

April Meeting: A Field Trip to Keego

The April 24 ECHS meeting will be a field trip to see an old hotel and sulphur springs site near Keego.

Members will meet at the JDCC Museum in Brewton to carpool and will leave the museum promptly at 3 p.m. to travel to the site.

**The Group will
Leave for Keego**

**at
3:00**

**Plan to be
at the museum
before 3:00
to join the car pool.**

June says that the site where Herrington Springs was once located is interesting even though little remains of the original hotel/resort.

The large, circular concrete steps (see picture below), which led down to the spring, remain although the spring itself is gone.

The area now known as Keego was once known as Herrington Springs because it was the location of a popular mineral

spring and hotel.

June and Bob Martin have invited the society to visit this area at the April meeting.

Only the brick steps remain to show where the original twenty-five room hotel was located.



Hotel at Herrington Springs ca. 1899

Back, L-R: B.M. Lovelace, James Jernigan, Dr. J. E. Martin, Unidentified, Navalou Martin, Ernest Davis

Middle: Miss Laura Lovelace, Bryus Butler, Lillie Belle Rankin, Marcy Martin, Sumpie Martin, Mrs. J. E. Martin (holding Ben L. (Fee) Martin), Billie Martin, Miss Bennie Lovelace

Front: Miss Jessie Ghent, Charlie McGraw

(Picture courtesy McMillan Trust)



*Aerial view of Keego
(see p 2)*

Volume 34, Number 4

April 2007

Inside this issue:

Herrington Springs and Keego	2
Minutes	3
Atmore Centennial	4
The Living Past	5
Genealogical Meeting	5
News of Members	6
Shell Apple	7
E.O. Wilson	8
Story Behind the Story	9
Identify This Picture	11

Program for the May 22 Meeting

The Descendants of the Confederate States of America

and

The Military Order of the Stars and Bars

Guest Speaker Bert Blackmon

Herrington Springs and Keego

Herrington Springs

By Ranella Merritt

The Herrington Springs Hotel and Resort was prominent in the late 1890's and early 1900's.

The hotel was built by James Herrington after a large mineral spring was discovered at the location during the construction of a railroad track.

The spring's waters had iron and chalybeate (sulphur), minerals which at the time were thought to be "good for what ailed you."

The hotel was named for Mr. Herrington and the area became known as Herrington Springs. Mr. Herrington died shortly after completing the hotel and his heirs ran it for a time.

In 1899, Dr. John E. Martin, a druggist in Brewton, sold his business and bought the hotel from the estate of Mr. Herrington

During its heyday, the hotel would have as many as 100 guests, who paid \$4.00 per week for room and board.

Popular as both a health resort as well as a recreational place with good fishing

and hunting, the hotel/resort was struck by a series of natural disasters.

In 1910, a fire destroyed the hotel and some of the surrounding buildings. Dr. Martin built a log house for those guests who continued to come to drink and bathe in the mineral waters.

However, in 1919 a storm, probably a tornado, destroyed most of the buildings at the spring.

Finally in 1929, when the waters of the big flood of that year receded, it was discovered that the spring waters had disappeared also.

The Keego Brickyard

By June Martin

(Article reprinted by permission)

The Herrington Hotel was for a long time the largest business in the small community of Keego in Escambia County. After the end of the hotel, the Keego Brick Plant was the area's biggest industry.

The brickyard was started in 1899 by E. M. Lovelace and W. H. Strong. Later it was bought by George F. Arnold. Originally in Alco, it was moved to Keego to take advantage of Keego's rail access.

Keego was named by Mrs. J. I. McKenny, wife of the L & N-Montgomery/Mobile, Division-Superintendent.

Keego is an Indian word meaning "fish."

From The Escambia County Historical Quarterly, Vol. 1, Sept. 29, 1973, p. 25.

It was a crude operation. The clay was dug by hand and hauled in wheelbarrows to the mill, which was driven by steam.

