

ALLEN GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 2025

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ALLEN GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2025

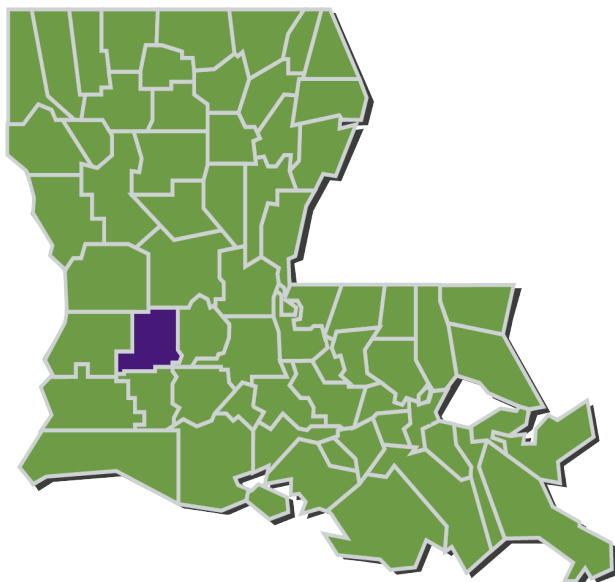
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THE ALLEN GENEALOGICAL and HISTORICAL SOCIETY was organized in May 1985 to collect, organize, process, and preserve genealogical material. The purposes of the Society are to promote interest in genealogy, to assist and encourage genealogical researchers in gathering material on historical events and people of Allen Parish, and to help complete family histories. AGHS was incorporated in March 1990.

AGHS regular meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 AM in the genealogy room of the Kinder branch of the Allen Parish Library, located at 833 4th Street, Kinder, Louisiana. Members are willing to help visitors with research, and to answer questions they may have.

MEMBERSHIP fees are \$20 per calendar year per person, and includes a digital subscription to the CROSSROADS newsletter. Any correspondence and dues should be sent to AGHS, PO Box 789, Kinder, LA 70648. The Society's email address is allenghs.contact@gmail.com.

The Allen GHS website is www.allenghs.com. The website has a page dedicated to posting the current issue of CROSSROADS, as well as an archive of previous issues. QUERIES may be submitted by email, and all queries are posted on the "Queries" link of the website. When sending a query, please include all pertinent information such as names, dates, and places, along with your name and contact information.



EDITORIAL POLICY: We encourage and welcome contributions of genealogical and historical material that pertain to Allen Parish locations and families for inclusion in CROSSROADS. The Society does not assure responsibility for accuracy or for any copyright infringement of submitted and published material. We reserve the right to edit and/or reject material we deem not suitable for publication.

DONATIONS of genealogical and historical materials such as books, periodicals, family histories, newspaper clippings, old photos, and filled out 5-generation charts are accepted by the Society and each item donated will be cataloged and placed on file in the genealogy room of the Kinder Library to be used for research. Memorials and honorariums are also welcomed by the Society.

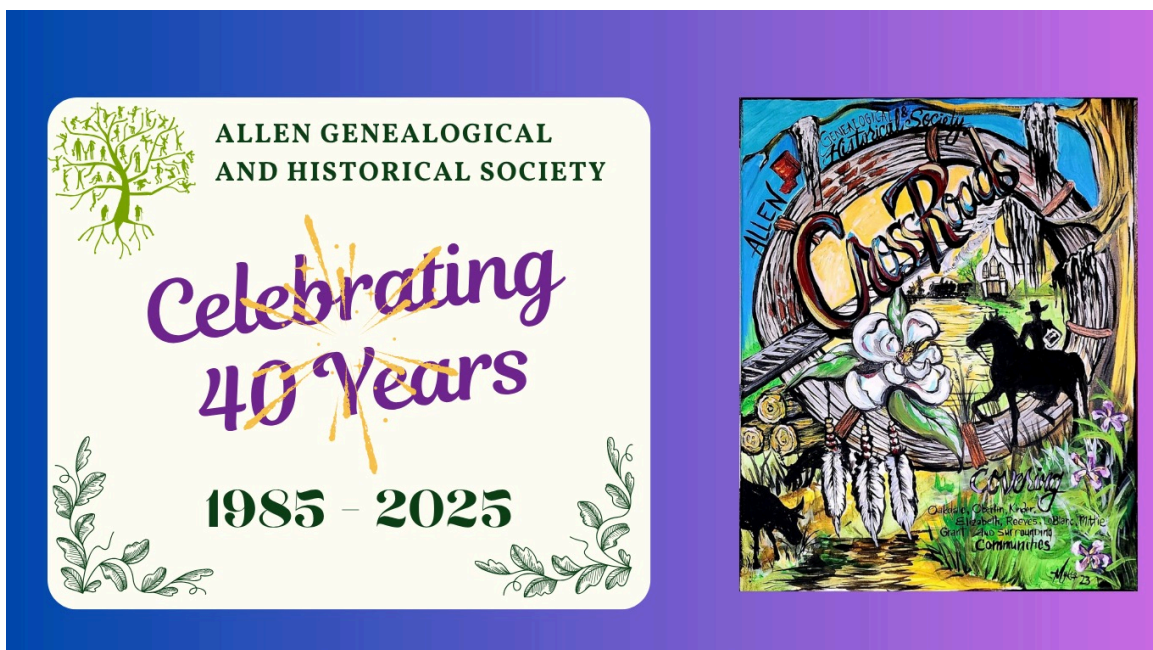
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Note: Books posted for sale in Crossroads prior to 2024 are out of print and are no longer for sale.



Allen GHS Celebrates 40-Year Anniversary



The year was 1985.

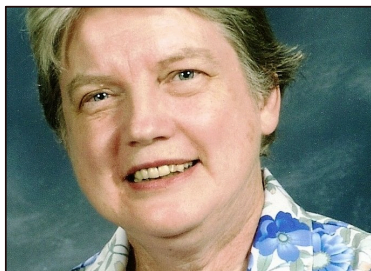
The top movie of that year was a film appropriately titled “Back to the Future.”

It was also the year that the Allen Genealogical and Historical Society was formed.

As Allen GHS celebrates its 40th anniversary, we look back on those early days, and pay our respects to those founders who established the Society we continue today.

