

# YORE LORE

Baldwin County Genealogical Society  
P.O. Box 108, Foley, Alabama 36536

Volume 30 No 4

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Baldwin County Genealogical Society  
Presents

**COLETTA BAILEY**

~ Advertising Rag Dolls ~

**SATURDAY APRIL 9, 2022**  
**10:00 A.M. Foley Library Meeting Room**  
**319 East**

**Laurel Avenue, Foley, Alabama**



Come enjoy Coletta's display and learn how collecting sacks in the early years included 'advertising rag dolls' as cotton bag manufacturers started printing dolls, animals and even miniture sofa and chairs for children's doll houses during the Great Depression.

**Coletta Stejskal Bailey** has taken her love of fabric to another level here in Baldwin County: serving as textile coordinator at Baldwin County Heritage Museum; giving programs throughout Alabama and surrounding states on programs such as collectible feed sacks for sewing clothes; using her personal collection of handmade laces and embroidery for display programs, most recently in February with Foley Public Library.

She collected, compiled personal artifacts and history honoring Baldwin County service men and women of WWI & WWII that has become an annual event showing at the Baldwin County Heritage Museum in Elberta. In 2020, the event was recognized and awarded Alabama Bicentennial Legacy Project by *200 Alabama Bicentennial*, resulting in the museum receiving a grant to help further the efforts perserving the history of Baldwin County.

Class of 1966 Robertsdale High School and a student of University of Alabama, Coletta also is member of the Baldwin County Genealogical Society, and claims her husand as favorite "helper" in her pursuits.

**All meetings are open to all interested public.**

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED for BCGS Members and Visitors**  
**March 16 – April 6, 2022**

Email: [BaldwinGenealogy@gmail.com](mailto:BaldwinGenealogy@gmail.com)

Or Call Barbara Thompson 251-424-4681

If you have your reservation and are unable to join us, please cancel your reservation by emailing or calling the above information. Seating is limited to 42.

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED for each meeting you wish to attend, deadline dates given for each meeting. Email: [BaldwinGenealogy@gmail.com](mailto:BaldwinGenealogy@gmail.com) with your name or call Barbara Thompson 251-424-4681. Confirmation email will be sent. Maximum seating: 50.**

Web site: <http://baldwingenealogy.org> or Baldwin County Genealogical Society – Home/ Facebook

## Upcoming programs:

**May 14: 1950 Census** podcast

**Obit Committee** meets every Wednesday, 1 p.m. in Genealogy Collections Room

**BCGS Board Meetings** will continue to meet at 9 a.m. Board Room.

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## BALDWIN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING, March 12, 2022

**MEMBERS/GUEST:** 29 members/ 4 visitors total 33 present

**CALL TO ORDER:** Pat Brummett called to meeting to order at 10 a m on Saturday March 12, 2022. Pat stated that the Business part of the meeting will be held first today as our program will be celebrating our 35<sup>th</sup> year as a society.

**MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:** The minutes of the February meeting were approved as printed in "Yore Lore" newsletter.

**Treasurer's Report:** Tina Graham stated the beginning bank balance as of 01 February 2022 was \$1096.71 with deposits of \$96.00 Expenses \$44.00 with an ending balance on 28 February 2022 of \$1148.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS: Membership** - Maureen Lee stated 1 new member at the February meeting, Sarah Symington.

**NEW BUSINESS:** JoAnn McKay was presented with a Lifetime Membership Award.

Billie Nardell asked anyone taking pictures at any and all meetings please send them to her by email at [bnardell@yahoo.com](mailto:bnardell@yahoo.com) or text at 251-504-0801.

**GENEALOGY MINUTE:** Billie Nardell read a Genealogy poem:

### **The Genealogist's Psalm**

Genealogy is my past time, I shall not stray  
It makes me to lie down and examine half-buried tombstones.  
It leadeth me into still courthouses,  
It restoreth my ancestral knowledge.  
It leadeth me in paths of census records  
And ship's passenger lists for my surname's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the shadows of research libraries  
I will fear no discouragement; for a strong urge is within me;  
It demandeth preparation of storage space  
For the acquisition of countless documents;  
It anointest my head with burning midnight oil;  
My family group sheets runneth over.  
Surely birth, marriage, and death dates  
Shall follow me all the days of my life;  
And I shall dwell in the house of a fanatical records chaser forever.

Author Unknown

There was a short intermission after which Vice-President Barbara Thompson introduced David Rittenhouse, son of one of our Founders Berdine Rittenhouse and Ms. Leslie Wilson, the nurse who took care of both Berdine and Dot Brown, our other founder. Barbara then presented a wonderful presentation of the History of BCGS.