In about 1905, a steam shovel was purchased to dig

the clay, and it was hauled up by cable car. All brick was shipped by rail, even to Brewton.

After the flood of 1929, B. H. Stallworth of Monroeville foreclosed on the brick plant. Ben L. Martin, son of Dr. John E. Martin leased the plant from Stallworth for a couple of years (1930-1931).

In 1934, along with his partners, H. H. Williamson and Hugh Pittman, Ben Martin purchased the plant. In 1950, Mr. Martin became the sole owner.

Bricks are no longer made at the Keego plant but under the leadership of Bob Martin, the third generation of Martins in Keego, the plant operated as a major wholesaler as Keego Clay Products, Inc.

Keego has seen many changes since Bob Martin was born there in 1931. It once was a thriving community, but now is mostly a subdivision for people who work in the area.

Below, an aerial view of the brickyard at Keego ca. 1960s.



Minutes of the March Meeting

After welcoming members and guests, **President Ann Biggs-Williams** thanked those who had helped to make the program on Leigh Place such a success..

She called attention to the excellent coverage given to the society and this meeting by **Margaret Collier's** article in the Tri-City Ledger.

The President thanked society member **Sally Finlay** and the Curtis Finlay Foundation for another generous donation for purchasing bronze plaques to mark homes and sites of historic value.

Ann called attention to several articles in local papers and state publications recognizing the outstanding work of society members and of speakers from the society's programs from last year.

A recent article in the Brewton Standard recognized **Vice-President Darryl Searcy's** work in both restoring the central courtyard at D. W. McMillan Hospital as well as creating a garden for new mothers and their babies.

The new garden is a memorial garden honoring Darryl's family.

Ann commended the editors of the society newsletter and noted that many people had shown an interest in the

article by **Jerry Simmons** on Bonnie Beach.

The President noted that two of the speakers for recent programs have received recognition:

- **Greg Waselkov**, who gave a program on Fort Mims, has been appointed to the Alabama Historical Board;
- **LeAnn Wofford**, who has worked with society members on cemetery preservation has received a state award for her work.

Other announcements:

- (1) There will be a reception honoring **Shirley West** on her retirement as Director of Turtle. The reception will at Turtle Point on June 1, from two to five p.m.
- (2) The Alabama legislator has dropped the idea of legislation to give incentives for those who remodel old houses.
- (3) The map from 1820 showing a road to Fort Gains (from the Big Escambia Creek to the Choctawhatchee River), which was donated to the Alabama Room/Museum by **Jacob Lowery**, has been framed and is on

display in the Museum.

The society web cite has generated a great deal of interest and receives some interesting emails..

Secretary Jacque Stone read two of the more interesting examples:

(1) **Russell Dunnum**, a member of the Brundidge Alabama Historical Society, commended the society for the excellence of the web page and its "active group."

He also called attention to a play, Come Home It's Supper, presented by the Brundidge Society each April and November.

(2) **Rob Burney** in his email referred to his great-great grandfather, William Henry Benson, who was a telegrapher in the confederate Army stationed at Camp Pollard.

Following the business session, members and guests were treated to an entertaining and informative program of "Show and Tell" which included the following members and items of interest:

- **Morris Stone** – a clay pot and scraper for gathering turpentine;
- **Mary Catherine Luker** – a copy of a newspaper published on the day

(Continued on page 4)

Pictures from "Show and Tell"



Alan Robison with his U. S. Navy 1941 Generator



Elizabeth Edwards with unusual silver serving piece



Gilbert and Sammie McGlothren with framed Awards

Minutes Continued

(Continued from page 3)

