

## Lareatha H. Clay

Add-quote:

My Reason for getting into hist preserv:

“people tend to think that hist preserv is about saving the big house in town w/ all the firsts or the most famous person in town...but everyone contributes and everyone’s hist is worth preserving...even a modest house and a modest story is worth remembering...”

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THC work...seeing diff areas of state...at meetings got to discover diff personalities of history and preserv ...each area is diff...realization of how remote place can still be a place people would want to go to...eg Perinni Ranch...well-known but very remote...eg Palo Duro Canyon...made me think Shankleville could also have something that would attract people...an experience people want to have...just because you’re out of the way doesn’t mean no one wants to come out here...must have something to offer in order to maintain it...

Not empire building, just keeping it going.

Homecoming since 1941

Area has lot of homecomings for freedom communities...AT helped organize Homecoming; grandmother also helped...community family homecoming....church-based....Sat singing for whoever shows up and sing old songs...Winnie’s daugh married McBride...her family known for singing...Bahleys really known for singing...

Commtty Sunday School and church

Last 20 years have scholarship program in afternoon...to help with upkeep of cemetery....ministers of 3 churches...all three go to homecoming...preacher is always descendent of Shankleville...intertwine Jim & Winnie Shankle story

Started scholarship to encourage youth to come...tried to entice them for that year and be involved...H.S. age...give out three per year...depends on applicants...for kids w/ some connection (family descendent or live there now)...people donate to scholarship...side by side donations (to homecoming—aka cemetery upkeep—and scholarship).

Jim Shankle Cemetery is only for his descendents  
Shankleville Community Cemetery has all local families

Jim and Steve McBride fell out...Jim didn’t want McBrides in cemetery....McBride partnered ‘cause married to Mary Rawlings...one of three kids Winnie had when moved to TX...Steve was known as womanizer...

Oral history of Jim/Winnie story...in the air all the time...mother recalls hearing Jim’s grandson, who heard story from Jim, tell story...her mother wrote up the story during college days...I remember as kid visiting my grandparents and doing work, shelling peas, raking...my grandfather, Big Papa Joe, loved to tell stories even despite stuttering...told all kinds of Shankleville stories...

Homecoming remains time for passing along oral histories...during church service, people often stand up and recall stories they heard about Shankleville...also have panel discussions about theme..

That sense of community is rare these days....when I was kid there would be hundreds attend Homecoming...laid out on long table...eat together afterwards....now still have meal but all prepared by one person...not as much sitting around under trees...but more eat inside 'cause ... numbers are dwindling as well....

1988 started Shankleville Historical Society...have been each year since then...get to know everybody that way.

Asa Hilliard, scholar at U of Ga.?...he's Shankleville descendent...his family came a lot...now deceased but encouraged his family to come to Homecoming...

Shankleville forms by several founding families, McBride, Gatlin, Lewis, etc...my grandmother said was 1500 people...her grandparents owned business too...when began was no central town but was farming community...a few stores...remember going to grist mill with her grandfather...

National Register...Odom Homestead...because of people involved, not structure...AT was self-employed contractor with timber company....one of few black contractors...Wiergate was largest sawmill town in area...heyday in '30s... had worker camps...segregated by race...his contract was maintenance on building in colored town....he built several buildings still around...built the house on the register...Wier Longleaf Pine Company...taught carpentry at CCC camp at school...founder of Homecoming...coffin maker...grandmother dressed for funeral...she worked during Depression...helped teach mattress making during WPA...also were farmers...

HOPES: restore house—hope to get grant from Natl Trust...restore environment...

Homestead, smokehouse, chicken coop, Noah's ark (where kept car), barn...

--outhouse is gone

--had store on property; donated to church later; now gone

--tractor barn

Several houses around several towns...several in Shankleville...

Dream would be to restore property: when we grew up was dirt road into Shankleville and the house is at end of road...spring where Winnie met Jim is down hill from house...goal to restore spring (cleared out to former site...could cool off, wash clothes...); 1<sup>st</sup> to get elec (AT was on school board)...also recruited teachers for school he built and teacherage that was on their property...people in comnty came to their house to listen to radio...gathering place for comnty...had mills for making syrup (brought the cane there)...

Purple Hull Pea Festival may be in the works...Shankleville Hunting Club has many members and when they hunt, have several houses they use...

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When try to get people to tell their story...you have to listen to people and draw out their story...how do you get along better...get to elaborate into what you say means...same happens re: Af-Am about history...times were hard...don't wanna talk about it...have to peel thru onion to get to what they mean..

Eg. What does Sh mean to you? Talking with relatives that moved in great migration to calif ...tease the story out...rather than the cliché....

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believe in preservation culture...we heard stories growing up... was nice...hist was what learned in school but learned that preservation of buildings and details was way hist integrates into lives...

THC highlight: got comm. to set up internship for any minority students (underrepresented groups)...summer internship....now thru Friends group...patterned after Dallas Symphony Orchestra 'string' project...

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Story:

As kid we played outside of the church during Homecoming...had uncle selling candy out of car...now everyone inside...

But teenagers on Sat nite now can meet new folks...courting goes on...get to grandmother's and talk about what's going...