

The Peak Cemetery Clean Up and the Jarnigan/Peak House (As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on June 25, 2012)

Before we continue with some additional history of the Peak family, please be reminded that the Peak Cemetery is being cleaned up by community volunteers led by Councilman Dave Mosby and Scarboro resident, member of *Scarboro Neighborhood Watch Group*, past member of the *Oak Ridge Bombers* baseball team and good friend of mine, Larry Gipson, along with members of the *Team Investment* group.

Won't you come out and help clean up this cemetery? It is located at the corner of Wilberforce Avenue and Fisk Avenue in the Scarboro Community. Larry wanted me to give you his phone number (254-2346) so you could let him know if you were planning to help on Saturday, June 30, 2012, starting at 8:00 AM.

The plan is to get the clean up done before it gets so hot up in the day. There is full shade in the cemetery.

If you have ANY questions about what is going to be done or if you wonder what tools will be needed, please call Larry. He will be glad to help you understand what you can do to help. Even if you don't have tools, just picking up the sticks and other things that should not be left there will be a big help.

Larry has been a real help to me in researching stories for *Historically Speaking*. He is the primary person who helped me contact individuals who, along with him, played on the Oak Ridge Bombers baseball team. He also agreed to be interviewed for a documentary film we were making about the Biology Division. That project was delayed because of the East TN PBS miniseries *A Nuclear Family*.

Now that we have completed that project, the *Our Hidden Past* series will pick up the second in the three-part series on the history of the Biology Division of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory located at the Y-12 site. Liane Russell and Nate Revis also helped with the history as well as others who worked there. Look for that series to be completed soon.

When I called Larry about the Peak Cemetery, he was quick to tell me about a new group he was proud of, the *Team Investment* group. He said they were enthusiastic about Scarboro Community and stressed the need for teaming together to improve our neighborhoods. I think that is a great idea. This group readily joined in the effort to clean his historic cemetery.

Remember, it just might be the final resting place of two Revolutionary War Soldiers and two Civil War Soldiers. It would be really good if we could recognize that with a historical marker. And it would also be good to create a plan for the ongoing maintenance of the site. Next there should be more research on the location of the slave cemetery that might just be there.

Fred Eiler has taken that to heart as he believes that Wilberforce Avenue may have been built through the original site of the adjoining slave cemetery. It could be that it was located farther North and the road went between the two cemeteries.

Last week I briefly mentioned a house in Clinton that was connected with the Peak family. Fred Eiler provided additional insight into that connection.

Fred said, "In the early 1950's my mother used to shop in Clinton. One time she allowed me to stay in the car while she went into the old Magnet Mills shop. I wandered over to the rear of the old two-story brick house across from the courthouse."

"An elderly gentleman was working in the back yard and spoke to me over the fence. He explained to me that the house was very old when he bought it about 30 years earlier. He pointed out the old slave chain, designed for punishment, in the backyard.

"When my mother returned he invited us in for a tour. We entered at the rear through the basement level. The original kitchen and slave quarters had been located there, and a silent butler type of elevator took food up to the dining room on the main floor above.

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"On that floor, as well as the second, a long, wide hallway ran the length of the house from front to rear, with a landing in the stairway half way up. I had visited 'My Old Kentucky Home' with my family, and this one was just as impressive. Mr. Peak showed us a dressing/bath room on the second floor that still bore bloodstains in the white oak floor boards that resulted from the homes use as a hospital during the Civil War.

When I came to Clinton High School to start my 30 year career of teaching foreign languages, I met Sarah Lee Peak Wood, and learned that she was the daughter of that kind gentleman, Clyde William Peak. Although she was born on the family farm in 1919 in what became Oak Ridge, she grew up in the town home, which her father bought in 1924.

"She told me the history of the house and referred me to a book on the subject. She said that the 14-inch thick walls were made by the slaves of the first owner, Mr Jarnigan, in 1839. She explained that the original mantles, with their mirrors and marble hearths were still in place. The rooms were named after the color of the hearth; there was a blue room, a pink one and a white one.

"Later research revealed that the house passed after the Civil War, around 1869, to John Ross. About 1890, he moved to a house on Depot, now Market St. It then became the property of M. A. Farrell, president of Clinton's First Bank.

