

The August Meeting Tuesday, August 26, 2014, 3:00 p. m. The McMillan Museum



Eugenia is shown at the right in this picture at a Homecoming at Bethany Baptist Church (Brunt Corn).

Eugenia attended Bethany Baptist Church as a child.

At the left is Kathy McCoy, Monroe County Heritage Museums Director.

The Program:

Eugenia Ellis Brown, who grew up in Burnt Corn, will present a program on her memories of the community. She will also join us on the field trip to Burnt Corn on September 9.

Eugenia was reared in Burnt Corn and moved to Belleville, Alabama after the death of her father. She graduated from Repton High School and the University of Montevallo.

Eugenia has served as the Director of Missions for the Baptist Association of Conecuh County and she taught at Evergreen High School for 25 years.

She is married to Dan Brown. They have 3 children, 4 grandchildren, and 3 great – grandchildren. €

Eugenia Ellis Brown Remembers Burnt Corn

*From A Visit to Burnt Corn
by Ed Williams.*

"There are so many things that I remember about Burnt Corn....

"I got my first haircut in the barber shop and remember my Daddy paying

5 cents for it.

"In front of the casket building and across in the Lowery's' yard we played all day long, jumping from one bale of cotton to the next and keeping score who

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The September Meeting

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

McMillan Museum

Speaker: Rev. Blue of Second Siloam Missionary Baptist Church, Brewton

Tuesday, September 9, 2014

Field Trip to

(1) Burnt Corn, (2) Wayne Purnell Home and Purnell Methodist Church, (3) Booker's Mill, and (4) Store at Cook's Dairy Farm.

Meet at McMillan Museum at 12:00 or join group at General Store in Burnt Corn at 1:00.



**Old Barber Shop
Burnt Corn**

Volume 41, Number 8

August 2014

Eugenia Ellis Brown Remembers Burnt Corn

(Continued from page 1)

could stay on the longest without falling between. Of course, it didn't hurt as the bales were soft.

"I also remember walking to school and being in no hurry. My best friend was the daughter of the doctor, and we used to hide and try to peep in the back of the doctor's office. Of course, we never saw anything, but it gave us something to do.

"In the summer, all the children in town would wait down in front of the Mosely house for my Daddy. When he closed, he would play with us -- games like Red Rover.

"Oh, I could go on and on....

"I remember that a movie came to town and set up a tent across from Lowry's store. We all went to the movie. I don't remember what it cost, but I do remember



L to R: The Barber Shop, The Casket Warehouse, and the Brantley Store known for the Coca-Cola Sign painted on its side.



The Doctor's Office with the Red Store to the Right

that there was no sound.

"A small circus came to town one time, too. I don't know how they found Burnt Corn, but they did.

"I'll stop right there, but I could go on for days....

"Oh, I forgot to tell you that the county line ran right through our house. We ate in Conecuh and slept in Monroe. We paid taxes in both counties"

(<http://www.auburn.edu/~willik5/burntcornhc03.html>).

*Note: Museum Coordinator Jerry Simmons was told that the Burnt Corn Post Office at one time was moved from its location in the General Store to a building across the street, so the Burnt Corn

Post Office was located in Conecuh and Monroe Counties at different times. €

The Burnt Corn Post Office

The following article is from the Burnt Corn website at <<http://www.burntcorn.com/htmlfiles/bcpostoffice.html>>.

Postal service started in Burnt Corn in 1817 and ended in 1997. Congress officially approved the postal route in Burnt Corn in 1818. The Burnt Corn Post Office was located in the Lowery Store in 1936. It was one of the oldest post offices in the United States.

The closing of the post office became the "Second Battle of Burnt Corn." Residents massed a full fledged protest against the U. S. Postal Service in an

effort to keep the old post office open. Mrs. Pearl Salter, was the General leading the fight to save the Burnt Corn Post Office. There were many months of town hall meetings and demonstrations and even lobbying of postal officials and elected officials in Washington D.C.

Pearl petitioned the NAACP as well because 90% of the residents served by the post office in Burnt Corn were African Americans. The protest gained national attention from the media across America. This even captured the attention of CNN.

