



JOHN GEE BLACK
HISTORICAL CENTER, INC.

Fall Newsletter

September, 2015

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MEMORIES REKINDLED BY A NAME

By Rosann Hollinshed

Just the last name of visitors to the John Gee Center triggered fond childhood memories. Bobette Braxton, our on-call board member, had the pleasure of meeting the relation of Rev. Elbert & Mrs. Wynona McGhee who toured the Center on July 14th. I'm sure many of us remember them and their daughter, Betty. They lived on Neil Avenue.

They owned a grocery store on the corner of 3rd & Pine beside Jim Bill Robinson's business. Oh how I loved to go to that store with those glass jars full of all those colorful candies. You would be given a little brown paper sack and got whatever candy you wanted. We always knew we would be leaving with some penny candy. That's what it cost then. (And they always threw in extra).

Rev. McGhee was the Associate Pastor at Paint Creek Baptist Church and Mrs. McGhee played the piano and pipe organ as well as Director of the Senior Choir. (We had 3 choirs at that time.) She had a beautiful soprano voice and, as they say, she could make that organ talk. The churches were filled in those days—40's thru '60's!

There were no empty lots in the neighborhood and every house was filled with families, large & small. We had barbershops, beauticians, podiatrists, dentist, teachers, groceries, florists, pool halls, restaurants, mechanic, bars, antique shop and probably more. Oh how the blocks and area have changed.

It is so good to have memories triggered about people and places of yesteryear. We may not have been rolling in dough, but it was a wonderful, pleasant time!

I'm sure some of you have memories that you would like to share. Feel free to send them in for our newsletter, please.

MAY STUDENT TOURS – May 11, 2015

It was a fruitful, enjoyable but busy day which took all hands on deck to accomplish these presentations.

The annual 5th Grade Washington School Walking tours began at 9:00 a.m., visiting John Gee Black Historical Center, the Lincoln Colored School, and the Pine Street Colored Cemetery. The first class to arrive at the Center was Ms. Duncan's class of 20 students, Ms. Kay's class was next with 16 students and 2 chaperones, followed by Mr. Ward's class with 18 students and 1 chaperone, and last, but not least, was Mr. Scott's class of 23 students and 2 chaperones. Presenters were: Sharon Anderson and Elaine Armstrong at the cemetery, Morris Hogan and Rose Stoney at the school, and at the Center, Bobette Braxton, who gave presentations, assisted by Dorothy Casey, Lorene Goggins, Rosann Hollinshed, and Althea Howard.

At 12:30 p.m., the 7th and 8th Graders from Buckeye Hills attended the presentation at the Center. This was the first year for their visit to the Center. One class had 11 students and 4 adults and the other had 9 students and 3 adults with one teacher.

Every class made asafetida bags, which slave children wore around their necks to repel all illnesses and plagues, both known and unknown; and once again, the Women's Auxiliary treated all who attended with drinks and chips.

A BIG thank you to all the schools, teachers, students, presenters, volunteers, & Women's Auxillary who help preserve Black History.

SICKNESS & REMEDIES – Part II (as

promised)

By Rosann Hollinshed

The **Second Cholera Pandemic** was from 1830-1851 and had a huge impact on the slave population. Cholera is spread mainly through unclean water sources. It began in India and swiftly spread via trade routes. Settlers traveling along the Mormon and Oregon Trails brought cholera to the United States, killing an estimated 150,000 Americans.

Slaves had no wealth and no rights so they had to depend on home remedies. Health matters was a contention between slaves and owners because owners wanted to exercise their own control over a slave’s body. Most slaves distrusted white doctors because slaves were often experimented on. Hundreds of slaves in 1800, including 200 of Thomas Jefferson’s slaves, were given smallpox in order to test how safe the new vaccine was. Because of this, slaves would hide their illnesses.

