

## The January Meeting Tuesday, January 27, 2015, 3:00 p. m. The McMillan Museum Jefferson Davis Community College, Brewton

### The Program



Darryl Searcy will present a program on his recent trip to the Czech Republic and East Germany.

(Pictured at left, Lt. Frank Stuberfield, Sylacauga, Alabama. At right, Lt. Darryl Searcy, Kansas City, Missouri, at the Officers Club, Gibbs Kaserne,

### Introduction to the Program

#### By Darryl Searcy

Our rag-tag group having arrived in Prague (pronounced Praha) were none the worse for wear. There were no brass bands, bullhorns, megaphones, or balloon releases to announce our arrival but somehow we knew that they knew.

From the moment our feet touched Czech soil we knew a special place awaited and it was our business to learn all we could and to see as much as we miserable travelers could handle in a few days of touring. That aside, during the brief flight between Paris and

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### The February Meeting Robin and Jo Brewton Will Present a Program on Historic Forts.



**Nettie Quill River Boat in 1906 at Dock in Mobile**



Sailing on Mobile Bay 1906

Volume 42, Number 1

January 2015

## Introduction to the Program

*(Continued from page 1)*

Prague, I attempted to put together a short history about the place, its people, and where in the world it sits. While in the region of Eastern Europe, side tours would be made into East Germany visiting Dresden, Wittenburg, Nuremburg and a former concentration camp in which were confined the wealthy of the region, as well as a few citizens of Denmark.

About 200 BC, the settlement and river were known as Moldau. In the year 800 AD, the settlement became Praha and the river became Witaua. Praha was the 14th largest city in Europe, Historic capital of Bohemia, and was home to two Roman emperors, at which time it was the capital of the Holy Roman Empire.

Of course, we know that Prague is the capital and largest city of the Czech Republic. Situated on the banks of two major rivers, the Elbe to the east and the Vltava (pronounced Witaua) to the west. This whole historic place is in central Bohemia, home to approximately 1.5 million people, and we suppose it could be derived from what we read that an additional 300,000 work there without having registered as residents.

Nicknames for Prague are: City of a Hundred Spires, Golden City, Left Bank of the Nineties, Mother of Cities and Heart of Europe. Since 1992, the historic center of Prague has been included in the UNESCO list of World



**Bridges over Vltava River**

Heritage Sites.

Mind you, I was loaded to my eyeballs with brochures and catalogs that extol the virtues of this ancient place, so no one of us on the tour was qualified to spout expert knowledge. Easily enough, however, we knew beforehand that the area on which Prague was founded has been settled since 200 BC when the Celts built a settlement between the two rivers. The Celts were replaced by Germanics and then the Slavs conquered the site around the fourth century AD; it was given a brief period of Mongolians, and then back to the Slavs where it re-

mains today.

When World War I ended with the defeat of Austria-Hungary, Czechoslovakia was created and Prague was

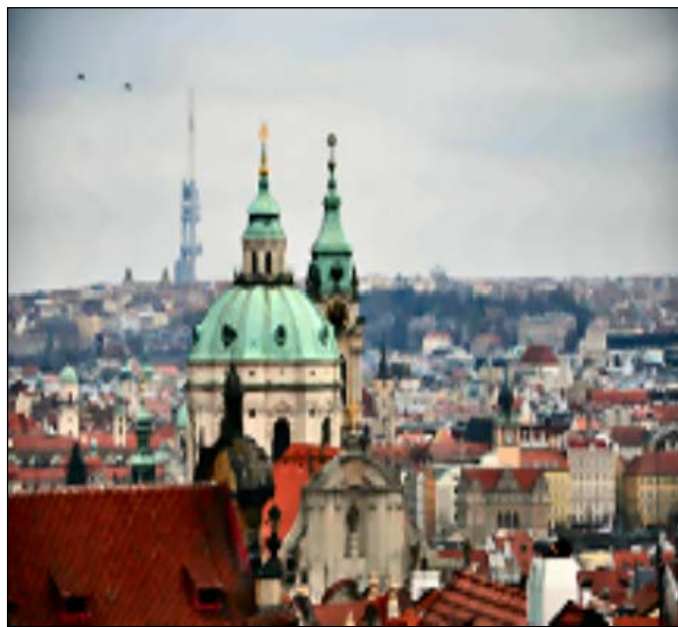
chosen as its capital.

