

# Hattiesburg Area Historical Society

**HAHS MUSEUM**  
Hattiesburg Cultural Center  
723 Main Street  
Mailing: P.O. Box 1573  
Hattiesburg, MS 39403-1773  
Web Site: [www.hahsmuseum.org](http://www.hahsmuseum.org)  
E-mail:  
[hahsmuseum@mcgagate.com](mailto:hahsmuseum@mcgagate.com)

## A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!



Barbara Merkel Johnson and sons, Steve and Ray, pose with their donation at the February 22, 2009, Grand Opening of the Hometown Heroes Exhibit. The exhibit featuring Barbara's father, WWI hero Edmo Merkel, tells the stories of a number of Hattiesburg natives who have made notable contributions to their communities. There is something for everyone in this exhibit, so be sure to visit your museum soon.

Edmo was born in Hattiesburg on April 26, 1897. He joined the US Marines on June 9, 1917. His division was one of the first to arrive in France. While serving as a Pharmacist Mate and ambulance driver he saw action at Verdun, Chateau Theiry, Bois De Belleau, the Meuse Argonne Offensive. He was severely wounded at the Battle of Blanc Mont, but continued to help treat his comrades until he collapsed. For this heroic service he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart.

After the war, he attended the American College of Physical Education, Chicago, and began teaching after graduation. Merk and his wife, Mary Elizabeth Jackson, both taught in Illinois until their retirement. They moved to Ocean Springs, Mississippi in 1957.

Merk made numerous contributions to the community in which he taught. These included officiating and coaching ball games for disadvantaged children, directing school bands, and coaching Olympian Walley Ris, 1948 100 free style swimming champion.



Not all of the Hattiesburg natives depicted in the Hometown Heroes Exhibit have actively served in the military, but all have served this community with their talents and dedication. Hattiesburg has always been blessed with citizens who felt that service to their communities was not only a duty, but also a privilege. The HAHS Museum is fortunate that they or their families have donated the memorabilia that makes this exhibit possible.

Citizen heroes walk among us daily. Since space constraints and our limited collection will not allow us to recognize them all, the HAHS hopes that by displaying the contributions of a few we can honor the many who make Hattiesburg a great place to live.

Our citizens have contributed in all areas of life: from government to sports, from education to healthcare, from religion to volunteerism, and from writing music to writing books. You'll find something here to enjoy.



Evelyn Gandy donated a dress (left) that she wore for one of her inaugural balls when she was elected Lt. Governor in 1976.

Chester C. Ward of A. Nash Clothes, a sports uniform supplier, was the sponsor for a the 1930's Hattiesburg baseball team that wore the uniform to the right.

The boy who wrote music for Hattiesburg (below) now entertains the nation.



Little boys, who wore their mother's hand-made robes (left) to sing in Ethel Poe's Main Street Methodist Boy's Choir, carved slingshots from tree limbs and grew up to rebuilt damaged faces and establish medical museums.

Little girls (right), who played nurse served as Red Cross volunteers at Camp Shelby in WWII and later traveled the world providing disaster relief.



## GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

October 7, 2008 - April 29, 2009

- Camp Shelby ID button #440 Civil Employee; South Central MS Red Cross shirt; volunteer service awards, and pin collection - Martha Smith
- Pictures and certificates belonging to Margaret Myrtle Fairley - Mollie McCaleb Currie
- Girl Scout uniforms and Camp School cheerleader uniform - Alesia Phillips Valentine
- Slingshot circa 1960 carved by Jack Turner (used on mannikin with choir robe) - Amelia McIntyre
- Book: "Commitment to Honor; A Prisoner of War Remembers Vietnam." - Col. & Mrs. George R. Hall
- Book: "Memories The Early Years 1860-1939" copyright 2000 - Ursula Jones
- Early model breadmaker; Books "Ball Preserving Book" (c1913) and "Reliable Recipes and Helpful Hints" Calumet Baking Powder c1913 with letter - Bettie Ross
- Book: "What a Blessing! The Life and Times of Tat Ott" (3 copies) celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday - Tat Ott
- USM yearbooks 1985, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995; Swans Down Flour Tube Pan c1893 belonging to her grandmother - Barbara Aldridge Curry
- Pocket Map of Hattiesburg dated 1937 - Dixie H. Thornton, Camp Shelby Military Museum
- "50<sup>th</sup> Reunion HHS Class of 1958" two copies of CD made at the reunion - Joe & Ann Johnson
- Booklet: "Hercules Flotation Oils c1922 - Arizona Historical Society
- Four 1980's mugs, 1930 metal lunch box, woven c1930 lunch basket and "Taste of the Pine Belt" napkins circa 1980 - Ursula Jones
- Central Railroad lantern used by M. D. Shows of Sanford, MS to flag train to stop for mail, patented 7-10-1928 - Larry Shows
- Book: "Lost Landmarks of Mississippi" by Mary Carol Miller c2002 - Mrs. Charlie Rouse
- Plate: First Baptist Church 100 years, flour sifter circa 1930, toy baby bottles circa 1950 - Ursula Jones
- Book: "The City of Hattiesburg 1884-2009" c2009 (3 copies) - Mark and Marsha Olderr
- Book: "Combat Wounded - Our Story" - Robert D. Ledford
- Albums belonging to her father, B. F. Smith - Mary S. Carleton
- HHS 1939 Li'l Miss annual - Betty Boucher
- Frances Chancellor's baby doll (being used to display Riley O'Neal's 1900 christening dress) - by daughter, Rebecca Bourdene



## Recent Monetary Contributions

November 5, 2008 - May 24, 2009

### New Life Members:

Marsha Olderr      H. C. Clearman  
 Betsy M. Rowell      Gene D. Saucier  
 Bradley B. Farris  
 Barbara A. Johnson

### Donors:

Norvell Robertson Chapter NSDAR  
 John Rolfe Chapter NSDAR  
 Daughters of American Colonists  
 Albert C. Jones & Connie  
 William L. Crowson  
 Thelma D. Deal  
 Virginia M. Van Wart  
 Mrs. Arthur E. Bradley  
 Betty T. Reuben  
 Gerald Buchanan  
 John Kochtitzky  
 Andrea W. Mulvaney

Gloria Hallum Bryant  
 James F. McKenzie  
 John Papadakis  
 Ralph Sanders  
 Lorraine S. Ott  
 Sarah Weiss  
 Class of 1936  
 Mrs. James E. Morris  
 Dee Abbott  
 Lynn Jones Meador  
 Susan G. Benson  
 Mary Frances Blackard  
 Elizabeth G. Pfahnl  
 A J Jones  
 Ursula Ruth Jones  
 George & Patsy Hall  
 Cora M. Sutherland  
 Class of 1945  
 Mrs. R. G. Steadman

Barbara A. Johnson

### Memorials:

Betty B. Cleere  
 Mildred "Snookie Bethea  
 Bill Lawton  
 Katherine & Willie Oubre  
 Charles Newcomer  
 Van Phillips  
 Elizabeth Murphy  
 Dr. John Askew  
 Frances Lovitt  
 Stone Barefield

### Honorariums:

A J Jones  
 Ursula Jones  
 Tat Ott  
 Lynn & Joe Meador  
 Albert C. Jones & Connie