1985

“The Society formally began in 1985, but there were actually meetings going on before that,” Sherry Manuel, the Society’s first president, said in a 2025 interview. “In fact, I was late to the group.”



Shirley Manuel

Manuel’s mother, Violet Wilson, lived in the Kinder area, and Manuel was living in Crowley at the time. “I got to where I would drive in and attend these meetings regularly and visit my mother also,” said Manuel. “Like killing two birds with one stone!”

Manuel said that those early meetings were conducted in the back room of the old library, which was located on 9th Street. Wridley Fontenot was the librarian at the time,

“It was just an informal group,” recalled Manuel. “We were gathering stuff and sharing it, like five-generation charts and addresses of people and that sort of thing.”

This group formally created the Allen Genealogical and Historical Society in the spring of 1985, and it received its

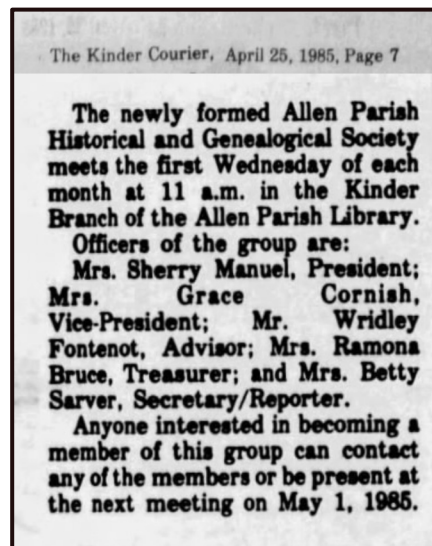
charter from the state in 1990.

“You didn’t have information online like you do nowadays,” said Manuel. “It wasn’t just sitting there waiting for you. It was a totally different world.”

“I mean, it would take us twenty years to research a line that would probably take us a couple of hours today.”

The officer slate in that inaugural year contained some genealogical heavy hitters.

Grace Cornish was the Vice President. Cornish, along with Ethelinda Andrus, authored the book *Looking Back at Kinder*, the authoritative history of Kinder, Louisiana, which is now in its second printing. Coincidentally, or not so coincidentally, it was first published in 1985.





Some of the early founders of the Allen Genealogical and Historical Society posed together for this photo when the Society received its Charter in 1990.

(Front Row, L to R) Grace Cornish, Betty Sarver, Ramona Bruce.

(Back Row, L to R) Mayor Fred Ashy, Ethelinda Andrus, Wridley Fontenot.

Wridley Fontenot, whose position was Advisor, was the librarian at the time. He had a PhD, he was an Air Force veteran, and he was a meticulous genealogical researcher.

Ramona Bruce was Treasurer, and Betty Sarver was Secretary/Reporter. "They were both great researchers," recalled Manuel.

Ramona Bruce was active for many years with the Society, including serving as president from 1993 - 2001. She also served on the Allen Parish Library Board for several years, as well as served as an officer with the Friends of the Kinder Library.

Betty Sarver subsequently took over as president of the Society in 1986, and served in that capacity from 1986 - 1992, and again from 2002 - 2020. She authored several books, including *Oaks from Acorns: The Descendants of Bud and Oziet Cole*. She was also a contributor to the classic genealogical book *Cole Footprints*, by Camellia Denys, published in 1984.

Manuel's work in the Society was short-lived. She shortly thereafter moved to Thibodaux, Louisiana, and her direct engagement with the Society came to an end.

However, her love for genealogy never cooled. She continued to author several genealogical publications, and stayed active in genealogical research.

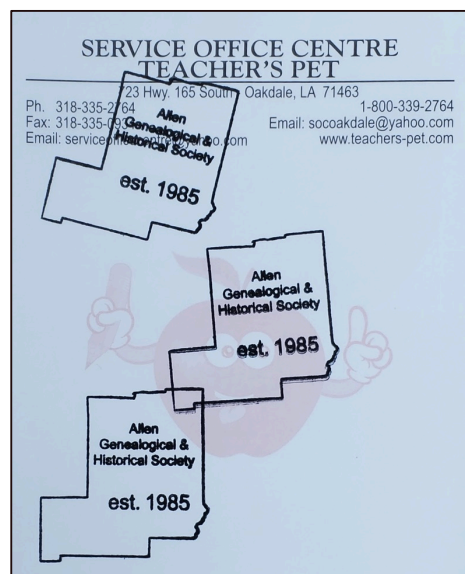
"Genealogy is still there. It's not going away. People are always going to want to know where they came from and who they are," she said.

"And DNA has really opened up things too. It's just a whole different world, and without DNA, you don't really get a full picture. You can't do one or the other; you have to use them

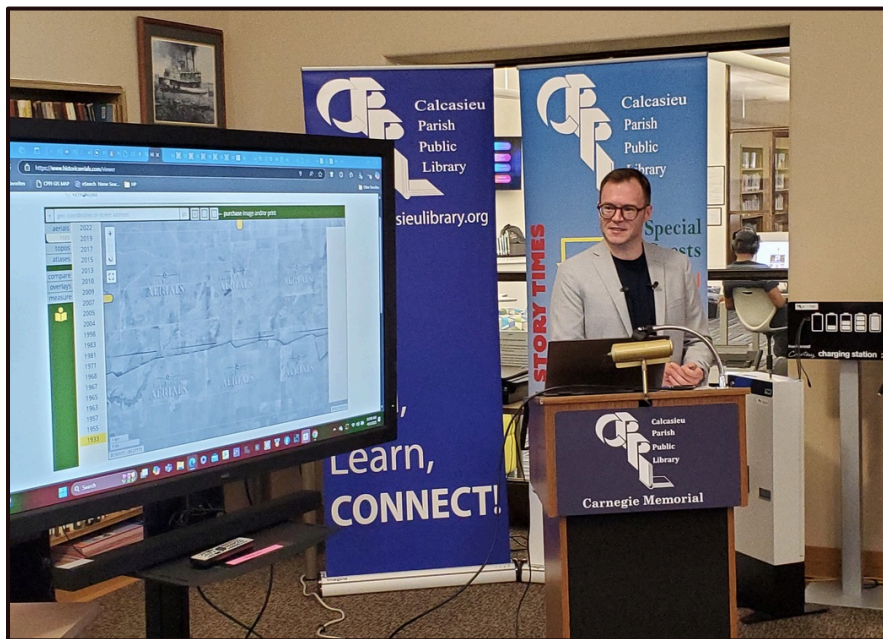
both. So it means we have to be multi-disciplinary today."