"A. L. Demarcus, Anderson County Sherriff and U.S. Deputy District Marshall bought the house in 1898. It must have been a very convenient location, near the courthouse and jail, and he was known for entertaining attorneys, judges and other officials. From 1917 to 1924, when it was purchased by C.W. Peak, it belonged to P F. Lynch. He was the superintendent of a large coal company at Briceville.

"As the house was being dismantled in 1970, I could see that the massive walls had been covered inside with an additional two inches of plaster, with lathwork between the 14 inches of brick and the plaster to aid in heating and cooling the massive pile. The exterior was plain, typical of the Federal Period in which it was built, with only a modest roofed porch across most of the front on Main Street.

"Sarah Peak Wood explained that her father, having no son, left his estate in the hands of a trust when he died in 1962. She died, much too young, from bone cancer in 1974. In the late 1970's I met her sister, Margaret Elizabeth Peak Horton, when her son was a student of mine.

"He was named Clyde Clarence, after his grandfather Clyde W., and his grandfather's brother, J. Clarence, who died in 1906 at only 22 years of age, and whose tombstone is in the Peak Cemetery. Clyde Horton was born shortly after the death of his grandfather C.W., so he never knew him, but he has many memories of the Peak house before its destruction.

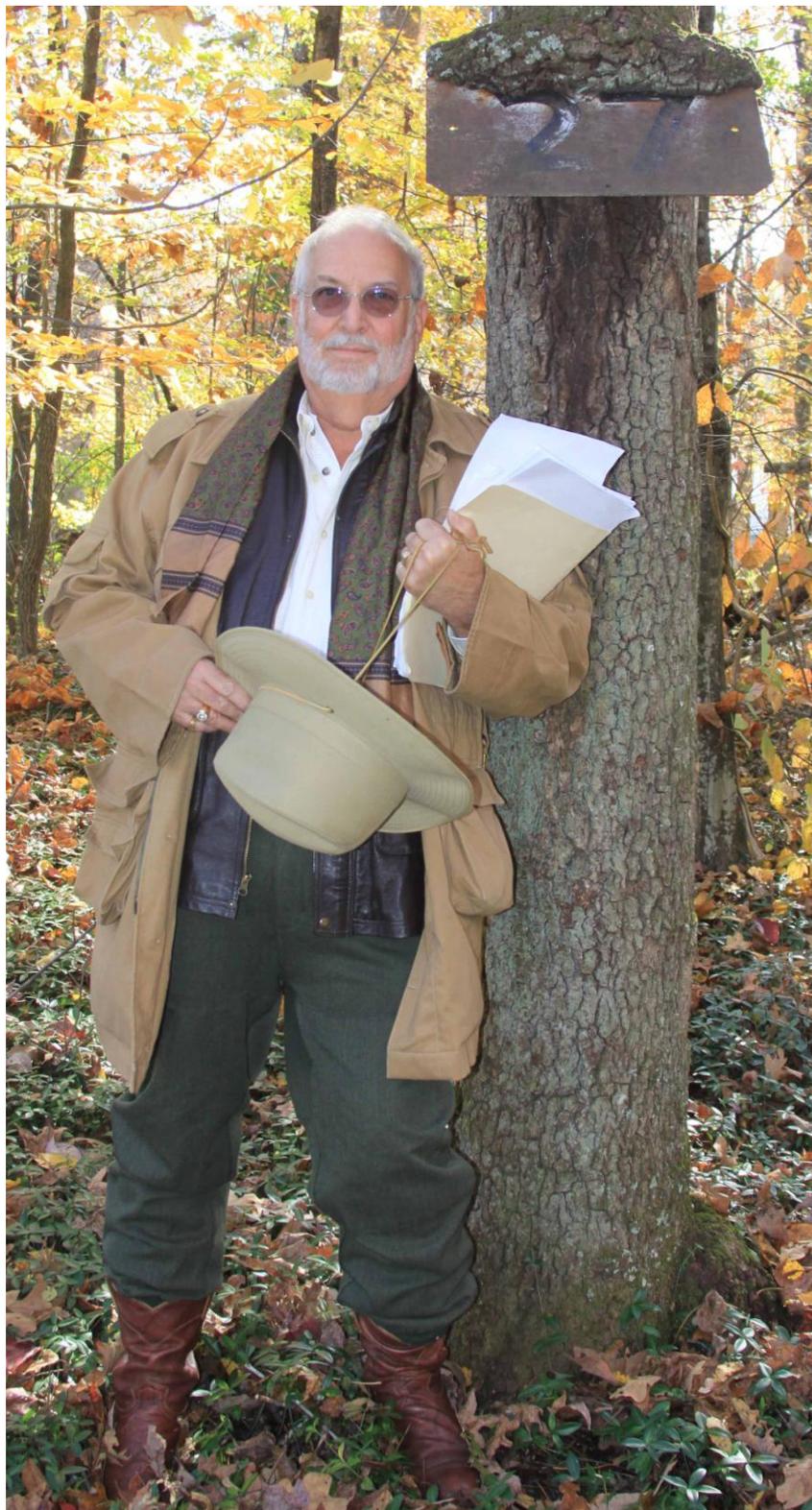
"And I personally can assure you that the ghost of the house still exists. Every time I have walked or driven by, I can't even see the branch bank built there and am transported back to the elegantly furnished mansion and guided by the proud Mr. Peak as he gives us a tour.

