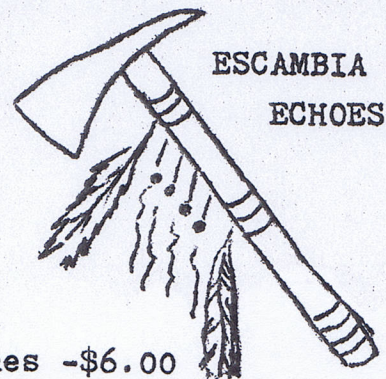


* THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

* P. O. BOX 276

* BREWTON, ALABAMA 36426

* Carolyn Pugh McLendon, President/ Editor



February 8, 1977

Annual Dues -\$6.00

NOTICE OF MEETING: Tuesday, FEBRUARY 15, 1977, 7:00 p.m.
AT BREWTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Program: WOODFIN PATTERSON, PRESIDENT, JEFFERSON
DAVIS STATE JUNIOR COLLEGE

Mr. Patterson has been asked to give us his projections regarding the Fine Arts Building on the campus of Jefferson Davis State Junior College which is to house the proposed museum for which this Society is endeavoring to raise \$200,000. A cordial invitation is extended to everyone who is interested in having a museum for this county.

MEETING DATE CHANGED TO FOURTH TUESDAY beginning with the March meeting. At the January meeting the members voted to change our regular monthly meetings to the Fourth Tuesday because of two conflicting meetings held on the third Tuesday that prevented some of our members from attending our meetings. We hope that this change will be agreeable with all our members and that it will help attendance. Extremely cold weather has held our attendance down the last two meetings. It could not be changed for February as your President will be teaching a Mission Study at First Baptist Church on February 22nd.

INDEX FOR 1975 QUARTERLIES - Miss Janel Redditt has volunteered to index the 1975 quarterlies which is a year behind schedule. We are grateful to Miss Redditt for assuming this responsibility; it is a difficult and time-consuming task. Bert Campbell, Jr. indexed the 1974 quarterlies and two of the 1973 issues, Gertrude Stephens indexed the first issue and your editor the second issue of 1973.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES? Look at the mailing address label on your copy of this newsletter. If it has a "77" in the bottom right-hand corner, we have you marked paid on our records--if not they are still due or we have erred. Please call any mistake to our attention.

RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) UNDAUNTED BY THE SNOW, assembled and mailed the January quarterlies on the date they had set up--the Sheriff had to order and escort them home. That's what I call determination! Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose H. Riley, Jr. completed the task on behalf of the RSVP group while they were snowed in. Those assisting with the January quarterly were Mrs. Belle Franklin, Mrs. Corrie Fredericks, Mrs. Edith Marsh, Mrs. Hesta May, Mrs. Alyne Otto, Miss Lula Pearl Neal, Mrs. Grace Rush, Mrs. Doris Smith, Mrs. Jimmie Steadham and Mrs. Permelia Townsend. RSVP, we just can't thank you enough!

MUSEUM PROJECT - Contributions have continued to come in, and we now have \$13,556.32 in our Museum Project Savings Account. We have been giving everyone a breathing-spell after getting the Christmas bills caught up, but will soon be getting out more letters and making personal contacts on behalf of the Museum Project. Several businesses here and two clubs in Flomaton have indicated that donations are in the process. Contributions received since our December newsletter have been as follows:

REGULAR DONATIONS: Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Welch

MEMORIALS:

James Donald Byrd

- Dr. and Mrs. R.E.Low
- Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Riley, Jr.
- Mr. and Mrs. J. Bryars Byrd
- Mrs. Alice Till Beall
- Mrs. Joe Larkin
- Lt.Com.and Mrs. R.A.McDaniel, Virginia Beach, Va.
- Mr. and Mrs. S. W. Williamson
- Mrs. John David Finlay
- Mrs. Maude C. Yeldell

Kathleen Davison (Miss)

- Miss Lula Pearl Neal
- Miss Marjorie Davison
- Miss Ethel Davison

John David Finlay

- Miss Lula Pearl Neal
- Mr. andMrs. J.F.Smith
- Lt.Com.and Mrs.R.A.McDaniel,Virginia Beach,Va.
- Mrs. Alice Till Beall
- Mrs. Joe Larkin
- Mrs. W. S. West
- Mrs. Glen D. Goldsmith, Ft.Deposit,Al.

J. E. (Ned) Finlay

- Mrs. Glen D. Goldsmith, Ft.Deposit,Al.