- of her birth;
 - **Elizabeth Edwards** – unique silver serving pieces which she had received from her husband's family;
 - **Alma Hall** – copies of ration stamps from 1943 (WWII);
 - **Willellen Elliott** – Examples of Vaseline Glass and Carnival Glass with uranium in them so that they glow under a "black light";
 - **Sammie and Gilbert McGlothern** – framed awards and certificates of commendation given to Gilbert for his military service during WWII and the Korean Conflict;
 - **Ranella Merritt** – a computer slide-show of her (and Paul's) recent trip to England;
 - **Paul Merritt** – picture of 1905 tea party, probably a staged photograph, some participants being members of Paul's family;
 - **Alan Robinson** – a box with a generator, spare parts, a gasoline can, from 1941 which seemed to have been made for use by the Navy;
 - **Joe and Kay Ross** – samples of turkey callers;
 - **Don Sales** – an egg, x-ray box from the early 1900's with a place for the eggs and for a candle which when lighted would show the progress of the eggs and an 1864 map of Pensacola and vicinity (Alabama) which he presented to the society;
 - **Margaret Collier** – a tintype of her grandmother and one of her father, the one of her father showing him in an infant's dress which had been painted on the tintype;
 - **Ann Biggs-Williams** – a saw filer which her grandfather had used to whittle with in his spare time at his job at a local saw mill.
- Susan Crawford and Mary Catherine Luker** were hostesses for the refreshments served after the program.

Pictures from Show and Tell



*Joe and Kay Ross
with
turkey callers*



*Darryl Searcy
Watches Morris
Stone Demonstrate
Turpentine
Collector and
Scraper*

Atmore's Centennial

Atmore is turning 100!

By LACEY HOCHSTETLER

(Reprinted by permission of author)

On May 23, 1907, Atmore became a city. On May 23, 2007, Atmore will celebrate its 100th birthday- and we're going to celebrate big!

The Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce and City of Atmore have teamed up to create a Centennial celebration to remember. The celebration will take place on Saturday, May 19th, a few days

before the actual anniversary, beginning at 2 p.m.

You may begin to see signs of the celebration in mid-April, however, when banners displaying the Atmore Centennial logo appear around town.

This logo, featuring a steam locomotive and a long leaf pine tree, shows two very important pieces of Atmore's history.

Atmore was founded in 1907 by railroad workers who were closely followed by settlers who came in because of the abundance of pine trees. Saw mills were very abundant in this area at the time.

The banners displaying the Centennial logo will be put up on all the lampposts in Atmore and in Heritage Park as well.

Another event that is being planned in the weeks before the celebration is scheduled to happen in the afternoon of Sunday, April 1st.

A picture will be taken on Main Street of 100 people spelling out the number 100. The people actually spelling out the number will be by invitation only, but the whole community is invited to come in and help "frame" the number.

(Continued on page 5)

Atmore Continued

The picture will be made into a post card that will be available at various locations around town.

In addition, the U.S. Post Office has agreed to make available a special mail cancellation on May 23, in celebration of Atmore's Centennial.

This cancellation, that all mail leaving the city of Atmore will be stamped with, features the Centennial logo, and will be available for a month following the celebration.

The actual event will be held at Atmore Heritage Park on May 19 at 2 p.m.

The Atmore YMCA will have both children's and adults' events planned, including sack races and three-legged races.

There will be team games planned for adults as well – horseshoes, tug-of-war, and volleyball among them.

The winning team will be presented with a Centennial Cup. Other activities include Historical Hayrides, video footage of Atmore citizens no longer with us, a Centennial costume contest, and a pie contest sponsored by the Rotary Club.

Light refreshments will be available in the park for the duration of the afternoon, and a supper of barbeque chicken will be served at 5 p.m., in the park.

The supper and entertainment will lead up to a firework display at dark. The fireworks are being planned by the City of

Atmore and will be shot from the band field at Escambia County High School.

The Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Atmore are still soliciting participants for food and activities in the park, so if you would like to get involved, contact the Chamber at 368-3305.

The Chamber does want to remind people that while they're working hard on the Centennial, they are not going to forget about Mayfest, which is two weeks prior to the Centennial.

Mayfest this year is going to be a grand event which will include an Idol competition.

