



Special points of interest:

- Merigold After-school Adventure Programs a Success (See Page 2)
- MS Author Anne Hart Preus Featured at Evening With Books (See This Page Below)
- History of the Robert T. Hollingsworth Public Library in Shelby (See Page 2)

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Volume XIV, Issue I

A History of the Thelma Rayner Memorial Library

The Town of Merigold was the first municipality to apply to the county library board for a branch library when the Bolivar County Library System was organized. Previously, the citizens of Merigold received service from the Community Library at the American Legion Hut, which had been discontinued by 1957. Upon acceptance by the library board, work began to extensively remodel the Merigold Town Hall, which had been selected as a desirable location for the new branch library. The Mississippi Library Commission provided furniture and a book collection, while the Town of Merigold provided and installed shelving.

The branch was formally opened and dedicated on February 8, 1959, with Mrs. Cora Lee Catchings as the newly appointed librarian. In 1963, the local library board was appointed: Mrs. James R. Smith III, who was elected chairman; Mrs. Virgie Hiter; Mrs. Ed D. Rayner; Billy Latham, and Charlie Clark (who by 1973 had been replaced by Mrs. E.C. Meek, Jr.). In February 1967, Mrs. Catchings retired and was honored by the board at an open house in the Rayner home. She was replaced by Myrtle Matthews (Mrs. Dan).

During the summer of 1971, the library was returned to the extensively renovated American Legion Hut, which was owned by the Town of Merigold. On July 8, 1971, the library was opened and renamed the Thelma M. Rayner Memorial Library. Thelma Rayner (Mrs. Ira) had been instrumental in establishing the Community Library by going house to house collecting book donations and then volunteering to serve as the librarian in 1934, which she continued to do until her death in 1953. The library was open nine hours per week. Yolanda Spearman has been the librarian since summer 2023.



Unfortunately, we don't have any early photos of the library in Merigold, but here is a cool photo from of an early business in Merigold.

Evening With Books Welcomed MS Author Anne Hart Preus

BCLS was pleased to welcome MS author Anne Hart Preus to our Evening With Books program on January 11th at the Robinson-Carpenter Memorial Library. Ms. Preus talked about her recent book *Out of Texas* that she co-wrote with her cousin Joseph Caldwell Townsend. The program was hosted by the Friends of the Bolivar County Library System. Copies of *Out of Texas* are available for checkout in both Cleveland and Rosedale.



LePoint Cassibry Smith Newsletter

The Dr. Robert T. Hollingsworth Public Library in Shelby



Photo of the railroad depot before it was renovated and converted to the library.

The Shelby Public Library was formally dedicated on February 14, 1959, and was originally housed in a 324 square foot storefront rented by the City of Shelby from Wayne Thompson. The first library board was appointed by Mayor Scott Morrison in May, 1960: Mrs. Jack Denton, chairman; Mrs. H. L. Bretall; Mrs. Harry Childress; Charles Newton; and James McKenzie.

When the City of Shelby applied to the Mississippi Library Commission for funds for a new building,

Dr. and Mrs. R. T. Hollingsworth presented the City with a deed to a lot, which had been purchased from Mrs. Ruth Hawkins with the stipulation that only a library could be built there. Service for the new facility began in March 1968.

On May 14, 1968, the Shelby railroad depot closed and was purchased by the City of Shelby in 1976 for later conversion into the Shelby Public Library in 1977. The library was later designated a Mississippi Landmark by the Historic Preservation Division of the Mississippi Department of

Archives & History on January 6, 1988. The highway marker was unveiled on April 14, 1989.

On November 17, 2005, the library was renamed Dr. Robert T. Hollingsworth Public Library for the retired, beloved Dr. Bob, as he was affectionately known. Dr. Bob and his wife Kathryn, a registered nurse who worked side-by-side with her husband, served the City of Shelby and the community for over 50 years.

Former librarians include Evelyn Browning (Mrs. James), the first

Continued on Page 3 at Shelby Library

*I'm not comfortable
being preachy, but
more people need to
start spending as
much time in the
library as they do on
the basketball court.
~Kareem Abdul-
Jabbar~*

Calendar

January 26th, February 2nd, 16th, 23rd, March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th—**Story Hour @ 10 a.m.**—Open to the Public at Robinson-Carpenter

February 21st, March 20th, April 17th—**Library Commission Meeting @ 10 a.m.**—Open to the Public at

Robinson-Carpenter

February 21st, March 20th, April 17th—**Board of Trustees Meeting @ 1:30 p.m.**—Open to the Public at Robinson-Carpenter

February 6th, April 2nd, August 6th—**Seniors Day Out! on the First Tuesday Every Other Month**

@ 10—11:30 a.m.—Open to the Public at Robinson-Carpenter

February 19th—**Presidents' Day—All Libraries Will Be Closed**

March 29th & 30th—**Good Friday & Easter Weekend—All Libraries Will Be Closed**

Merigold's Afterschool Adventure Programs

Librarian Yolanda Spearman shared these photos from a couple of her Afterschool Adventure Programs she hosted at the Thelma Rayner Memorial Library in September. As you can see, the participants enjoyed the craft activities!



