



Celebrating 18 Years!

Since 1995

Your
Gateway
to
East Texas

TEXAS INFORMER

July 2013
Volume VXII Number 3

Web: www.texasinformer.com
e-mail: informernews08@aol.com

P.O. Box 332
Rusk, Texas 75785

Church celebrates 125 years of existence in 2013



Mount Pleasant Christian Methodist Episcopal Church founded March 10, 1888 has existed in the current building since 1953. A recent 2,500 square foot addition housing fellowship hall and classrooms was recently dedicated.

EDITORIAL/OPINION



Fast Food

"All that you accomplish or fail to accomplish in life is a direct result of the images you hold in your mind"

~ Hortense Canady, President Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

In the world that I grew up in, people took responsibility for their own actions and other people placed the blame on them for their own actions.

If I didn't complete the home chores my mother expected of me, I was blamed, not my sister or cousin. If I didn't turn in school projects in a timely manner, I was blamed, not my teacher or my classmates. If I didn't

play well in a basketball game or gave a poor performance in the band, I was blamed, not my coach or band director.

Today, when students fail to prepare themselves for class by studying and when they fail to pass tests that are required of them, the teacher is blamed, or the parents or the home environment or something.

What has happened to self motivation, the strongest weapon one can carry? I know many people today who faced serious obstacles in growing up and in getting an education. Thinking positively and taking responsibility for their lives made the difference.

We can never advance further than the thoughts we allow to occupy our minds.

Dennis Kimbro once told this story. "In the heart of a thriving city was a hot-dog vendor who sold fine quality hot dogs. Business was booming, customers loved his product, and kept coming back for more. The owner believed in his business and the need for someone to do what he was

doing. He was so busy selling advertising and selling hot dogs that he didn't even have time to read the newspaper or listen to the radio. Consequently, he never heard a word about the recession or the need to cut back. As long as he continued to offer his hot dogs, his customers bought them.

Then one day his well-educated son informed him of the economic recession. His son told him people didn't have money to buy his hot dogs. The old vendor believed the news, so he quit advertising. He began ordering fewer hot dogs. He even removed his roadside signs. And sure enough, people stopped coming to his stand. Customers stopped buying his hotdogs and he went broke."

Don't be swayed by those you know who blame someone else and refuse to take responsibility for their actions. If you allow yourself to think positively about yourself and be the one who takes responsibility for your choices, then you can be the one to find solutions to your problems.

Letters To The Editor

Texas College Accreditation

Dear Texas College Family and Friends:

I am pleased to announce that the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has awarded the status of "Accredited" (without any sanctions and no further reports due) to Texas College.

I am also pleased to announce that the Teacher Preparation Program has received the status of "Accredited" by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). These are Herculean accomplishments and ones that I hope we can all be proud of. Thank all of you who assisted in making this possible. I declare that God has His hands on this institution and we continue to have a mighty work ahead of us. May God continue to bless you all.
Regards,
Dwight J. Fennell, Ph.D.



EVERY ONE IS IMPORTANT.

You can help keep your child healthy with regular checkups and vaccines. Every one is important. And they're free with Children's Medicaid.

Your child will also get other health benefits like free prescription drugs, dental care, eye exams, and glasses. Even rides to and from the doctor or dentist's office. Call today or visit our website to apply.

www.CHIPmedicaid.org
1-877-KIDS-NOW

 **Children's Medicaid**
We've got your kids covered.

CHILDREN WITH MEDICAID CAN GET FREE RIDES TO THE DOCTOR OR DENTIST'S OFFICE. CALL 1-877-MED-TRIP TO LEARN MORE.

Letters to the Editor Policy

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please send to P. O. Box 332, Rusk, Texas or informernews08@aol.com. Letters must include name of the sender.

Cherokee County Informer
DBA Texas Informer

The African American Press of East Texas
"Bringing you positive news about local people"

941 Loop 343

P. O. Box 332

Rusk, Texas 75785

Ph: (903) 683-1065

Ph: (903) 683-5743

Fax: (903) 683-8543

www.texasinformer.com

informernews08@aol.com

PUBLISHER/SALES MANAGER

Walter Session

EDITOR/WRITER

Maxine Session

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Krystal Ward Carter

Billy "Hollywood" Grooves

Ferlich July Arrington

A. J. Rhodes

Published monthly it serves Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Houston and Rusk Counties.

Texas Informer copyright 2013

Mount Pleasant Christian Methodist Episcopal Church celebrates 125 years

Mount Pleasant CME Church located at 138 Reeder Street Rusk, Texas is celebrating 125 years of existence this year.

The story passed down verbally for many years is that the founding fathers of this church met in the homes of those who were among the first members, prior to March 10, 1888. The first Warranty Deed for land owned by the church shows land deeded to church trustees March 10, 1888, John R. Raines and John W. Floyd sold seven acres of block number thirty-five, located at one-half mile north of downtown Rusk, presently the site of Brookshire Brothers grocery store, to church trustees named as Junius Simmons, Jeff Smith, Warrick Roland, Wiley Dickerson, Claude Shanks, Richard Carter, Isaam Jefferson and John Rains. The cash price listed was \$671.00. At that time the church was named *Mount Pleasant Colored Methodist Episcopal Church*. The first building was a one room structure made of plain unpainted boards on pier and beam.