Celebrate "The Living Past"

May 3-5, 2007 in Monroeville, AL

By Ann Biggs-Williams

Maybe it's because my ancestors have roots in Monroe County, but every year I'm drawn to the Alabama Writers Symposium in Monroeville. This year, May 3--5, 2007 is the tenth anniversary and the theme is "The Living Past."

The symposium brings together Alabama writers, those who want to be writers, and those who just love literature. Located less than an hour from Escambia County, Alabama, the symposium is a chance to hear literary discussions, talk to authors, purchase books and have books autographed and on occasion, have your photo taken with a famous author.

Rick Bragg is the keynote speaker at the Thursday night banquet. Bragg, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist is author of the book, All Over But the Shoutin.

Kathryn Tucker Windham, renowned storyteller will present the opening convocation on Friday, May 4 at 8:15 a.m.

Registration fees apply but discussion sessions are free. (Thursday only ticket is \$50. Friday ticket is \$60. Saturday ticket is \$50. Comprehensive ticket is \$150.)

For more info, phone Donna Reed at 251-575-3156, ext. 223 or e-mail at dreed@ascc.edu. Website info is at www.ascc.edu Registration deadline is April 20.

Alabama Genealogical Society Meeting

Sanford University, Birmingham, May 5, 2007

The Alabama Genealogical Society (AGS) will hold its annual Spring Seminar on Saturday, May 5, 2007, at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama.

This seminar, titled "The Grass Is Always Greener: The Movement Of Our Southern Ancestors," will be presented by educator, genealogist, historian, author and lecturer, Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck of Dallas, Texas.

Topics include: *Settlement Patterns and Principles of Migration, The French and Spanish Experience, Federal Land Sales and The South in the 19th Century.*

Registration opens at 8:30 a. m. in the Dwight Beeson Business Building and the program concludes at 4:00 p.m.

For more information and a pre-registration form visit the AGS website at: <http://www.algensoc.org>.

News of Members

Welcome to new member **Karen Cottrell**, daughter of member **Peggy Bracken**.

We also welcome two, new life-members: (1) **Shirley Booth-Byerly** of Fairhope, Alabama, who is interested in everything involving genealogy; and (2) **John Walker Hoomes**, who has received a lifetime membership from Charles and Jacqueline Stone. John's mother Jacque is secretary of ECHS.

Cleo Jordan Ansley, a World War II vet who is 90 years young, renewed her dues and made a \$25 donation.

Mrs. Ansley's genealogy interests include Jordan and Butler families of Escambia County and Collins family of Dale County.

Kathryn Wilkinson, ECHS member who resides in Pensacola, represented ECHS at the sixtieth annual meeting of **The Alabama Historical Association**(AHA) in Opelika on April 13 & 14.

Kathryn reports that she particularly enjoyed the program presented by outgoing AHA President Marlene Hunt Rikard entitled "Lost Treasure," The Birmingham Steel Series of Artist Roderick D. MacKenzie,,

Kathryn also reported that the AHA fall pilgrimage will be to the Anniston area where Ft. McClellan is located.

Ann Biggs-Williams, ECHS President, represented the ECHS at the First Annual **Cemetery Preservation Workshop**, presented by a sister historical society, the Canebrake Genealogical & Historical Society in Conecuh, County on April 14..

The workshop was held in the Historic Evergreen Depot building. **Sherry Johnston, an ECHS member**, was instrumental in the planning and organization of this workshop as well as the formation of the Canebrake Genealogical & Historical Society.

Membership in the Canebrake group is \$10 per year for individual and \$15 for family.

Go to the website at www.canebrakeghs.com for forms and mail to Canebrake Genealogical & Historical Society, Attn: CGS Membership, P.O. Box 851342, Mobile, AL 36685.

ECHS Vice-President, Darryl Searcy was over in Camden, Alabama April 13 & 14 for a meeting of the **Alabama Wildflower Society**.

Banquet speaker **Fred Nation** pre-

sent a program on wildflowers that included info on the travels of **William Bartram**, naturalist.

The **Bartram Trail Conference** will be held in October in neighboring Baldwin County. More information in future newsletters.

