

ESCAMBIA ECHOES

Published under the Supervision of the Escambia County Historical
Society Executive Board

February, 1981

NOTICE OF MEETING

The meeting of the Escambia County Historical Society will be held on Tuesday, February 24, 1981, at 7:00 PM at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the campus of Jefferson Davis State Junior College in Brewton, Alabama.

This month's program, DECORATIVE ARTS OF THE SOUTH, is intended to correspond with the museum's temporary exhibition--now showing--of the same subject.

The guest speaker, Bradford Lee Rauschenberg, will present an audio-visual program about Southern crafts and craftsmen during the 1650-1820 period. Particular emphases will be placed on such crafts as silversmithing, furniture making, casting and engraving, and painting that were accomplished in the South.

Mr. Rauschenberg is a Research Fellow at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. A professional photographer, wood technologist, researcher, and cultural materials analyst, Mr. Rauschenberg is extremely well qualified to present an interesting, educational program of the sort to be shown at the ECHS meeting.

Rauschenberg has received numerous professional study grants and awards for his works, and he has published over a dozen professional articles within his field of expertise. He will be flying from North Carolina especially to give this program, and all members and their guests are urged to attend the meeting, which will be outstanding in its content and usefulness.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of the end of January, 1981, the Society has a balance of \$1159.42 in its general fund account.

ALABAMA HISTORY ROOM GIFTS

The following books have been donated to the Escambia County Historical Society's book collection in the Alabama History Room in the college's Leigh Library:

Owen, Thomas, Revolutionary Soldiers in Alabama (Orig. pub. 1911, reprinted by Genealogical Pub. Co., Baltimore, 1975). Presented in memory of Robert L. Seale by Mrs. Barry L. Emerich.

Nix, Fern S., Oakey Streak, A Historic Landmark (Montgomery:Paragon Press, 1980). Presented by Wayne McGowin Brown in memory of his grandfather, Samuel Lewis McGowin.

An additional copy of Nix's Oakey Streak text has been presented by Mr. and Mrs. Barry L. Emerich in memory of Reverend James W. Caldwell.

EXECUTIVE BOARD NEWS

Mrs. Thomas E. (Elvira) McMillan has been elected to the office of Vice President of the Escambia County Historical Society, a position vacated due to the ascension of Gladys Byrd to the presidency of the Society after the passing of Brother Jim Caldwell. Mrs. McMillan, long an active and participating member of the Society, will be a positive addition to the Executive Board.

MUSEUM NEWS

The following gifts have been donated to the permanent collections of the Thomas E. McMillan Museum:

A collection of Medical instruments and accessories of the late 19th to early 20th century, by Dr. Robert E. Low of Brewton;

An anvil and blacksmith's bench vise, owned by Brewton's Ben Stallworth, Sr., by Dr. Robert R. Smith of Brewton;

An oil drilling triaxial shaft bit, from the Pollard oil fields, by Robert C. McMillan of Brewton.

The work on new museum exhibits is continuing, and the museum is still seeking collections and individual objects of interest to place in exhibits which interpret this area's past.

Congratulations are in order to JDJC-museum student Alvin Diamond, who, through the museum's class in archaeology has recorded the first twelve officially designated prehistoric Indian sites ever to be surveyed in Conecuh County. This area has not enjoyed a great deal of professional archaeological attention, and the survey and location of sites is an important primary step in the accomplishment of future, in-depth study. Student surveys and site recordings are also being pursued in Escambia, Monroe, Butler, and Covington Counties in a cooperative effort with the state of Alabama.

MEMORIALS

The following remembrances have been presented to the Society:

In memory of Samuel Lewis McGowin, by Wayne McGowin Brown of Denver, Colorado, Nix's Oakey Streak, A Historic Landmark.

In memory of Reverend James W. Caldwell, by: Mrs. Gladys Byrd (Brewton); Mr. and Mrs. Barry L. Emerich (Brewton).

In memory of Jacob Herriwether, Sr. and Family, by a daughter, Mrs. Garland Butler, Sr. (Atmore).

In memory of R.C. (Bob) Wallace of LaFayette, Alabama, by Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Hurd (Atmore).

In memory of Robert (Bob) L. Seale, by Mrs. Barry L. Emerich (Brewton), a book: Owen's Revolutionary Soldiers in Alabama.

The current balance in the Memorials Fund account is \$1994.78---E.F.

JACOB MERRIWETHER, SR.

Jacob Merriwether was born December 12, 1872 near Greenville, Alabama in Butler County. He died April 29, 1947 at his home, 104 Ashley Street, Atmore, Escambia County, Alabama. He is buried in the Merriwether plot in Oak Hill Cemetery in Atmore. He was the son of Duncan Charles Merriwether and Francis Ellen Redmon and was a descendant of Francis Meriwether (1712-1793) and Mary Haller Lewis, who moved to South Carolina in 1790.

Mr. Merriwether married Claudia Viola Robinson on October 18, 1900 at her father's home in Pineapple, Alabama (Wilcox County). They moved to Butler Street, Escambia County and owned a farm and country store.

In 1917, the Merriwether family moved to 1125 South Pensacola Avenue in Atmore. He was a livestock dealer and farmer. His thriving livestock business was on the corner of Ridgeley and Tramwell Streets in Atmore; his 200-acre farm was on Highway 21, 2 miles North of Atmore. Mr. and Mrs. Merriwether were the proud parents of eleven children, nine of whom were college graduates. In 1921, in order to be nearer to his business, the family moved to 104 Ashley Street in Atmore. Both Mr. and Mrs. Merriwether were regular members of the First Baptist Church, which started in 1918. They were both active in educational circles in the Atmore community.