John Gay (b.1795) and Pheriby Godwin Gay (b.1812)

- Ray Polk

Judge and Mrs. John David Leigh

- Mrs. John C. Byrd, Greenville, Al.

At the request of several of the members the following history of The Escambia County Historical Society (which was printed in the February 3, 1977 issue of The Brewton Standard) is being re-printed for the benefit of our out of town members.

A BACKWARD GLANCE - A FORWARD LOOK
HISTORY OF THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Carolyn Pugh McLendon
January 1977

during the summer of 1971 a small group of people including Mrs. Henry (Eunice) Nadrchal, J.W.Caldwell, Harry Weaver, Janel Redditt,

John David Finlay, W.E. Brooks, and Gene Cashman, met to consider the feasibility of forming a historical society for the area. With Mrs. Nadrchal, Mrs. Worth Smith and Mrs. Eva Parker making numerous phone calls a meeting was arranged for the group and a committee set up for the nominating of officers to serve two-year terms. It was determined that the group should be called The Escambia County Historical Society and that it should be a non-profit educational group with dues of \$5.00 per year, and would hold its meetings at the Jefferson Davis Junior College. Officers elected were J.W. Caldwell, President; Harry Weaver, Vice President; Mrs. Eunice Nadrchal, Secretary; Dr. E.D. Rosemore, Treasurer; Janel Redditt, Librarian; Gene Cashman, Publicity Chairman; John David Finlay, Curator; W. Emmett Brooks, Woodfin Patterson and Thomas E. McMillan, Trustees. A bus trip into Conecuh County to Jay Villa Plantation owned by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas McMillan was planned. On this trip Mrs. Nadrchal announced that her husband was being transferred and she would be leaving Brewton within a few weeks. Because of her efforts on behalf of the Society a silver bowl was given her as an appreciation gift.

As a young Society we made our first mistake during this first year, one that still haunts us on occasion--the Sowell house project. When several of the townsmen learned that the old Sowell house on Belleville Avenue was to be torn down to make way for an apartment house complex, Rev. George Stritikus appealed to several of the clubs of the Brewton area, the Historical Society included, to make an effort to "Save the Sowell House" and the Historical Society jumped in with much enthusiasm and "got its feet wet," so to speak. Jack Hines, who had bought the Sowell House and lot was prevailed upon and he agreed to give the house to the Historical Society with the understanding that it was to be moved from its original location. With all the determination of a youthful society we set out to find a place to put the house and have it moved. Since we planned to use it for an initial museum edifice, it was decided that the college campus would be the appropriate place for the house and the college officials agreed to allow the house to be moved to the campus. In an effort to help the Society in its project (although he questioned the feasibility of the project) Mr. Thomas McMillan paid the cost of moving the original part of the house to the campus. For some time the restoration of the house was considered and being a young society and with only a small treasury, the task seemed to grow into an impossibility. Many professionals were called in to advise the Society regarding the Sowell house (including W. Warner Floyd and Milo Howard of the State organizations); and it was with sad hearts that this young Society in March, 1973, admitted defeat. On the recommendation of Mrs. Carolyn McLendon the project was abandoned, and at the same time Mrs. McLendon proposed that the group take a step forward and begin the publication of a Historical Quarterly. During 1971 many interesting programs were brought before the Society by W. Emmett Brooks, John David Finlay, Mrs. M.G. Waters, Milo Howard of the Department of Archives and History, Montgomery; W. Warner Floyd of the Alabama Historical Commission; J.W. Caldwell, and Floyd Currie at a meeting held in Atmore.

December, 1972 saw the beginning of our first publication, a letter notifying members of the meeting with "DID YOU KNOW" notes at the bottom. This letter was really born of necessity because Mrs. Nadrchal was no longer available to call our members to remind them of the meetings, and the new secretary, Mrs. McLendon, found it necessary to get word to the members in some other way than by radio. The December letter was so

enthusiastically received and republished in newspapers and via radio that Mrs. McLendon felt encouraged to do the same for the January, 1973 meeting. By February, 1973 the newsletter had grown to 8½x14 size, and the idea of a quarterly historical publication was born. The newsletter has continued monthly since December, 1972, and has grown into a three-page letter with news of the Society, queries, notices of books available, and a page of history. This newsletter has been proclaimed to be the best newsletter in the State of Alabama. The quarterly began in March, 1973, has continued and has added about 225 members to our rolls. Free copies are sent to colleges, libraries and schools, giving a total mailing for the quarterly of 350. The quarterly has been well received state-wide and caused this Society to receive an Award of Merit in December, 1975 for its publication efforts.

