

## The September Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 2009, 3:00 p. m

At the Thomas E. McMillan Museum

Jefferson Davis Community College Campus

### The Program: Show and Tell

Always a good program with members and guests participating. This program always provides interesting items and good stories to go with them.

Plan on bringing items from family history, documents, photographs, tools, collections, hobbies, in general, items that have meaning for you.

### Welcome to New Members in ECHS for 2009

- Nancy Grisham Anderson, Honorary Member from Montgomery
- Beth Bain, Regular Member from Brewton
- Charles Booher, Regular Member from Pensacola
- Jo Brewton, Regular Member from Pensacola and Brewton
- Robin Brewton, Regular Member from Pensacola and Brewton
- Cheri Buckmaster, Regular Member from Lebanon, MO
- Virginia Butler-French, Regular Member from Lakeland, FL
- Terri Carter, Honorary Member from Repton
- Ann Feathers, Honorary Member from Greenville
- Mildred Hall, Regular from Atmore
- Joshua Hammac, Regular Member from Brewton
- Connie Hornsby, Regular Member from Lake Charles, LA
- Hourglass/Breckinridge; Business Member from Brewton
- Marion Johnson, Regular Member from Moss Point, MS
- Jeremy Lambert, Regular Member from Brewton
- Dr. Susan McBride, Regular Member from Brewton
- Barbara Page, Regular member from Brewton
- Barbara Coy, Regular Member from Atmore
- Emilie Mims, Honorary Member from Atmore
- Ricky Peebles, Honorary Member from Century
- Kitty Reynolds, Regular Member from Brewton
- Jeff Ross, Honorary Member from Atmore
- Paul Shelley, Business Member from Monroeville

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### The October Program

**Charlie Booher of Pensacola will be the guest speaker. Charlie, the Collector, as he is known to his friends will bring interesting items from his collection to display and discuss.**



**Moye #1**

**Alabama's First Gusher**

Volume 36, Number 9

September 2009

# Mondays at the Museum in Repton

## The Next Monday at the Museum

Plan to join us in October for a visit to the Flomaton Railroad Museum, the Alger-Sullivan Historical Park in Century, and possibly a visit to Turtle Point in Flomaton. Details for date, time, and transportation will be discussed at the September Meeting.



### Final Score

**Repton – O. Century - O.**

### Tom Butts – One Broken Collar Bone

During the visit to the Carter Hospital Museum in Repton, Rev. Butts, whom many remember from his service as pastor at the First Methodist Church in Brewton, joined us. He is shown with the x-ray of his broken collar-bone, one of the many x-rays still kept in the Hospital.

He received this injury in a high-school football game between Repton and Century, remembered because it is the only game in which Repton did not lose to Century.

“It was the final game of the season in my Sr. year at Repton. It was cold and rainy. Not a sprig of grass on the field. Muddy. We were doing an end run with full-back carrying the ball. I was to take out the Century tight end. I got him. He fell on me, and so did the ball carrier and the Century tackler. I stayed in the game for 2 more plays before I realized I had broken my collar bone. The game ended 0-0 tie. Dr. Carter x-rayed the break and set it under a fluoroscope---no anesthetic. I DID NOT PLAY COLLEGE BALL!!! This ended my football career”



### The Nursery at the Carter Hospital

**ECHS member** Beth Bain stands beside the scales in the Nursery of the Hospital. She was born in this hospital.

Also, once when she was seriously ill, while still an infant, Dr. Carter operated on her and saved her life.

Beth is a retired teacher who taught English at T. R. Miller High School and Jefferson Davis Community College in Brewton.



### ECHS Members and Guests in Front of the Carter Hospital

Terri Carter, Mayor of Repton, gave the group not only a tour of the Carter Hospital but also took the group to the old downtown of Repton and described plans for the restoration of that area.

The group also enjoyed a lunch hosted by Terri and her husband William at their home. Donations for the lunch were given to the Repton Restoration Fund.

