

ECHOES

The Newsletter of the Escambia County
Historical Society
February 2006 - Vol. 33, No.2
Editor, Ranella Holley



Escambia County Historical Society Officers for 2006-2007

Right to Left:

Jacqueline Stone – Secretary
Ann Biggs-Williams – President
Ranella Merritt – Newsletter/Journal Editor
Darryl Searcy – Vice President
Susan P. Crawford – Treasurer
Lydia Grimes – Publicity
Jerry Simmons – Historian/Librarian

The January Meeting

Draft of the Minutes of the Meeting for January 24, 2006

Lynn Wixon, President, welcomed members to the first meeting of 2006. The members recited the Pledge to the flag. Lynn read thank you notes from the family of the late Mr. Harry Weaver, a founding member, who was honored at the Christmas party with a memorial candle lighting ceremony.

Ann Biggs-Williams, Vice-President, invited members to bring a family snapshot to the February meeting where guest speaker Frances Robb will present a program on "Snapshots and Snapshooters" through the Alabama Humanities Foundation.

Jerry Simmons, Museum Coordinator, gave a report on usage of the museum and Alabama Room and distributed a new brochure that he designed.

As there was no old business, a slate of nominees was presented by Paul Merritt, Nominating Committee Chair.

The nominees were: President, Ann Biggs-Williams; Vice-President, Darryl Searcy; Treasurer, Susan Crawford, Secretary, Jacqueline Stone, Newsletter Editor, Ranella Holley Merritt, Publicity, Lydia Grimes, and Jerry Simmons, Librarian/Curator/Historian.

The nominees were accepted and voted on individually. The new officers will talk to prospective trustees for a trustee vacancy at a separate meeting.

Officers are asked to read the Society's by-laws as pertains to their elected office.

Lynn presented incoming president Ann Biggs-Williams with the gavel representing that office. Lynn as outgoing president was presented with a Sago Palm Tree.

Jerry Simmons reminded members that April 8 in Century, Florida will be Model A Day. All proceeds go to the Alger Sullivan Historical Society. You may make a donation and get a ride in a Model A. You may want to bring a camera.

The meeting was adjourned and refreshments were provided by Louise Stone and Lynn Wixon.

MARCH 28 MEETING

Cemetery Preservation to be the program topic of the Escambia County Historical Society's meeting on March 28th.

President of the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Association, Ted Urquhart, and the Alabama Historical Commission's Cemetery Program Coordinator, Lee Anne Wofford, will be guest speakers on March 28th for the Escambia County Historical Society members and guests. The meeting begins at 3 p.m. at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum, located at Jefferson Davis Community College in Brewton. Handouts will be available and a period for Q&A will follow the presentations.

Save the Dates

Save the dates of the meetings for 2006. The remaining meeting dates are: February 28, March 28, April 25, May 23, June 27, July 25, August 22, September 26, and October 24. A Christmas party date will be determined later.

The February Program

Date: Tuesday, February 28, 2006 Time: 3:00 p. m.

Location: The Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the Jefferson Davis Community College Campus

The Program: Frances Robb, independent scholar and member of the Alabama Humanities Foundation speaker's bureau will present "Snapshots and Snapshooters."

Our Speaker



Frances Robb is a native of Birmingham, Alabama. She is a graduate of Birmingham Southern College and holds M.A. degrees from the University of North Carolina and Yale University. She taught history and humanities at Texas Christian University, the University of North Texas and the University of the South at Sewanee.

When Robb returned to Alabama with her family in 1986, she began a love affair with historic

photographs. Since then, she has been the curator for numerous exhibitions, lectured, presented workshops, and served as a consultant to museums, libraries and archives in Alabama and the Southeast. She is completing a book on the history of photography in Alabama and has another in the works on dating and identifying family photographs. As you might expect, historic photographs will illustrate her presentation.

Meet the New ECHS President



Ann Biggs moved to Brewton in 1973 to join the faculty of the then Jefferson Davis Junior College (now Jefferson Davis Community College) as Assistant Librarian. Ann, who received a B.S. Degree from the University of South Alabama and an M.L.S. Degree from Florida State University, taught English and served as librarian at Escambia Academy in Canoe, AL prior to employment at the college..

Ann reports that as a newcomer her first year in Brewton, she attended a field trip sponsored by the Escambia County Historical Society to tour the Brooklyn Cave and to visit the circa 1868 A.A. McCreary Plantation home in Teddy, Alabama.

Thirty three years later is a long time to recall the particulars of that trip, but she reflects that it was her first contact with the Escambia County Historical Society. Ann observes the irony that she ended up marrying Mike Williams from Teddy, Alabama and now spends part of her time in that community in northeast Escambia County that she first visited with the historical society on that field trip!

The Escambia County Historical Society's archives were moved from the museum to the college library and there Ann assisted Society members and researchers with the Society's archives known as "The Alabama Room." When Ann, who eventually became Head Librarian at Jefferson Davis Community College, retired in 1997 she became a member of the Escambia County Historical Society and served as Vice-President in 1998, 1999, 2004, 2005. As Vice-President in those years, Ann planned programs for the Escambia County Historical Society and assisted Ed Seward who was president in 1998 & 1999 and Lynn Wixon, who was president in 2004 & 2005.

As Ann assumes the position of president for the Escambia County Historical Society, she reflects on the circle of life. Now, the Society's archives are located once again in the museum, rather than the library. Ann also comments that after years of helping **other** people research family history, she now has the time to work on **her** family history. In fact, Ann and her brother and cousin are planning a Biggs Family Reunion for the first weekend in June that will be attended by Biggs' relatives from a number of states.

Ann says she will be asking Society members to take an active role in their organization and invites their support and enthusiasm.