The data on their eleven children is as follows: Annie Laurie, b. Aug. 8, 1901, d. Jan. 15, 1904; Duncan, b. June 9, 1903, married Asenath Marie Kenyon on Feb. 9, 1929 in New York, N.Y.; Maude Lucille, b. July 12, 1905, married Nelson Gray at Silver City, N.M. in Jan. 10, 1938; Ernest Newman, b. April 23, 1907 in Escambia County, AL, married Mary Louise Hackanson on Oct. 18, 1929 in Mobile, AL; Nellie Irene, b. March 9, 1909 in Escambia County, AL, married Harold Lee Jones on March 31, 1929; Jacob, Jr., b. May 19, 1912, d. Sept. 15, 1956 (unmarried); James Lewis, b. Feb. 28, 1914 in Escambia County, married Olivia Beatrice Verell in Houston, Miss., May 28, 1938; Frances Cynthia Merriwether, b. Dec. 7, 1915, in Esc. Co., married Eddie Garland Butler, Sr. in Atmore, Dec. 21, 1941; Doris Ruth, b. Jan. 5, 1918 in Esc. Co., married James Clary Conner on Aug. 14, 1937, in Atmore; Claudia Bessie, b. Feb. 15, 1920 in Atmore, married Harold Malone; and Harry, b. July 9, 1921, killed in action as a Lieutenant on July 13, 1944.

R.C. (BOB) WALLACE

R. C. (Bob) Wallace was born Nov. 20, 1904 to parents James Howard and Emily Fuller Wallace in LaFayette, Alabama.

Bob attended LaFayette School, finishing when he completed 10th grade, having taken extra courses to accelerate his education. He then entered Ogelthorpe University in Atlanta, Ga. at age 16. He transferred to the University of Alabama in 1922, but had to wait until he was 18 to take his desired law courses there.

During the summers in between his 3 years of law school, Wallace served with the Merchant Marines, saying, "It was a great way to see the world and didn't cost my parents a thing."

Upon finishing law school at age 21, he arrived home, registered to vote and qualified to run for legislature, saying that campaigning was a good way to learn the people in the county. At age 22, to his surprise, he won.

Being advised by Judge John Denson to stick in LaFayette to practice law, that it was a great place to live, even if it might be a tough place to make a living. His second reason for staying, Wallace jokingly added was, "Because I didn't have enough money to get out of town."

In 1931, he was appointed County Solicitor and held the office for 4 years.

In 1934, he married Louise Griffin, a hometown girl. They had a son, Bob, Jr. and a daughter, Frankie.

In 1936, he was appointed to fill the unexpired term of J. W. Hollingsworth in the legislature.

Bibb Graves was Governor, and during this term they passed the Sales Tax Bill to support Public Schools.

In 1952, Wallace was appointed County Attorney, a post he held for 23 years, before being appointed as County Commissioner in 1973. Serving as a Commissioner was something of which he was really proud, as his father and his wife's father had served in that capacity.

Bob Wallace's favorite law cases, were those involving damage suits and criminal cases. He loved to defend. Someone commented that it was very interesting to hear father and son fighting on opposite sides of the same case, as Bob, Jr. had followed in his father's footsteps by entering law practice.

Bob Wallace, Sr. who first began practicing law in his home town of LaFayette 50 years ago, was honored in the same courtroom where he had represented clients in hundreds of cases. Circuit Judge William Byrd recessed Criminal Court and allowed newsmen's cameras in the court for the first time, a most unusual event.

Members of the Chambers County Bar Association and fellow Attorneys gathered to pay tribute to the 71 year old Attorney for his longevity, skills, and help he had given to young lawyers.

At age 72, he was looking forward to more practice, maintaining his office for 4 more years. Upon retiring, he lived only a short time, dying with a heart attack, on Dec. 11, 1980. It was said of him, that he ably defended those who could pay, but just as ably, those who could not pay.

He is survived by his son, Lawyer H.C. Wallace, wife and 4 daughters, and by his daughter, Mrs. Frankie Wallace Stegall, of Atlanta, Ga. and her son. Mrs. Stegall works with Emory University Clinic as Chief Orthopedist, Ocular Motility.

Other survivors are one brother, W.F. Wallace of Prattville, Alabama, and sisters; Mrs. Mary Fank Watson of Huntsville, Alabama, Mrs. H.M. Simms of Riverview, Al., and Mrs. Emily Finlay of Brewton, Al., as well as many neices and nephews.

MEMORIALS NOTES

We would appreciate having memorial statements such as those appearing here from those of you who gave memorials in the past. We hope to compile a book of these, as you may know, and such statements are necessary for such an effort. The "how-tos" of preparing statements are included in the January, 1981 issue of Escambia Echoes. --Mrs. John David Finlay, Memorial Chairman, P.O. Box 737, Brewton, AL 36426

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

REMEMBER that, if we have not received your ECHS dues by March 31 of this year, we will have no alternative but to drop you from our subscription rolls; we regret having to do this, but publication and mailing costs are high and we must have these dues to keep "in business". Thank you.

Send Dues to: Treasurer
Escambia County Historical Society
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Brewton, AL 36426