The record book for the years 1929 through 1931 is detailed with names of those attending, total money raised at each service for the pastor or education and mission; who was ill or needed benevolent offering. The record book shows T. C. Scott to be the pastor on December 14, 1930. Total money raised for morning and evening service averaged around ten dollars. The light (electric) bill was \$1.50 and the wood bill was 63 cents.

Membership grew and the church prospered.

Rev. Will Johnson, former pastor, stated that by 1952, the black population had begun to migrate to the south side of Rusk, presently known as Dickinson's First Addition. Because many of the church members lived in that community, it was decided the church should be moved. In December of 1952, Irvin C. Conley donated three lots of the Irvin C. Conley Estate to the church trustees. With help from the city of Rusk and Herman Bradley, who was a city employee and church member, Mr. Conley was able to have a street cut to this property. The street was named Reeder Street, Reeder being the maiden name of his wife Inez Reeder Conley.

Under building contractor Bud Vinson, a member of the church, the old building located on North Main was torn down. The recession of 1953 was in full swing, but by using materials from the old church and adding only what was necessary, the current church was constructed on Reeder Street. The corner stone for the church reads: October 4, 1953; C. D. Smith presiding Elder; B. F. Williams, Pastor; Trustees John Cook, Will Johnson, and Bertha Conley; Steward: Oscar B. Denman, Jr.; Contractor: Bud Vinson and corner stone presented by Black and Black Memorials of Rusk, Texas. The church congregation looks at this year as a milestone and



The church sanctuary built on pier and beam in 1953 has been carefully maintained with remodeling from time to time and is still in use today.

has marked this year as a year of great time of praise, worship and celebration. A special anniversary celebration was held March 28th with dedication of a 2,500 square foot addition to the church which houses a media classroom now equipped with four computers, primary classroom and a larger adult classroom which also serves as a conference room. In addition, it has two comfortable sitting areas, two bathrooms, one with shower, a modern kitchen, pantry and large diningroom.

The mission work begun by the church founding fathers late 1800's is still a part of the church outreach ministry today. Families are assisted with their needs.

Reverend Greenie Phillips is the current pastor. Walter Session, H. R. Waggoner and Floyd Franklin

stewards. Maxine Session, Terri Franklin, and Sarai Johnson are current Trustees. Some of the past Pastors are T. C. Scott, D. Langrum, T. B. Williams 1950 -1957, S. P. Session 1957 -1968, Freeman 1969 - 1971, Emmanuel Herren 1971-1978, Tommy Starks 1978 -1979, Robert Christopher 1979 - 1987, L. Phillips 1987 -1988, Willie F. Jeans 1988 - 1989, Dr. Mitchell Patton 1989 -1990, Floyd Furgerson 1991 -1992, Louise Austin 1992 - 1995, Billy Burnett 1994 - 1995, Willie F. Mallard 1996 - 1998, Victory Phillis Davis 1998 - 2000, Joe Amerson 2000 - 2007, and Greenie Phillips, 2007 to present.

Plans are to complete remodeling to the outside of the church and parking lot one step at a time.

See page 7

Bobby Blue Bland

from page 8

After moving to Memphis in 1947, Mr. Bland began working in a garage and singing spirituals in a group called the Miniatures. In 1949 he joined the Beale Streeters, a loose-knit collective whose members at various points included Johnny Ace, Rosco Gordon, Earl Forest and B. B. King, all of whom went on to become popular blues performers as solo artists.

Mr. Bland also traveled as a part of the Johnny Ace Revue and recorded for the Chess, Modern and Duke labels before being drafted into the Army in 1952. Several of these recordings were made under the supervision of the producer Sam Phillips at Sun Studios in Memphis; none sold particularly well.

After his time in the service Mr. Bland worked as a chauffeur, a valet and an opening act for the Memphis rhythm-and-blues singer Junior Parker, just as he had for Mr. King. He toured as a headliner throughout the '60s, playing as many as 300 one-night engagements a year, a demanding schedule that exacerbated his struggles with alcohol. He performed widely, in the United States and abroad,

until shortly before his death. In addition to his son, Rodd, Mr. Bland's survivors include his wife, Willie Mae; a daughter, Patrice Moses; and four grandchildren. Rodd Bland said his father had recently learned that the blues singer and harmonica player James Cotton was his half-brother.

Mr. Bland's synthesis of Southern vernacular music and classy big-band arrangements made him a stylistic pioneer, but whatever he accomplished by way of formal innovation ultimately derived from his underlying faith in the emotional power of the blues.

"I'd like to be remembered as just a good old country boy that did his best to give us something to listen to and help them through a lot of sad moments, happy moments, whatever," he said in a 2009 interview with the syndicated "House of Blues Radio Hour."