Current Allen GHS president Laura Hall said, "I give my heartfelt thanks to the ladies and gentlemen who endeavored forty years ago—whether by landline, or church pew, or letters in the mail, to form this organization."

"Those who have the calling to gather up, preserve, and pass along the people and treasures of the past can be counted, in my opinion, as treasures themselves."



Trent Gremillion Talks Cemeteries and Historical Records



Trent Gremillion at the SWLA Genealogical and Historical Library (photo by Jon Buck Ford)

Allen GHS held its April meeting in conjunction with a presentation by author and Calcasieu Parish Clerk of Court official Trent Gremillion.

"I want to introduce the newly launched [Louisiana Register of Historic Cemeteries](#) website," said Gremillion. "It is run by the [Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation](#), and it's for registering all the cemeteries in the state of Louisiana."

Gremillion went on to describe the registration process, and share his experiences in registering the cemetery that he was working on, the Catholic Cemetery of Lake Charles.

"If you're wanting to register a cemetery with them, it does have to be older than 50 years," said Gremillion. "And it either needs to have someone buried there that has historical significance, or it needs to have a marker that's important, or it needs to have some kind of significance, even if it's a family that's buried there—anything of that nature."

Gremillion went on to share with the many attendees the websites that he utilizes as he conducts his research, as well as telling stories about the things he has found, such as:

- The [Calcasieu Parish GIS](#) website, which includes an interactive map that sources many categories of data, including aerial views of Lake Charles from 1940 - present.
- The [Louisiana Office of State Lands](#) website, which provides document access to historical records, tax records, and SLABS (State Land and Building System) records across all Louisiana parishes, with records dating back to the 1800s.
- The [Library of Congress](#) website, which has a large collection of historic newspapers, including the Lake Charles Echo (1876 - 1898), where obituaries and other valuable data can be found.

Gremillion also brought a collection of old maps from the Calcasieu Clerk's office, which included surveys of Lake Charles and the surrounding area.

"I enjoy digging, and I hope I shared some things with you that you didn't know about," concluded Gremillion. "I hope you enjoyed it!"

SWLA Genealogical & Historical Library

TIDBITS OF HISTORY:

PRESERVING SWLA'S HISTORIC CEMETERIES

Join the SWLA Genealogical & Historical Library as we welcome Trent Gremillion from the Calcasieu Parish Clerk of Court's Office!

The Clerk of Court's own Trent Gremillion will be joining us at the SWLA Genealogical & Historical Branch to discuss the importance of preserving and protecting historic cemeteries in Southwest Louisiana.

He will share practical tools for cemetery research, as well as introduce the newly launched Louisiana Register of Historic Cemeteries (LRHC) website, created by the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation in partnership with Gambrel & Peak, Tulane School of Architecture, and SymGeo.

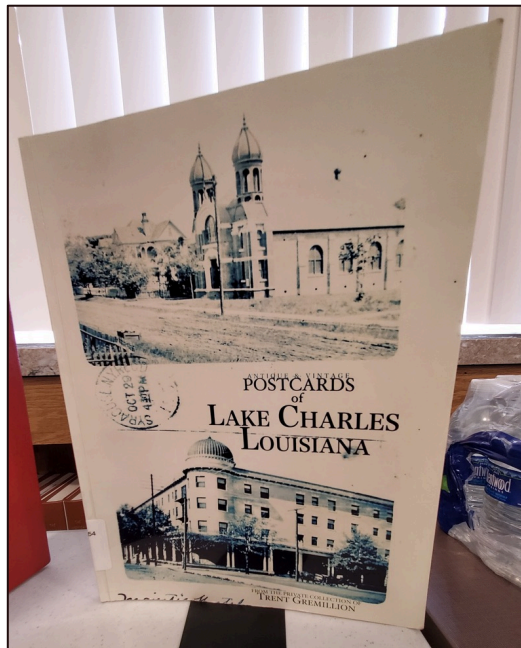
This is a must-attend event for anyone interested in history, genealogy, or cultural preservation!

Tuesday, April 1
10:00am - 11:00am

SWLA Genealogical & Historical Library
411 Pujo Street
Lake Charles, LA 70601
(337) 721-7110
genstaff@calcasieulibrary.org



Trent Gremillion at April Meeting



Fran Clemmons—Thank you for your Service!



Fran Clemmons—Allen GHS Officer Since 2005

In each issue of Crossroads, Allen GHS will feature one of its members. This issue will shine the spotlight on Fran Clemmons.

Fran Clemmons has led a life of service.

The Kinder native and US Army veteran has held officer positions in the Allen Genealogical and Historical Society for the past 20 years.

Brought on as Historian/Reporter in 2005, Fran was named Editor/Publisher of the *Crossroads* newsletter in 2008, and continued in that role until late 2020, when the Covid pandemic halted most of the Society's activities.

Fran has also been the Society's Secretary/Treasurer for the past 15 years.

Ironically, it was the *Crossroads* newsletter that sparked Fran's interest in joining the Society.

"I got interested in the Society through reading the *Crossroads* newsletter!" recalled Clemmons.

"My mother worked at the hospital as an aide, and the RN she worked with was named Martha Rider. And Miss Martha's mother belonged to the Society and would get the *Crossroads* newsletter."

Clemmons went on to explain that her uncle Pierre Nevils and aunt Ouida Nevils were members of the Society, and they had published their family tree in the newsletter.

"And Martha recognized that," said Clemmons. "So Martha brought that newsletter and gave it to Mother, and I just happened to pick it up, and start reading it, and I saw that my

aunt and uncle had written it."

"So I was talking to my aunt Ouida about it, and she invited me to come to a meeting, so I started coming. And I've been coming ever since!"

Fran, Allen GHS recognizes the contributions you have made to the Society, and we thank you for your service!