Postal officials argued that the post office had to

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The Burnt Corn Post Office

(Continued from page 2)

be closed because it had no handicapped access as required by federal law. They also cited the fact that the Burnt Corn Post Office was no longer profitable to operate. A postal official cited that in 1993 the post office generated \$5,803.91 but by 1995 it had dropped to \$4,658.22. The cost to operate the post

office was \$14,339.00 per year.

The battle was lost and the post office was closed in 1997, despite print and electronic newscasts, protest, and lobbying to post officials and politicians. Some residents wore black on that eventful day of the decommissioning of the historic post office and a giant black bow was placed on the door.

The Lowery Store at Burnt Corn



The post office was located in the back left corner of this store which is the most famous landmark of the community.

It was built by James K. Kyser (shown at the left), who became Postmaster in January 1891.

The upstairs of the building once served as the Burnt Corn Masonic Lodge and it was the meeting place for the Methodist from 1908 until their church building was completed in 1913. The store closed around 2007.

The Lowery Store is listed in Alabama's Tapestry of Historic Places 1978 published by the Alabama Historical Commission.

The Lowery Dynasty

The following is taken from Zoominfo at <http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Sam-Lowery/44781509>.

Samuel Anthony Lowery, a schoolteacher, came to Burnt Corn in the 1870s to farm and raise Jersey cows.

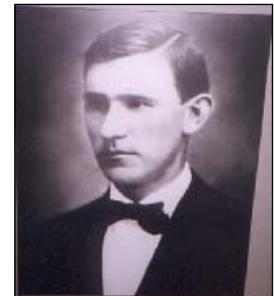
In 1876 he married Martha Ann Betts, daughter of James and Cynthia Betts. This union would eventually bring their son, Jacob, to begin the Lowery dynasty in Burnt Corn.

Jacob was ambitious and continuously acquired more land to add to the property that had been accumulated already by his father and through his mother's family, the Betts. This included the cotton gin and main store of Burnt Corn.

Jacob ran the Burnt Corn general store until his death. He left the Lowery family the JFB Lowery Estate.

His photo, shown at the right, hung inside the office of the general store.

Photo from the Burnt Corn Website at <http://www.burntcorn.com/>.



The Burnt Corn Cotton Gin

Field Trip: September 9, 2014

Tuesday, September 9, meet at the McMillan Museum at 12:00 to Car Pool. Otherwise, plan to travel to Burnt Corn and be at the Lowery Store in Burnt Corn by 1:15. Be sure to bring snacks or a brown bag lunch. We will have our lunch/snacks at the Wayne Purnell House. ECHS will provide drinks. Planning on 45 minutes to one hour for each stop, we should be through around five.

Directions to Burnt Corn

First Set of Directions:

Judy Purnell, one of our hosts, has suggested that easy directions to Burnt Corn are to travel on Interstate 65 to Evergreen to the Midway Exit and turn onto Hwy 83 North. Two Landmarks to look for to know that you have the correct highway are a barbeque restaurant on the right side of the highway (closed but building still marked) and a Pizza Hut on the left.

On HWY 83, travel about eight miles until you come to Lyeffion Jr. High School. Turn left then on County Road 30. After about eleven miles on this road (County Road 30), you will reach a dead end. Turn left at the dead end and you will be about two hundred yards from the General Store in Burnt Corn, our meeting place and first stop.

Second Set of Directions:

Darryl Searcy has written the following set of directions for reaching Burnt Corn from Brewton as well as directions from Burnt Corn to other locations for our trip. He has also noted places of interest along the way.