"Whatever moments you get of happiness, use it up, you know, if you can, because it don't come that often." Mr. Bland himself broke through to pop audiences in the mid-'70s with "His California Album" and its more middle-of-

the-road follow-up, "Dreamer." But his greatest success always came in the rhythm-and-blues market, where he placed a total of 63 singles on the charts from 1957 to 1985. He signed with the Mississippi-based Malaco label in 1985 and made a series of well-received albums that a

ppealed largely to fans of traditional blues and soul music. Mr. Bland was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992 and received a Grammy Award for lifetime achievement in 1997.

God has given us two hands - one to receive with and the other to give with. We are not cisterns made for hoarding; we are channels made for giving.

~Billy Graham

LEGAL NOTICE

These Texas Lottery Commission scratch-off games will be closing soon.

Game #	Game Name / Odds	\$	Official Close of Game	End Validations Date
1438	Quick Enrichment Overall Odds are 1 in 8.08	\$20	2/14/13	1/15/14
1588	Easy Money Overall Odds are 1 in 4.14	\$2	8/29/13	3/24/14
1487	Quick Riches 5% Overall Odds are 1 in 4.08	\$2	8/29/13	3/24/14
1448	Chili Pepper Tiptail Overall Odds are 1 in 8.87	\$5	8/29/13	3/24/14
1488	Instant Millions Overall Odds are 1 in 8.08	\$5	8/29/13	3/24/14

For detailed additional game information, visit texaslottery.com or call 1-800-455-7777. Scratch to Win or other by purchase is subject. The Texas Lottery respects Texas Governor's 2007 Texas Lottery Amendment. All rights reserved.

TEXAS
LOTTERY

COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME

431 NORTH MAIN
ST. JACKSONVILLE, TX. 75785

TEL: (903)

DEXTER R. RHODES, OWNER
A. J. RHODES, FUNERAL DIRECTOR

L & P Paint and Body Professional Collision Center

*Computer Estimates *Frame Machine *Paint Booth *Digital Camera *System to Fax to Insurance Company *24 Hour Wrecker Service

Fax: (903) 723-4847 SHOP (903) 723-3532

NIGHT (903) 922-2892

1203 WEST OAK

Palestine, Texas 75801

Religion

Reflection time?



Just a reminder to you to give yourself quiet time often by turning off radio, T. V. computer, cell phone, ipad or whatever else provides constant noise in your life. In other words, give yourself time to think.

As humans, we need time to reflect or to meditate.

Meditating is the practice of reflection or contemplation.

The Greek word translated as meditate occurs only twice in the New Testament. The Hebrew words behind this mean to "murmur", a murmuring sighing or moaning. This concept is reflected in Psalms 1:2 where the blessed man meditates on God's law day and night. The Psalmist also prayed that the meditation of his heart would be acceptable in God's sight (Psalms 19:4) In Luke 21:14 Jesus instructed His disciples not to meditate beforehand in answering their adversaries when the end of the age comes. Paul in 1 Timothy 4:15, urged Timothy to meditate, or take pains with, the instructions he gives.

Meditation is a lost art for many Christians, but the practice needs to be cultivated again.



Senator Royce West
District 23

AUSTIN -- Arguments against big government, government take-overs and government's intrusion into the private lives of its citizens obviously do not apply when it comes to state leader's desire to trample the rights of Texas women over to access healthcare. Gov. Rick Perry has called the Legislature back to the capitol to force through legislation that has twice failed and that by no means can be called crucial to the day-to-day operation of Texas. All experts say - and Republicans won't deny - that the passage of HB2 would likely result in the closure of 37 of the 42 centers that provide healthcare to women. Abortion happens to be just one of the services that include in many instances,

Texas should not bully or overreach on women's health

doctors provide to their patients. HB2 will look much like SB5 from the legislature's First Called Special Session. The bill failed due to providence, and missteps taken by supporters of legislation that would deny women's healthcare to the majority of those who live outside Texas' urban centers. HB2 will contain language found in bills that could not pass during the regular session when normal Senate rules that guard the balance of power were in place. Gov. Perry and the extreme right who normally stress fiscal conservatism don't mind spending an extra million or so per special session of taxpayer dollars when it comes to putting politics over what's best for women's health. Gov. Perry said that he and other pro-life allies won't stop their battle to end all abortions, a constitutional right American women have had for 40 years. "Until the day Roe vs. Wade is nothing but a shameful footnote in our nation's history books, we won't give up the good fight," said the governor over this past weekend at a North Texas event. Republican attacks on women's may also recall that in 2011, this same group of Texas political leaders led ealth didn't just start in January 2013 and are not confined to Texas. You might remember several widely denounced statements made byh candidates for Congress during the

2012 Presidential election cycle. You the effort to cut millions in funding to Planned Parenthood over the issue of affiliates who provide abortion-related services. It was also in 2011 that the Texas Legislature passed into law, legislation that requires Texas women to undergo unneeded and intrusive ultrasound examinations and to return to an abortion clinic the next day before a procedure can be performed. This is a state that also promotes abstinence-only sex education and leads the nation in its number of teen pregnancies. If history provides evidence, HB2 won't end abortions, it may cause more illegal ones.