Page 2 - The Kinder Courier News, Thursday, March 17, 2005



The new officers for Allen Genealogical and Historical Society include from left: Secretary/Treasurer Bill Fawcett, Assistant Editor Loretta Headrick, Reporter/Historian Fran Clemmons, Editor/Vice President Ethel Sacker, and President Betty Sarver.

Fran Clemmons became an Allen GHS officer in 2005.

Fran Clemmons wrote the following information about herself as a contribution to this article.

I was born on December 1, 1948, given the name Francis Ellen Williams. I am female, but the spelling of Francis is the male version of the name.

My father, Bryan Eugene Williams, named me. I guess he secretly wanted a son, but he got me, a big 9-pound, 14 ounce baby girl.

My mother, Mary Ellen Nevils, was a little woman, and didn't weigh more than 100 pounds soaking wet.

The name Francis/Frances was a family name, but no one said which family member I was named after. My mother's mother was Frances, but no one ever called her by that name. Her family in East Texas where most of her family lived, called her Frank.

When she married my grandfather, Luke Nevils, his father Pierre Nevils, called my grandmother Fannie. The name stuck, and everyone called her Fannie.



Fran's grandmother Fannie Cartrett Nevils, 90th birthday.

She never had a birth certificate, so some years later for social security purposes she got one, but had to have people that knew her from her younger years sign letters so she could get a birth certificate. "Fannie Cartrett Nevils" was on her certificate.

My dad had an aunt named Frances, and my mother had a cousin she was close to named Frances, so I could have

been named for one of them.

My middle name was my mother's middle name. It is a family name also. My great-grandmother's name was Elenor, sometimes called Ellen. Also one of my great-aunt's name was Ellen. Ellen was a name used by lots of the older family members.

My one and only sister, Eugenia Ann Williams, was born on April Fools Day, 1955. She weighed 11 pounds at birth. There were no more children after that.

My mother named her after my father. Eugenia was the female version of Eugene, my father's middle name. No one has ever called her by Eugenia. Everyone calls her Ann.

She was my April Fools Day surprise.

I was in first grade and I never had any "show and tell" happenings to share with my class, so I made up a story about a baby brother at my house. My teacher knew my mother was expecting, so she thought the baby was born and never questioned my story.

My uncle Pierre was a senior that year, and my teacher knew him. It just so happened that she brought our class to the library, which was an event for us, as it was upstairs.

Coming down the stairs as the class was going up was my uncle. Miss Durio, my teacher, stopped



FRANCES WILLIAMS

him to say hello, and to ask how my mom and the "baby boy" were doing.

Well then, I got busted big time.

When Ann was born, Mom sent a birth announcement to Miss Durio, which she read to the class, letting everyone know I had a sister that was born April 1, 1955. April Fool on me!

I went to school from first grade through 12th grade in Kinder, Louisiana. I graduated in 1966.

Soon after I graduated, I went to work for a dentist in Kinder. My mother's cousin, Bonnie, had a friend that worked for Dr. Karam in Kinder.

The friend was retiring, and mentioned that a position was open at the office. Bonnie let my mom know, and I went to apply for the job. I was hired as the receptionist and worked there several years.

My friends lived in Lake Charles, and I wanted to move there also. I found an ad in the paper for a dental assistant job, so I went to talk in the agency that put the ad in the paper.

The agency would help get the job, but would take a portion of the first three pay checks. That seemed OK, and I was looking forward to the full pay check once the agency was paid.

Well, when that paycheck was given to me, it was not what I was supposed to get in payment. The dentist I went to work for short-changed me. He as good as told me, take it, or leave it, so I stayed but was very unhappy.

After almost a year, I heard about another dental assistant job in Lake Charles, so I went to apply for it. I was hired that day,, but I had to give two weeks notice to the other dentist.

At the time all this was going on, I was wearing braces on my teeth, seeing an orthodontist. I had an appointment to see him, and was so excited to tell about the new job.

When I told him who I would be working for, he had a fit and said, "NO, you can't go to work for him. He has a bad reputation!"

That scared me, so I called this dentist office and told the girl that answered the phone that I wasn't taking the job. A little later I got a call from that dentist himself. He questioned me about the reason I decided not to take the job with him.

I couldn't tell him about what was told to me from the other dentist, so I told him I couldn't take the job. He was very angry with me and I felt bad but I wasn't going to work for him. Not now for sure.

He proceeded to tell me he would make sure I would never be able to work for anyone in Lake Charles ever.

He really scared me. I had already given notice where I was working, so I made up my mind to enlist in the Army. That was a decision that I am so happy I made.

I enlisted in the Women's Army Corps, and went to basic training in Alabama, then to advanced training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. I was trained as a medical corpsman and dental assistant.

I enjoyed being there and loved being in the Army.



Fran Clemmons, US Army

After leaving Fort Sam Houston, I went to Fort Hood, Texas. There I met and married my soul mate, Wayne Clemmons.

I had to get out of the Army when it was apparent that we were starting a family. Wayne was sent overseas, and I was given an honorable discharge and came home to Kinder to wait for the arrival of my first child.

Duane Alan Clemmons was born on March 27, 1972, at the Kinder Hospital. He was a year old when Wayne got home from overseas. He had orders to be stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

We lived there and were happy for an addition to our family. Katy Ann Clemmons was born on March 20, 1975.

Wayne got orders to go overseas unaccompanied, so my children and I came home to Kinder to wait his return. I worked for Dr. Wilhelm during this time.

When Wayne returned, he had orders for Fort Sam Houston. We were there a few years, then Wayne was sent back overseas.

The children and I moved back to Kinder.

Wayne got permission for me and the kids to go overseas to be with him, so away we went to Germany! We lived there for a few years, then returned to the states where we were sent to Fort



Wayne Clemmons, "The love of my life..."

Bliss, Texas. We lived there in El Paso for several years. I worked for a dentist as a dental assistant.

Wayne was sent back overseas unaccompanied again, but this time the children and I stayed in Texas.

When he came back, we moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Wayne retired at Fort Sill, and we moved back to Kinder. I went to work as a Home Health Nurses Aide, and worked for many years at the job.

Both of our children graduated from Kinder High School and McNeese University. They both married and have beautiful families.

Duane and his wife Paula are teachers. They have two children, Nolan and Natalie.

