

The January Meeting The Biennial Election of Officers Tuesday, January 22, 2008

The January meeting of the Escambia County Historical Society will be held **Tuesday, January 22, 2008 at 3:15 p.m. at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum at the Brewton campus of JDCC.**

The January 2008 meeting is the **biennial business meeting** which is held every two years for the election of officers for the two years to follow.

Paul Merritt is chairing the Nominating Committee and will present a slate of officers at the January meeting. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

Remember that in order to vote, your 2008 ECHS dues must be paid.

In addition to the election of officers, the Society is honored to have **one of the founding members of the Society, Janel Redditt** of Gulf Breeze, Florida to return and speak briefly at the biennial meeting.

Janel is the former head librarian of Jefferson Davis Community College's Leigh Library and one of the original faculty members of the college. Please join us to welcome Jan home.

In the summer of 1971,

seven people met at the then named Jefferson Davis Junior College in Brewton, Alabama to form the Escambia County Historical Society. The seven original founders were: **W. E. Brooks, J.W. Caldwell, Gene Cashman, J.D. Finlay, Eunice Nadrchal, Janel Redditt, and Harry Weaver.**

The Society was incorporated in 1972 and has been meeting regularly since that time with **the mission to recognize and preserve the history and heritage of Escambia County, Alabama and its environs.**

Presidents of the Escambia County Historical Society

② J.W. Caldwell, 1971--1973	② J.W. Caldwell, 1980--1980	1993	② Darryl Searcy, 2002--2003
② Floyd Currie, 1974--1975	② Gladys Byrd, 1981--1983	② Ed Seward, 1994--1995	② Lynn Wixon, 2004--2005
② Carolyn Pugh McLendon, 1976--1977	② Nettie T. Parker, 1984--1987	② Dwight Milligan, 1996--1997	② Ann Biggs-Williams, 2006--2007
② Gladys Byrd, 1978--1979	② Gail Thrower, 1988--1991	② Ed Seward, 1998--1999	② 2008—2009 Who will it be????
	② Mervin Huff, 1992--	② Willellen Elliot, 2000-2001	



ECHS Entry in Parade

Volume 35, Number 1

January 2008

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******Dues Alert******

ECHS Dues are "Due" in January

The February Meeting

The February 26 program will be by John Hall on 18th century naturalist William Bartram.

The program is part of the Draughton Seminars bringing Alabama history to Alabama citizens.

The programs are funded by the Kelly W. Mosley Endowment and administered by the Caroline Marshall Draughton Center for the Arts & Humanities at Auburn University.

Member News

Welcome to new member **Carol Graves**, owner of Garden Images, located in downtown Brewton in and adjacent to the historic building that formerly housed the Luttrell Hardware and is now the home to The Hourglass and Garden Images. Carol helped co-host the 2007 ECHS Christmas Party.

We also welcome **Tom Barrickman** of East Brewton, who drove the antique car for the Escambia County Historical Society to participate in the 2007 Brewton Christmas Parade. Riding in the car and throwing candy canes to the crowd were: **Susan Crawford, Lydia Grimes, Dianne Simmons, and Jerry Simmons**. Susan Crawford decorated the car for the parade with Tom's assistance.

ECHS member, **Elizabeth (Roberts) Edwards of Brewton**, started off the New Year by giving three ECHS gift memberships. Thank you Elizabeth. Elizabeth gave a gift membership to **E. Ann Scott of Brewton** who is her husband's

cousin. Elizabeth also renewed the dues for her sister, **Jacqueline R. Martin of Keego** who is also an ECHS member. And so that he would be included as well, Elizabeth gave a new gift membership to **Ben L. Martin of Keego**, Jacqueline's husband. We're glad to have Mr. and Mrs. Martin and Ann Scott on board for 2008.

The name of the late **Charlie (Mac) McArthur** of East Brewton has been **added** to the **Memorial Plaque** in the Elvira McMillan Parlor at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum by Darryl Searcy. Charles was the husband of ECHS member Pat McArthur.

A Correction for the **December 07 Newsletter**.

Under the listing for **The Baker's Dozen**--Sitting from the left, the first person is **Carolyn Geck**, rather than **Carolyn Beck**.

The 2008 Christmas Party at Double M Farms



Group Shot of those attending the Christmas Party

Beautiful View from Patio of Double M Farms



Hosts Ann and Ed Leigh McMillan



Bob Pasquill Has New Book on CCC in Alabama

The University of Alabama Press is publishing the new book on the CCC. Mr. Pasquill has presented a program to ECHS on the CCC in Escambia County. The following material and image are from the pamphlet announcing publication of the book.

