

University of Mississippi

eGrove

Cedar Oaks Guild Newsletter

General Special Collections

9-19-2021

Newsletter, September 2021

Cedar Oaks Guild

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/cedaroksguild_news

Recommended Citation

Cedar Oaks Guild, "Newsletter, September 2021" (2021). *Cedar Oaks Guild Newsletter*. 33.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/cedaroksguild_news/33

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the General Special Collections at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Cedar Oaks Guild Newsletter by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Cedar Oaks Guild Newsletter

September, 2021



Flexible planning has been a necessity due to the continuing Covid situation. The Guild moved outside to the patio for an informal brunch on September 14. Hostesses Tricia Copelin, Beth Ducrest, Donna Fuller, and Laura Harper served cheese straws, mini quiches, fresh fruit, and autumn leaf muffins. Baskets were arranged on a charming country table setting.



Allergy reminder: If you have any food allergies, please notify Tricia so that she can alert the hostesses. We don't want to make anybody sick!

Emmie Lou Brunson, who has been a member of Cedar Oaks Guild or its predecessor for 44 years, commended the group for their continuing dedication to the support and improvement of Cedar Oaks. Several members have contributed to Cedar Oaks for decades. Three of our "classic" members, Betty Bridge, Emmie Lou Brunson, and Abi Rayburn posed in the garden. Toni Paolillo left too early to be in the picture.



Keri Dibrell and Sharon Hawkins brought a guest, Suzanne Atkins. Keri met Suzanne through University Dames, and then Suzanne, Keri, and Sharon "grew" their friendship working with Master Gardeners. We were happy to meet Suzanne.



Garden Dedication: Martha Huckins, Landscaping Chair, discussed the upcoming dedication of the garden to T. E. and Zilla Avent. Martha, Reba Greer, Barbara Purdon, Sharon Hawkins, and Karen Travillo have been working diligently to prepare for the dedication. Special thanks to the Master Gardeners, and to Laura Harper for donating a third bench. The event will be held Sunday, October 17, at 3:00. *Invitation Oxford* will be there to cover the event. T. E. and Zilla's grandson Murray Avent will attend, as well as other guests. Invitations will be mailed to out of town guests. Please plan to attend this special occasion to honor our benefactor.



The **October 12** meeting will be held at Burns Belfry, where there is more space to practice social distancing.

Halloween Trick or Treat on the trail is planned for Sunday, October 31, 1:00-3:00. We will “Pass the Pumpkin” at the October meeting to collect funds to purchase candy in bulk. Everyone is invited to dress up and have fun with the children of our community.

Docent tours: Tours have resumed on Fridays, 1:00-4:00, or by appointment. Masks are required. Marianna Ochs has made “push cards” and placed them at local hotels and the Oxford Visitors Center. Serving as a docent is a way to learn more about the house and its history, and also meet new people. If you are interested in being a docent, contact Sharon Hawkins. Members with social media skills can share information about Cedar Oaks remotely. If you would like to contribute to our Facebook or Web pages, contact Laura Harper. Our intern Brittany Ellis developed an online exhibit about Cedar Oaks and its history. <https://cedaroaks.omeka.net/exhibits> Information can be added to this in the future.

Happy Birthday:

Carolyn Lott	September 10
Donna Fuller	September 26



Cedar Oaks Treasure: Our Benefactor, T. E. Avent

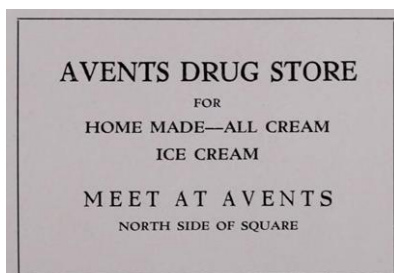
The Avent family was among the earliest settlers of Lafayette County, when Benjamin Avent brought his family here in 1839. The Avents continued to be an illustrious family, active in local government and civic affairs. Our benefactor, Thomas Edison Avent, was the son of Thomas Wesley and Sidney Avent. He was one of 5 sons who lived to adulthood. T. E. was trained as a pharmacist at the University of Mississippi, and was president of the Pharmacy Class in 1914. His wife, Zilla Holmes Avent, was from Abbeville, LA, but her ancestors were from Lafayette County. They met when she came to Ole Miss and were married in 1916. Zilla died in March, 1956. She

had been a member of Eastern Star and was active in First Baptist Church. T. E. and Zilla had one son, Thomas Webb, who was a flight instructor at the university and a Navy test pilot during World War II. He married Louise Murray, the epitome of outstanding women in Oxford. Thomas Webb and Louise Avent had two sons, Thomas Webb, Jr., and Murray Edison Avent. Her sons honored her by establishing the Louise M. Avent Memorial Scholarship Endowment in the Patterson School of Accountancy.