Katy has a state job, and her husband Eddie is a policeman. They have three children: Bailey, Karly, and Justin, and two grand-babies, Liam, and Olivia (Bailey's babies).

I am so blessed.

The love of my life passed away in April, 2004. I am retired and enjoy my church and church family. I enjoy genealogy and being with my genealogy group every month.



The Clemmons Clan

(L to R) Nolan Clemmons, Natalie Frances Clemmons, Paula Stefflan Clemmons, Duane Alan Clemmons, Francis Clemmons, Katy Ann Clemmons Wellman, Eddie Wellman, Karly Duplechian, Justin Edward Wellman, Bailey Duplechian Whatley, Samuel Whatley, Liam Brent Whatley. (not pictured Olivia Kate Whatley—not yet born)

If Tombstones Could Talk...

McRill Cemetery, Kinder, Louisiana



*McRill Cemetery
(Photo by Wanda Carole Wrinkle Ford)*

In each issue of Crossroads, Allen GHS will feature one of Allen Parish's cemeteries. This issue will pay its respects to McRill Cemetery in Kinder, Louisiana.

In 1899, Mr. Milton Bruce McRill donated land for the establishment of a community cemetery. The land is approximately 1.5 miles north of the town of Kinder.

For years it was referred to as the "McRill Memorial Cemetery," but many locals have come to refer to it as the "Kinder Cemetery."

The first person to be buried in the cemetery was W. O. Reynolds in 1899.

Features of the cemetery include a brick entranceway, a wrought-iron fence, a centrally located flag pole, and a pavilion.

Since 1996, McRill Cemetery has been the site for Memorial Day ceremonies that include the posting of an Avenue of Flags, flags placed on veteran graves, and other ceremonial tributes. An article on McRill Cemetery's Memorial Day ceremonies was featured in Allen GHS's *Crossroads* # 261.

The following are some notable people buried at McRill Cemetery:

William Oliver Reynolds

William Oliver Reynolds (1841 - 1899) was a US Army Civil War veteran, and the first person buried at McRill Cemetery.

He was a member of Company D, 123rd Regiment of the Ohio Volunteers during the Civil War.

He married Mary Elizabeth McRill in 1868 in Hancock County, Ohio. Miss McRill was the sister of Milton McRill,

who donated the land for the cemetery.

After living for a while in Lawrence, Kansas, the Reynolds moved to Kinder to get away from Kansas' harsh winters, and to be near McRill family members who had come before. Elijah McRill, who was Mary and Milton's father, had moved to Kinder in 1892.

William and Mary Reynolds were the ancestors of several Reynolds family lines that still live in the Kinder area.



*William Oliver Reynolds and
Mary Elizabeth McRill Reynolds.*



Douglas Bernard Fournet

Douglas Bernard Fournet (1943 - 1968) is a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient.

He was a US Army First Lieutenant in the Vietnam War, serving in Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery at A Shau Valley in the Republic of Vietnam on May 4, 1968. His citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. 1st Lt. Fournet, Infantry, distinguished himself in action while serving as rifle platoon leader of the 2nd Platoon, Company B.

While advancing uphill against fortified enemy positions in the A Shau Valley, the platoon encountered intense sniper fire, making movement very difficult.



The right flank man suddenly discovered an enemy claymore mine covering the route of advance, and shouted a warning to his comrades. Realizing that the enemy would also be alerted, 1st Lt. Fournet ordered his men to take cover and ran uphill toward the mine, drawing a

sheath knife as he approached it.

With complete disregard for his safety and realizing the imminent danger to members of his command, he used his body as a shield in front of the mine as he attempted to slash the control wires leading from the enemy positions to the mine.

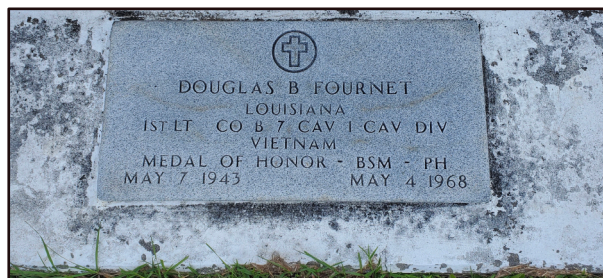
As he reached for the wire, the mine was detonated, killing him instantly. Five men nearest the mine were slightly wounded, but 1st Lt. Fournet's heroic and unselfish act spared his men of serious injury or death.

His gallantry and willing self-sacrifice are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the US Army.

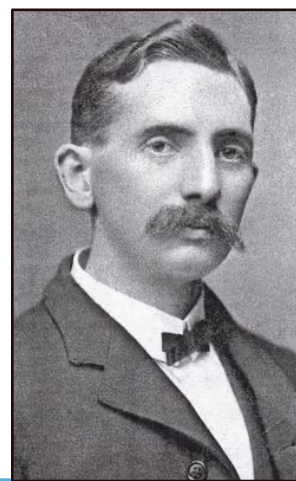
His Medal was posthumously presented to his family at the White House by President Richard M. Nixon on April 7, 1970.

His name can be found on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC, on Panel 54 E, Line 033.

Lt. Fournet and his wife Marilyn Grissett, had a son, Bill Fournet, who was born after his father's death. A portion of Interstate 120 that loops around Lake Charles was named the "Douglas Fournet Expressway" in the fall of 2001.



Rev. Paul Leeds



Rev. Paul Leeds (1869 - 1958), "Pioneer Preacher of the Piney Woods," was an influential pastor and missionary in Allen Parish and the surrounding area. His ministry in the area spanned over 65 years.

A native of Michigan, Rev. Leeds came to Kinder in 1893 as a missionary. He worked faithfully, holding meetings under trees, at homes, or in barns, "...just anywhere I could get people together..." he often said.

When Rev. Leeds first took up his ministry in the area, he would walk many miles to seek out those who would hear his ministry. At times he would swim rivers.

In 1894, he purchased a horse, and became a "Circuit Rider." As time progressed, Leeds' transportation evolved into horse and buggy, then a Model T, then later an automobile.