A number of ECHS members were among the crowd welcoming Kathryn Tucker Windham, Alabama author from Selma, to the Brewton Public Library on Saturday afternoon, April 14.

Mrs. Windham told stories but more importantly encouraged those attending to tell and pass on family stories.

We all got a bit nostalgic when Mrs. Windham brought out combs and tissue paper and many attending proceeded to play a number of songs on the combs!

ECHS members attending were: **Betty Campbell, Sally Finlay, Lydia Grimes, Clair Sanborn, and Ann Biggs-Williams**.

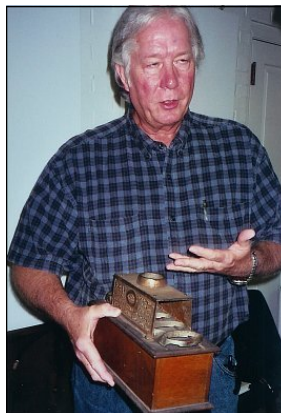
Mrs. Windham will be at the Alabama Writers Symposium, referenced elsewhere in this month's ECHS Newsletter.

Snapshots



*Ranella and Jerry at Work
on the Newsletter*

*Don
Sales
Exhib-
its his
Egg X-
Ray
Box at
"Show
and
Tell"*



Presenters at "Show and Tell"

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Shell Apple Lives Again Through Grafting

Dan Mullins, IFAS Extension Commercial Horticulture Agent, became interested in the Shell Apple after reading Annie Waters' story in her [History of Escambia County Alabama](#).

In this article, he tells the story of grafting the tree so that this apple tree can again be grown in Escambia County.

We reprint excerpts from his article which appeared in the [Pensacola News Journal](#) with permission of the author.

Allow me to depart from the usual and just tell a story. This story has an ulterior motive, and that is to encourage more gardeners to become interested in grafting.

Many years ago, southern Escambia County Alabama was an apple producing area. It was started by Green Shell, an agriculturist who was born in 1841.

He planted an apple orchard near the intersection of present day highways 49 and 40, about ten miles north of Brewton. This enterprise developed into a successful business that gave the town its name – Appleton.

The apple business had a large grading shed, complete with shipping barrels and a cider press. During harvest, Mr. Shell's son Andrew made two trips a day by wagon in order to deliver the apples to the freight station in Brewton. They were shipped to northern markets and soon became known as "Shell Apples."

Mr. Shell also grew young trees which sold well. Within a few years, nearly every farm over a wide area had at least one Shell apple tree that produced apples for family use.

A few ancestors of the original orchard

trees still exist and are found in some landscapes and on a few farms in northern Santa Rosa County.

During the early 90's I became interested in the history of this apple and was fortunate to locate a tree. A farmer friend allowed me to remove some scions for grafting.

Six inch long pencil sized stems from current season's growth were removed during early winter as soon as all leaves had fallen. These were wrapped in plas-



tic and placed in a refrigerator at 40 degrees F.

Meanwhile, one year old apple seedlings with a similar stem diameter were ordered. Upon arrival, these rootstocks were also refrigerated.

The trees were grafted the following February during our first grafting workshop. We started with a thirty minute presentation describing the procedure and delving into the science of grafting.

Following a demonstration, each student was provided with grafting supplies, a rootstock and a scion of the Shell apple. They then grafted a tree and took it home for planting.

We used the whip or tongue graft, which is a good choice when the diameter of the stock and scion are about the same size. It is also a relatively strong graft, holding the two pieces together better than when using some other techniques.

These workshops have been held a half dozen times over the past ten years and as a result, there are now several bearing Shell apple trees in the area. Ironically, I don't have one of my own.

All during this time our yard was too shady for even one apple tree. This condition was resolved by Hurricane Ivan and I am looking forward to planting one.

Note: Obviously, this is not apple growing country. Most apples require a longer dormant period than is provided during our mild winters.