Prague was already a major

European capital with a highly developed industrial base. For most of its history Prague had been a multi-ethnic city with important Czech, German, and (a mostly Yiddish- and/or German-speaking) Jewish populations. From 1939, when the country was occupied by Nazi Germany, and during World War II, most Jews either fled the city or were killed in the Holocaust.

The German population, which had formed the majority of the city's inhabitants, were expelled or

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**Church of St. Nicholas**

## Introduction to the Program

*(Continued from page 2)*

fled in the aftermath of the war. Prague's people had revolted against the Nazi occupants as early as 1945, shortly after the Soviets entered the city. Prague was the capital of a Communist Republic under the military and political control of the Soviet Union and became a part of the Warsaw Pact (a defense organization that put the Soviets in command of the armed forces of the member states).

The lively intellectual world of Prague, however, suffered under the totalitarian regime. In spite of the all-out program of rebuilding and caring for its damaged monuments after World War II, the people of Czechoslovakia took a strong position against the Communist regime.

Clearly seeing the people's unrest under the Soviets, the new Communist Party



**Carriage Ride in Old Town Square  
Prague**



**Clock Tower Containing  
Astronomical Clock—Prague**

Secretary, Alexander Dubcek, was quick to proclaim a new deal in his country's life, starting the season of a Prague Spring aimed at democratic reforms. The Soviet Union and the rest of the Warsaw Pact reacted, occupying Czechoslovakia with tanks, thus suppressing any attempt of renovation.

After the Berlin Wall fell, a revolution took over the streets of Prague and Czechoslovakia finally freed itself from communism and soviet influence. Prague benefited greatly from the new mood and in 1993, after the breakup of Czechoslovakia, Prague became the capital city of the new Czech Republic. That part of Czechoslovakia that remained a part of the old Soviet/Warsaw Pact bloc is known today as Slovakia. €

## News and Announcements

### **West Florida Genealogical Society February Meeting**

**Date:** Saturday, February 7, 2015;

**Place:** West Florida Genealogy Library. 5740 N. 9th Ave, Pensacola, FL; [850-494-7373](tel:850-494-7373);

**Time:** 10:00 AM; **Topic:** Freedmen's Bureau;

**Speaker:** Diane Richard

Pre-recorded as a national webinar, this program will cover creation of the Freedmen's Bureau, what the bureau did, records associated with it, and where to find them.

The Bureau was established to assist disadvantaged people, black and white, and issued rations and clothing, operated hospitals and refugee camps, and supervised labor contracts. There is a good chance that anyone's post-Civil War southern ancestor might be found in records of the Freedmen's Bureau.

Diane Richard is a professional genealogist, owner of Mosaic Research with 26 years' experience. She is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, an editor of UPFRONT with NGS and of the blog for the National Genealogical Society.

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# News and Announcements

(Continued from page 3)

There will be a handout. Members and guests are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be available at 9:45. Meeting begins at 10:00.

Contact Charlotte Schipman [850-477-7166](tel:850-477-7166) [cschipman@mac.com](mailto:cschipman@mac.com)



Dauphin Street, Mobile, Date Unknown

\*\*\*\*\*

## Alabama Historical Association Annual Meeting to be Held in Mobile April 9-11, 2015

The meeting will feature scholarly papers, local history tours, special guest lectures, workshops, and more. The History Museum of Mobile will be the host venue.

The AHA has a block of rooms reserved at the Mobile Downtown Historic District Hampton Inn & Suites for \$110 per night. Mention the AHA to receive this special rate. The deadline for registration within the room block is March 9. You may call the hotel directly at 251-436-8787 or register online at [www.mobiledowntown.hamptoninn.com](http://www.mobiledowntown.hamptoninn.com).