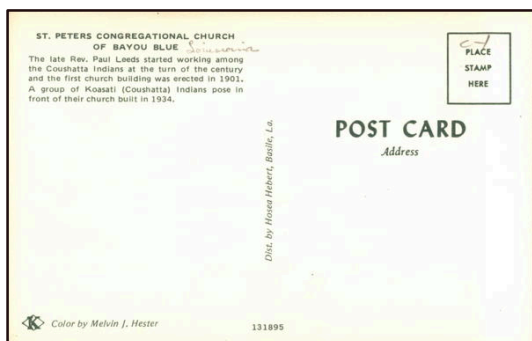
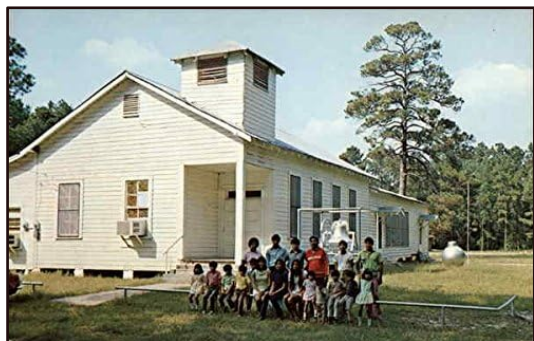
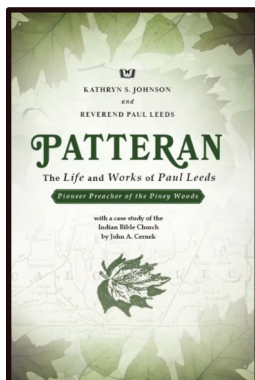
Leeds is also notable for his work with the Coushatta, Alabama, and Choctaw Indians. He served in their ministry for 60 years.

The book *Patteran: The Life and Works of Paul Leeds*, documents his missionary work in the area. Currently in its second printing, it lists 58 preaching points, including one called "Who'd a Thought It!"

He is credited with organizing 28 churches, and mentored and cultivated a long list of Christian workers. He pastored the First Congregational Church of Kinder for 65 years.

He was married to the former Sarah Elizabeth "Besse" Allen (1887 - 1973), and they had one daughter, Marie Elizabeth Leeds Rogers (1908 - 2009)

He is represented in silhouette, Bible in hand riding horseback, on Allen GHS's logo and *Crossroads* cover.



Ethelinda Andrus and Grace Cornish

Ethelinda Andrus (1913 - 2009) and Grace Cornish (1919 - 2008) were co-authors of the book *Looking Back at Kinder*, a history of Kinder, Louisiana.



Ethelinda Andrus and Grace Cornish

In an column published in the *Kinder Courier* in 1986, Stanley Leger wrote:

Ethelinda J. Andrus and Grace H. Cornish are to be commended for their achievement. Their book is very much like they say the people of Kinder are: 'warm and friendly.'

The authors' own narrative is both interesting and witty and reflects the affection they have for their home town.

I believe that Mrs. Cornish and Mrs. Andrus deserve the title "Historians in Residence" of Kinder.



Looking Back at Kinder is currently in its second printing; it was first published in 1985.

Both Mrs. Andrus and Mrs. Cornish were active in local community organizations, including the Allen Genealogical and Historical Society, the Kinder Cemetery Association, Friends of the Kinder Library, and the Kinder Area Arts Council, among others.

Cornish was also Allen GHS's Vice President in its first year of 1985.

Ethelinda Andrus was the daughter of Frank Ulysses Jemison and Susana Philbrick Jemison. She and her husband Chester Clifton Andrus had five daughters: Marverine, Ellen, Shirley, Fran, and Helen.

Grace was the daughter of John Mathews Houston and Grace McRill Houston. She and her husband Merrill Cornish Sr had two children: Merrill Jr, and Ann.



Perley Day Wilder

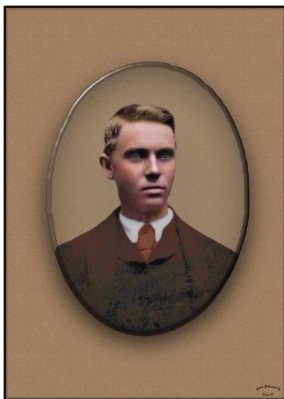
Perley Day Wilder (1869 - 1934) was the brother of Almanzo Wilder, who was married to the author Laura Ingalls Wilder of *Little House on the Prairie* fame.

Perley Day, the son of James Mason Wilder and Angelina Day, was born in upstate New York, near the farming town of Malone. After several successive crop failures, the family moved west to Minnesota.

In 1893, Perley Day's 43-year old sister, Eliza Jane, had met 62-year old widower Thomas J. Thayer while on a trip to see her parents in Minnesota. Thayer had made a fortune in Acadia Parish in the rice business, and was living in retirement in Crowley, Louisiana.

Eliza Jane soon married Thayer, and joined him in Crowley. Eliza loved it there, and wrote letters to her family members encouraging them to move south to Louisiana, and several of them did!

Eliza's brother Perley Day soon joined her in Crowley, where he met and subsequently married Elsie Lillian Merritt.



Perley Day and Elsie Lillian Merritt Wilder

Perley Day soon bought and operated a large rice plantation in Mermentau, Louisiana.

Around 1910, he moved to a railroad stop at Lauderdale near Kinder. There he operated a general store and served as the railroad agent and postmaster.

In later years, he returned to rice production, farming near Kinder.

Perley Day and Elsie Lillian had six children, three of whom remained in the area.

Perley Day was featured as a character in the popular TV show *Little House on the Prairie*. In Season 6, Episode 1, titled "Wilder and Wilder,"

Perley Day visits his brother Almanzo at Walnut Grove. The episode first aired on February 11, 1980.



The Mason Wilder Family

(L to R) Royal Gould, Almanzo, Mason, Eliza Jane, Angelina, Laura, and Alice Maria.

Perley Day is the small child in front.

Mr. P. D. Wilder, former prominent Jeff Davis parish merchants and warehouseman, died at his home midway between Kinder and Oberlin on the Pelican Highway last Thursday at 6 o'clock p. m., following an illness of several months duration.

Funeral services at the home Friday afternoon were conducted by the Rev. Paul Leeds, pastor of the Kinder Congregational church, followed by interment in the Kinder cemetery.