The Shell apple was selected because it requires less chill hours than most others. It produces a medium sized fruit that is crisp and somewhat tart.

There is just something historical and romantic about this apple cultivar. I enjoy thinking that several generations ago, large quantities of apples were produced in southern Alabama.

There is a much bigger story, and we shouldn't let the history, nor the apple die. Thanks to several local residents who took the time to learn to graft there is a greater chance that the Shell apple will live on in our area.

The historical information included here was taken from the book, [History of Escambia County, Alabama](#) by Annie C. Waters. This is interesting reading for both gardeners and historians.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Dr. Edward O. Wilson's Brewton, Alabama Connection

ECHS President Ann Biggs-Williams has a love of natural history and nature, as well as local history and genealogy. Ann and her husband, Mike Williams also have a penchant for the preservation of south Alabama's history and its irreplaceable natural resources.

This interest led to the opportunity for Ann to research information for one of her heroes, Dr. Edward O. Wilson. Ann relates the series of events that led to that research below:

"Dr. Wilson, my name is Ann Biggs-Williams calling from Brewton, Alabama..". thus began the message I was leaving on the answering machine of Dr. Edward O. Wilson, Harvard Professor. This was July of 2006.

I had previously rehearsed a brief message to leave on Dr. Wilson's answering machine, as he travels extensively doing research, and as a much sought after speaker for those who follow conservation issues.

My pre-planned statement was interrupted abruptly with a click, as soon as I said, "Brewton, Alabama" and there I was-- talking on the phone with one of my personal heroes, Dr. Edward O. Wilson.

Talk about being on cloud nine! Dr. Wilson and I chatted for about thirty minutes.

I was planning to be on the Harvard campus later that month for a Patient Conference of the FSH Society (*a nonprofit society that solely addresses specific issues and needs regarding facioscapulo-humeral muscular dystrophy, FSHD*), and was calling to see if Dr. Wilson would be on campus that same week. Alas, he would not be at Harvard then but talked at length, reflecting on his time in Brewton.

Dr. Wilson said that he always wondered what had happened to Mr. Perry, the Englishman who, in the 1940's, ran the fish hatchery on the western edge of town next to a dense swamp.



*Edward O. Wilson, Eagle Scout, 1944
Picture Courtesy of E. O. Wilson's book
Naturalist*

I told Dr. Wilson that I was retired now from the local college but volunteered with the local historical society and I would see what I could find out about E. O. Wilson's "Mr. Perry."

Dr. Wilson lived in Brewton and attended Brewton High School in 1944. As a football player in Brewton, he saw minimal time on the field but did earn the nickname "Snake" from his teammates because of his appetite for real snakes.

Dr. Wilson's most impressionable memory of Brewton was his reminiscence of the goldfish hatchery, run by the affable, sixty-something year old Englishman named Mr. Perry.

In his Pulitzer prize winning autobiography, Naturalist, Wilson wrote that, as a polite southern boy, he would never have called Mr. Perry by his first name, so he never knew what it was.

Dr. Wilson in the book does describe

Mr. Perry as a natural-born environmentalist," who tread lightly on the land in his care." What better description could anyone want!

In his recollection of the "swamp" adjacent to the goldfish pond, Wilson writes, "Into this paradise I threw myself with abandon. The hours I spent there were among the happiest in my life!" (Naturalist, p. 86).

He also recalls one narrow escape with a big cotton mouth which could have easily been his very last memory! Incidentally, Dr. Wilson was glad to learn the name of his swamp is Burnt Corn Creek.

The Wilson family moved from Brewton in the late spring of 1945, a few weeks after sirens blew across Brewton to celebrate the surrender of Germany. They then moved to Decatur, Alabama.

Consulting Headstones & Heritages, I was relieved to locate in the index that a Mr. & Mrs. Perry were buried in Union Cemetery in Brewton. The of the grave-stones that I mailed to Dr. Wilson, show etched into stone the answer to his question.