# **Mondays at the Museum in Pensacola**

## **The Next Monday at the Museum**

**Plan to join us on Monday, October 5, 2009 for a trip to the Flomaton Railroad Museum, the Alger-Sullivan Historical Park in Century, and Turtle Point in Flomaton.**

**Transportation and final details for arrangements will be discussed at the September ECHS meeting.**



## **ECHS Members and Guests in Front of Train Engine Donated by T. R. Miller Lumber Co.**

This group picture was taken after a tour of Pensacola's Museum of Commerce. This museum recreates street scenes and store fronts of Pensacola as they would have appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## **Tour of Old Christ Church**

Old Christ Church, now a museum and part of Pensacola's Historic Village, is a beautifully done restoration.

Here our excellent guide for the day, tells the story of the church's history which in many ways is the history of Pensacola



## **Lunch with the Brewtons**

**ECHS members Jo and Robin Brewton treated the group to lunch at their home in Pensacola.**

## Our Business Members

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## The Oil and Gas Industry in Escambia County: What If Brewton Becomes a Second Beaumont?

### Early Speculation and Disappointment

Oil and gas exploration began in Escambia County in 1902 when the first well was drilled in the Roberts community. By September of that year, the well had been drilled to about 900 feet.

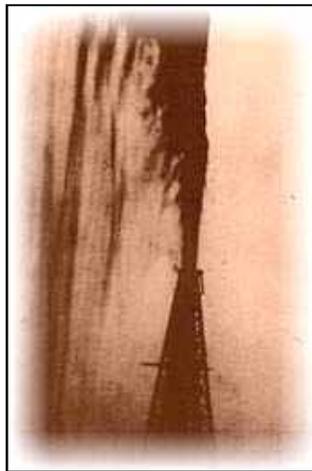
A show of oil was discovered on December 1 of the following year, at a depth of 1,200 feet and the prospects were regarded as bright, in fact, the question, "What if Brewton becomes a second Beaumont?" was often asked.

Investors, stockholders, in this drilling operations included T. R. Miller of Brewton, J. J. Sullivan of Century, V. M. Norville, of Beaumont, Texas, and Marion Quina of Pensacola.

In the end, the result was too much salt water mixed with the oil for the well to become a producer. In 1904, the property was sold at auction by the trustees to help pay the debt incurred in drilling the well.



Beaumont, Texas in 1902



The Lucas Gusher  
Beaumont, Texas

### Texas's First Oil Boom-Town

Oil was first successfully drilled in Beaumont in 1901 in an area called Spindletop Hill. The first well was the Lucas Gusher, named after the engineer, Anthony F. Lucas, who drilled it and the fact that it gushed for nine days after it was first drilled before it could be capped.

The Lucas Gusher began producing in January of 1901 and, by April of that year, with six gushers on Spindletop hill, Beaumont's production "outstripped the total yield of the rest of the world."

(from the city of Beaumont website at  
<[www.cityofbeaumont.com](http://www.cityofbeaumont.com)>)

### Discovery of Moye #1 Renews Comparisons to Texas

When this first gusher for Escambia County came in, oil-boom fever hit. An article in the Atlanta Journal/ Constitution reported that property lease prices skyrocketed and "feverish activity was rapidly spreading—fanning out from the gusher nucleus near Brewton" ("Alabama Agog Over Oil After Rich Strike on Farm," Sunday, Jan. 22, 1952, p. 5-F).

Walter B. Jones, Alabama's state geologist and supervisor for the State Oil and Gas Board, said that the areas of southeast Alabama and northwest Florida would "get a play" for oil riches similar to that in the coastal areas of Louisiana and Texas" ("Alabama Agog," p. 5-F).

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## The Oil and Gas Industry in Escambia County and Alabama: Moye #1

*Materials written and compiled by Darryl Searcy and Ranella Merritt with consultation and assistance from Tom McMillan and the staff at the McMillan Trust.*

Escambia County's first major oil strike and Alabama's first gusher was the oil well named Moye #1. The well was named after the owner of the farm in whose cotton patch it was drilled and successfully "brought-in" in 1952. Moye #1 was the first well in what would become the Pollard Field.