A quote from a slave in the South Carolina narratives said: *“Missus Martha sho’ did look after de slaves good when they was sick. Us had medicine made from herbs, leaves and roots; some of them was **cat-nip, garlic root, tansy** and roots of **burdock**. De roots of burdock soaked in whiskey was mighty good medicine. We dipped asafetida in turpentine and hung it ’round our necks to keep off disease.”*

Some remedies used for illnesses in fall and winter were: **Boneset** used for colds. **Pennyroyal** used to reduce fever, headaches, and fighting colds. **Cherry and dogwood bark** were used to make tea for fever and chills and treat malaria. **Pennyroyal** tea also was used for cough, fever, & colds as well as kidney and liver ailments. Native Americans used **St. John’s wort** for tuberculosis, respiratory ailments, coughs, snake bites, & fever. Slaves used **mustard** & whole wheat flour mixed with water to make a plaster for pneumonia. **Gum turpentine** from pine & fir trees was used for bronchitis, toothaches, and other illnesses. **Golden Seal** was used by Native Americans to stain their faces & dye clothes, and stomach aches, skin problems, and sore eyes.

What home remedies has your family passed down from generation to generation?

TRIBUTE TO CORLISS MILLER

By Bobette Braxton

The John Gee Center sends our deepest sympathy to the Corliss Miller family. This community has lost another one of our historians. Corliss loved America’s oral and written black history, culture, and arts. She was always ready and willing to share her knowledge with others. She will be greatly missed.

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HISTORICAL FIELD TRIP

After Bobette Braxton’s discovery of Charles Richard Patterson, the founder of the World’s First Black owned automobile manufacturing company, who had a business in Gallipolis in 1939, we decided to visit Greenfield Ohio where the company originated.

So off we took, Thomas Austin-Braxton, Bobette Braxton, Geneva Braxton, Allie Callaghan and Aunt Roro (Rosann Hollinshed). It only took about 1hour 20 minutes before we were sitting in front of the Greenfield Historical Society. Harold Schmidt, President of the Society was our host. We visited two of buildings—one which held many displays and the one that is called “Travellers Rest” which houses the society’s library, meeting room and display area. They had other sites to visit and it is a very historical area, but we were focused on learning more about C. R. Patterson. Mr. Schmidt was very informative, knowledgeable, friendly and willing to give us any information, including copies, that we requested.

One article I found extremely memorable. As the story goes, whether fact or fiction, Henry Ford was riding the train from Detroit to another city south of Greenfield when one stop seemed extremely long to him. So he inquired about the delay. He was told that sheet metal and automobile parts were being unloaded in Greenfield because there was a man who manufactured automobiles. Upon returning to Detroit, he decided that no sheet metal or parts could be shipped to Greenfield--Mr. Patterson had to find another source.

TIP OF THE HAT:

- To Blake Harris and Austin Vanco for laying lauan board and tile in the women’s restroom in time for the student tours and also to Morris Hogan for his repairs.

- To Sharon Anderson, Bobette Braxton, Morris Hogan, and Rosann Hollinshed for cleaning the Center before the student tours.

- To Bobette Braxton for her annual presentation to Gallipolis In Bloom on June 16th.

- To Dorothy Casey for opening the Center on July 4th.

- To Bobette Braxton for hosting the Pinkham family, relation of John Gee.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Sept. 18-20: 152nd Emancipation Day Celebration at Bob Evans Farms. Events planned for all--crafts, food, vendors, reenactors, the Columbus Zoo and more. The main speaker for Sunday’s program is track and field multi-event Olympic gold medalist, Jackie Joyner-Kersey. Come catch up with old friendships and make new ones. You will have a GREAT day(s)!!!

Oct. 20: Annual Tour for the University of Rio Grande Nursing Students. 12:30 – 4:30 p.m. Presenters will be Elaine Armstrong, Bobette Braxton & Rusie McCallister.

TOURS:

Individual/group tours of the Center can be arranged by calling Bobette Braxton at (740) 441-0999 or Dorothy Casey at (740) 446-2447.

Please send 2015 Membership Dues to:

**Bobette Braxton Treasurer
108 Pine Street
Gallipolis OH 45631**

**Individual - \$20.00
Family - \$35.00
Nonprofit/Church - \$50.00
Business/Corporation - \$100.00**