The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alabama, 1933-1942: A Great and Lasting Good

By Robert Pasquill Jr.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was one of the better known and most successful of the New Deal programs following the Great Depression.

The causes of the Great Depression have been addressed, and debated, from a variety of perspectives through the years.

However, the effects, explained in terms of human suffering, leave little room for debate. By March of 1933, there were more than 13.6 million unemployed, and over 200,000 of them were wandering across the country—looking for work. Homes and families were fractured.

President Roosevelt proposed to put 500,000 unemployed men from cities and towns into the woods to plant trees, reduce fire hazards, clear streams, check erosion, and improve the parks system all across America. With unprecedented speed, national legislation was written, passed, and funded creating a myriad of programs—referred to as alphabet projects—in hopes of generating useful work and necessary paychecks, and creating a “great and lasting good”



One of structures built by CCC

for the American public.

CCC projects in Alabama would initially employ 20,000 men with projects in all 13 state forests and seven state parks.

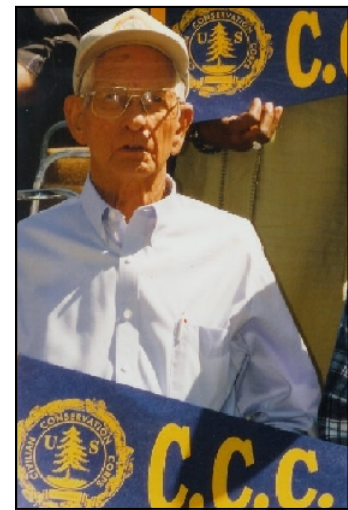
This volume traces in great detail the work projects, the camp living conditions, the daily lives of the enrollees, the administration and management challenges, and the lasting effects of this New Deal program in Alabama.

Referred to by many names, including Roosevelt’s Tree Army and the Forgotten Soldiers, the work of the CCC enrollees is still visible—if you know where to look—be that a terraced field, a stone structure in a state park, or a majestic fire tower standing tall

over the pines.

Through archives, government documents, and over 125 interviews with former enrollees of the CCC, Bob Pasquill has recounted the CCC program in Alabama, and brought this humanitarian program to life in the Alabama countryside. It was a truly monumental win-win situation emerging from a national and international economic tragedy.


Robert G. Pasquill Jr. is the Forest Archaeologist for the U.S. Forest Service, Montgomery, Alabama



The late Mr. Owen Carroll of Dixonville is included in an interview on the CD of the Book on the CCC in Alabama

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Cultural Crossroads Symposium on the History of Alabama to Explore the Years 1800—1830

.Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery, The Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities, The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts and The Alabama Humanities Foundation invite you to join them for a new series of Cultural Crossroads symposiums on the history of Alabama.

This symposium, "A New Country," will explore the years 1800-1830. During this time a massive migration of American settlers moved into the former

Creek Indian homeland, intent on acquiring land and planting cotton.

Speakers will include: Leah Atkins, Ph. D., Historian, Professor and Author; Kathryn Braund, Ph. D., Historian, Professor, Auburn University; Edwin Bridges, Ph. D., Historian and Director of Alabama Department of Archives and History; Mark Dauber, Freelance Scholar and Author; John Hall, Ed. D., Historian and Director, Museum of the Black Belt; Angela Hudson, Ph.D., Historian, Profes-

sor, Texas A& M; Harvey Jackson, Ph. D., Historian, Professor, Jacksonville State University; Craig Sheldon, Ph. D., Moderator, Professor, AUM.

Date is Saturday, January 26 from 9 a.m. to 3:45 at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Auditorium.

Genealogy Workshop

“From Old Leaves to New Trees: Using Church Records in Historical and Genealogical Research”

The Monroe County Heritage Museums will host the seventh annual genealogy seminar featuring Elizabeth Wells, special collections librarian at Samford University.

Topics will include preservation of church records, learning other sources that contain church data and the importance of church records for the organization and the researcher. The seminar will be held at the Old Courthouse Museum on Saturday, February 2, 2008.

Registration begins at 8:30 and the program is from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Admission is \$20 per person.

Following the program, guests will have an opportunity to purchase many genealogical research items from the museum gift shop located on the first floor of the Old Courthouse Museum.

For more information, please contact Shannon Hall Jones at the Monroe County Heritage Museums at (251) 575-7433.

Elizabeth Wells presented the same program to ECHS a couple of years ago.