Surviving are the widow, formerly Miss Elsie Merritt, three sons, Jay of South Gate, Calif.; Harold and P. D., Jr., of Kinder, and two daughters, Gladys of Houston, Texas, and Dorothy of Kinder. Other surviving relatives include a brother, A. J. Wilder of Mansfield, Mo., two nieces, Mrs. Fred Merritt of Crowley, and Mrs. Rose Wilder Lane of Mansfield, Mo., and two nephews, W. W. Thayer of Lafayette and R. W. Howard of Welsh.

Mr. Wilder was born near Malone, Franklin county, N. Y., his early years having been spent in southern Minnesota until 1897 when he came to Acadia parish, La., and engaged in rice growing. For a number of years he operated a store and warehouse at Lauderdale, in the northern part of Jeff Davis parish, later resuming farming operations in Allen parish.



Family Recipes

Family Recipes are a special component of our family heritage. They link us across generations, to ancestors we never knew, in ways that no other resource can:

- they enrich us with smells and tastes;
- they instill us with our family's cultures;
- they give us stories of family holidays, of "favorite foods;" and the passing down of family traditions;
- they tell us what crops our ancestors raised, what animals they domesticated and hunted, and their relationship to the environment in which they lived;
- and many more things...

Family Recipes--a special component of our family heritage.

In each issue of Crossroads, Allen GHS will feature recipes from the Allen Parish area.

Feel free to submit family heritage recipes to allenghs.contact@gmail.com for possible publication.

Recipe submissions should include not only ingredients and cooking instructions, but also include the family story or stories associated with the recipe.

Bon appetite!

MO'S CAKE DONUTS

Submitted by Fran Clemmons

My Grandma Fannie Cartrett Nevils' Recipe



My Grandma Nevils would make a big batch of doughnuts and they would be gone too fast.

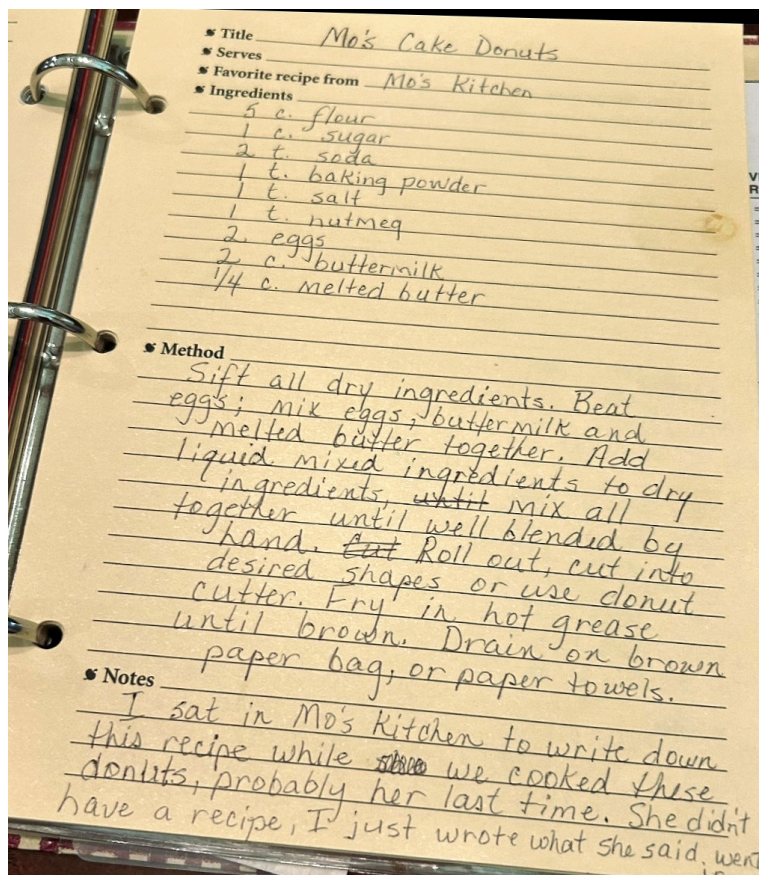
When my sister Ann was little, and she was eating a doughnut, my grandpa would tell her, "Ann, don't eat the hole in that doughnut! It will

cause a stomach ache."

Later my grandma would find doughnuts eaten all around the hole. Only the hole was left.

She never put a glaze on them. They were great without, especially with coffee.

—Fran Clemmons





Family Recipes...continued...

MAMA'S GUMBO

Submitted by Margie Robertson Toone
From her book *Mama's Country Cooking*



This recipe has been passed down from my Grandma Frances Wrinkle Robertson (1893-1975). She was born and raised in Allen Parish.

The gumbo recipe that my mom made is the same recipe that my Aunt Iris Robertson Langham and Aunt Bobbie Robertson Guillory made—only Aunt Bobbie put a boiled egg in hers for luck.

One thing I can remember is my sister and I begging Aunt Iris to make gumbo, and Maw Maw said, "Iris, go make them some gumbo!"

Aunt Iris jumped off the porch and went and grabbed

a chicken, and snapped its head off!

Later when I saw her stirring the gumbo and a leg popped up. I wasn't sure I wanted any gumbo then.

My first lesson on where chicken came from! Ha Ha.

—Margie Robertson Toone

Mama's Gumbo

Chicken Sausage Gumbo is still my most favorite dish. I could eat it every day. Gumbo smells so good when it's cooking. Nothing draws a crowd like gumbo. In fact, I usually cook a large batch, just so I have leftovers. Add French bread or corn bread and you have a meal. I always sprinkle on gumbo file' and hot sauce. The spicier the better.

1 gallon water
1 whole chicken (cut up & de-boned)
1 lb. sliced link smoked sausage
1 medium size yellow onion (diced)
3 stalks of celery (chopped)
1 diced green pepper
1 clove of crushed garlic
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. cayenne pepper or as much as you want
1/4 tsp. oregano
1 T. gumbo file (fee-lay)
1 whole bay leaf
2 tsp. Salt or to taste
"Roux"
about 4 cups of cooked white rice

In stock pot combine chicken, sausage and all vegetables. Cover in water and

bring to boil and then simmer until chicken is done (about 30 minutes boiling). Remove chicken and de-bone then return to pot. Add onion, celery, bell pepper and spices to stock, keep simmering, if water gets low add more until you have same amount as original. Now you're ready to do the "roux". After roux is done, while it's hot, you carefully add the mixture to the simmering chicken stock. Then simmer for 20 more minutes and it's ready! To serve, place one scoop of rice in bowl and pour enough gumbo over rice to cover (soupy). Sprinkle more gumbo file and red pepper to taste.