*The following article from the Mobile Press for January 22, 1952 explains the importance of this well and captures the excitement and speculation it prompted:*

### South Alabama's Oil Gusher

The biggest news and most popular topic of conversation in South Alabama is oil – gushing out of the ground, that is. Black gold spewed into the air in Escambia County over the week end and folks came from miles around to witness Alabama's first gusher.

What happened at Allen Moye's farm sounded mighty good to State Geologist Walter B. Jones, and others who have been dreaming and working towards the day when oil, beautiful oil, would blow right out of Alabama soil. Dr. Jones predicts the well on the farm eight miles west of Brewton will produce 1000 barrels a day of the best cash crop known to man.

The significant thing about the oil from farmer Moye's place is its high quality. It has a gravity of 29. Oil men say that means it is high quality stuff. The oil from the Choctaw and Clarke county fields has a gravity of about 13 to 18, which means it is of poorer quality than the Escambia product. The 77 producers in the older wells do not flow normally, but have to be pumped.

"This definitely is a flowing well, and I think we can look for an early development of this area," said one geologist at the scene. "This area will now get a play equivalent to coastal areas of Louisiana and Texas."

With the experts so optimistic, it is easy to see why it was



**Moye #1 After the Pumps Were Installed.**

**Discussing the pump are Fred Rew (left) and Allen Moye. Allen Moye is the owner of the farm on which the well was drilled.**

necessary to call out the highway patrol to break the traffic jam when the news spread to happy citizens. The sight of the black gold streaming 100 feet into the air out of good Alabama earth is an invigorating experience, to say the least.

All Alabamians, particularly those in south Alabama, will continue watching oil developments with eager interest. The fabulous stories of Texas, coupled with a little imagination, are enough to make all of us realize what this could mean if the oil on the Moye farm keeps gushing and other producers of like quality are

brought in .

Since the Gilberttown field began producing, the nucleus of an oil center has been developing in Mobile. The fraternity of oil men engaged in exploration, production, and the handling of leases has been growing. The State docks and private firms have added and improved oil transportation facilities.

Maybe this is where Alabama's ship comes in.

The Pollard Field was the third oldest field in Alabama. Nine years after Moye #1 began pumping, the field had "37 producible wells" and had produced "about 6,300,000 barrels since its discovery in 1952" ("New Show at Pollard Raises Hopes," Mobile Register, Tuesday, May 2, 1961, 6 B.)

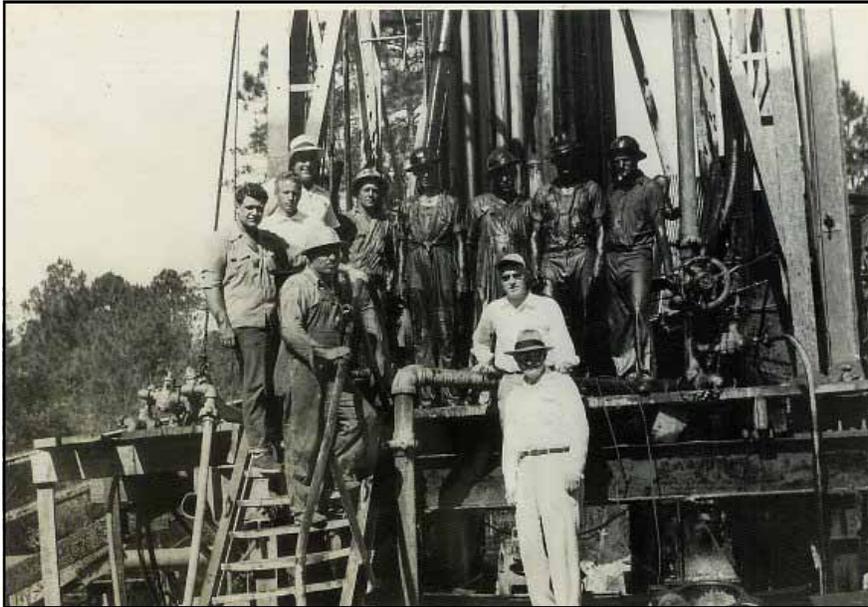
The Gilberttown Field in Choctaw County, discovered in 1943-1944, is known as Alabama's first major field. It is credited with ushering in the state's oil producing era (The Petroleum Industry in Alabama, 1989, p.10).