"In about 1980 I was invited to the newly constructed home of some friends in Clinton. It was very beautiful but rather modern. I kept being drawn to the salvage brick that they had purchased locally and used in the construction. I couldn't keep my hands off it, and I explained to them that the brick spoke to me of times long past.

"I asked them if it could have come from the Peak house. They said that they had been told that it came from the old courthouse, but because the bricks were handmade, they suspected that they were from a slave-built home older than the courthouse.

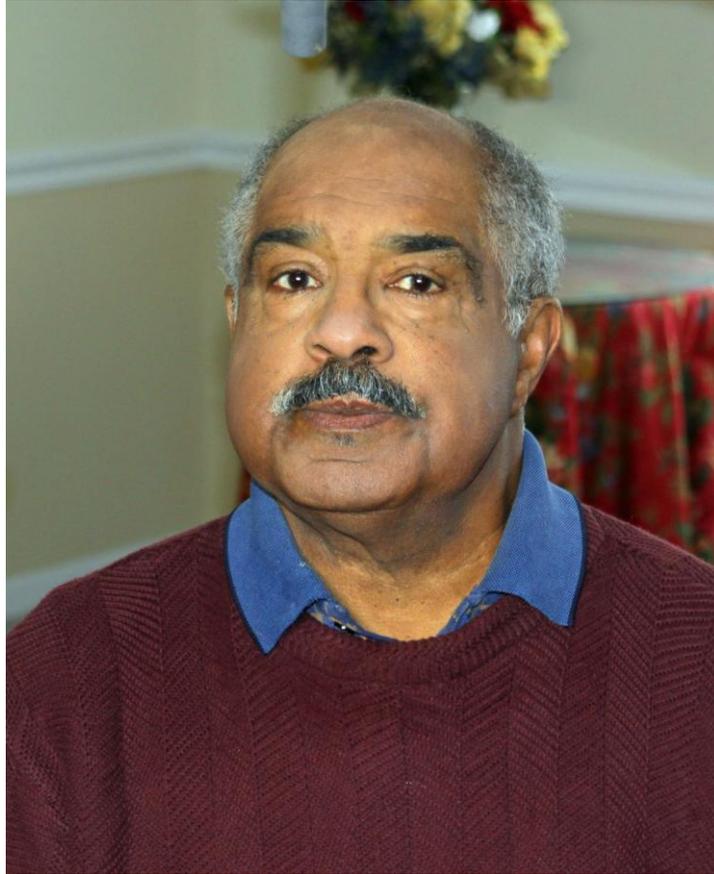
Thank you Fred, for that wonderful description of what the Jarnigan/Peak House in Clinton meant to you.

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Fred Eiler stands by the Peak Cemetery # 27 marker

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Larry Gipson is leading the Peak Cemetery Clean Up on Saturday, June 30, 2012 at 8:00 AM