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## 2015 ARCHITREATS: FOOD FOR THOUGHT LUNCHTIME LECTURE SERIES SCHEDULE

- January 15 - Marianne Weber - +\*Jonathan Daniels: Episcopal Martyr of Lowndes County
- February 19 - Monique Laney = \_When Histories & Memories Collide: How Huntsville Made Sense of its German Rocket Team's Nazi Past
- March 19 – Sheyann Webb-Christburg - \*Dr. Martin Luther King's Smallest Freedom Fighter
- April 16 – Robert Bradley - \*Mobile 1865: The Siege & Reduction of Spanish Fort & Fort Blakeley
- May 21 – David Warren Steel - Makers of Sacred Harp
- June 18 – Steve Flowers - Goats & Governors: Alabama Political Stories
- July 16 – Jason J. Battles - \*The Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama, 1865 – 1867
- August 20 – Billy Singleton - Visions of Flying Machines: Early Aerial Experimenters in Alabama
- September 17 – Sharon G. Pierson - The "Laboratory of Learning": Alabama State College Lab High School, a Model Education
- October 15 – Donna Cox Baker - Iterations of Afterlife: Changing Views of the "Future State" in the Antebellum South
- November 19 – David Robb - Alabama's "Invisible Map" of 1818 & the Origins of the Great Seal
- December 17 – Edward H. Davis - Collards: A Southern Tradition from Seed to Table

The Architreats programs are held at noon on the 3rd Thursday of the month at ADAH. Bring your-brown bag lunch. Admission is free.

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# News and Announcements

(Continued from page 4)



Kathryn Windham

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## Kathryn Tucker Windham to be Inducted into Alabama Women's Hall of Fame

Many Alabamians know Windham for her storytelling and the more than two dozen books she wrote about Alabama.

Her most popular books include the "13 Alabama Ghosts and Jeffrey" series. Lesser known is her time as a reporter when few women worked in journalism.

Windham, who died in 2011, will be honored posthumously for her achievements as a reporter, author, photographer and storyteller. The Hall of Fame, based at Judson College in Marion, announced Windham will be the only inductee this year at its March 5 banquet.

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## New Statewide Television Show "Simply Southern" Launched February 4, 2015

Airing on Sunday mornings at 6:00 and 6:30 on major networks, the show, sponsored by the Alabama



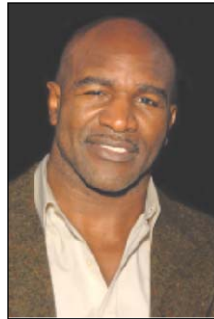
Farmers Federation and the Alabama Farmers Cooperative, focuses on agriculture, gardening, rural lifestyles, and rural youth programs.

As an illustration, here is the summary for the show for January 11, 2015:

"Shrimp Harvest. This week, Jim Allen takes us to Greene County, where farmers are harvesting saltwater shrimp from freshwater ponds; Samantha Carpenter visits the Peinhardt Living History Farm,

where schoolchildren learn about life on a farm during the early 20th century; Kevin Worthington travels to northwest Alabama, where residents carved horseback riding trails into a local canyon to make it a highly sought after destination; and Sidney Phelps tells us what to consider when deciding where to locate your backyard garden" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Q7RKBl8uEo>).

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Evander Holyfield

## Atmore Native Evander Holyfield to be Inducted into Alabama Sports Hall of Fame

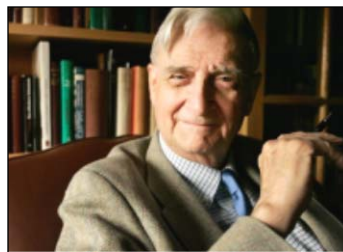
Holyfield will be inducted as part of the 2015 class. He is the former undisputed world champion in both cruiserweight and heavy-weight boxing divisions. He had

an all-time record of 44 wins and 10 losses with 29 knockouts.

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## Brewton's CCC Campground Renamed, Now The E. O. Wilson Nature Adventure Park

The old Civilian Conservation Corps Campground was recently awarded a new name by the Brewton City Council in honor of E. O. Wilson.