The South Carlton Field in Clarke and Baldwin Counties is considered the second. It was discovered in the 1950 1952 period.

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## The Oil and Gas Industry in Escambia County and Alabama: Moye #1 Photos

**Standing in Front of Moye #1 , Ed Leigh McMillan, major investor in the oil well, with the crew that successfully drilled it behind him, many covered in the “black gold”**



**Moye #1 after Installation of the Connecting Pipes and Valves called a**

**Humble Oil Company Drilled Moye #1**



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## History of The Oil and Gas Industry in Alabama

*This following history is taken from the Alabama State Oil and Gas Board web site at < <http://www.gsa.state.al.us/ogb/ogal.html>>*

### Oil and Gas Exploration in Alabama

“Alabama's oil and gas industry has enjoyed a long and remarkable history. As early as 1808, American Indians in the Tennessee Valley in north-central Alabama were selling oil from asphaltic rocks for medicinal purposes. The first wells drilled for oil in the southeastern U.S. were drilled in Lawrence County in 1865, just six years after the first oil well was drilled in the U.S.

“The first commercially marketed natural gas production in the southeastern U.S. occurred in the early 1900s near Huntsville. In 1944, oil was discovered near Gilbertown in Choctaw County. This discovery led to the creation of the State Oil and Gas Board of Alabama.

“The discovery of Alabama's giant Citronelle Field in

**“Traces of petroleum, in the form of natural gas, were first discovered in Alabama in Morgan and Blount counties in the late 1880s, and by 1902, natural gas was being supplied to the cities of Huntsville and Hazel Green (“Discovery of Oil and Gas Products,” from the article “Oil and Gas Industry in Alabama,” in the Encyclopedia of Alabama <[www.encyclopediaofalabama.org](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org)>).**

**“In 1909, a small discovery by Eureka Oil and Gas at Fayette fueled that city's streetlights for a time, but no natural gas was recovered anywhere in the state for several decades afterward” (Encyclopedia of Alabama (“Discovery of Oil and Gas Products”).**

Mobile County in 1955 focused national attention on the State's oil and gas potential. World class natural gas reserves were first discovered in Alabama's offshore waters in the late 1970s.

“Alabama became a world leader in the development of coalbed methane gas as an energy resource in the 1980s. The Alabama Oil and Gas Board established in 1983 the first comprehensive set of rules and regulations in the United States governing coalbed methane operations.

The growth of the petroleum industry in Alabama is further reflected in the fact that in 1980 the State was ranked 16th nationally in the production of natural gas and 18th in liquid hydrocarbons, whereas now the State

is ranked 10th nationally in the production of natural gas and 15th in the production of liquid hydrocarbons.

“The annual gas production from Alabama State waters has ranged between 150 and 200 billion cubic feet or approximately 50% of the State's total gas production. Production of coalbed methane ranges between 116 and 120 billion cubic feet annually or 35% of the total State production.

“Exploration and production have dramatically increased since 1980. Between 1945 and 1980, the Board issued a total of 3,040 drilling permits and established 84 oil and gas fields. In the next 25 years, approximately 11,000 wells were permitted and 286 additional fields were established in the State. Similarly, the number of producing wells increased from 1,000 in 1980 to nearly 6,000 in 2005.

“The oil and gas industry provides major economic benefits to Alabama and its citizens. Over \$2.4 billion worth of oil and gas are produced annually in Alabama. The State receives direct benefits of approximately \$500 million annually in the form of lease bonuses, royalties, trust-fund investment income, and severance taxes.”