Shelby Library

permanent librarian; Patricia A. Denton, who took over as librarian in 1972; Vivian Malatesta, librarian from 1974 to December 2005; and Tamara Blackwell from October 2006 to October 2007. Librarian Marie Shorter has served the needs of library patrons since 2011.

BCLS is saddened to announce that due to circumstances beyond our control the Dr. Robert T. Hollingsworth Public Library will close effective January 31, 2024.

Did You Know?

WI-FI. The wi-fi at the Robinson-Carpenter Memorial Library in Cleveland extends into the parking lot and at Rosedale into the front & back porch areas so those who want to use the wi-fi may do so when the libraries are closed.

NOTARY PUBLIC. Robinson-Carpenter Memorial Library in Cleveland has a free notary public available to the public. Our Office Manager, Melissa Robinson, is the notary and she is **generally** available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. However, Melissa is sometimes tied up with library business and may not be available every day and/or without a wait, so it is recommended that those needing notary services call the library to make an appointment.

MEETING ROOM. The libraries in both Cleveland and Rosedale have meeting rooms available for reservation during regular library hours. Unfortunately, neither location can accommodate after hours meetings. First time users should read the Meeting Room Policy and then must complete the Meeting Room Reservation Request Form, which must be renewed each year or when group wishes to change the person responsible for the Meeting Room Reservations.

Please note that the Meeting Room at the Dr. Robert T. Hollingsworth Public Library in Shelby will no longer be available effective immediately.

Looking for a Good Book?

Samantha: *The Maid* by Nita Prose. “Charmingly eccentric” Molly loves her job as a hotel maid, taking great pride in doing a good job. Her world is turned upside down when she finds a hotel guest dead in his room and finds herself a suspect in the case. I really like how Molly gets caught up in the scandals happening in the hotel. This critically acclaimed whodunit is for a must for locked-room mystery lovers. (Fiction—Print, eBook & Audiobook on CD)

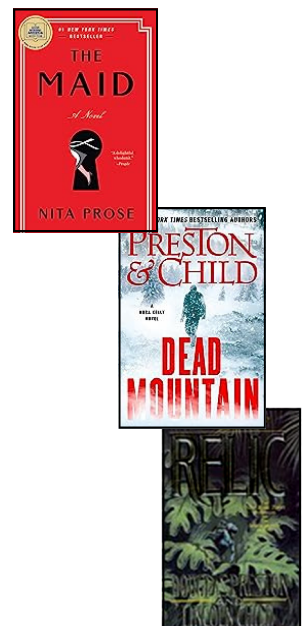
Tamara: *Dead Mountain* (A Nora Kelly Novel) by Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child. This is the fourth in the Nora Kelly series and it is just as exciting as the previous books! FBI Agent Corrie Swanson has just been assigned a new mentor in Agent Clay Sharp, who assigns Corrie as primary on an intriguing and enigmatic cold case. Nine experienced mountaineers

perished under very mysterious circumstances while backpacking in the New Mexico mountains fifteen years ago. When two of the three mountaineers bodies are suddenly recovered, the case is reopened. As in the past, Corrie brings in archaeologist Dr. Nora Kelly to assist in the case. As Corrie, Nora, Sharp, and others race to find answers, others are working just as diligently to stop them. Why? Wow, I could not put this book down! (Fiction—Print)

Tamara: *Relic* by Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child. I just reread this fantastic book published in 1995 that introduced the Special Agent Pendergast character that is the lead character in 22 novels (so far), not counting Pendergast’s “cameo” appearances in the Nora Kelly Novels. You might have seen the movie *Relic*, which is based on this novel, that came out in 1997 with Tom Sizemore and

Penelope Miller, but do not let that stop you from reading this novel. It is so much better!!!! Indeed, the movie didn’t even have the Agent Pendergast character, nor the Bill Smithback character that was introduced in this novel and also shows up in later books in the series. The premise is an unknown killer is stalking people at a prestigious New York museum, but is the killer human or animal, or something else? Agent Pendergast involves himself when he recognizes the killer’s MO from some murders that happened several years previous in New Orleans. Thrown in the mix is an important new exhibition that is being mounted with a huge gala planned to open it in seven days. The museum’s top brass are determined the gala will go on as planned—nor matter what! But hey, nothing can go wrong, right? Entertaining, fast moving, and very suspenseful! (Fiction—Print)

“Why buy a book
when you
can join a library.”
~ Ricky Gervais ~





Bolivar County Library System

104 South Leflore Avenue
Cleveland, MS 38732-2607

Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 9a.m.—6p.m.
Friday 9a.m.—5p.m.
Saturday 9a.m.—1p.m.
Sunday Closed

All Branches Are Closed on All Legal Holidays (Except Columbus Day) and on Good Friday; note that If Friday is a Legal Holiday, the Saturday Following It Will Be Closed, Too.

