

# YORE LORE

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

Volume 30 No 11

November 2022

## BALDWIN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS GUEST SPEAKER TRACY D. NEELY

“Creole Settlements in Baldwin County”

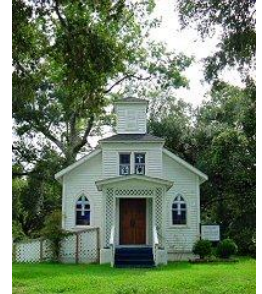
Sat. November 12, 2022

10 a.m Meeting Room ~ Foley Public Library

**RSVP Dates:** (Oct 12 – closed when seating capacity met)

Our Lady of Bon Secour

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



Catholic Church

**Tracy Neely** is a direct descendant of the Chastang, Collins, LaFargue and Jorne families, surnames familiar in the Creole Settlements in Bon Secour, Vernant Park, Magnolia Springs and Fairhope in Baldwin County, Alabama. St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Magnolia Springs is considered the center of the Creole community. Tracy has ancestors buried in the Church’s cemetery.

Tracy began her genealogical adventure to satisfy her curiosity regarding her father’s lineage. In 2011, she created the Facebook group, *Mobile, Alabama Creole Connections*, a grassroots effort to cull more information about Mobile’s Creole population. She has volunteered in the Mobile County Probate Court Archives with the late Coll’ette King, increasing the momentum in her genealogical studies.

Tracy is President of Mobile Creole Cultural & Historical Preservation Society (MCCHPS), also librarian, assisting Registrar, for the Needham Bryan Chapter DAR in Mobile, as well as lifetime member Jamestown Society. The MCCHPS\* has genealogy records, historical facts, mini-reunions and much more.

Website: [mobilecreolesociety.weebly.com](http://mobilecreolesociety.weebly.com)



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Grotto, Vernant Park

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

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL BCGS GENERAL MEETINGS.**

**PLEASE CANCEL IF YOU CAN NOT MAKE THE MEETING AS THERE IS A WAITING LIST Thank You.**

Email: [BaldwinGenealogy@gmail.com](mailto:BaldwinGenealogy@gmail.com) with your name or call Barbara Thompson 251-424-4681. Confirmation email will be sent. Website: <http://baldwingenealogy.org> or Baldwin County Genealogical Society – Home/ Facebook

**\*Footnote for MCCHPS upcoming programs celebrating International Creole Heritage Month with the Mobile Public Library by hosting the following Series in October 2022.**

Oct 15 – 3 p.m. Premiere showing of “Creole Fire No. 1: A Living Legacy.”

Oct 22 – 10 a.m. Robert Runderson, System Manager at USA, will give advice on beginning your genealogical research on a budget.

Oct 29 - 10 a.m. Chelsea Cook, history and archeology student at USAA, will take an in-depth look at archaeology from a tenement building on Royal Street.

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**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.

**Upcoming programs, Reservation required** – seating limited to 42 – email your name to [BaldwinCounty@gmail.com](mailto:BaldwinCounty@gmail.com):

**Dec. 10, 2022:** **BCGS Committee** – Members Christmas Social (Nov 16- closed when seating capacity met)

**Jan. 14, 2023:** “Mayflower Pilgrim Genealogy” – Eligibility & Membership in General Society - **Dr. Jack Dwyer, Lt. Col., USAF (Ret)-** Mayflower Descendants. Member SAR, Mayflower Descendant, former Lt. Governor of the Gulf Coast Colony of Mayflower Society in Alabama (Dec 10, 2022 – closed when seating capacity is met)

**Feb. 11, 2023:** **Sherry Johnson**, instructor/researcher in “Using the Salt Lake City Family History Library”- researching countries, U. S. States. BC Genealogical Soc. member. (Jan 14, 2023 – closed when seating capacity is met)

**Mar 11, 2023:** **Susan Stein**, Historian of Grand Hotel, Point Clear, AL – “The Secret Training Mission at the Grand Hotel in WWII” – “Operation Ivory Soap.” BC Genealogical Society Member (Feb 11, 2023 – closed when seating capacity is met)