E. O. Wilson

The 48-acre property, once home to a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, part of President Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s and early 1940s, is located across the creek from Burnt Corn Park.

The city is seeking

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# News and Announcements

(Continued from page 5)

grants to help realize plans for the anonymous gift of 48 acres. These plans include a pedestrian bridge, walking path, RV park, aquatic garden, facilities for kayaking and a zip line.

Stephanie Nelson's article in the Brewton Standard on the park comments on E. O. Wilson's connection to Brewton and his career, "Wilson was born in Birmingham but moved with his family to Brewton when he was 15. From an early age, he was interested in natural history and later went on to be known as the 'father of sociobiology' and a Pulitzer Prize winning author."

In the same article, City Clerk Steve Yuhasz was quoted, "It was here in Brewton that Wilson explored the area and later became an Eagle Scout."

Nelson points out Wilson's specialty, "He was blinded in one eye at seven, and the accident forced him to 'focus on the little things.' He went on to specialize in myrmecology, the study of ants" (<http://www.brewtonstandard.com/2015/01/13/ccc-campground-awarded-new-name/>).

*Note: For more on the CCC Camp in Brewton and E. O. Wilson's account of his explorations in Brewton, see the Journal section of this newsletter.*

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## Burnt Corn Tour Planned for the Spring

On Friday, April 17, 2015, Judy Purnell will host a tour of Burnt Corn along with Eugenia Ellis Brown, who grew up in Burnt Corn and is a humorous and informative guide on the town's history and eccentricities.

For ECHS members who missed the ECHS field trip to Burnt Corn last fall, this is an excellent opportunity to visit the community.

The Escambia County Baptist Association has arranged for the tour but Judy has extended the invitation to any ECHS members who are interested. Just bring a bag lunch and join the group at her husband's family home, the Wayne Purnell house in Burnt Corn at 2:00 on April 17.

\*\*\*\*\*



**Former State Finance Director and Former Auburn University Official, Alfred Henry "Buddy" Mitchell Died**

## The 2014 ECHS Christmas Party



ECHS Members Shown Here Enjoyed Good Food, Good Company, and a Good Parade at the Christmas Party at the L House.

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Drive-in Theatres

The first drive-in movie theatre opened on June 6, 1933 in Camden, New Jersey. Originally called Park-in theatres, the concept of an open-air theatre was developed by Richard Hollingshead.

Writer Richard T. Reid notes, "The concept of showing movies outdoors wasn't novel; people often watched silent films on screens set up at beaches or other places boasting an abundance of sky. However, it took an auto-parts salesman such as Hollingshead to see the genius in giving a car-loving society one more activity they could do in their vehicles" ([smithsonian.com](http://smithsonian.com)).

Author Robin Connor in the article "Starlit Screens: Preserving Place and Public at Drive-in Theaters" points out that the drive-in theatre was built first to accommodate the automobile and then the customer. Thus, the theaters were built on large tracts of land on the outskirts of commercial and subdivision areas, usually with easy access to major highways. Drive-ins reflect the pattern of commercial development in suburban areas and many spaces that were once drive-ins are now malls or other commercial developments.

The appeal of the drive-in also involved the ability to bring the family and enjoy a movie in a relaxed atmosphere and the privacy of one's own car. Adults didn't have to dress to go to an indoor theatre and the kids could come in their pajamas. Author Robin Connor notes that drive-ins appealed to the emerging teen culture as "couples sought the privacy of darkened cars" ([southernspaces.org](http://southernspaces.org)).

Author Kelly Kazek in her article on the history of the drive-in theatre in



**First Drive-in Theater, Camden, New Jersey, 1933**

Alabama notes that by 1942, two drive-ins had opened in Alabama, one in Birmingham and another in Montgomery. However, the war slowed the growth of the new industry and it was not until 1949 that a drive-in opened in north

Alabama, probably the Hatfield Drive-In in Athens, which showed the movie The Wistful Widow of Wagon Gap for a cost of 25 cents per ticket ([http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2013/03/athens\\_had\\_north\\_Alabamas\\_firs.html](http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2013/03/athens_had_north_Alabamas_firs.html)).