For more information, please contact Kelvin Bass at 214-467-

Racism

con't from page 10 and enslaver of thousands in Atlanta wrote me to describe her pain at discovering a personal connection to these events-and the importance of not looking away from them.

"We did not know of any of this before," she wrote. "But I believe that the ghosts of slavery and racism and the terrorism inflicted within our own country must not be hidden away but brought out into the open.... Without the whole truth, we live only in illusions."

Elm Grove Homecoming Scheduled for August 17, 2012

The Elm Grove Homecoming has been scheduled for Saturday, August 17, 2013. Activities will begin with church services at 12:00 Noon at Elm Grove Baptist. Activities will follow beginning at 1:00PM at the Church fellowship hall next door to the church located on highway 110 North of Rusk.

- Activities include:
- * Large waterslide for the children
 - * Spade Tournament
 - * Dominoe Tournament
 -and much more!

Parking will be available on the parking area of each of the four church campuses.

Glasses. Medicine. Dentist visits. Peace of mind.



\$50 or less covers all your children for one year. See if you may qualify. Apply online or call 1-877-543-7669.

Family Size (Adults + Kids)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Yearly Family Income Before Taxes	Up to \$22,980	Up to \$31,020	Up to \$39,060	Up to \$47,100	Up to \$55,140	Up to \$63,180	Up to \$71,220	Up to \$79,260

www.CHIPmedicaid.org | 1-877-KIDS-NOW

CHIP | Children's Medicaid
We've got your kids covered.

Polk and Dickson Wed

Sanders Celebrate Second Wedding Anniversary



Nina Echa Polk and Regenaldevon Dickson were married on Saturday, June 22, 2013 at six o'clock in the evening at the Covenant Church on the Hill in Rusk, Texas. Both are employed with Rusk State Hospital and will continue to make Rusk their home.



Federico and Lahoma Sanders will be celebrating their 2nd wedding Anniversary on August 12, 2013. They will be travelling to Indianapolis, Indiana. Federico is employed by the United States Postal Service. Lahoma is employed by Cherokee County Appraisal District. They both attend God's Way Baptist Church, Tyler Texas, where he serves as Minister of Music and she serves as choir director.



Member FDIC

CD'S
Savings
Home Loans

Councilman Walter Session, Maxine Session, Margaret Perkins, James I. Perkins, CEO Citizens 1st Bank, TJC Staff Member and Dr. L. Michael Metke President of Tyler Junior College attending 1st TJC Rusk LVN graduation.

CITIZENS 1ST BANK

HOME OWNED AND SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1920

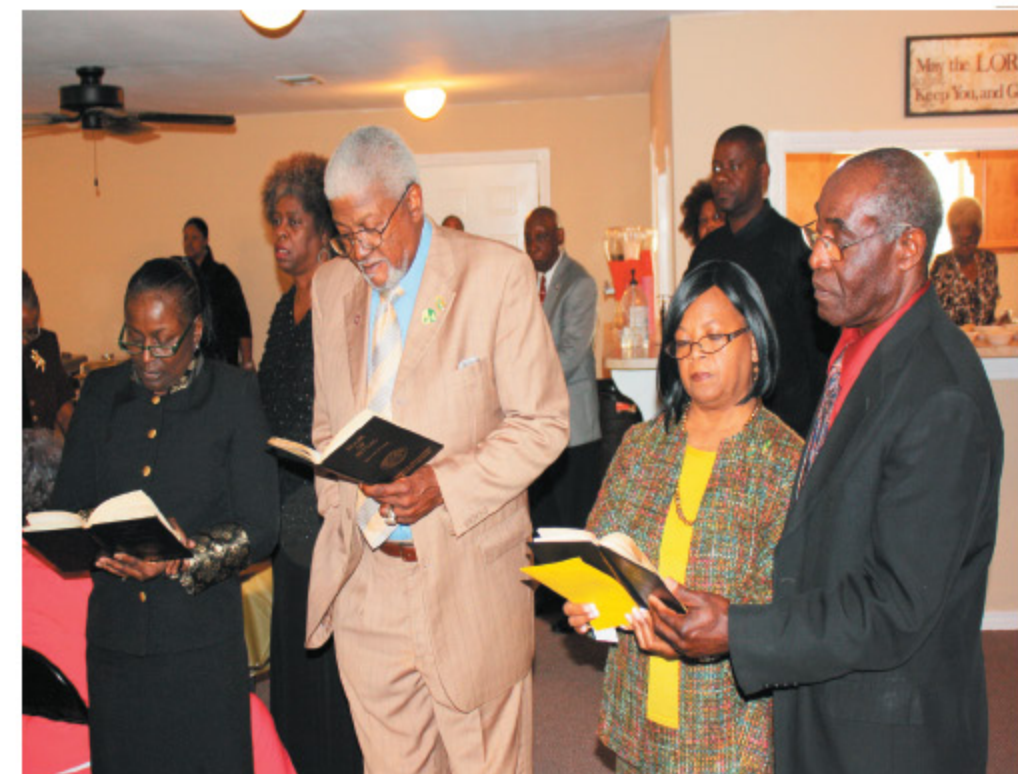
Rusk - 125 North Main Street (903) 683-2277

Jacksonville - 825 South Jacksonville (903) 586-2201

Tyler - 2001 East South Easty Loop 323 (903) 581-1900

Nacogdoches - 3010 University (409) 5601401

Mt. Pleasant Church Fellowship Hall Dedicated



Dedication of 2,500 square foot addition to Mt. Pleasant C. M. E. church was conducted by Elder Donald Madlock, Rev. Phillips and other ministers.