Mr. Perry's first name was Frank. Sadly, Mr. Perry had died in 1945, not long after Dr. Wilson's family left Brewton.

Frank Perry's headstone reflects that he was born in Devonshire on June 3, 1876 and died in Brewton at the age of 69.

Mary Perry's headstone listed her as Mary Smith Perry, born in Devonshire on October 8, 1874 and died December 17, 1952.

Newspaper clippings from the Brewton Standard, November 22, 1945 listed the relatives and friends who attended the funeral on a Wednesday, including a brother, Rev. Herbert Perry from Dunkirk, Indiana and other folks from Anderson, Indiana as well as Bagdad, Florida and Montgomery.

(Continued on page 9)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The E. O. Wilson Brewton Connection *Continued*

(Continued from page 8)

When Mrs. Perry died in 1952 at the age of 78, the obituary said she had lived in Brewton 23 years. So, the Perrys came to Brewton in approximately 1929.

The obit for Mrs. Perry gave me the clue for further research when it stated she had died at the residence of Virgil Portwood.

Thanks to my then-Brewton-neighbor, Ethelene Harold, I learned that Mr. Portwood's daughter, Mary Alice Hale still lives in Brewton on Portwood Lane. I called her.

Mrs. Hale and I had a delightful phone conversation. Although she did not re-

call Mr. Perry, I learned that Mrs. Perry, who was friends with Mrs. Hales' Mother, Drucillar Portwood, actually came to live with the Portwoods after Mr. Perry's death.

In fact, Mrs. Hales' father, Virgil Portwood built a room on to their house for Mrs. Perry. Mrs. Hale was a senior in high school when Mrs. Perry died.

She stated that Mrs. Perry fell on some steps and broke her hip and her health seemed to decline after that fall. She recalled that Mrs. Perry loved her hot tea and a piece of toast in the afternoon and really enjoyed Mrs. Portwood's biscuits with the tea.

Mrs. Hale recalled that the Perrys specified that they wanted the words

"born in Devonshire" on their headstones and specified the type of crushed stone that was to be used on the graves.



Perry Headstone

The Story Behind the Story

: In 1994, I learned from Mrs. Carol Perez, Executive Director of the FSH Society, that Dr. E. O. Wilson had once lived in Brewton, Alabama!

Mrs. Perez had just finished reading Naturalist by E. O. Wilson and had picked up that tidbit. (I was diagnosed with Facioscapulohumeral Muscular Dystrophy in 1980, am a founding member of the FSH Society, and currently serve on the Board of Directors of that nonprofit group.)

The Perez family lives in Lexington, Massachusetts in the same town where Dr. Wilson lives, so Mrs. Perez, who also has FSHD, thought that it was quite a coincidence and worth mentioning to me that a famous scientist at Harvard had also once lived in Brewton, Alabama.

"Worth a mention! Could it be that E. O. Wilson, a two time Pulitzer Prize Winner had once lived right here in Brewton, Alabama, the town I have called home since 1973 when I started employment at Jefferson Davis State Junior College (now, known as Jefferson Davis Community College) as a librarian?"

After retiring from Jefferson Davis Community College in 1997, I volunteered at Turtle Point Environmental Center, located here in Escambia County in Flomaton. In 1999 the day arrived for the dedication of Turtle Point, where each volunteer could invite five people to the dedication.

I thought it would be perfect to invite Dr. Wilson. Before

the days of the internet, I had taught my students at JDCC in bibliographic instruction classes that if they needed to find the address of a famous person, they only had to look in the Who's Who in America.

So, there I looked and discovered Dr. Wilson's home address in Lexington, MA. I wrote and invited him to the October dedication of Turtle Point. As time passed and I received no response, I thought either he was too busy to reply or perhaps he would just show up, thinking Turtle Point would pay his expenses!

Then I started to worry how I would come up with money for his travel if he did attend. However, before the dedication, Dr. Wilson wrote me the most gracious letter saying he would be unable to attend the dedication, but the next time he was in Escambia County, he would definitely visit Turtle Point.

