

Fairhope Historic Preservation Committee

Monthly Meeting Notes

April 13, 2022

9:30 a.m.

Fairhope History Museum

Attendance: Gary Gover, Mara Hunter, Andrew Ousley, Skip Jones, museum liaison Gabriel Gold-Vukson (Museum Liaison). Guest:

Not Present: Jay Robinson

Call to order: Gary Gover, 9:31

Old Business

- Minutes approved, March
- Discussion of May 19 Workshop-Alabama Historic Commission will present slide show at the Baldwin County Campus building.
—County Historic Development Commission (Preservation Plaque Process): Skip will present 15 - 20 Minutes, and notes that Wayne Dyas is the liaison historic development commission.

New Business

- William Alfred Lewis House: After a news story on NBC15, the developer reached out to Corey Martin, who through Cecil Christianberry contacted the superintendent of schools to see if the house could be moved to the Anna T. Jeanes site as an education building. FHPC reached out to the Alabama Historic Commission to learn about grants to help with the efforts. Subsequently Theo Moore from the Black Heritage Council reached out to Corey M., and is now working to get the house into the NHR. [postscript—the effort to register the house with NHR is delayed until the owner expresses interest].
 - Within our new mission what steps can we take to help efforts underway? Skip Jones to contact the developer. Mara Kozelsky to pursue further historic research on the property. [Relevant documents relating to the Lewis family can be found in the Single Tax archive, including E.B. Gatson's research notes, which offer more detail than his articles on the subject. Additionally, research revealed that the historical survey had some inaccuracies, and dates did not always coincide to Baldwin County property records. Baldwin County records office indicated that it no longer had the original records and assessors estimated many dates for older properties].
- The Summit Inn
 - Small Business looking into the historic rehabilitation credit. Skip will meet with owner to ascertain our ability to help with the application.
- Single Tax presentation about mission change (super-short), to the FSTC April 13 evening meeting. [Post-script: Subsequently, MK met with the Single Tax archival committee to learn about their remarkable progress in verifying the history-survey and recording local history of FSTC homes in the on-line archive.]

Meeting ended: Gary Gover, 10:25 a.m.

309 Ingleside

The house at 309 S. Ingleside is known as the homestead of the Lewis family, freed slaves who settled in Fairhope decades before the town became incorporated. After emancipation, the family migrated from a plantation in Mississippi to Baldwin County, where they worked an eighty-acre farm bounded on one side at the corner of present-day Fairhope and Section Street. The house was built by William Alfred Lewis, who was born into slavery on December 18, 1858 in Meridian Mississippi. Along with his mother Nancy Lewis, notably featured in Paul Gaston's *Women of Fairhope*, William Alfred Lewis migrated to Baldwin County with his father John, and sister Betty, also born into slavery. Working the land and in local industries, the Lewis family contributed substantially to the early development of Fairhope. The Single Tax Colony acquisition of land in Fairhope reduced the Lewis family tract from 80 acres to 40 acres.

Paul Gaston recorded William Alfred Lewis's history in "Irony in Utopia: the Discovery of Nancy Lewis," and notes that William Alfred Lewis appeared in the Alabama census of 1870 as an 11 year old child. He again appeared as a turpentine hand in 1880. Eventually, William Alfred Lewis married Rosetta Young, daughter of Parker Young, another long term resident of Fairhope who shared in the 40 acre Lewis tract. A picture of William Alfred Lewis with his descendants at 309 S. Ingleside can be found at the Fairhope History Museum, also in the *Images of America: Fairhope* book by Cathy Donelson, with a forward from Fannie Flagg.