Roux

Roux – What the heck is roux? Well I knew how to make roux, as soon as I could say, "Mama what's that, it's burning my eyes?" Roux is a mixture of flour and shortening or oil cooked at a high temperature to a certain color and then added to liquid to make gravies, gumbos and soups.

Note: Please. Do not use olive oil. Only vegetable or lard.

Basic Roux

1 cup flour
1 cup shortening

In iron skillet, melt shortening over medium heat, and add flour. Cook stirring constantly, until mixture starts to turn dark brown. The trick is to know when to remove from heat, I like to say when it starts to look like caramel or milk chocolate, it's done. Do not burn. Burnt roux is not usable and will ruin your gumbo. Start over and keep practicing till you get it right.





Family Recipes...continued...

BANANA CAKE

Submitted by Danna Bushnell Erickson
From the book *Bushnell Family Cookbook*



Wesley and Clemmie Duhon lived next to the railroad tracks at the corner of Hwy 165 and Hwy 190.

Their front door faced the tracks, and the sound of the train drowned all conversations.

Momo often had banana cake made in a bundt pan ready to serve with her strong dark coffee.

If we were lucky, we ate the cake warm. Other times it had been stored in her green lettuce Tupperware bowl in the refrigerator.

She smashed the bananas with a fork.

It was like winning a prize when you got the deliciousness of a chunky banana.

We sipped our coffee and savored the banana cake when the trains came by. We had each other and the banana cake.

—Danna Bushnell Erickson



BANANA CAKE

Clemmie Duhon

(Danna Bushnell Erickson's grandmother)

1 1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup shortening
1/4 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 egg yolks

2 egg whites, beaten stiff
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 ripe bananas, mashed

Cream sugar and shortening, add milk, vanilla and egg yolks. Beat well. Sift flour, salt and soda, add to batter. Stir in mashed bananas. Fold in egg whites that have been beaten stiff. Bake at 350° for 35 to 45 minutes or till toothpick comes out clean. *Note: if you use 3 egg yolks and 3 egg whites, it will make it more like a cake. 2 eggs will be firmer like a bread.* ☺



Family Recipes...continued...

MAMAW'S FRENCH TOAST

Submitted by Danna Bushnell Erickson
From the book *Bushnell Family Cookbook*



Elizabeth Lormand Bushnell was my dad's mom.

I was eight months old when she died. I've had a curiosity about her all my life.

She and Roman raised thirteen children in Indian Village and kept food on the table.

In 1995, I compiled recipes from her family members. This French Toast, submitted by her daughter Dean Miller, was a surprise to me.

The sweetness is like a dessert, and the added vanilla puts this dish over the top!

She cooked a lot with iron pots, which made it extra crispy when cooked with oil.

—Danna Bushnell Erickson



MAMAW'S FRENCH TOAST

Claudia Dean Miller

3 large eggs, beaten
1/4 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

3/4 - 1 1/4 cups sugar
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
6-10 slices bread

Set electric stove burner on 5 or 6. Combine all ingredients except bread and thoroughly mix. Have large skillet placed on burner. Fill bottom of large skillet with cooking oil. Heat oil till hot. Dip slice of bread in egg mixture one at a time. Then put coated bread in large skillet. If skillet is large enough it should hold three slices. Be sure to turn slices around to keep it from burning on one end of bread. Cook on each side of bread. For gas burner, set at medium heat. ☺

Local History Books for Sale



Allen GHS has sponsored the second printings of three books of local history.

Patteran: The Life and Works of Paul Leeds, was written by Kathryn S. Johnson, and includes original material from Rev. Paul Leeds. It was first published in 1964, and is 237 pages.

This second printing includes the addition of John A. Cernek's case study, "Growing a Fellowship of Believers in a Native-American Community."

Leeds' ministry as a pastor and missionary preacher ranged from the 1890s into the 1950s. His outreach extended into the local communities, as well as to the Coushatta Tribe.

Johnson assembled writings from Leeds' diaries, along with personal notes, memoirs, interviews, and old newspaper clippings.

"Bro. Leeds' determination to bring Jesus Christ to everyone he could reach was accomplished by a lot of walking, even swimming the river if he had to," said Allen GHS President Laura Hall. "For years, he went on horseback to deliver his message, many times making several stops a day."

"He finally did get a vehicle, but I personally like to picture him in his horseback days, doing all he could to help settle the rough backwoods."

Patteran delivers a hero in Bro. Paul Leeds and also contains good genealogical information.

Looking Back at Kinder, written by Ethelinda J. Andrus and Grace H. Cornish, was first published in 1985. Its first edition was limited to 300 copies, and they have long since been sold out.

The book thoroughly records the early settlers, founding churches, original businesses and schools, and community

organizations. Included are many oral histories from numerous founding families, relating their exciting and colorful tales.

The book's 353 pages include many interesting old photos, in addition to a 75 family name index.

Stanley Leger, in a column published in the *Kinder Courier* in March of 1986, wrote, "*Looking Back at Kinder* is the kind of book that you will find hard to put down once you start browsing through its pages."

"It's a sentimental journey through the town's history. And this is a genuinely heart-warming experience. It's like attending a large family reunion."

"The authors' narrative is both interesting and witty and reflects the affection they have for their home town."

Oberlin: The First 100 Years, 1893-1993, edited by Pat Carroll Marcantel, was first published by the Oberlin Chamber of Commerce in 1994.

The book beautifully captures the spirit of its subject, and puts into words the legends and love that would have inevitably been lost forever. Past persons and places are now archival material in this enormously rich and evocative book.

Topics include the local Coushatta tribe, Cajun culture, nearby small communities, early school, local politics and businesses, and founding families. Detailed maps of 33 original cemeteries are also included for genealogical research.

The book is 200 pages and is full of old, historical photos.

The second printings of all three books were published by Wise Publications, based in Sulphur, Louisiana.

Persons interested in purchasing the books may order them online from the Bookstore tab at the Wise Publications website at <https://www.wisepublications.biz/>.