**“The world's first oil discovery occurred in Pennsylvania in 1859. Chemists found they could “refine” the crude oil into certain components that were useful. The first of these refined products to find widespread use was kerosene, which quickly replaced whale oil as lamp fuel (“Discovery of Oil and Gas Reserves,” from the article “Oil and Gas Industry in Alabama,” in the Encyclopedia of Alabama <[www.encyclopediaofalabama.org](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org)>).**

**“Later, gasoline and other fuels were refined to power the engines of the fuel-thirsty twentieth century. By the end of World War II, the rapid demand for refined products meant that the hunt for oil spread quickly across the United States and the world (“Discovery of Oil and Gas Reserves”).**

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Alabama Oil and Gas Regions

The following article is taken from “Oil and Gas Industry in Alabama, [Encyclopedia of Alabama](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org), <[www.encyclopediaofalabama.org](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org)>.

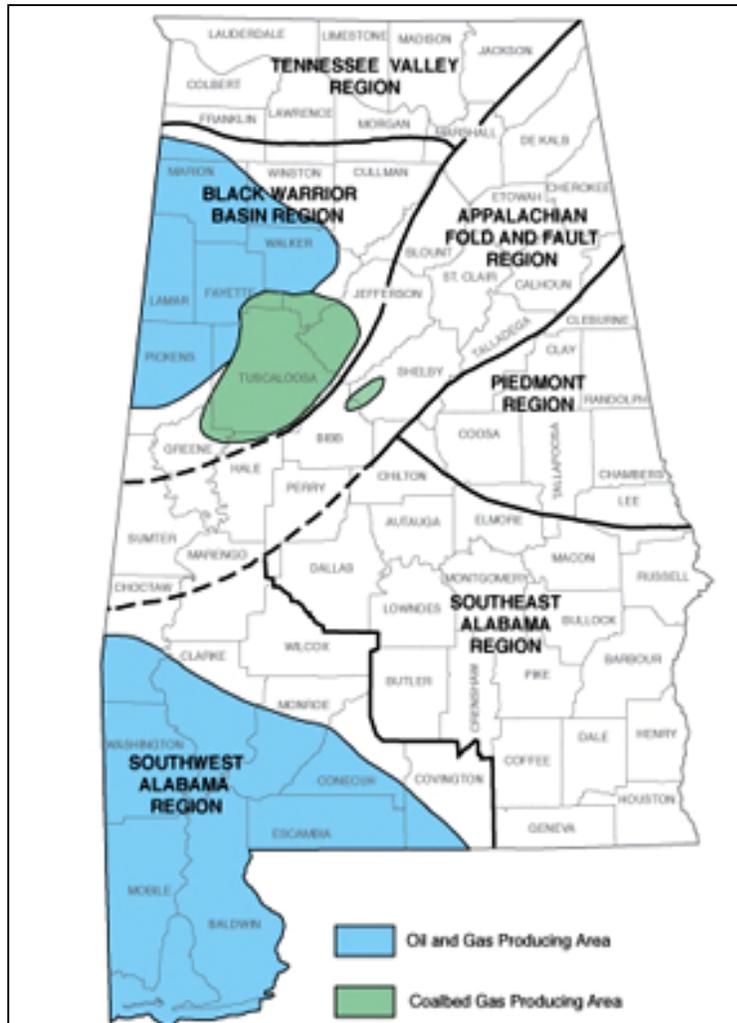
“Oil In Alabama generally occurs in the state’s two sedimentary basins, the Interior Salt Basin in the southwest and the Black Warrior Basin in the northwest, both of which extend westward into Mississippi.

“Geologists use the term ‘basin’ to describe a broad area where layered sedimentary rocks sag thousands of feet downward into a ‘bowl’ shape, although there is often no evidence of this at the surface.

“The Interior Salt Basin consists of Mesozoic and Cenozoic rocks, which date back to 200 million years ago. The Black Warrior Basin is composed of Paleozoic rocks, some of which date back 580 million years.

“This region is also famous for its vast coal reserves, such as the Warrior Coal Field.

“ Although the popular idea is that oil comes from dinosaurs, in reality it originates from the decaying remains of countless microscopic creatures that died, fell to the ocean floor, and became buried under thousands of feet of sediment. The heat and pressure of the overlying sediments changed the chemical make-up of the organisms into crude oil. Natural gas, which is composed mainly of methane, is a by-product of this slow process and is found both with oil or by itself. Crude oil and natural gas are together referred to as petroleum.