## What Countries and States Are You Researching? (Response Required - Extended to Oct 15, 2022)

Our February 2023 Guest Speaker has asked what countries and states that our members are researching. For example: Austria, Croatia, Germany and USA - Michigan and Pennsylvania. Respond via email to BCGS Email address: BaldwinGenealogy@gmail.com Attn: Barbara Thompson, with your name and information. This information was collected from the members at the October 8, 2022 Meeting. The program will be customized to address what locations we are researching. Thank you, Barbara Thompson BCGS Program Committee Chair October 11, 2022

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### BALDWIN COUNTY GENEALOGY SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING, 8 October, 2022

**MEMBERS/GUEST:** 29 members / 2 visitors, total 31

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Pat Brummett called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m., welcoming members and guests. She then called on Vice-President Becky Younce to introduce our speakers Mary S. Palmer and Paula Webb, co-authors who spoke on their book "Mississippi Mojo.....And Murder."

After the program, a short intermission, the meeting was resumed 11:05 am.

**MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING:** As there was a delay in the distribution of the "Yore Lore", the voting on the minutes of the September meeting was delayed until next month.

**Treasurer's Report:** Tina Graham reported the beginning balance as of September 1, 2022 was: \$1,658.37; deposits \$20.00; Expenses \$20.00; ending balance \$1,658.37 as of September 30, 2022.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**Membership:** Maureen Lee reported no new members since the September meeting.

**Correspondence:** Maureen reported she sent 1 email thank you card to Mike Bunn, last month's speaker.

**Obituary Report:** Tina Graham said the current obituaries from the Baldwin Times and the Mobile Press are up to date. The historic obituaries from 1900 to 1987 are progressing well. We are now in the 1950's. We do the research and printing at home, file weekly in the library. Research is by Maureen Lee, Coletta Bailey, Billie Nardell, and Tina Graham. Pat Brummett assists with filing.

**GENEALOGY MINUTE:** Billie Nardell gave the Genealogy Minute on "How a Timeline Can Help in Your Research". Building a timeline for each ancestor is important because you can collate your information, see gaps in your research, and observe how historical events may have impacted your ancestor's life.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

**Baldwin County Fair:** Coletta Bailey stated the BCGS Baldwin County Fair booth was a great success. Members who participated were Tina Graham, Jeanette Bornholt, Maureen Lee, Patricia Maness, Janice Hudson, Pat Brummett, and Coletta Bailey.

**Heritage Park Bricks:** The bricks we commissioned have been placed in Heritage Park.

**Foley Library Halloween Extravaganza:** Plans are underway for the BCGS Halloween booth. This year we will have the fishing booth again. We are still in need of a couple more members to help man the booth. If you can help, there is a sign up sheet on the back table.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Because in the delay of the "Yore Lore", Barbara Thompson requested members send what states and countries they are researching to her no later than 16 October 2022. She will forward this information to February 2023 guest speaker.

#### UP COMING EVENTS: 2022:

November 12: Tracy D. Neely - Mobile Creole Cultural and Historical Preservation Society

December 10: BCGS BOD- Members Christmas Social  
2023:

January 14 Dr. Jack Dwyer, USAF ( Ret) Fairhope, AL Sons of the American Revolution, Presentation "Mayflower Pilgrim Genealogy "

**HOSTESSES:** Pat thanked this month's hostesses, Beth Traylor and Becky Younce. The hostess for November will be Dan Armstrong.

**DOOR PRIZES AWARDED:** There were 3 door prizes awarded.

**ADJOURNED:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m. to meet again on 12 November 2022 at 10 AM in The Foley Public Library Meeting Room.  
Respectfully submitted, Billie Nardell, Recording Secretary

**Baldwin County Genealogical Society Obituary Report October 12, 2022:** The current obituaries from Baldwin Times and Mobile Press are up to date. Billie Nardell collects the obits from Baldwin Times and Tina Graham collects obits with a Baldwin County connection from Mobile Press. All are filed in Genealogy Section of library. Some of these obits are available on "Past Perfect" website. The historic obituaries from 1900 to 1987 are progressing well.