1. Follow Hwy-41 from Brewton to Repton – 27 miles. At Hwy-84 junction turn R and at next Intersection, turn onto CR-5 (Carter Hospital).
2. Stay on CR-5 thru Bermuda to Burnt Corn (Old Federal Road and County Line Conecuh/Monroe) – 12.3 miles.
3. Leaving Burnt Corn Turn R onto CR-30 – 3.5 miles to Purnell Church and Residence.
4. Stay on CR-30 from Purnell to Fairnelson - 3.0 miles
5. At Fairnelson turn R onto CR-22 to Booker's Mill – 3.0 miles (landmarks are beautiful home of Dr. Stanley Barnes and the estate of Dr. Salem

Saloom). Bookers Mill is now Stinson Springs. 6. The Store on Cook's Dairy Farm is 4.4 miles from Booker's Mill. The Store which is part of what is called Cook's Crossroads is located at the intersection of County Road 32 and State Road 83.

This is the last stop on our trip and at this point we are at State Road 83 East which leads back to Interstate I 65.



View from an Approach to Burnt Corn

First Stop: Burnt Corn

The oldest community in Monroe County, Burnt Corn started as a settlement sometime after the Revolutionary War. Its history illustrates the history of many small communities in rural southwest Alabama of territorial settlement, periods of war, recovery, prosperity, and decline. As with many communities, when the depression of the 1930's came, residents went to larger towns to find work, and when bypassed by the railroads or the highway systems, the community again suffered decline.

Burnt Corn has a unique placement in that it is located on the intersection of two important trails or roads, the Old Wolf Trail or Pensacola Trade Path and the old Horse Path through Indian Territory from Georgia to points south and west, which would eventually become the Federal Road. The location was the reason for its early development.

Burnt Corn, on its main street, which is the old Federal Road, still retains buildings and houses from

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Field Trip: September 9, 2014

(Continued from page 4)

its past. In addition to the Barber Shop, Casket Warehouse, Brantley Store, Doctor's Office, and Lowery or General Store, which have already been pictured in this newsletter, other buildings which can be seen include these pictures from the Burnt Corn Website at http://www.burntcorn.com/old_sitebuilder/historictour.html.



The Hardware Store or Red Store



The Burnt Corn Grist Mill where residents used to take corn to have it ground into corn meal as they waited.



The James and Cora Betts Kyser Victorian style house, built at the turn of the century. It is next to the Methodist Church which they also built.



The Burnt Corn Methodist Church



The Boarding House



The Masonic Lodge Hall



A Service Station from the Past

Second Stop: The Wayne Purnell Home and Purnell Methodist Church

The home was built by Wayne's grandfather, M. E. Purnell, who moved into the recently completed home with his bride, Josephine Hawkins, on their wedding day, December 19, 1900.

M. E. Purnell, some time later, also donated the land for the Purnell Methodist Church, which is located across the road from the house.

The present owners of the home, Wayne and Judy Purnell, will be our hosts for our visit.



The Purnell Methodist Church

Photo Courtesy of
<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=237600>

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Field Trip: September 9, 2014

(Continued from page 5)

Third Stop: Booker's Mill, Also Known as Stinson Springs



A Cabin at Booker's Mill
From *Rural Southwest Alabama*
<<http://www.ruralswalabama.org/attractions/bookers-mill-near-evergreen-al/>>.



Inside a cabin at Booker's Mill
From <<http://www.wordrunner.com/rich/Booker's%20Mill.htm>>.

The following material on Booker's Mill has been taken from *Wordrunner* at <<http://www.wordrunner.com/rich/Booker's%20Mill.htm>>.

Booker's Mill is an old, 200 acre pioneer farmstead located in Southwest Alabama about seven miles northwest of Evergreen. The mill site was first purchased by the John Guice family shortly after the civil war in the 1860's.

The Guice family built a grist mill, cotton gin and sawmill. Known as Guice's Mill, the development was the hub of activity for many years.

Ownership changed several times until 1982 when the mill and cotton gin burned. The Stinson family purchased the property in 1982. The Booker name

was retained for historical purposes for the mill site.

The Don Stinson family members have spent several years rebuilding the dam, nature trails, several cabins, ponds, roads, a chapel, water wheel, and other improvements.

It has been recognized by several publications and organizations. The Stinson family was presented the Helene Mosley memorial award by Alabama Treasure Forest Association in the year 1999. This is the highest individual award given by ATFA for the improvement and use of private property.