Elizabeth Rivers, Vanessa Boyd, Kaye Coleman and Wyvonne O'Neal enjoy good conversation while waiting for dinner to be served.



Lula Franklin Perry, Terri Franklin, Kathy Harris, Kimberly Clark and Daphne Session serve lunch.



Preston Meador, Inez Conley and Lessett Bennett



Members from the youngest to the oldest recently enjoy the one hundred twentieth church anniversary and dedication of the new fellowship hall. Kerry Tubbs held by Sarai Johnson and the newest addition to the church family. She is the daughter of Tiffani and Kerry Tubbs. Mrs. Inez Conley, Church Mother is the oldest. Standing with her are Lessett Bennett and Preston Meador. Elder Donald Madlock of New Hope CME and Presiding Elder of the North Tyler District, was the guest speaker for the worship service held prior to the dedication.

Other churches present were West Union Faith Ministry and Mount Olive Community Church, and Pennell Chapel CME from Jacksonville.

Bobby Blue Passes away at age 83

Bobby (Blue) Bland, the debonair balladeer whose sophisticated, emotionally fraught performances helped modernize the blues, died on Sunday June 23, 2013 at his home in Germantown, Tenn., a suburb of Memphis. He was 83. His death was confirmed by his son, Rodd, who played drums in his band. Though he possessed gifts on a par with his most accomplished peers, Mr. Bland never achieved the popular acclaim enjoyed by contemporaries like Ray Charles and B. B. King. But he was nevertheless a mainstay on the rhythm-and-blues charts and club circuit for decades.



His vocals, punctuated by the occasional squalling shout, were restrained, exhibiting a crooner's delicacy of phrasing and a kind of intimate pleading. He influenced everyone from the soul singers Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett to rock groups like the Allman Brothers and The Band. The rapper Jay-Z sampled Mr. Bland's 1974 single "Ain't No Love in the Heart of the City" on his 2001 album, *The Blueprint*.

Mr. Bland's signature mix of blues, jazz, pop, gospel and country music was a good decade in the making. His first recordings, made in the early 1950s, found him working in the lean, unvarnished style of Mr. King, even to the point of employing falsetto vocal leaps patterned after Mr. King's. Mr. Bland's mid-'50s singles were more accomplished; hits like "It's My Life, Baby" and "Farther Up the Road" are now regarded as hard-blues classics, but they still featured the driving rhythms and stinging electric guitar favored by Mr. King and others. It wasn't until 1958's "Little Boy Blue," a record inspired by the homiletic delivery of the Rev. C. L. Franklin, that Mr. Bland arrived at his trademark vocal technique. "That's where I got my squall from," Mr. Bland said, referring

to the sermons of Mr. Franklin — "Aretha's daddy," as he called him — in a 1979 interview with the author Peter Guralnick. "After I had that I lost the high falsetto. I had to get some other kind of gimmick, you know, to be identified with."

The corresponding softness in Mr. Bland's voice, a refinement matched by the elegant formal wear in which he appeared onstage, came from listening to records by pop crooners like Nat King Cole, Tony Bennett and Perry Como.

Just as crucial to the evolution of Mr. Bland's sound was his affiliation with the trumpet player and arranger Joe Scott, for years the director of artists and repertory for Duke Records in Houston. Given to dramatic, brass-rich arrangements, Mr. Scott, who died in 1979, supplied Mr. Bland with intricate musical backdrops that set his supple baritone in vivid relief. The two men accounted for more than 30 Top 20 rhythm-and-blues singles for Duke from 1958 to 1968, including the No. 1 hits "I Pity the Fool" and "That's the Way Love Is." Steeped in vulnerability and emotional candor, his performances earned him a devoted female audience.

Though only four of his singles from these years — "Turn On Your Love Light," "Call on Me," "That's the Way Love Is" and "Ain't Nothing You Can Do" — crossed over to the pop Top 40, Mr. Bland's recordings resonated with the era's blues-leaning rock acts. The Grateful Dead made "Love Light" a staple of their live shows. The Band recorded his 1964 single "Share Your Love With

Me" for their 1973 album, "Moondog

Matinee." Van Morrison included a version of "Ain't Nothing You Can Do" on his 1974 live set, "It's Too Late to Stop Now."

Robert Calvin Brooks was born on Jan. 27, 1930, in Millington, Tenn., just north of Memphis. His father, I. J. Brooks, abandoned the family when Bobby was very young. His mother, Mary Lee, married Leroy Bridgeforth, who also went by the name Leroy Bland, when Bobby was 6.