This is a long-term project, but we are now in the 1950's. We do the research and printing at home and file weekly in the library. Research is done by Maureen Lee, Coletta Bailey, Billie Nardell and Tina Graham. Lois Marie O'Konek has assisted with research. Pat Brummett assists with filing. We have a temporary filing system for historic obits now but when all are collected up to year 1987, they will be filed in binders. Eventually we hope to have all collected obits available digitally.

This was a dream of Dot Brown.

BCGS Obituary Chair, Tina Graham

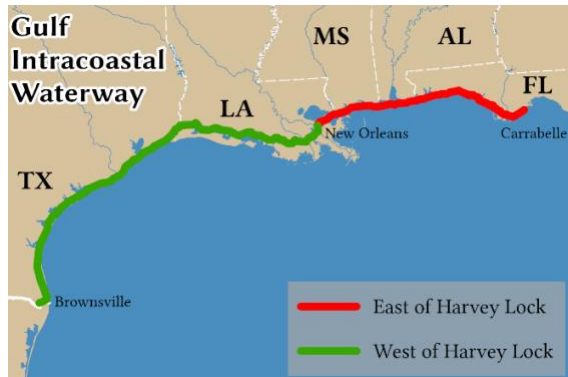
# The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway that changed course of history of Baldwin County



The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, 1938

The **Gulf Intracoastal Waterway** is the portion of the Intracoastal Waterway located along the Gulf Coast of the **United States** including **Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana** and **Texas**. It is a navigable inland waterway running approximately 1,050 miles from **Carrabelle, Florida** to **Brownsville, Texas**. The waterway provides a channel with a controlling depth of 12 ft designed primarily for barge transportation. Although the U. S. government proposals for such a waterway were made in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway was not completed until 1949.

Through its connection with the extensive networks of rivers which funnels into Mobile, the Waterway links every part of Alabama with the entire Gulf Coast and, by way of the Mississippi River system, with much of the interior of the nation. For Southerners, it is a chief reason for the greatest boom in Gulf Coast history which includes **Baldwin County, Alabama**.



(Birmingham News File Photo)

The first portion of the present **Gulf Intracoastal Waterway** to receive attention of the federal government lay east of the Mississippi River. Almost twenty years before Florida and Texas were admitted to the Union, legislation of **March 3, 1826** authorized a survey of a canal route between the Atlantic Ocean and the **Gulf of Mexico**. In 1829, Brigadier General **Simon Bernard**, a member of the Board of Internal Improvements, and Army Engineer Captain **William Tell Poussin**, as assistant to the board, reported their survey findings. Their proposed improvement set forth the first suggested route for an Intracoastal waterway from western Florida to New Orleans, but Congress appropriated no funds for such a project.

**Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Borgne, and Mississippi Sound** afforded protected passage to vessels traveling between New Orleans and **Mobile Bay**; however, at **Pass au Heron**, the natural controlling depth was about 3 feet over the shoal between Mobile Bay and Mississippi Sound forcing ship navigating the inland into the open Gulf at **Dauphin Island** with increased risk of danger from the elements and increased rates of insurance. The **United States** abandoned a project to deepen **Pass au Heron** channel which led **John Grant**, in 1838, to obtain a charter from state of **Alabama** authorizing possession of as much of the shell reef as necessary to construct a channel, also granting him the power to collect tolls at rate of fifteen cents per registered ton to defray work cost.

The concept of safe, land-locked navigation between the **Mississippi River** and the **Atlantic** coast persisted through years so by 1875, the most comprehensive survey of this stretch was authorized to encompass a canal across Florida and an inland route along the Gulf Coasts of **Florida, Alabama, Mississippi** and **Louisiana** to the **Mississippi River**. The survey met the same fate as many other attempts for waterway improvements – lack of funds.

In November, 1908, the *Onlooker* newspaper, **Foley**, wrote “A convention that means much to the entire Gulf Coast and tributary country will convene next Monday and Tuesday at Columbus, Ga., and every businessman and preop owner should show his interest in this great project of the Gulf Coast Inland Waterway Association to have the government construct a series of canals to connect the coastway bays and lagoons into a continuous and safe inland waterway.”

