



Lifestyles

The treasures in old church record books

BUTLER -- Church records can be very valuable when hunting family information. Besides the juicy tidbits about who got kicked out for dancing or intoxication, you might find the dates of baptisms, marriages, deaths and other items that are helpful.

Rev. Franklin McLeland at the County Baptist Association Office in Butler, is actively seeking old record books for preservation. He copies them in his office, then takes them to Samford University's Baptist Archives where they are microfilmed, then he returns the original book to the person who loaned them. There is no charge

Needles in Haystacks

by Ann Harwell Gay

to the local congregation or owner.

Microfilm is the preferred method of preservation today. Computer technology changes so rapidly, what is on a disk today may not have a machine capable of reading it in ten years. Think about that when taking photographs. You

need to use film, or get plenty of print-outs or copies.

I am helping Bro. Franklin by indexing the names of those in church record books. We are currently working on the Mount Sterling Baptist Church which began in 1854. The book is a copy from the original, which

was also used for the Mount Sterling Grange, a short-lived agricultural and political organization in the 1870s.

Church record books are rapidly disappearing. House fires took their toll in the early days, and heirs sometimes clean out old houses and attics by sending everything to the dump. Brother Franklin has rescued several books in the past few years and he hopes for more. Concord's books from 1847 until its closing, were donated to the Baptist Association when the church disbanded, and those books are now preserved for future historians. The originals are in the Association Office

in Butler.

My interest is from a genealogical and historical perspective. As Bro. Franklin records and saves church history, I hunt for names and facts in our early history. In addition to finding who were the pillars of the church, I have found a small number of African-Americans who were members of the white churches until after the Civil War.

Bro. Franklin concentrates on Baptist records. I am interested in all denominations and beg people holding our early history hostage in closets, boxes or trunks to share before it is too late. I, too, can copy the original and

give it back to the possessor. We would love to lay hands on the original Mount Sterling Methodist church book and others from our early days, such as the ones at Isney, Silas, and the very old Sardis Church. Copies of my work on Methodists churches are sent to the Methodist Archives at Huntingdon College in Montgomery.

Feel free to contact me at 308 Miller Avenue, Butler, AL 36904 if you have any of these jewels from the past that need preservation and indexing. For Baptist records call the County Baptist Association office at 205-459-4549.



SCHS Class of 1957 enjoys 50-year reunion in Toxey

TOXEY -- Members of the Southern Choctaw High School Class of 1957 met for a memorable 50th-year reunion on April 28, at the renovated Toxey Masonic Lodge Community Center. Pictured are: front row -- Willie G. Clark, Cecile Adams Ramos, Ruth Adams Taylor, and Audrey Ellison Imsand; second row -- Darrel Adams, Billy J. Jackson, Teny Koen Beard, Rankin Green, and Newburn Ledbetter; third row -- Virginia Land Sikes, Edna Odom Trimble, Melba Lewis Austin, JoAnn Dubose Abston, and Lauren Doggette May; fourth row -- Juanita Skinner Gilbert, Bonnie Jackson Gilbert, Maxine Gilbert Morris, Shelia Stokley Stewart, Ella Singley Hyatt, and Sara Singley Ward; back row -- Raymond Sturdivant, John Singley, Jack Bonner, Joe McIlwain, Allan Mosley, T.P. Toomey, George Taylor, Liston Tindle, John L. Jackson, John Bonner, Jimmy Adams and Massey Lassiter.

Submitted photo

A bit of U.S. History: Destroyer USS Ward DD-139, APD-16

This ship fired the first shot of the Pacific War.

Class Destroyer: High Speed Transport: Displacement: 1060-1090 Tons Length: 4' 3" Beam: 30' 6" Draft: 8' 8" Speed: 35 Knots Armament: 4-4"/50, 6x3 21" Torpedo Tubes, 6x3"

Complement: 149 Geared Turbines with Twin Screws, H.P. 26,000

Built in Mare Island Navy Yard

Commissioned: As DD-139 24 July 1943

Converted to High-Speed Transport at Puget Sound Navy Yard, and Reclassified APD-16, February 6, 1943

USS Ward, a 1,247 ton Wicks Class Destroyer, was built at Mare Island Navy Yard, California. Under the pressure of urgent First World War needs for Destroyers, her construction was pushed rapidly from keel-laying on May 15, 1918 to launching on June 1 and commissioning on July 24, 1918. Decommissioned in July 1921.

With the out break of World War II, the USS Ward was Recommissioned in January 1941. Sent to Pearl Harbor for



Our Veterans

By SFC Richard M. 'Pete' Allen (Ret.)



patrol duties in Hawaiian waters.

December 7, 1944 USS Ward DD-139 while on patrol duties in Hawaiian waters she encountered a Japanese Midget Submarine attacked and sank it, thus firing the first shots of the Pacific War a few hours before Japanese Carrier Aircraft formally opened the conflict with their attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet inside the harbor.

In 1942, USS Ward was sent to the West Coast for conversion to High Speed Transport Service.

USS Ward took part in many of the island assaults and amphibious landing. On the morning December 7, 1944, three years to the day after her number three gun fired the opening shot of the War; she was patrolling off the invasion area when she came under

attack by several Japanese Aircraft. One bomber made a suicide crash into her hull amidships, bringing the ship to a stop.

The fires could not be controlled, wards crew was ordered to abandon ship and she was sunk by gunfire from USS O'Brien DD-725, whose Commanding Officer, William W. Outerbridge, had been in Command of Ward during her action off Pearl Harbor three years before.

USS Ward was named in Honor of Commander James H. Ward, USA, 1806-1861, the first U.S. Navy officer to be killed in Action during the Civil War.

Not sure if any one from the Choctaw County was on board this ship for the "Love of Ships." USS Ward DD-139 went to the Deep Blue Fighting like a Lady.

Go Navy!

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