In 1973 interesting programs were presented to the Society by Mrs. Gertrude Johnson Stephens, President of Mobile Genealogical Society; Mrs. Marion Viccars, Associate Librarian John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida; Floyd Currie, Mrs. C.B. (Rochelle) Garrett, Robert H. Jones, Jr., President, Conecuh County Historical Society, Evergreen; Buddy Smith, State News Editor of Mobile Register; Mrs. Bernice McMillan, Stockton, Al.; and Buddy Mitchell, Brewton. Our first Garden Party was held in 1973 at The Leigh Place (Brewton's first courthouse) as guests of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas McMillan. We were all "heady" that night from the staggering success of our first quarterly publication. In October we made a pilgrimage to Fort Mims as guests of The Baldwin County Historical Society, and in December we held an old-fashioned costume Christmas Party. The Society nominated Thomas E. McMillan for the Alabama Historical Commission Distinguished Service Award. Our membership grew in 1973 from 78 to 221! Assisting our staff with mailing were Ben Kelly Strain and his secretaries, Miss Helen Robertson, Dan S. Robertson (age 94, stuffing envelopes), and Mrs. and Mrs. John David Finlay. Mrs. Wilbur P. (Eva) Parker was our great lady in charge of our parties in 1973.

New Officers elected January, 1974 included Floyd Currie, President; Bert M. Campbell, Jr., Vice President; Miss Helen Robertson, Secretary; Mrs. Harriett Miller, Recording Secretary; Miss Janel Redditt, Librarian; John David Finlay, Curator; E. D. Rosemore, Treasurer; Mrs. Carolyn McLendon, Publication. 1974 gave us such interesting programs as Mrs. Annie Crook Waters "History of Escambia County Schools;" N. R. Stowe of University of South Alabama with "Archaeology in South Alabama;" J. W. Caldwell with his artifact collection; Carolyn McLendon and "Railroad Bill;" Mrs. Jack (Doris) Bruner with her stories of ghosts, superstitions and folklore; Miss Rita Jane Boykin's "Nostalgic Reminiscences and Contrasts;" and Robert H. Jones, Jr. of Evergreen with "History of the Brooklyn area and its Families, Legends and Traditions." In 1974 we had our second Garden Party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John David Finlay in Alco, and our first "Show and Tell" program in June which was enjoyed so much that it was repeated in October; and we made our fall pilgrimage to Brooklyn, Alabama, stopping at Dr. A.J. McCreary's Teddy, Ala. on the way and picnicing at Dozier Camp as guests of Ed Leigh McMillan and family. We finished the year with a Christmas Party at which Miss Rita Jane Boykin, Dan S. Robertson, Mrs. Doris Bruner and Mrs. Jewel Williamson entertained, and with a total membership of 264! Making their advents as our super party ladies this year were Mrs. Harriett Miller, Mrs. Betty Campbell, and Mrs. Paula Jay, and by mid-year we had exhausted our membership secretary, Miss Helen Robertson, and Mrs. Don (Gladys) Byrd took up the voluminous task. Three new writers sent in stories, Mr. W.T. Rice of Flomaton, "Pollard Notes;" Mr. Jesse F. Elliott "Recollections of the

Bruner and Mrs. Jack Peevy "Gala Bicentennial Events Remembered" and Miss Mary E. Brantley "A Tribute to the Early Settlers of Alabama."

In June, 1976, we held a Martha and George Washington Party with special program by Miss Rita Jane Boykin and Mrs. Jack Bruner assisted by soloists Mrs. Robert T. Maxwell and Mrs. Bob Hamil, with Mrs. Bert Campbell, Pianist. In July three more of our members received Alabama Historical Commission Awards of Merit--J. Floyd Currie of Atmore, Mrs. M.G. Waters, and Tom Gardner, publisher of The Brewton Standard, presented by W. Warner Floyd of the Alabama Historical Commission. In September we made our fall pilgrimage to Belleville, Conecuh County, Alabama, and were well received there. October 1st found us saying our "goodbyes" to our departed Curator, John David Finlay, whose death triggered a museum fund drive because of memorials donated in his name. By the end of the year a total of \$12,000 was in the fund from various donations and numerous memorials to many departed loved ones. During the year our benefactor Duncan Meriwether of Chester Springs, Penn. donated sundry books, records, microfilm, and a microfilm reader to the Society. Our new writers in 1976 were John R. Jones, Jr. of Camden, New Jersey with Jones and Brooks family histories, and Miss Rita Jane Boykin's "The James M. Davison Home." We ended the year with 275 members. It was a good year and a busy bicentennial year.