Alabama's slow start in having drive-ins is shown by the fact that there were only 13 drive-ins in operation by 1948. However, in the 50's the state had added 83 drive-ins and in '58 reached its peak with 96 (<http://www.driveinmovie.com/AL.htm>).

One drive-in that opened in 1949 in Russellville, Alabama, has an amazing record. King's Drive-in is the oldest continuously operating drive-in theatre in Alabama and it still operates.

The golden age of drive-ins was the fifties and sixties and then came the decline with many closing in the seventies and eighties. During its heyday there were drive-ins in communities both large and small. There were some theatres which held up to 3,000 cars and these would be filled on the weekends.

There were some theatres with oddities. There was one in New Jersey which was both Drive-in and Fly-in. There was an air strip next to the theatre and customers who arrived by plane were taken to and from the theatre by a taxi service.

However, even in the boom years of the fifties, there were problems for the



**Playbill for Abbott and Costello Comedy First Movie Shown at the Hatfield Drive-In**

*(Picture courtesy of*

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Drive-In Theatres

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theatre owners. Communities were concerned with moral questions about the drive-in, both the idea of steamed up windows and also with the content of the movies.

The drive-ins mainly showed B movies because they could not easily get first run films from the studios. Since drive-ins could only show features once or twice a day, the indoor theatres which could do multiple showings had first priority for the better films. When the drive-in era began to decline, many of the theatres showed x rated films in an effort to attract an audience.

The advent of color television and air conditioned theatres are cited as part of the causes of the decline of the drive-in theatres. Other reasons include the introduction of daylight saving time which meant outdoor movies could not start in some areas until as late as 10:00 p m, for many parents, too late to bring the family to the drive-in.



**Bass Hill Drive-In Cinema, Sydney, Australia**  
(Picture courtesy of Wikipedia)

suddenly, so easily. He mentions poor film quality, weak projectors and bad sound which the theatre owners made no effort to deal with. "When attendance declined, the cavalier way operators treated patrons came back to haunt them. It couldn't be undone" [http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2013/03/athens\\_had](http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2013/03/athens_had)



**Map of Current Drive-ins in Alabama.**  
(Map courtesy of al.com)

Author Kerry Segrave also points out that drive-in theatres aided in their own demise because they were so popular, so

drive-ins than any other country.

Author Kerry Segrave explains why the U. S. had and still has so many more drive-ins than other countries.

"(B)efore drive-ins could spring up all over, a country had to be wealthy; it had to have a good deal of vacant, accessible, relatively cheap land; and the country's inhabitants had to be

financially well placed, have automobiles, and enjoy an emotional relationship with their cars" (<http://www.amazon.com/Drive-Theaters-History-Their-Inception/dp/0786426306/>). €

[north Alabamas\\_firs.html](#)).

In the 90's there began a renewed interest in drive-ins, some attributing this to nostalgia looking back and thinking the era of the drive represented a simpler world. With the revival in interest, drive-in owners are using multiple screens and FM radio sound as well as digital projection and sound. There are also owners who have invested in playgrounds, miniature golf courses and other forms of entertainment to attract the public.

The use of digital projection and sound means that the owners can get current films faster than in the past but the equipment is expensive and some owners may not be able to afford it.

Today some 400 drive-ins exist in the United States and some 100 outside. The numbers have remained steady since the nineties with the U. S. having far more



**A Drive-in with a 33 Metre (108 foot) Wide Inflatable Movie Screen in the Centre of Brussels, Belgium**

(Picture courtesy of Wikipedia)

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Escambia County Drive-Ins: Goolsby's (Damascus)

### By Jacque Stone

Goolsby's Drive-in was located in Damascus on HWY 29 just past Mancil Rock Road and Meathouse Creek. The Drive-in was actually behind the Goolsby Store which faced HWY 29 and next to the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Goolsby. Mr. Goolsby was the principal at the Damascus School and his wife Daisy Miller Goolsby was one of the teachers.

With the screen at the back of the store and probably a loud speaker for a sound system, customers would either drive to the back and park or simply "walk in." Charges depended on whether you arrived in the back of a pick-up (one dollar for a loaded pick-up) or walked-in (10 cents a person).