Phone: (622) 843-2774
Fax: (662) 843-4701
Email: info@bolivar.lib.ms.us

Individual phone numbers and email addresses may be found at our website.

"Like" us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/1bcls; you may also access the page from our website.



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Some Bolivar County History...

"Rosedale by Florence Sillers Ogden"

The last excerpt left off at: "Most of the brick buildings on Court street, including the Sillers Building and the Valley Bank, were built at this time."

"EARLY SETTLERS"

Closely interwoven with the history of Rosedale are the names of McGuire, Jones, Montgomery, Scott, Sillers, Shelby, Yerger, Clark, Allen, Moore, Christmas, Roberts, Chaney, Rice, Bryant, Lobdell, Dulaney, Sutherland, Melchoir, Lapresto, Reinach, Woods, Gill and others. The descendants of many of them still live here. Some of the beloved and influential women of early times were: Mrs. Mary McGuire, Mrs. Frank A. Montgomery, Mrs. Matilda B. Sillers, Mrs. Charles Scott, Mrs. Pinky McGuire, Mrs. Mary D. Shelby, Mrs. E. A. Kirk, Mrs. Minerva Lightfoot, Mrs. Bender Miller, Mrs. Margaret Winchester Clark, Mrs. E. H. Moore, Mrs. William Arthur Yerger, Mrs. C. T. Christmas, Mrs. John Gill, Miss Tillie Montgomery, Miss Hattie Chambers, Mrs. Anna B. Farrar, Mrs. A. C. Wilson, Mrs. Mary C. Warfield.

EARLY LAWYERS

As Rosedale was the county seat and, consequently, the most important town in the county, the life of the town centered around the courthouse. As is usual in new countries, there was much litigation which drew an assemblage of brilliant lawyers to the bar. Among these were: Colonel Frank A. Montgomery, Charles Scott, Walter Sillers, Fred Clark, O. G. McGuire, E. H. Moore, F. M. Scott, E. H. Woods, Neville Scott, Thomas S. Owen, Fontaine Jones. The Sillers law firm, established in 1884, now Sillers and Roberts, is the oldest law firm in the county and has an unbroken record of service to the present time. It is the oldest business institution in the town. The lawyers more than any other group, developed leadership in public affairs, and guided the reins of government of the country.

Court, with terms lasting six weeks or more and dockets full, met in the spring and the fall, as today. Men rode in on horseback from all parts of the county and stayed through the term. The town overflowed. Hotel facilities were meager, the judge and the court officials stayed in the homes of the lawyers. It was a time for toddies, good stories, roast turkey, wild duck, and quail. Ladies of the church vied with one another to serve benefit oyster suppers in the fall, strawberries and ice cream in the spring.

It was not customary for ladies to attend court trials. When the young bride of one of the lawyers wanted to hear her husband try a case, the town gasped, but the district attorney's wife and a few young women braved public opinion and went with her to the courtroom. This was the opening wedge. By 1904, when the McLemore case was tried, every lady in town put down her housework and went to court. School turned out to allow the children to attend this murder trial. Lawyers of today are: Walter Sillers, W. C. Roberts, M. L. Kaufman, A. F. Valentine.

Excerpt from *History of Bolivar County, Mississippi* (DAR, 1948) by Florence Warfield Sillers, et al.

This excerpt will continue with Rosedale's "Early Doctors" in the next newsletter.

Bolivar County Library System Information

Board of Trustees:

Ms. Katherine Crump, *Chair*
Ms. Lynn Shurden, *Vice-Chair*
Ms. Lucille Holmes, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Mr. Nathaniel Grammer

Ms. Cora Jackson

Cleveland Commission:

Ms. Jurist Green, *Chair*
Ms. Dorothy Tolliver, *Vice-Chair*
Ms. Carol Tatum
Ms. Heather Walker
Ms. Corrinne Hegwood

Library Staff:

Emily Bell, Director
Melissa Robinson, Office Manager
Melanie Free, Systems Administrator
Tamara Blackwell, Reference / Newsletter Editor
Martha Lawson, Rosedale
Bobbie Matheney, Youth Svcs
Marie Shorter, Circulation
Kevin Reed, Circulation
Valency Rogers, Technical Svcs
Samantha Williams, Circulation
Yolanda Spearman, Merigold
Cindy Williamson, Circulation
Hannah Franklin, Circulation
Clara, Housekeeping
Donny, Rosedale/Housekeeping

Rosedale Public Library

(662) 759-6332/Fax: 734-0825
702 Front Street
Hours: M & W 10a.m.-5p.m.
T & Th 1p.m.—5p.m.
F 12p.m.—5p.m.
Martha Lawson, Librarian

Thelma Rayner Memorial Library (Merigold)

(662) 748-2105/Fax 748-2596
201 Front Street
Hours: T & Th—1p.m.-5p.m.
Yolanda Spearman, Librarian

Dr. Robert T. Hollingsworth Public Library (Shelby)

Due to circumstances beyond our control, this library will close effective January 31, 2024.