March, 1932, the *Fairhope Courier* newspaper, Fairhope, “was able by telegram from President **R. C. Kenney** of the **Baldwin County League of Civic Clubs** enroute home from Georgia, announced the final deed of right of way for the Intracoastal canal had been

secured and the construction of the canal seemed assured.” The *Birmingham News*, April, 1932, wrote of “boats having the option of running to the **Baldwin** rodeo waters, about the mouth of **Perdido Bay**, or the **Mobile** rodeo waters around **Dauphin Island** without going into the open gulf. They can also reach 14 good fresh water fishing streams that flow into Perdido Bay which would appeal to some people more than do the commercial transportation possibilities.”



Looking west toward Oyster Bay on Gulf Intracoastal Waterway

March of 1933, headlines boasted the “Canal Ready in 12 months for Heavy Traffic.” It also stated the “**Baldwin Canal** as an important link of the water route in that peace-time commerce and War Defense were expected to enlarge projects. Prospective industries included sawmill, oil and gas distribution station to take advantage of cheap water transportation, fish and oyster shipping with refrigeration, a tourist camp which would accommodate hunters and fishermen. The **McGowin** interests, **Geoge Fearn** and **George C. Meyers** of Mobile, were the founders of the new geographical ideas.”

Military expediency and National defense in “military science can see that the intercoastal canal system will form an important third line of defense in event of an attempted invasion of this country. The Navy is only as strong as its protecting air forces. Mobile artillery heavy enough to be effective could move, with supporting troops, along the intercoastal waterways, proving both practical and economical.”

When the Intracoastal Waterway was completed in 1949, “... some of it traverses well-marked routes across open bays, and portions have been cut through land to connect the natural bodies of water adjacent to the Gulf.” Just such changed the geography of **Bon Secour** when a portion of the **Ft Morgan Peninsula** was cut off by the canal and designated as **Oyster Bay**. This area actually became an island bound by the **Bon Secour River** on two sides and **Oyster Bay** and the **Intracoastal Waterway** on the other sides. The tidal movement of the water from the adjacent rivers and streams along with **Mobile Bay** and the **Gulf of Mexico** created an exceptional habitat for fish, shrimp and oysters that encouraged opportunities for recreation and business.

The entire area became famous for the large, rich tasting Bon Secour oysters. **Oyster Bay Island** is referred by many locals as **Plash Island** because of the **Plash family** who have operated a seafood business on the island since late 1930s.



1865 map



Oyster Bay Island aka Plash Island today.

The completion of the Intracoastal Waterway in 1937, and the opening of the Gulf State Park in 1939, were both crucial factors in attracting people to the Gulf Shores of Baldwin County, Alabama, area.

Sources: *A Report and maps of a survey of Canal Routes through Florida*, December 9, 1833, Message from the President of the United States, 23<sup>rd</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session Doc. No 61; *Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (Section in Alabama)*, Interbasin Projects pg 84, Baldwin County History Files FPL, : Leatherwood, Art (15 June 2010), *Gulf Intracoastal Waterway*, Handbook of Texas Online, Texas State Historical Association. Retrieved Mar 23, 2020; Lynn M. Alperin, *History of the Gulf Intracoastal Water*, (PDF) U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Office of History, *Intracoastal Waterway* Baldwin County History File, FPL; *The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway*, Published in New Orleans, Louisiana, **United States Army Corps of Engineers**, 1938, Alabama Department of Archives and History, 624 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36130, <https://digital.archives.alabama.gov/digital/collection/maps/id/938>; *A Brief History of Gulf Shores*, Pinterest Fort Morgan Property Management, <https://www.gulfshoresal.gov/412/History>; *Gulf Shores Photo Gallery*, <https://www.gulfshoresal.gov/gallery.aspx?PID=129>; *The Intracoastal Waterway*, Time magazine, Oct 1, 1956; The Onlooker newspaper, Nov. 6, 1908, Foley, AL; Compiled by J. Bornholt, Foley Public Library