The chapel on the property is featured in a hardback publication of *Churches of Alabama* published by *Alabama Living* magazine.



The Chapel at Booker's Mill



Interior of the Chapel at Booker's Mill
Both pictures of the Chapel From <www.wordrunner.com>.

Fourth Stop: the Store at the Cook Dairy Farm



Ann Cook has invited us to visit and enjoy the many items from the past which have been collected in the store. The store is located on the 800 acre dairy farm which began in 1949 and is still in operation. €

News and Announcements

West Florida Genealogical Society Meeting September 6, 2014



The West Florida Genealogy Library

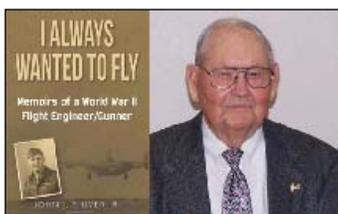
Photo from <http://mywfp.com/research/west-florida-genealogy-library/>.

The Society will meet at the West Florida Genealogy Library (5740 N. 9th Ave, Pensacola) at 10:00. The topic is Picasa and the speaker is from Laser Images in Pensacola.

Charlotte Shipman from the West Florida Genealogy Society explains that Picasa is a free application program available from Google that allows you to edit, organize, and enhance your genealogy photos without disturbing the original photograph. It also includes face recognition software which can assist in identifying unknown pictures you may have.

Members and guests are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be available at 9:45. Meeting and program will begin at 10:00.

For more information call [850-494-7373](tel:850-494-7373).



John Shiver Shown Pictured with Photo of Cover of His Book

From <http://www.northescambia.com/2013/01/i-always-wanted-to-fly-local-veteran-publishes-book>.

John Shiver, Jr., Author of I Always Wanted to Fly, Has Died

In February 2013, Mr. Shiver presented a program for ECHS on his experiences as a flight engineer and gunner during world War II.

When he gave the program, Mr. Shiver had recently published I Always Wanted to Fly, his book about his military service, which included flying

over 75 combat missions in North Africa and Italy. Mr. Shiver, was 93.

Darryl Searcy Has Just Returned from a Visit to Germany and Czechoslovakia



Darryl posts on his facebook page that the purpose of the tour was first of all educational.

However, there seems to be some fun mixed in for sure since his post with this picture is: "Just crossed the border. Will be in Pilsen (Plzen) shortly for a visit at the Pilsen Beer Headquarters. — in Czech Republic." The city claims to be the originator of beer.

Mary Williams of Teddy Passed Away This Month



Mary is shown above in the Story Core van with her son Mike Williams, where Mary recorded her family history. The Story Core van visited Pensacola in 2010. (For more about Story Core, see ECHOES for Jan. 2010.)

Certainly she had an interesting life to record. We learn from her obituary that she "spent her early life on a sailing ship in San Francisco Bay as her Father was a licensed ship captain. The family also lived in Alaska where Mary assisted her Mother with the cooking for a Salmon Cannery.

"On her return to San Francisco, Mary took voice and studied opera. She married John Dana Williams

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News and Announcements

(Continued from page 7)

when she was 20 and became the wife of a career Navy man. Mary's ministry was to prepare nutritious and tasty food for her family from the many recipes she collected in her travels. She is remembered locally by many as a wonderful cook who provided food for parties, canoe trips and neighborhood events."

Mary was a member of ECHS when her daughter-in-law, Ann Biggs-Williams, was president.



Conference Observing the 200th Anniversary of the Red Stick War of 1814-15 Scheduled for Saturday, August 23, 2014, at Wind Creek Hotel

The Conference will last all day. Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner will be served. All meals and presentations will be in the Wind Creek Ballroom.

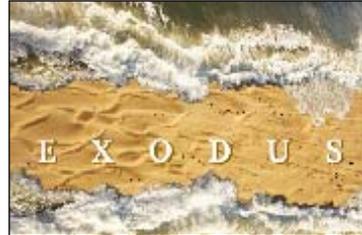
Speakers include, Dr. Greg Waselkov and Dr. Phillip Carr of the University of South Alabama; Robert Thrower, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer; Dr. Deidre Dees, Tribal Archivist; and others.