Mr. Bland dropped out of school in the third grade to work in the cotton fields. Though he never learned to write music or play an instrument, he cited the music of the pioneering blues guitarist T-Bone Walker as an early influence.

See Bobby Bland page 4



TEXAS

NATIONAL

BANK

LOOKING FOWARD ★ REACHING HIGHER



MEMBER
F.D.I.C

FULL SERVICE BANKING

Texas National Bank
Telebank 24 Hr
1-866-586-0044
www.tnbjacksonville.com

LOCATIONS:

- ★ 903 586 0931
300 Neches Jacksonville
- ★ 903 683 8899
484 North Main Rusk
- ★ 903 894 5030
524 East Main Bullard
- ★ 903 663 0587
612 East Hawkins Longview
- ★ 903 938 5400
716 East End Blvd. Marshall



Chapman Pharmacy

100 East 5th Street "Oth Square" in Rusk
We are a Participating Medicare Provider

We honor All Prescription Cards



903 683-2422

1-800- 657-1873



See me today and get the discounts and service you deserve.



Austin Young, Agent
400 N Main Street
Rusk, TX 75785-1332
Bus: 903-683-5486
austin.young.jkqu@statefarm.com



LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR, STATE FARM IS THERE.®

statefarm.com®

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, State Farm Indemnity Company - Bloomington, IL

ALL STAR FORD

CREDIT CLINIC

- ★ Bankruptcies ★ Repos
- ★ Slow Pay ★ Charge Offs

with a little money from you...we can get you on the road!

BRING THESE FEW THINGS AND DRIVE HOME TODAY!

- Proof of Income
- Proof of Residence
- Cash Down Payment
- Complete References



**2929 S. Loop 256 • Palestine, TX
903-729-2171 • 800-234-6171**

Min. cash \$1,000 cash down on trade equity and \$1,000 per month income. Other credit checks apply. Before credit approval is subject to dealer approval.

The City of Rusk, Texas

"A City Planning for the Future"
Drop by and Apply

Always Taking Applications
"Always looking for good people"

**406 North Main
Rusk, Texas 75785
(903) 683-2214**

Racism

con't from page 11

with a buggy whip across my bare back, and stood by until it was done."

When his labor contract finally expired after a decade, the man was told he could leave Kinderlou, so long as he could pay his accumulated debt at the plantation commissary—\$165, the rough equivalent of two years' labor for a free farmer. Unable to do so, of course, he was compelled to sign a contract promising to work on the farm until the debt was paid, but now as a convict.

He and other "prison laborers" slept each night in the same clothes they wore in the fields, on rotting mattresses infested with pests. Many were chained to their beds. Food was crude and minimal. The disobedient were tied to a log lying on their backs, while a guard spanked their bare feet with a plank of wood. After a slave was untied, if he could not return to work on his blistered feet, he was strapped to the log again, this time facedown, and lashed with a leather whip. Women prisoners were held across a barrel and

whipped on their bare bottoms.

In the summer of 1903, the assistant U.S. attorney in Macon, Georgia, began a brief investigation into Kinderlou's army of Black laborers held against their will. He discovered that the brothers had arrangements with sheriffs and other officers in at least six other Georgia counties. These law enforcement officials would seize Blacks on the grounds that they were "committing crimes," often specious and sometimes altogether made up, and then sell them to the McRees and other businessmen, without ever going through the regular processes of the criminal courts. When the McRees learned of the investigation, they hastily freed the workers being held involuntarily. At least forty fled immediately—James Robinson, the brother of Carrie Kinsey, may have been one of them, though federal officials never connected her allegations to the Kinderlou investigation. Even if Kinsey's brother's case had been investigated, her letter misspelled the name of the plantation.

In November 1903, a grand jury indicted the McRee brothers on 13 specific counts of holding African-American men and women illegally. Many of those enslaved

had never been charged or tried in any fashion. Several public officials were indicted for conspiring to buy and sell Blacks arrested on trivial or fabricated charges and then turning them over to the McRees. Sheriff Thomas J. McClellan, resorting to an audacious legal defense employed repeatedly in the handful of slavery cases brought by federal officials in the early twentieth century, argued that since no federal law specifically made slavery a crime, he could not be guilty of violating it. In effect, he claimed slavery was not illegal in the United States.

A member of the U.S. Congress submitted a legal brief in support of the sheriff, and prominent state officials sat at the defendants' table during a hearing on a challenge to their charges. Across Georgia, operators of lumber camps, where thousands of other men were being held under similarly dubious circumstances, watched the proceedings closely. Appearing with his brothers before a Savannah courtroom, Edward McRee assured the judge that while his family had held many African Americans in the four decades since slavery's abolition, they had never intended to enslave anyone or break the law. "Though we are probably technically guilty we did not knowt," he told the court. "This custom has been [in] existence ever since the war.... We never knew that we were doing anything wrong."