Gratitude Shown to New Lifetime Member



The Society presented Martha with a Lifetime Membership to the Society at the reception honoring her and her years of service with Alabama Power. Martha is retiring this year.

The Society owes an immense debt of gratitude to Martha and her two brothers, M.G. (Muddy) Waters, Jr., who lives in Navarre, Florida, and Matt C. Waters of Little Rock, Arkansas, for allowing us to use proceeds from the sale of their mother, Annie C. Waters' book, The History of Escambia County Alabama, to generate funds for the society.

Martha and her brothers are pleased with the membership which honored their mother as well as Martha.

The Society's New Website

We owe a big "Thank You" to Jerry Simmons, Museum Coordinator, for taking on the task of creating and maintaining a Web Site for the Society. Take a look at what has already been done in this "Work in Progress" at < www.escohis.org>. Jerry requests feedback. Send feedback (remember the site is still "under construction") at the email address for the society <escohis@escohis.org>. A practice has begun to automatically send reminders via email prior to meetings and other events. Let us know your email address if you want to have this reminder sent to you, or if you do not want it sent.

Wish List For Alabama Room

- ② Archival Sleeves for fragile newspapers and documents
- ② Volunteers to assist in filing and inventorying
- ② Copy paper
- ② Blank labels for file folders
- ② Cartridges for the printer/scanner
- ② Archival file folders and hanging folders
- ② A sign for the museum and Alabama Room
- ② Newspaper and Census microfilm

Donations designated for the Alabama Room are encouraged. Don't forget the Thomas E. McMillan Museum and Alabama Room hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-3. Other days and hours available by appointment. 251-809-1528

Announcements

Reunion Honoring Magilbry and Dollie Findley

On March 12, 2005, the remains of Magilbry & Dollie Findley were buried at the Fairmount Cemetery in Red Level, Al. Descendants from as far away as Nevada, Arizona, Ohio, Virginia and many other states merged on this small town to honor their ancestors.

After fighting in the War of 1812, Magilbry moved from South Carolina to Georgia, finally settling in the Brooklyn/Red Level/Loango area of Alabama. Magilbry and Dollie had ten children: William, John (Jack), Martin, Riley, Celia, Gillama, Bluford, Mary Ann, George and Martha Ann. On March 11, 2006, descendants of Magilbry and Dollie Findley will once again merge on Red Level, Alabama to honor their ancestors.

The Reunion will be held at Crystal Springs Park in Red Level beginning at 11 a.m. with a catered lunch at noon. The event will conclude with a ceremony at the gravesite. A newsletter and registration form has been mailed to those who signed the registry at the event in March, 2005 and the event posted on the Magilbry Findley Yahoo Group website.

For more information, contact Janet Cunningham at 251-867-4902, Robert Warr at 251-867-3958 or Tony Findley at 334-469-5036.

Tour of Homes

Art & Architecture

Brewton Spring Tour of Homes

April 6, 2006 ~ 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bring a tour group and experience a casual day of touring stunning residences relishing the local charm and flavor of Brewton. You will as though friends are opening their doors to you because, in fact, they are. Highlights of tour include:

- * A stately hillside home thoughtfully designed to exude charm, character and ambiance.
- * An elegant home nestled amongst the trees featuring stone terraces overlooking a private lake.
- * A low-country cottage that boasts prized antique furnishings and relaxed porches for outdoor living and entertaining.
- * A Norman style home with sophisticated art collected on travels around the world, and a garden house that features award winning orchids.
- * Shopping in historic Downtown Brewton.



The homes on the tour are: Dr. & Mrs. Robert Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Owens, Mr. & Mrs. Earl (Buddy) Weaver, and Mr. & Mrs. Joe Gordy. This is the Gordy home.

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Excursion Tickets also include:

- * A distinctive gift from Natural Decorations, Inc., a premier maker of floral arrangements, when touring their facilities.
- * Lunch at The Country Club of Brewton, overlooking the Jerry Pate designed championship golf course.

- * A display of folk art by former JDCC student Bernice Sims, whose art is featured on a U. S. Commemorative Postage Stamp. Guests may purchase her original paintings at the luncheon.
- * Excursion tickets are \$50 each and include Tour of Homes and Natural Decorations, Inc. and lunch.

Other ticket options available:

- * Tour of homes only - \$25
- * Patrons Party on Wed., April 5, 2006, at the home of Ann and Ed Leigh McMillan at 6:30 p.m. - \$100 per couple.

Discover Brewton, selected as one of the best 100 small towns in America
 To book a tour group, contact Ada Adams at (251) 809-1550

A benefit for the Jefferson Davis Community College Foundation

<u>Books for Sale</u>	<u>Mailed</u>	<u>Regular Price</u>
<u>A History of Escambia County</u>	\$55.00	\$50.00
<u>Headstones and Heritage</u>	\$40.00	\$35.00
<u>Escambia Historical Society Cookbook</u>	\$10.00	\$ 5.00

Get in Touch with Us

Address: Escambia County Historical Society, P. O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427; **Phone:** 251-867-7332; **Email:** escobis@escobis.org

Membership: \$15.00/person. Clip the following form and send to: Treasurer, Susan P. Crawford, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427.

**Membership Renewal/Application Form
 (\$15.00 per person or \$100.00/person for Lifetime dues)**

Name(s) _____				
First	Middle	Last		
Address _____				
Street	City	State	Zip	
Phone _____				
Email _____				
Dues (\$15.00/person)		_____ (or \$100.00/person Lifetime)		
Donation		_____		
Amount enclosed		_____		

❖ **Please double check your records to see if you have paid your Society Dues for 2006. Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year.**