The Bellville Baptist Church

After the article on the Bellville Baptist Church appeared in the Nov./Dec. issue of the Newsletter, we had an informative and helpful response to the article from Margaret Gaston, former church member who says she may be the only person who still spells the name of the church as Bellville, not Belleville..

Ms. Gaston explained that the narrative on the church which was used in the newsletter was written in 1976 “in cooperation with Association Missionary, Ed Everage.”

Also, members of the church were able to obtain minutes of the Bellville Baptist Church in 1979 (the narrative had appeared in 1976), which showed that the church had been organized in 1818, not in 1820 as previously thought.

Ms. Gaston says that this narrative along with a census of the cemetery was presented to members of ECHS who made a field trip to the Bellville community, probably in 1976.

She gives us further information that the name of the church remained Murder Creek Baptist Church until 1846 when “Bellville” first appears in the minutes of the Bethlehem Baptist Association 1827-1867. The Bethlehem association was known as the “Beckbe” Association until 1827.

News from the Museum and Museum Coordinator Jerry Simmons



If you've visited the museum lately, you've noticed an additional person or two hanging out there.

Some have even said hello to them, thinking they should be introduced, but later discover these newbies had little to say!

No wonder, because they're mannequins purchased to man (so

to speak) some new displays planned for the near future.

A problem has arisen, however, because there are not enough clothes for them. The male is rather tall and uniforms in the storage area will need modifying to fit him. The two ladies have clothes, but we will need changes as time goes on.

If you have some older clothing (including shoes and hats) you'll donate for this cause, contact the museum coordinator at 251-809-1528.

The Alabama Room, as many of our readers know, has been making preparations to move next door into the room in the Fine Arts Building formerly occupied by the college's IT (computer) department. The room is almost ready and perhaps by this time next month we can announce the move is complete.

This change will facilitate an increase in space for the Alabama Room and also make additional room in the museum for more exhibits and displays. Of course, there may be a period where things might be a bit disorganized (more so than normal), so we're asking for your patience in helping us in that organization and for your physical assistance in the actual move.

Notify Jerry Simmons if you're willing to help with the move and/or organization and he'll make sure you can have a part in this effort.

Jerry can be reached at the museum at 251-809-1528 - or at home at 850-256-2661.



A visit to the Escambia County Board of Education a couple of months ago got us a bonanza of old photographs of schools in Escambia County. Some of the schools were identified but a large number were not. They were stored in a manner that over the years, many had faded almost beyond recognition, and many had physical damage to them. However, we were able to restore several to acceptable condition.

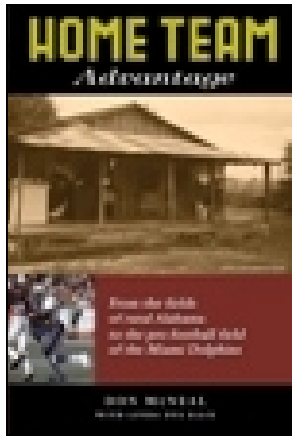
The problem is that we don't know the identity of the majority of the photographs and we'll be publishing some of them in ECHOES over this year in hopes someone might be able to help us name them.

Today is the start of that series. The photo above is a picture of a log building, obviously a one-room school. The first schools supported by the county were positioned such that students within a six

square mile radius could walk to school. One of the very first of these schools was described as being a log cabin near Sizemore. Can you confirm that this is that school - and do you have any more information about it?

The ECHS *Journal* Section

A Review of Don McNeal's Book Home Team Advantage



Book Review: Home Team Advantage: From the Fields of Rural Alabama to the Pro Football Field of the Miami Dolphins by Don McNeal

By Ann Biggs-Williams

Why would I review a book about sports in this issue of ECHOES? Read on and prepare to be inspired...

Don McNeal tells about the journey from his childhood home near McCullough, Alabama to the University of Alabama and then to the pros. Home Team Advantage is a wonderful success story that occurred quietly right here in Escambia County.

Don shares his memories of growing up in the south in what was typically known as a "shotgun" house, built by his Dad, Henry McNeal. The home housed a family of twelve with no indoor bathroom, a wood burning cook stove, and water available only at a sink in the kitchen.

Both parents worked, but times were hard. The family grew almost all the food they ate and all ten children had chores. Don's task was to plow with a

mule named "Kate," who taught Don plenty about persistence..

On March 24, 1965 when Don was in the second grade, tragedy struck when his mother died of an aneurysm. Don recalled that when Mrs. Douglas the bus driver for Freemanville School came the next morning, she and all the kids that had been picked up stopped at the McNeal home and cried with the family.