For further information, call 251-445-4531 or 251-350-8240 or visit the Poarch Creek Indian Newsletter for August 2014. The Conference is free and open to everyone.

ECHS Scholarship Recipient for the Academic Year 2014/15

Kayla Hoomes, a student in the nursing program at JDCC, has been awarded this year's scholarship.

The First Methodist Church of Brewton Presents Brad Sherrill in a One Man Show, Exodus, on Sunday, August 23, 2014, at 5:30 p. m.



The Program is described as "The timeless story of God's liberation performed live with new videography from Egypt, Sinai, Jordan, and Israel." Light refreshments will be served afterwards.

Barbara McCoy Now Has Her First Grandchild, James Tyler Bell, Jr.

Barbara has been with her daughter and the baby who was born prematurely but is reportedly doing well.

Headstones and Heritage Now Selling at a Reduced Price

Previously priced at \$35.00 and \$40.00 (if mailed), the book will now sell for \$20.00 and \$25.00 (if mailed).

Church of Latter Day Saints Family Research Assistance Still Available

Young People from the LDS Church still are available in the Alabama Room at 1:00 on Thursdays to help with Genealogy/Family Research.€

Snapshots from the July 2014 ECHS Meeting



The Refreshment Table



Another View of the Refreshment Table



Jerry Simmons Shows Rifle Used to Kill Railroad Bill

Jerry shows the pistol carried by Sheriff McMillan when he was shot and killed by Railroad Bill



President Sally Finlay Presides at the Meeting



In the left bottom corner of this picture is a display case of arrowheads and tools which Jeff Ross brought.

Snapshots from the July 2014 ECHS Meeting (Continued)



To the Left, Members Visiting Before the Program Begins Below, Enjoying the "Show and Tell" Program



Quida Searcy Grissett with the doll she received in 1937 when she was five years old. It is a Toyland Doll and was purchased from Robbins and McGowin.



Langham Parr is shown with the army helmet from World War II which he brought. He also showed a pair of gloves worn by men in the Army Air Corps to protect their hands at 20,000 feet. Langham's great grandfather, L. E. Langham, served in the Army and his great uncle, Billy Giles, served in the Navy.



Mr. Liles of Bay Minette brought this photo of a graduating class of the Brewton Educational Institute.

Snapshots from the July 2014 ECHS Meeting (Continued)



Susan Crawford Showing Antique Bottle She Found.



Alice Cushman Darling and James Macky Darling, shown at the left, are great grandparents of Barbara Page. Barbara, pictured below, is shown holding the guest book which was autographed at the 35th wedding anniversary party of this couple.



Barbara McCoy Brought Homemade Preserves and Pickles both for Show and Tell and for Sale, with Donations Going to ECHS

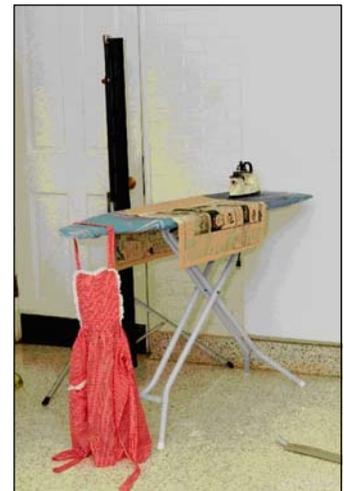


Barbara Page Showing Guest Book of her Great Grandparent's 35th Wedding Anniversary Party



Barbara McCoy is shown in front of the table with displays of the jellies, pickles, and other preserves she brought. Also shown is Quida Grissett's doll and the picture of the graduating class from the Brewton Institute.

To the right, the ironing board and apron are a reminder that there are still newspapers in the Alabama Room collection to be ironed so they can be stored.



Snapshots from the July 2014 ECHS Meeting *(Continued)*



Jerry Simmons talks to Paul Merritt (with his back to the camera). Paul brought pictures and information on the Airway Beacon at Middleton Field, the airport at Evergreen, Alabama.