Through our unified efforts we have become one of the outstanding Historical Societies in the State of Alabama, and have become known state wide for our various efforts. We are fulfilling our responsibilities as a Historical Society within the Escambia County area and are assisting students and historians over the United States through our publications and correspondence. We have good reason to be proud and can face the new year challenged to do even greater things--to see a museum rising on the face of Alco Hill.

Carolyn Pugh McLendon
January, 1977

If you know of anyone who would like to send in a donation for the Museum Project, tear off this form and give it to them:

The Escambia County Historical Society
P.O.Box 276
Brewton, Alabama 36426

Enclosed is my contribution to the Museum Project in the amount of \$_____.

() I would like this contribution recorded as a Memorial to _____.

Bradley Area" and Mrs. Mary Jane Richburg "Appleton History." It was a very good year!

1975 brought us such programs as Harry Weaver's "Biography of an Unknown Man;" Mrs. McLendon's "Brewton, A Special Place to Live;" Mrs. Annie Waters "Escambia's Kil Kenny Cat Fight;" C.R. Floyd of Monroeville with "Pictures and Slides of Old Historic Places in Monroe County;" Mr. Woodfin Patterson's discussion of museum plans; James F. Sulzby, Jr., Secretary of the Alabama Historical Association; H. Eugene Pettis' "Oral History and Its Application regarding Flomaton--Make Your Own Kind of History, Do Your Own Kind of Thing;" Harry Weaver with "Early Days in Brewton;" and Gould Beech of Magnolia Springs, Al. with "Researching Pollard History."

During 1975 we had a contest to name our newsletter won by Miss Helen Robertson who submitted "Escambia Echoes" with Miss Mary Brantley running a close second with "Esco Echoes." It was our honor to host the Alabama Historical Association's 18th Annual Fall Pilgrimage to Brewton in October with the homes of Ed Leigh McMillan, Mrs. John R. Miller, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. McMillan, Mr. and Mrs. Jack W. Hines, and the Robbins & McGowin store open for the tour by the Alabama Historical Association members. December, 1975 saw Ed Leigh McMillan, Thomas E. McMillan and The Escambia County Historical Society receiving Alabama Historical Commission Merit Awards presented at our Christmas Party by our State Representative Brooks Hines; and the fall Pilgrimage to Pollard, Alabama; ending the year with a membership of 278. In January 1975 the RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) assumed the responsibility for assembling and mailing our publications, making it possible for us to continue after the task became too voluminous for the members to do individually. In February, 1975 an appreciation presentation was made to the Editor of the quarterly and newsletter dubbing her as the groups' "Sweetheart." She was given an orchid corsage, a box of candy, an engraved medallion, an antique foral arrangement and valentines with a special poem by Mrs. Doris Bruner:

C A R O L Y N

We like your view, we like the news,
And no one else can fill your shoes,
Our group keeps growing in size and style,
Because you walk that second mile.

New writers submitting material were Ronald A. Stratton "Peter Lazarus Johnson--His Song;" Miss Elizabeth Riley "Hampden Ridge;" and Mrs. C.B. Garrett "A Tribute to Jefferson Davis--Lest We Forget." We ended the year with 290 members. This was our best and greatest year!

1976--our bicentennial year--came in with new officers: Mrs. Carolyn Pugh McLendon, President; H. Eugene Pettis, Vice President; Mrs. Evelyn Weaver Jernigan, General Secretary; Mrs. Gladys Byrd, Membership Secretary; Bert M. Campbell, Jr., Treasurer; Miss Janel Redditt, Librarian; John David Finlay, Curator; Miss Rita Jane Boykin, Program Chairman, and we changed our place of meeting to the Brewton Public Library because of the heavy student load at the college and lack of parking space.

Miss Rita Jane Boykin, our Program Chairman, was able to bring us such programs as Mrs. Harriett Miller's slides of the "Bicentennial Fashion Show;" Rev. Roderick MacDonald, born in Scotland, Pastor of Evergreen Presbyterian Church with "Why I love America;" Miss Lynn Hastie of Stockton with her specialty collections from Live Oaks Country Crafts; W. Warner Floyd of the Alabama Historical Commission; Hon. Hugh Rozelle with "History of the Creek Indians;" Mrs. Jack