Cartoons were shown first, then the newsreels and, after an intermission, the main feature. The movie, usually a Western, a favorite of the crowd, would last an hour and the length suited the Saturday-night crowd also. During the intermission, the Goolsbys opened up the store and patrons could purchase sodas (5 cents) and

snacks (10 cents). Some would bring popcorn from home in a big sack.

For the "Walk-ins," Mr. Goolsby had built benches and placed them in front near the screen. Anyone who "walked-in" barefoot risked stepping on a warm cigarette butte thrown in the grass.

I remember that Mack Stone and Willis Goolsby would walk to Mr. Goolsby's house and wait for Mr. and Mrs. Guy Pate who brought their grandson, Sherrill Stacy, to the Drive-In. The boys would ride in on the Pates' flatbed truck and save their dimes. They later spent their money at the store. When the Pates left, Mack and Willis would walk together the quarter mile to Willis' home. Mack had to walk another quarter mile to his home. Since it would be "pitch black" by this time, Mack told me that he would take off and run all the way. He said he was scared to death.

Sammie Hoomes McGlothren and best friend Margaret Ann Goolsby would take up money at the entrance to the drive-in. If the girls had dates, they would sit with the boys during the movie. There was some

## Escambia County Drive-ins: The Eagle (East Brewton) and

### The Eagle Drive-in

Online listings show that the Eagle Drive-in had a capacity for 300 cars but give no details of when it opened or closed.

Jeff Scurlock, Pastor of the First Assembly of God in East Brewton notes that his church is located on the "nine acres of beautiful land that years ago was home to the Eagle Drive in theatre" (<http://www.jeffscurlock.com/tag/church/>).

An article from the Brewton Standard "Looking Back . . . 50 Years," published in 2005 commented: "At the Eagle Drive-In, On the Waterfront (starring Marlon Brando) is popular, while 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea plays at the Ritz Theatre" (<http://www.brewtonstandard.com/2005/06/20/looking-back-50-years-39/>).

### The Palms

Lowell McGill, historical columnist for the Atmore Advance, in an article in 2011 wrote of his memories of

the Palms Drive-in. He recalls that theatres were big attractions in the sixties and that the Strand and the Palms were the biggest entertainment attractions in the Atmore area.

Weekends were always big at the Palms and on certain occasions extra help would be needed to direct traffic off the highway into the movie area.

McGill writes of one memorable weekend at The Palms: "One Saturday night in early 1962, an all 'Elvis Movie Fest' drew a record number of movie-goers. They drove their cars and waited in line to see the popular star. But a horrendous thunderstorm came over, rained for hours and knocked out the performance. The demand for rain checks was so great that Palms management had to reschedule the event the following weekend" (<http://www.atmoreadvance.com/2011/03/30/theatres-were-big-attractions-in-1960s/>)

No online listing for opening and closing dates for the Palms. €

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## E. O. Wilson's Brewton Experience From Naturalist

*The following introduction and excerpt of a section of E. O. Wilson's book Naturalist is from the script to a Nova program on PBS <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/wilson-boy-naturalist.html>>.*

When he was 15 years old, Ed Wilson lived in Brewton, Alabama, just north of the Florida panhandle. It was a herpetologist's Eden, with 40 species of snakes, one of the highest densities in the world. Here, the budding biologist spent long, happy hours catching snakes and otherwise exploring a dense swamp beside a fish hatchery run by a 60-year-old Englishman named Mr. Perry. One experience there might have ended Wilson's life, but instead it served, decades later in his lyrically written autobiography Naturalist, as a reminder of all the reasons—some clear, some inchoate—as to why he was a born naturalist.

### **From Naturalist**

Adults forget the depths of languor into which the adolescent mind descends with ease. They are prone to undervalue the mental growth that occurs during daydreaming and aimless wandering. When I focused on the ponds and swamp lying before me, I abandoned all sense of time. Net in hand, khaki collecting satchel hung by a strap from my shoulder, I surveilled the edges of the ponds, poked shrubs and grass clumps, and occasionally waded out into shallow stretches of open water to stir the muddy bottom.