**Map of Alabama’s Oil and Gas Producing Regions**

Map courtesy of the article “Oil and Gas Industry in Alabama , [Encyclopedia of Alabama](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org)

<[www.encyclopediaofalabama.org](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org)>

“Petroleum forms in the microscopic pores of rocks such as sandstone and limestone and slowly makes its way to the surface.

“Where petroleum becomes trapped in its migration, it forms an oil or gas field. Common traps are geologic features known as faults and anticlines. Faults are cracks in layers of rock in which the rocks on either side of the crack move in relation to each other.

“This can be envisioned by thinking of a knife slicing through a layer cake and seeing one side of the cake slump downward. Anticlines are dome-shaped folds in sections of layered rock.

“Geologists search for these traps with machines that measure gravity, magnetic, and seismic data, all of which tell them critical properties of buried rock layers.

“Geologists refer to a likely place for oil or gas as a ‘prospect.’ When a prospect is identified, ‘landmen’ are sent in to lease the mineral rights from property owners, who retain a royalty, which is a share of the revenue generated by the oil and gas produced from the owner's property.

“After the leases are acquired, drilling rigs are brought in to drill and test the prospect.

“Another type of oil resource occurs when oil makes its way to the surface forming a geologic feature known as tar sands. The Hartselle Sandstone in northwest Alabama is a prime example of such a surface oil field. Although geologists believe Alabama’s tar sands have future commercial use, most of the state’s known petroleum reserves are located underground.

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Geological Map of Southwest Alabama

