SEPTEMBER VISITORS:**

Since we go to press September  
 9<sup>th</sup>, we will not have time to enter  
 the 5-6 days of visitors for the  
 month. We are hoping that on  
 Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, Labor  
 Day evening that we will have  
 lots of Stockstill's attending the  
 Stockstill Get-Together.

### **STOCKSTILL FAMILY GET-TOGETHER**

IN AN EFFORT TO INFORM THE  
 PUBLIC AND TO ENHANCE  
 INTERESTS IN RESEARCHING  
 OUR FAMILY HISTORIES, WE  
 PLAN TO HOLD MONTHLY  
 PROGRAMS, SINGLING OUT  
 SPECIFIC FAMILIES AND  
 GROUPS OF FAMILIES.

OUR FIRST PROGRAM WILL BE  
 HELD ON MONDAY EVENING,  
 SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> FROM 6:00-  
 9:00 P.M. AT THE ARCHIVE  
 LOCATED AT 301 WILLIAMS  
 AVE IN PICAYUNE, MS.

THERE ARE 16 BOXES AND 4  
 BOOKS (12' OF MATERIAL)  
 RELATING TO THAT FAMILY'S  
 HISTORY. SNACKS AND  
 DRINKS WILL BE PROVIDED.  
 PLEASE COME AND JOIN US!

Don Wicks

~~~~~

WITH WARM

REMEMBRANCE

.....Our thoughts and prayers go out
 to the families of members who
 have died and/or lost a spouse since
 our last newsletter. Please let us
 know if a family member or another
 HHMA member(s) has passed or if
 we have missed anyone's death.

.....We would like to mention and
 ask everyone to consider and tell
 others about giving a memorial
 contribution to the Hilda Hoffmann
 Memorial Archives, Inc., in the
 name of Loved Ones, HHMA
 Members, or of Friends that may
 have died. Our Thanks!

~~~~~

### **SOME SURNAMES**

#### **MEMBERS**

#### **ARE RESEARCHING**

Earl - Hall - Henley - Lee -  
 Judice - Leonard - McCants -  
 Newman - Odom - Rouses and  
 Wood.



## DON'T FORGET OUR YARD SALE SATURDAY - NOVEMBER 7, 2015

We still desperately need items for our up-coming Yard Sale. Thanks to Gayle McCants-Bogalusa, LA; Jan Martin-Picayune, & Beverly Kellar-Nicholson, MS who have dropped off items. Please make sure your name is included with your items, so we may "thank you" personally for your help...We also are happy to give you a receipt if needed.

**Thursday, August 20, 2015**

**The Picayune Item, Picayune, Mississippi**

(With Don Wicks Picture at table with boxes of Stockstill Information.)

### "AWARENESS OF FAMILY HISTORY"

Article by Cassandra Favre

Cassandra's article starts with: "In an effort to generate greater interest in local family histories, members of the Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive, Inc., will begin hosting monthly programs showcasing a specific family in Pearl River County".

The article goes on to refer to previous articles about Hilda Hoffmann's amassed collection of boxes, binders and filing cabinets filled with records.

It is noted that upon opening in 2012 the Archive featured a one room mini-museum entrance with some historic artifacts and items both donated and on loan.

In the article Don commented: "Families used to have yearly family reunions, which you do not hear much about anymore and aside from pride of land, our ancestor's deserved to be remembered."

Don Wicks, announced The Archive (HHMA) will host it's first "Family History Program" featuring one of the oldest and largest families in the Picayune area, the "Stockstill Family" on Monday, September 7, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive. Just a couple of noted local Stockstill families are the families of the late David H. Stockstill, and the late local philanthropist Huey Stockstill family. In fact the local telephone book lists 61 Stockstill's in our area.

Remember the Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive is a non-profit organization and residents and/or family's of former residents are invited to donate or join the Archive - annual dues are \$25.

Hilda Hoffmann Memorial Archive, Inc.

301 Williams Avenue, Picayune, MS 39466

Telephone: 601-799-5671.

Email: [hildaarchive@bellsouth.net](mailto:hildaarchive@bellsouth.net) or [hhma1908@att.net](mailto:hhma1908@att.net)

Website: [www.hildahoffmannarchive.org](http://www.hildahoffmannarchive.org)

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/HildaHoffmannArchive>

## Greater Picayune Arts Council (GPAC)

Fall Fest - Oct. 23 & 24 - 6-9 p.m.

Jack Reed Park

Several Hilda Hoffmann members are also members of the Greater Picayune Arts Council (GPAC) and we have been asked to help get the word out.

Their Annual Fall Fest at Jack Reed Park on Goodyear Blvd., is scheduled this year on October 23rd and 24th from 6-9 p.m. there is a small "Entrance Fee" and they are "putting down roots by encouraging our youth to look at the trees."

For those of you that have never been to the Fall Fest, it is geared for young children. The entertainment includes dancers, story telling, puppets, and games. There is a parade around the park with Fairy Tale backdrops scattered all around the park. Beverly Elston established this event and was responsible for designing and painting many of the Fairy Tale backdrops for the event.

This year they are featuring a new event. They are inviting the Woods Ferries to join them at the base of a huge sweet gum tree. The tree stands close to Goodyear Blvd. and has a massive root system measuring at least 20 feet.

The object of the Woods fairy theme is to create a fun and fanciful way to enjoy the wonders of nature.

A "Fun and Enjoyable Experience for both Young and Old". Be sure to mark the date on your calendar.

\*\*\*\*\*

### WE NEED YOUR HELP!

**We are looking for a wonderful Christmas story that you possibly have about your personal family or just a story that depicts the season, that you would share with our members and donors for our October-November-December "Archive News."** It needs to be a couple pages and possibly no more than 2-3 pages. Deadline date **November 1st. Send to Marilyn Weston at HHMA Archives, 301 Williams Ave.**

\*\*\*\*\*

"With hurricanes, tornados, fires out of control, mud slides, flooding, severe thunderstorms tearing up the country from one end to another, and the threat of bird flu and terrorist attacks, are we sure this is a good time to take God out of the Pledge of Allegiance?" (Quote of the month by Jay Leno)