After reading, Dr. Wilson's autobiography, Naturalist, there it was. Brewton, Alabama, in the index with citations for pages 80, and 82-91. I was first in line to get Dr. Wilson to autograph my copy of Naturalist when he spoke at an environmental conference in Mobile.

I also shared with him my story of thinking I might have to pay his plane fare had he been able to attend the Turtle Point dedication back in 1999. On November 24, 1999. I

(Continued on page 10)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Story behind the story (cont'd)

(Continued from page 9)

wrote an editorial to the Brewton Standard about Audubon Magazine listing Dr. Wilson as one of the 100 Champions of Conservation, along with names like Ansel Adams, Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, John Muir and Roger Tory Peterson.

Having regretted not having the courage to ask Dr. Wilson to pose with me for a photo in Mobile, I mustered the courage to ask him to pose for a photo in 2005 when he gave the keynote address at the annual Alabama Writers Symposium in Monroeville, Alabama. I will always cherish that photo which is in this newsletter.

I had hoped to see Dr. Wilson in person in July of 2006 when I attended the FSH Patient Conference at Harvard and present him with a copy of the photo but I mailed it instead when I learned he would be out of town.

So now you know the story of my research for Dr. E. O. Wilson. The Escambia County Historical Society often has queries that involve research for individuals out of town. If you are interested in volunteering to do some of these "look ups," please let me know. It can be a rewarding experience!

Dr. Wilson will be at Samford University on April 21 for a symposium sponsored by the Alabama Environmental Education Consortium to discuss "Saving Life on Earth." Who knows, I may just get to see him once again.....



Ann Biggs-Williams and E. O. Wilson at Writer's Symposium in Monroeville, 2005



At left is "Old 100," the steam locomotive that The Alger-Sullivan Historical Society is working to get back to Century.

The society is very near giving the word to have the engine shipped; the track is ready, the engine is paid for, and most of all, the members are ready!

Old 100 is symbolic of the founding of Century and a tribute to the hard work of the employees of The Alger-Sullivan Lumber Company both at the mill in Century, and in the woods of Escambia, Monroe and Conecuh Counties in Alabama.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Help us Identify This Picture

Can you help us identify who the ladies in the picture are and where they are? Are they in front of the foot bridge which at one time crossed Murder Creek between Brewton and East Brewton/? If you have information about this picture let us know at escohis@escohis.org.



ECHOES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Escambia County Historical Society
P.O. Box 276
Brewton, AL 36427

Phone: 251-867-7332

E-mail: escohis@escohis.org

We're on the web!

www.escohis.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL DATED MATERIAL

Books for Sale Price

Mailed Regular

<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
<u>Wildflowers of The Escambia CD</u>	\$17.50	\$15.00
<u>A Picture Story of Century DVD</u>	\$17.50	\$15.00
<u>Old 100 in Indiana DVD</u>	\$17.50	\$15.00

Clip the following form and send to ECHS Treasurer, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427.

Notice that some pages are "Journal" pages. On these pages are longer and often more in-depth stories of interest usually found in the Society's *Journal*. You may expect at least 2 journal pages in each newsletter.

Due to rising costs and to keep membership rates the same, the membership voted to include journal-type pages in the newsletter instead of making a separate publication. We hope you enjoy this new format.

If you have a suggestion for a topic, or will help in research, please let us know!

Name(s) _____ Date _____

First Middle Last

Address _____

Street/P.O. Box City State Zip

Phone _____

Email _____

Dues (\$15.00/person) _____ (or \$100.00/person Lifetime)

Donation _____

Amount enclosed _____

Your interests _____

You will help with _____

❖ Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year. Give a membership as a gift!

ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society is published monthly except November. Editor, Ranella Merritt; Assistant, Jerry Simmons

Comments are welcome. You may email the Society at escohis@escohis.org or call 251-867-7332.

Mailing address:

ECHOES

Escambia County Historical Society

PO Box 276

Brewton, AL 36427.