The judge, hoping to avoid inflaming the anger of local whites, dispensed symbolic punishments. The McRees were allowed to plead guilty and pay a token fine of \$1,000. In the wake of that trial and other failed prosecutions in the first years of the century, the U.S. Department of Justice turned a blind eye to such practices for the next 40 years. Only the advent of World War II, a declining need for low-skill laborers, and a new era of federal prosecution would finally bring a true end to American slavery.

More than 100 years after Carrie wrote her letter, I received an unexpected call from a man who identified himself as Bernard Kinsey. He believed he was one of Carrie's cousins.

Her letter had haunted me through years of research for the book I wrote on re-enslavement. What those few lines conveyed—the seizure

of a teenage boy and his sale to a powerful businessman, the abject refusal of authorities to assist her, the brutalization of thousands of other Blacks on the same plantation, the heroism of Carrie in seeking the aid of President Roosevelt, and, finally, the futility of her letter—captured the entire epic tragedy of Black life in the rural South in the time between the Civil War and World War II. Even to this day, I find myself turning back to her story, resifting census records and cemetery records, looking for the fate of her brother. Did he escape? Did he die at Kinderlou? The answer still eludes me.

Bernard Kinsey represented the counter story. He told me that the Kinsey family fled to Florida not long after the McRee trial of 1903. Bernard's father opened one grocery store. Then more. Bernard graduated from Florida A&M University in 1967, and a few years later he became one of the first Black employees of Xerox Corp. Twenty years later, he retired as a senior executive, one of more than 10,000 African Americans at the company. He then became a major civic leader in Los Angeles, a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist, and one of the leading collectors of African-American art and artifacts in the U.S.

Here was the valiance of African Americans who persevered against immeasurable odds. Here was the miracle that American society survived its sweeping betrayal of its own values, its collective dishonoring and debasement of Lincoln's achievement, the euphoric crowds of 1865 and all those who had died in the Civil War. Ultimately, it is only in a full revelation of all three narratives—of Lincoln and the Thirteenth Amendment, of re-enslavement and the failure of American character, and of the slow ongoing resurrection of our values through the struggle of citizens such as Bernard Kinsey—that we can begin to understand the progress we have made, and the progress we have yet to achieve.

A few weeks after the publication of my book, the great-great-granddaughter of a white industrialist

Racism
Con't page 5

Custom Loans Built Here.



Austin Bank

Member FDIC

200 E. Commerce • Jacksonville • 903-586-1526
1700 S. Jackson • Jacksonville • 903-589-8800
216 S. Main • Rusk • 903-683-2254

www.austinbank.com
30 Locations Throughout East Texas



Race In America

Continued from June 2013 Issue
by Douglass A. Blackmon

This story of re-enslavement is irrefutably true, however. Indeed, even as Spielberg's film conveys the euphoria felt by African Americans and all opposed to slavery upon passage of the amendment in 1865, it also unintentionally foreshadows the demise of that brighter future. On the night of the amendment's passage in the film, the African American housekeeper and, as presented in the film, secret lover of the abolitionist Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, played by the actress S. Epatha Merkerson, reads the amendment aloud. First, the sweeping banishment of slavery. And then, an often overlooked but powerful prepositional phrase: "except as a punishment for crime."

It began with Reconstruction. Faced with empty government coffers, a paralyzing intellectual inability to contemplate equitable labor arrangements with former chattel, profound resentment against the emancipated freedmen, and a desperate economic need to force Black workers back into the fields, White landowners and government officials began using the South's criminal courts to compel African Americans back into slavery.

In the first years after the Civil War, even as former slaves optimistically swarmed into new schools and lined up at courthouses at every whisper of a hope of economic independence, the Southern states began enacting an array of interlocking laws that would make all African Americans criminals, regardless of their conduct, and thereby making it legal to force them into chain gangs, labor camps, and other forms of involuntarily servitude. By the end of 1865, every Southern state except Arkansas and Tennessee had passed laws outlawing vagrancy and defining it so vaguely that virtually any freed slave not under the protection of a white man could be arrested for the crime. An 1865 Mississippi statute required Black workers to enter into labor contracts with White farmers by January 1 of every year or risk arrest. Four other states legislated that African

Americans could not legally be hired for work without a discharge paper from their previous employer—effectively preventing them from leaving the plantation of the white man they worked for.

After the return of nearly complete White political control in 1877, the passage of those laws accelerated. Some, particularly those that explicitly said they applied only to African Americans, were struck down in court appeals or through federal interventions, but new statutes embracing the same strictures on Black life quickly replaced them. Most of the new laws were written as if they applied to everyone, but in reality they were overwhelmingly enforced only against African-Americans.

In the 1880s, Alabama, North Carolina, and Florida passed laws making it a crime for a Black man to change employers without permission. It was a crime for a Black man to speak loudly in the company of a White woman, a crime to have a gun in his pocket, and a crime to sell the proceeds of his farm to anyone other than the man he rented land from. It was a crime to walk beside a railroad line, a crime to fail to yield a sidewalk to white people, a crime to sit among whites on a train, and it was most certainly a crime to engage in sexual relations with—or, God forbid, to show true love and affection for—a white girl.