**UP COMING EVENTS: April 9 :** Coletta Bailey "Advertising Rag Dolls"

**Hostesses for next month:** April hostesses will be JoAnn McKay and Maureen Lee

**DOOR PRIZES AWARDED:** There were 4 door prizes awarded.

**ADJOURNED:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a m to meet again on 09 April 2022 at 10 AM in the Foley Public Library meeting room. Respectfully submitted: Billie Nardell, Recording Secretary

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### **Customs related to the passing of our loved ones have changed over the years.**

One such custom was loved ones and friends "sitting up" with the body of the deceased in the home, usually the parlor or even dining room, until burial. Family, close friends and neighbors took turns with sitting, keeping the vigil known as a "wake," so that the deceased was never left unattended. And they often consumed lots of coffee before and throughout the night.

In Greensboro, Alabama, the time came for a neighbor's turn, a young man named Spencer, to "sit" in the wee hours of morning with the deceased. Restless from consuming coffee, it became a bit more than Spencer could handle to sit still, to be watchful ... watchful of only the dead neighbor lying in his coffin.

So imagine when morning dawned and mourners began gathering in the parlor ... the fright of seeing the dead in his coffin upright leaning against the wall, with eye glasses on, newspaper propped as if reading ... perhaps his own obituary?

The story is told the young Spencer was "shipped off" by family to an uncle in Texas until the widow revived and the scandal died.  
*True story as told to Jeanette Bornholt, librarian, Alabama, Local History & Genealogy Collections*

## The Justice of Peace in Baldwin County, Alabama

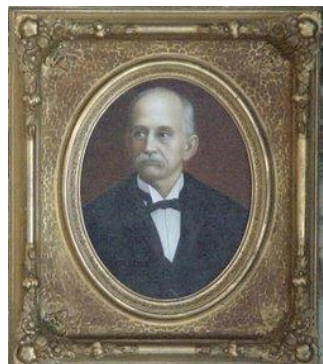


The position of justice of the peace originate in **England** in 1361 with the passing of the **Justice of the Peace Act**. In colonial **America**, as early as 1600s, the position with its judicial, executive, and legislative powers, was the community's main political force and therefore the most powerful public office open to colonists. Legal training was not a prerequisite.

A justice of peace is described as "a subordinate magistrate for the conservation of the peace for a specified district ... with sometimes other incidental administrative and financial powers. In simple language, he or she preside over the justice court in cases involving misdemeanors, small civil disputes, landlord/tenant disputes and more, including the hogs getting into the neighbors field uprooting the crop.

Justice of peace are (or were) appointed or elected from the citizens of the jurisdiction in which they serve. But popularly, the term "justice of the peace" has become a commonly used term for someone who performs a wedding ceremony and in family research, it is wise to note who performed the ceremony. Oftentimes, members of the family including fathers of one or other of the to-be-wed couple would do the ceremony, signing the legal marriage license.

The Alabama justice of the peace contains all the duties, powers and authorities of that office, as regulated by the laws now in force in this state, which includes Baldwin County. They were appointed from advocates of at least ten years' standing and served full-time until age of 70.



*Judge Harry Toulmin*

**Judge Harry Toulmin's** (1838-1916) decisions in the wilderness of southwest Alabama over 200 years ago influenced the course of United States history. Toulmin was appointed judge for the Southern District of the United States which included Baldwin County. Settlers moved down in "droves needing land" from the East Coast into what is now southwest Alabama eyeing the territories of the weakened Spanish empire.

"So some of these people decided they would just take it over militarily from Spain," said Fairhope attorney and local historian David Bagwell during the dedication of Toulmin Monument at the Baldwin County Courthouse in 2009. Toulmin was instrumental in stopping several groups intent on seizing West Florida from Spanish control, in so doing avoided a war.

Because of his actions, Toulmin was exceptionally unpopular when he wanted to become the first federal judge when Alabama became a state in 1819. But the justice of peace system was in place until 1973 when a unified judicial system was approved throughout the state when historian David Bagwell stated, "courts held the justice of the peace system was unconstitutional because they only got paid a fee when they convicted somebody."

In 1896, the vote cast in each precinct in Baldwin County for the Justices of the Peace and Constables were listed for **Blacksher, Stockton, Perdido, Bayminette, Holman's, Bromley, Court House, Van Kirk, Heltons, Bon Secour** and **Lillian**.

Dated 1908 in Baldwin Times newspaper: "Attachment. Notice to Non-residents, In Justice of Peace Court of **D. C. Byrne. E. L. Halladay**, plaintiff vs **Robert Lesesne** and **Chas. Lesesne** doing business as partners under the firm name and style of the **Lesesne Lumber Company**, Defendants. ... it appearing certain property of the said defendant has been levied upon, to-wit: 35,000 feet of lumber at **Gateswood, Alabama**, consisting of scantling 2x6, 2x7, one 1x6, and one inch boards." Such were the type of cases served by a justice of peace.

It wasn't always a sought after position as noted in the Onlooker newspaper, Nov 1927 when it was noted: "For two years, the **Commercial Club** has been trying to get some one to serve as Justice of Peach (*sic*) and at last **Clarence Fuller** has kindly consented to make the sacrifice. This is one time where the office surely seeks the man. **Gov. Graves** has given the appointment to Mr. Fuller. The new office will be a great convenience and will save many miles of travel to a distant J.P. when important legal papers are issued."