442 GULF COAST ASSOCIATION OF GEOLOGICAL SOCIETIES TRANSACTIONS

VOL. XLV, 1995

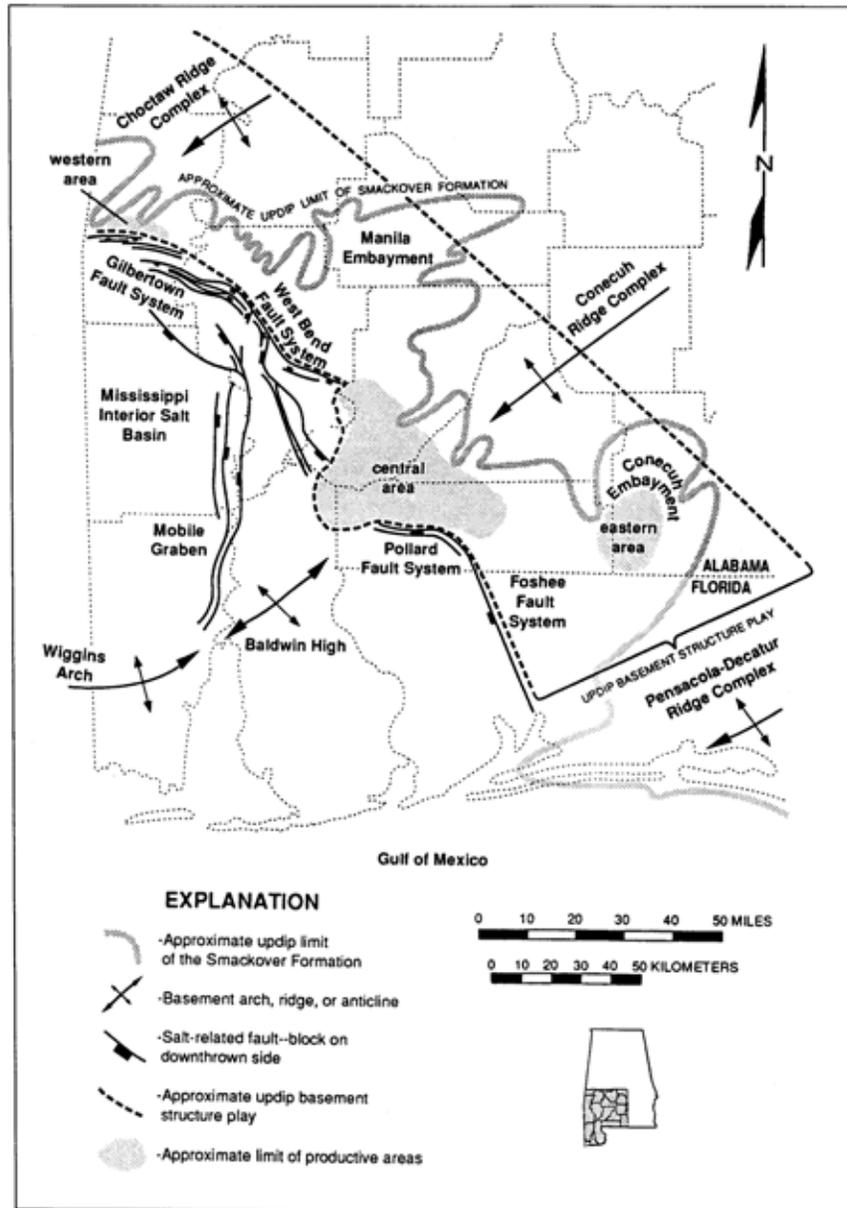


Figure 1. Major structural features and the updip basement structure play of southwest Alabama.

Map of Southwest Alabama Geological Formations is taken from the Geological Survey of Alabama at  
<[http://www.gsa.state.al.us/documents/pubs/onlinepubs/Reprint\\_series/RS107.PDF](http://www.gsa.state.al.us/documents/pubs/onlinepubs/Reprint_series/RS107.PDF)>

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Named Oil And Gas Fields in Escambia County

1. Appleton (1993)
2. Appleton NW (1997)
3. Appleton West (1990)
4. Barnett (1975)
5. Barnett East (1988)
6. Big Escambia Creek (1972)
7. Big Spring Creek (1992)
8. Broken Leg Creek (1988)
9. Burnt Corn Creek (1986)
10. Burnt Corn Creek South (1987)
11. Canaan Church (1992)
12. Canaan Church NW (2006)
13. Canaan Church SW (1997)
14. Canaan Church West (????)
15. Catawba Springs (1985)
16. Catawba Springs West (2007)
17. Chavers Creek (1984)
18. Chitterling Creek (1993)
19. Chitterling Creek East (2006)
20. Chitterling Creek West ((2007)
21. Dean Creek (1992)
22. Dean Creek South (1991)
23. Fanny Church (1973)
24. Flomaton (1968)
25. Foshee (1982)
26. Foshee West (1981)
27. Gravel Hill Church (1995)
28. Gravel Hill Church South (1997)
29. Hall Creek (1986)
30. Hall Creek NW (2005)
31. Hanberry Church (1987)
32. Hickory Branch (1991)
33. Huxford (1982)
34. Huxford East (1990)
35. Huxford West (1994)
36. Jernigan Mill Creek (1991)
37. Lambeth Church East (2007)
38. Little Escambia Creek (1970)
39. Little Rock (1985)
40. Narrow Gap Creek (1995)
41. Osaka (1989)
42. Perdido (1983)
43. Pollard (1952)
44. Robinson Creek (1990)
45. Robinson Creek East (1994)
46. Robinson Creek North (2001)
47. Sizemore Creek (1984)
48. Smith Church (1988)
49. Smith Church North (1990)
50. Smith Church NW (1992)
51. Wallace (1987)
52. Wild Fork Creek (1988)
53. Wild Fork Creek South (1988)
54. Wild Fork Creek West (2007)

Since the first major strike was made in 1952 in the Pollard field with Moye #1, Escambia county has been a major part of the State's oil and gas industry.

That figure has more than doubled in the last 30 years.

THE NEWSLETTER FOR  
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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<u>Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook</u>	\$46.00	\$40.00

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*ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) corporation, is published monthly except November. Comments are welcome. You may email the Society at [escohis@escohis.org](mailto:escohis@escohis.org) or call 251-867-7332, or 251-809-1528.*

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