And that's how it happened. Within a few years of the passage of these laws, tens of thousands of Black men and boys, and a smaller number of Black women, were being arrested and sold into forced labor camps by state officials, local judges, and sheriffs. During this time, some actual criminals were sold into slavery, and a small percentage of them were White. But the vast majority were Black men accused of trivial or trumped-up crimes. Compelling evidence indicates that huge numbers had in fact committed no offense whatsoever. As the system grew, countless white farmers and businessmen jostled to "lease" as many Black "criminals" as they could. Soon, huge numbers of other African-Americans were simply being kidnapped and sold into slavery.

he forced labor camps they found themselves in were islands of squalor and brutality. Thousands died of disease, malnourishment, and abuse. Mortality rates in some years exceeded 40 percent. At the same time, this new slavery trade generated millions of dollars for state and local governments—for many years it was the single largest source of income for the state of Alabama. As these laws and practices expanded across the South, they became the primary means to terrorize African Americans, and to coerce them into going along with other exploitative labor arrangements, like sharecropping, that are more familiar to 21st-century Americans

This was the terrifying trap into which Carrie Kinsey's young brother had been drawn. After a trip through the counties near Kinsey's home, W. E. B. DuBois, who was then teaching at Atlanta's Morehouse College, described in 1905 one such convict farm. "It is a depressing place—bare, unshaded, with no charm of past association, only a memory of forced human toil—now, then, and before the war," he wrote. He described Black farmworkers who never saw wages because charges for rent and food always exceeded any compensation. "A dismal place it still remains, with rows of ugly huts filled with surly ignorant tenants," Du Bois wrote. "And now and then it blazes forth in veiled but hot anger."

Du Bois could easily have been describing Kinderlou, where Kinsey's brother was taken. Encompassing 22,000 acres, it was an enterprise that dwarfed any antebellum definition of the word "plantation." Owned by state Representative Edward McRee and his brothers, Kinderlou was an unparalleled center of economic and political power in Georgia. By 1900, the siblings had inherited the enterprise from their father, a noted Confederate officer named George McRee. Each lived in a lavish mansion within a square mile of the center of the plantation, basking in the subtropical warmth of the Gulf Coast.

Between them, an empire bustled with tens of thousands of enslaved laborers. Consuming the bulk of an entire county, Kinderlou included thousands of acres of lushly

fertile sandy loam, and thousands more of dense pine and hardwood. On a private spur of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad thrust into the center of the plantation, dozens of boxcars waited at all times for the hundreds of thousands of bushels of tomatoes, watermelons, cantaloupes, corn, tobacco, and cotton. The McRees owned their own cotton gins, compresses to make bales, and warehouses to store enormous quantities of lint. A five-horsepower steam engine ground the plantation's sugarcane to make syrup. Five 80-foot-long barns were built to cure tobacco, and a factory produced thousands of pallets, wooden crates, and baskets for shipping produce. Deep in the forests, McRee turpentine camps collected rosin for their naval stores distillery.

Initially, the McRees hired only free Black labor, but beginning in the 1890s they routinely leased a hundred or more convicts from the state of Georgia to perform the grueling work of clearing land, removing stumps, ditching fields, and constructing roads. Other prisoners hoed, plowed, and weeded the crops. Over the course of fifteen years, thousands of men and women were forced to Kinderlou and held in stockades under the watch of armed guards. After the turn of the century, the brothers began to arrange for even more forced laborers through the sheriffs of nearby counties in Georgia and Florida—fueling what eventually grew into a sprawling traffic in humans. A Black worker in 1904 described to a journalist how he arrived at the farm at age 10 as a free laborer. A few years later, he attempted to leave to work at another plantation. Before sundown on the day of his departure, one of the McRees and "some kind of law officer" tracked him down. The new employer apologized to the McRees for hiring the young worker, saying he would never have done so if he had known "this nigger was bound out to you."

"So I was carried back to the Captain's," the man said later. "That night he made me strip off my clothing down to my waist, had me tied to a tree in his backyard, ordered his foreman to give me 30 lashes

Mt. Pleasant CME Church Celebrates



The primary class members wait patiently for lunch to be served during the church anniversary and dedication of fellowship hall.

Above Kaye Carter and a guest talk as they wait in line to be served.



Pictured L to R - Kathy Harris, Mckayla Glenn, Trinity Small, Destinye Harris, Gracie Ratcliff, Maurie Ratcliff, Iyana Berry, Eddie Harris enjoyed a day of water play recently.

The trip to the Villages Water Park was sponsored by Mt. Pleasant Christian Methodist Church. Others accompanying the youth not pictured were: Maxine Session, Terri Franklin, Lula Franklin Perry, Kathy Harris, Kel Curl, Liz Bryant, Shunteeya Harvest, Tray Scott, and Destiny Foreman.

They arrived at the park about 10:30 AM and rode the lazy river, the wave and the water slide most of the day, stopping only for a short picnic lunch outside.