While relatives offered to take some of the kids, Don's Dad declined and said, "no". Don's Dad said he would keep his family together. As the family worked together, Don credits that time for why they are all still close today, although they live far apart. Lessons of working together and being responsible to each other were part of every day.

One of Don's sisters, Eula Davis and her husband, have returned to live in McCullough.

I must admit that I zoomed right in on chapter eight where Don discusses the two role models he had in addition to his Dad and his family that inspired him to always do his best. They were his third grade teacher, Mrs. Biggs, and the legendary Coach Bear Bryant.

Even though Mrs. Biggs disciplined him," she did it out of love." he writes. Don quotes a poem that he still remembers after all these years: "When your work has just begun, Never leave it until it's done. Do your work, great or small, Do it well or not at all."

That was the emphasis of Mrs. Biggs' classroom. She taught Don to always do

his best--whatever the job.

Later, that work ethic was reinforced by Coach Bear Bryant. Don comments that after plowing with Kate, the mule, playing football for Escambia County High School in Atmore, just seemed easy!

After graduating from Escambia County High School in Atmore in 1976, Don recalled that as the family did not have a phone, he always gave a neighbor, Mrs. Lucy Tuntine's phone number for contact.

One day, Mrs. Turntine came running to say Coach Bear Bryant was on the phone. Coach Bryant first asked Don, "How's your family?" and then followed with, "I want to offer you a scholarship to the University of Alabama!"

At the University of Alabama, Don was named Team Captain in 1980. During his tenure with the Crimson Tide, he played on two national championship teams in '78 and '79.

After playing for the Crimson Tide, Don was a first-round draft pick for the Miami Dolphins in 1980. Don enjoyed a 10-year career with two Superbowl appearances as number 28 with the Miami Dolphins and worked under another great Coach, Coach Don Shula.

Don was named Miami Dolphins' Player of the Year twice in '82 and '84. He was named to the Dolphins' Silver Anniversary Team in 1996.

Don now resides in Miami with his wife Rhonda and daughter Jessica who is a

(Continued on page 7)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

A Review of Home Team Advantage (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

student at the University of Alabama. Presently, Don is in full-time ministry and public speaking for Sports World Ministries.

Several years ago Don was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis but approaches that challenge with the same principles that his Dad and other role models instilled in him.

I spoke to Mr. McNeal briefly before writing this article as I wanted to thank him for taking the time to record his story and for the kind words about his third grade teacher Mrs. Biggs who was my Mother. Even on the phone, Mr. McNeal quoted to me the poem that Mother had him learn.



Mrs. Biggs with one of her classes at the Freemanville School.

What an unexpected gift it is to find unsolicited praise of a parent. When the Heritage Book Series was published, I was thrilled to find my father, Henry Biggs, remembered in The Heritage of Baldwin County, Alabama Volume 2 "as one of the best men in Lottie." (Lottie, Alabama, my home community, is lo-

cated only a few miles from McCullough but across the line in Baldwin County.)

Now I've received a second gift--to read in print that my Mother served as an early role model for Don McNeal.

Don McNeal and I have never met, but we grew up within a few miles of each other and we both have parents that left us a legacy that money can't buy....Priceless.

Afterword: *Don McNeal has been selected for induction into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame. The 2008 induction banquet will be at the Sheraton Birmingham Hotel on May 31, 2008.*



At the ECHS Christmas party for 2007, our hosts Ed and Ann McMillan were presented with two lovely maple trees, one for the front yard and one for the back.

These trees weren't ordinary maples—"special" is what Darryl Searcy (left showing one tree to Ann McMillan) called it—ask Darryl what he meant!

Our gracious co-host Carol Graves (right) was given a membership to the ECHS and a certificate of appreciation.



The ECHS *Journal* Section

Flomaton—"A Mud Hole"

Imagine a scene of unpaved paths called "streets;" a single store next to the railroad; an upright plank shack used for the depot; black smoke rolling over the trees onto freshly washed sheets, carrying with it cinders and smut from the wood and coal fires in the chuffing steam engines; all of this could describe what Flomaton was like in its formative years.

James A. Wilkinson came from Illinois to Evansville, Alabama, a town just north and east of Canoe. Wilkinson was the bookkeeper at the sawmill there until it burned and the owners decided to not rebuild. He eventually came to Flomaton and became one of its doctors. R. W. Brooks worked at the sawmill in Evansville, too, and was well acquainted with Wilkinson.