See article below for more information about this historic airport beacon.

An Historic Airway Beacon: The Airport Tower Beacon at Evergreen Air-

By Paul Merritt

The tower and the small building at the base of the tower shown in the picture date from 1931. They were part of the light-beacon system that was used in the 20's and 30's to guide air mail pilots at night so they could find their way. The towers in this system had a powerful light on the top and were spaced about every 20 miles along the route. The routes covered much of the country. This particular tower was on the route from Atlanta to New Orleans.

As other forms of navigation came along, the towers and associated buildings were almost all torn down over the years. Only a handful of such facilities remain and most of those have been turned into museums or preserved historical sites. The only reason the tower and building at Middleton Field have survived is because when the Navy built Middleton Field in 1944, they utilized the existing tower and changed the light on top from an airway beacon to a rotating beacon, which every airport must have. The tower and building are still being used for the rotating beacon.

However, there is danger lurking for the tower beacon and the small building at its base. The tower and building are very close to Highway 84 and there are plans to widen this highway in the near future. Without some special protection that would be gained by getting this facility deemed a historical

treasure, the facility could well be destroyed as the highway is widened. Currently the Cane Brake Society, the Genealogical and Historical Society in Conecuh County, is attempting to attain a special status for the tower and building so that they can be preserved. €



Picture of Tower and Small Building at Base by Paul Merritt, July, 2014.

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Photographs from Burnt Corn's Past



The Gin at Burnt Corn

This cotton gin was constructed in the 1890's. A two-story diesel engine was the power source for the gin. The huge engine was started by a blowtorch to heat the head. It had to be braked by hand.

The engine was transported on a specially built platform pulled by a team of oxen.

This photograph but in color also appears in the section on the Lowery Store of this newsletter.

*Text from Burnt Corn website.
Photographs on this page from ADAH.*

Horse Drawn Wagons Taking Cotton from the Gin in Burnt Corn Alabama, 1900-1919.



The ECHS *Journal* Section

Photographs from Burnt Corn's Past *(Continued)*



Line of cars on a road in Burnt Corn Alabama. In front of the cars, three children have a wagon with a sign that says "Good Roads."

Photographs on this page from ADAH.

Line of Cars Driving through Burnt Corn. Photograph from around 1915.

Text from ADAH.



The ECHS *Journal* Section

Photographs from Burnt Corn's Past *(Continued)*



Mule-drawn carts lined up beside the road from Peterman to Burnt Corn in Monroe County, circa 1915. The photograph was possibly taken during the original construction of the road.

Photographs on this page from ADAH.

Car Driving on the Road from Peterman to Burnt corn in Monroe County, Alabama, circa 1915.



The ECHS *Journal* Section

Photographs from Burnt Corn's Past *(Continued)*

Truman Capote once said in an interview, "My favorite place in the whole wide world is Burnt Corn. I swear, it's just the most delightful wide place in the road, and the way the highway bends right there, with the church and the cemetery and the little country store, and those people."

From the blog [Conundrums](#)



The Burnt Corn Hunting Club.

Originally this was the Issac Betts House. It was located on the "Old Federal Road" not far from another historic home, the Dr. John Watkins house. The Hunting Club burned in July 2000.

Photograph and text from the [Burnt Corn Website](#)



The Dr. John Watkins House

This house is located just north of Burnt Corn in Monroe county. It is a two and a half story structure that has an unusual lower wing extension. It was the home of Dr. John Watkins who was one of the early and few physicians in this part of the Mississippi Territory. Dr. Watkins moved from Claiborne Alabama to Burnt Corn in 1819. In addition to being a doctor, he served in the Alabama House of Representatives and Senate and was a trustee for the Burnt Corn Academy. The Watkins house was listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage on October 4, 1993.

Photograph and text from the [Burnt Corn Website](#).

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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❖ **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, a 501 (c) (3) corporation, is published monthly except November. Comments are welcome. You may email the Society at escohis@escohis.org or call 251-809-1528.

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