In Jul 1940, **W. W. DeWolf** was appointed Justice of Peace for **Fairhope** for the unexpired elective term of **George W. Morgan** upon his death. Judge DeWolf was a printer in Chicago and later president of Typographical Union before moving to Fairhope.

Notice of Local Bill, 1947, stated: Justices of the Peace have final jurisdiction, pleads of guilty, pays fines, costs.

Sources: Merriam-Webster 3<sup>rd</sup> New International Dictionary, c1993; <https://ballotpedia.org/Justice>; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice\\_of\\_the\\_peace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_of_the_peace): \*Alabama Justices of the Peace Officials\*, A Beautiful Affair of the Heart, The Baldwin Times newspaper, Aug 1896, pg 2; May 1908 pg 5; <https://abeautifulaffairoftheheart.com/AL-jp-go.shtml>; written words of Henry Hitchcock, 1791-1839, Berkley Law Library Catalog, <https://lawcat.berkelev.edu/record/278101:Judge>; "Monument to Judge Toulmin dedicated today in Baldwin County" by Caig Myers, Dec2009/Jan2019, al.com; encyclopedia.com; State of Delaware: History of Justice of the Peace;

## Justice of Peace & Judges of Probate, Baldwin County, Years Served

Howell Dupree	1810-1811, 1814
Daniel Johnstons	1811-1812
John Barnard	1813
George Gullett	1815
James Johnston	1816-1819
	1822
J. Pierce	1824
Issac Chaffin	1824
Patrick Byrne (Judge of Probate)	1824-1856
C. W. Wilkins (Judge of Probate)	1856-1866
Osmyn P. Hall (Judge of Probate)	1869-1870
William H. Gasque (Judge of Probate)	1871-1892
Charles Hall (Judge of Probate)	1893-1904
Charles H. Dresbach	1893-1916
W. T. Kee	1893
H. J. Helton	1893
J. M. Beam	1893
John C. Nelson	1893
R. W. Slaughter	1893
Thomas Thompson	1893
W. E. Bryant	1893
Thos. E. Stine	1893
Chas Hall	1895
Edward G. Blake	1900
Jesse L. Keesler	1900, 1919
L. C. Day	1900
William C. Dinwiddie	1903
Charles E. Littlefield	1903
Frank Racine	1904, 1908
J. H. H. Smith (Probate Judge)	1905-1916
Henry H. Hess	1906
Lawrence A. Rinke	1906
E. B. Lambert	1906
Harry J. Davis	1907, 1910
William H. Helton	1907
William H. Harding	1907, 1910, 1912
Paul Y. Albright	1907, 1910, 1913
H. W. Slaughter	1907, 1915
William R. Countryman	1907
Harry J Davis	1907, 1910
Adrian D. Beecher	1908
C. Myrick	1908
W. Percy Hall	1908, 1928
Jacob A Shiver	1910, 1912, 1916, 1917
George W. Burns	1911
David R. Durant	1911
Harvey Blackburn	1912, 1917
Thomas W. White	1912
Tunstall Bryars	1912
James P. Slocum	1912
Garland E. Perkins	1912
Edwin M. Dickinson	1913
H. W. Slaughter	1915
G. R. Suarez	1915, 1926
Andrew J. Aubert	1916
Oscar Johnson	1916
John P. Powell	1916
B. F. Rogers	1916
Frank W. Walker	1918, 1919
J. B. McDavid	1918
George L. Lambert (Judge of Probate)	1923-1924
Michael Schnatz	1923
Charles R. Weekly	1923

Charles E. Cauright	1924
William D. Stapleton (Judge of Probate)	1924-1926
John Walter Fleming	1926
G. W. Humphries (Judge of Probate)	1923-1935
Peter M. Pedigo	1927
Earnest A. Moore	1927, 1928
A.L. West	1928, 1930
Charles C. Hand	1928, 1937
John H. Adams	1927
Clarence C. Fuller	1927
Abel T. Crouch	1929
James W. Luther	1928
Peter Forsman	1930
Thomas Vonashek	1931, 1937
Jerome Price	1935
G. W. Robertson (Judge of Probate)	1935-1944
George W. Morgan	1937, 1940
Howard Gaillard	1941
W. W. DeWolfe	1940
D. W. Robertson	1943-1944
James A. Carney	1946
W. R. Stuart (Judge of Probate)	1944-1963
L D. Owens, Jr. (Judge of Probate)	1963-1965
Harry M. D'Olive, Sr (Judge of Probate)	1965-1993
Harry M. D'Olive, Jr (Judge of Probate)	1993-1995
Adrian T. Johns (Judge of Probate)	1995-2010
Tim Russell (Judge of Probate)	2010-Current