Brooks decided to move to Bluff Springs and was employed by a mill there. While living there, he became friendly with Brown Bowen and Bob Hardy, two desperados mentioned later on in this book. In his later years he became a prolific historian and writer. He even started a newspaper in Century, called the Century News, in that town's seminal years of the early 1900s.

He began writing a column for The Flomaton Journal and wrote primarily of his own experiences while in this area. In December of 1939, he commented in the Journal on what he recalled from 1872 of the condition of the settlement eventually called Flomaton. This is his writing, just as it was printed in that newspaper:

"I stood on the streets of Flomaton a few days ago and looked at the nice paved streets and fine sidewalks and splendid brick business buildings, and the fine residences, and as I stood and looked at these improvements, my mind ran back to 1872 when the Pensacola contractor, Major Reuter, drove the last spike on the 9th day of April of that year, which connected it

with the main line of the Mobile & Montgomery Railroad.

"As I thought of these improvements, I marveled at the change and if I was to put down here just how it looked at that time many of the younger generation would think I was overdoing the thing and that the town of Flomaton could never have been that bad looking, but I want to assure the younger generation of Flomaton that it can't be over drawn.

"The south wye was the last to be connected with the main line and an upright plank makeshift of a Depot was placed just about two car lengths of the main line and there the freight and tickets was to be dispensed to the public that could brave the mud and slush that was all around it.

"A Mr. Frisbee, a northern man, was the

pulled him off.

"Mr. Frisbee got up with a bloody nose and a black eye. From that day I never heard the gentleman bragging as to he could do to any body.

"The road was first coupled up Pollard, the County seat had about six saloons in it as ever store in those days sold whiskey so a Mrs. Wiser who lived there decided she would move to a new place and put up a store. She built just where the Jackson Hotel is now, wading around in the mud till they got her a small shack and she opened up a store.

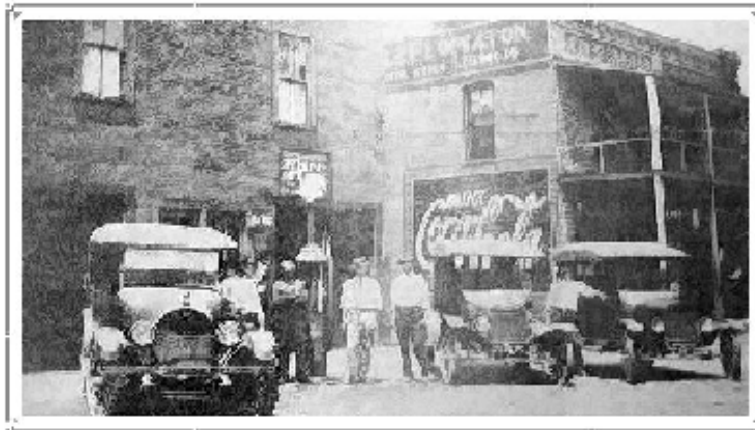
"Nobody there to buy as she was actually the lone inhabitant of the town to be but business was flush as logs were driven down the creek and those men got good wages and they liked their liker and spent it freely and soon the lady was taking in shekels enough to build her a good store and she kept it up for years and later other people came and other stores located there and see what it is today

"The first time I saw Flomaton it looked like it was about worth fifty cents provided you could do anything with a mud hole. When Col. W. D. Chipley was made Superintendent of the Pensacola division he came to Flomaton to build a depot right where it is now and if the people that is in Flomaton could see the car load after car load of sand

and gravel and cinders, anything that fill up, they certainly would be astonished at the amount of stuff that is under that nice looking station.

"Col. Chipley made a success of building the station but not the one that is there now as it has been burned a couple of times since then.

"When the rail road was connected up the town of Flomaton was not much as that was what the contractor named it."



The two-story Bank of Flomaton building (above right) circa 1924. The bank, located in the first block from the railroad on Palafox Street, opened about 1906 and closed about 1926.

agent. He came from some where in Illinois coming down with Dr. James A. Wilkinson who practiced medicine in Flomaton and died there. Mr. Frisbee was the most belligerent man I ever knew. He was always talking about fighting and said just what he would do to a man that attacked him.

"One day he was talking that way when one of the log drivers of Big Escambia was in the office and he promptly floored the gentleman and was pounding him in the good old fashioned way when the boys



“Didn’t either!”

“Did too!”



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THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Escambia County Historical Society
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We're on the web!

www.escohis.org

<u>Books for Sale</u> 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

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 down, 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!

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

Membership Renewal/Application Form

Name(s) _____ Date _____

First Middle Last

Address _____

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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, or 251-809-1528.

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ECHOES

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