T. E. Avent began his pharmacy practice in the building that was first Isom Drug Store, then Bramlett, then Avent, and finally Leslie Drug Store, now the home of Bouré Restaurant. Along with the drug store, Mr. Avent became increasingly involved in the dairy business and sold the pharmacy to John and Elizabeth Leslie in 1951.

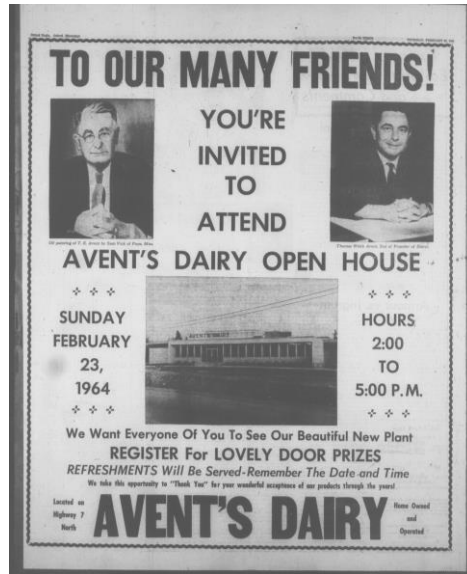
Back about 1920, milk was not a common commodity. The food demands of World War I and afterwards had utilized cattle for meat rather than milk. Pasteurization was known, but not common. Without proper handling, milk could carry a myriad of bacteria and illnesses. Mr. Avent, with his pharmacy training, was concerned about the health problems it posed. If you wanted fresh milk, you got a cow. According to family stories, Mrs. Avent wanted a cow, so Mr. Avent bought one. "According to Mr. Avent, the first thing he knew he had another and still another until one time he counted later and not only found out that he had 350 cows, but also that he was in the dairy business." (*Oxford Eagle*, Feb. 20, 1964, p. 1)

Improvements in breeding dairy cattle, processing and refrigerating milk, and nutrition information led to an increase in the dairy industry. Butter, ice cream, homogenization, and more cost effective packaging, moving from glass bottles and metal carriers to cardboard containers followed. Ice cream from Avent's had long been popular, even before he was in the dairy business fulltime. An ad in the 1937 *Ole Miss Yearbook* for Avent's Drug Store highlighted their ice cream. Last July, John Cofield's Facebook page featured an old picture of the ice cream carton.



The office for Avent's Dairy was first located just north of the Square, diagonally opposite the original location of Cedar Oaks. In the October, 2013 issue of *Invitation Oxford*, Murray Avent remembered his mother taking them there and having to do small chores. But getting ice cream was a reward. (*Invitation Oxford*, pp.78-79)

The February 20, 1964 issue of the *Oxford Eagle* was devoted almost entirely to the grand opening of the new state of the art facility on North Lamar, near Three Way. The plant employed 54 people, from the front office receptionist, to the engineers, to the truck drivers who delivered the products to 14 different counties and everyone else who worked with Avent's Dairy. At the same time, Tomas Webb Avent was elected president of the Mississippi Dairy Association. Avent's Dairy was sold to Luvell Dairy in 1990.



Before T. E. Avent sold his herd of cows to concentrate on the processing and marketing aspects, he owned much of the northeast part of Oxford. In October 2019, Kate Kenwright, Oxford Historic Preservationist, spoke to Cedar Oaks about Avent Acres, the neighborhood that was developed as affordable housing for GIs returning from World War II. Avent was not only an astute businessman, he was an extremely generous person. In addition to the land he donated for Cedar Oaks, he also donated 20 acres for the city park that bears his name, and built a church on the site where his ancestors had worshipped, adjacent to Liberty Hill Cemetery. The land given for Cedar Oaks in honor of his beloved wife, Zilla, was the best in the area.

In the documentary film, *The House that Would Not Die*, Murray Avent recalled his grandfather giving the land at Mrs. Tate's request. "Mrs. Tate knew who to go ask. She came to Grandfather. Grandfather promised to donate these two lots here. This is really the highest point of all this neighborhood you can see. He meant it to be the focal point, the centerpiece, the crowning touch so to speak of this neighborhood." *House*, 3:40 Mr. Avent also helped with fundraising to pay for the cost of moving the house.



Without the dedication of Mary Alice Tate and the other women, and the generosity of T. E. Avent, William Turner's house probably would have been lost.

Skipwith Historical and Genealogical Society. *The Heritage of Lafayette County Mississippi*. 1986.

<https://umfoundation.com/main/2014/07/28/avent-legacy-honored/>

Invitation Oxford <https://issuu.com/invoxford/docs/ooct2013master>

The House That Would Not Die. Documentary. <https://cedarocks.org/index.php/learn-more>

Sharon Schreiber, Newsletter Editor