Often I just sat for long periods scanning the pond edges and vegetation for the hint of a scaly coil, a telltale ripple on the water's surface, the sound of an out-of-sight splash. Then, sooner on hot days than otherwise, I worked my way down for a half-mile or so along one of the effluent streams into the deep



**The future biologist, nicknamed Snake by his fellow teenagers, as a 15-year-old Eagle Scout in Brewton, Alabama, the same year he met his match in a swamp.**

**Text and photo from** <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/wilson->

shade of the swamp, crossed through the forest to the parallel stream, and headed back up it to the hatchery. Sometimes I cut away to explore pools and mudflats hidden in the Piranesian gloom beneath the high closed canopy.

In the swamp I was a wanderer in a miniature wilderness. I never encountered another person there, never heard a distant voice, or automobile, or airplane. The only tracks in the mud I saw were those of wild animals. No one else cared about this domain, not even Mr. Perry. Although I held no title, the terrain and its treasures belonged entirely to me in every sense that mattered.

### **SWAMP THINGS**

Water snakes abounded at abnormally high densities around the ponds and along the outflow streams, feeding on schools of blood-gorged fish and

armies of frogs. Mr. Perry made no attempt to control them. They were, he said, no more than a minor source of goldfish mortality. Although neither of us had the vocabulary to express such things, we shared the concept of a balanced ecosystem, one in which man could add and take out energy but otherwise leave alone without ill consequence. Mr. Perry was a natural-born environmentalist. He trod lightly upon the land in his care.

A swamp filled with snakes may be a nightmare to most, but for me it was a ceaselessly rotating lattice of wonders. I had the same interest in the diversity of snakes that other 15-year-old boys seemed automatically to develop in the years and makes of automobiles. And knowing them well, I had no fear. On each visit I found something new. I captured live specimens, brought them home to cages I had constructed of wood and wire mesh, and fed them frogs and minnows I collected at the hatchery.

*(Continued on page 12)*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## E. O. Wilson's Brewton Experience from Naturalist

(Continued from page 11)

The tigers and lords of this place were the poisonous cottonmouth moccasins, large semiaquatic pit vipers with thick bodies and triangular heads. Young individuals, measuring 18 inches or so, are brightly patterned with reddish-brown crossbands. The adults are more nearly solid brown, with the bands mostly faded and confined to the lower sides of the body. When cornered, moccasins throw open their jaws, sheathed fangs projecting forward, to reveal a conspicuous white mouth lining, the source of their name.

Peterson's A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North America, written by the herpetologist Roger Conant, warns, "Don't ever handle a live one!" I did so all the time, with the 15-year-old's naïve confidence that I would never make a mistake.

### MEETING HIS MATCH

Immature cottonmouths were never a problem, but one day I met an outsized adult that might easily have killed me. As I waded down one of the hatchery outflow streams, a very large snake crashed through the vegetation close to my legs and plunged into the water. I was especially startled by the movement because I had grown accustomed through the day to modestly proportioned frogs, snakes, and turtles quietly tensed on mudbanks and logs. This snake was more nearly my size as well as violent and noisy—a colleague, so to speak.

The snake began to turn its head far enough to clamp its jaws on my hand. ... I was losing control. It sped with wide body undulations to the center of the shallow watercourse and came to rest on a sandy riffle. It was the largest snake I had ever seen in the wild, more



### E. O. WILSON, 1971

**Naturalist Edward O. Wilson poses here with a tank of ants in his laboratory at Harvard University in this 1971 photograph. Wilson has spent most of his life studying the biological and behavioral lives of insects, especially ants, and has worked tirelessly to promote conservation.**

**Text and photo from <<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/>**

than five feet long with a body as thick as my arm and a head the size of my fist, only a bit under the published size record for the species. I was thrilled at the sight, and the snake looked as though it could be captured.

It now lay quietly in the shallow clear water completely open to view, its body stretched along the fringing weeds, its head pointed back at an oblique angle to watch my approach. Cottonmouths are like that, even the young ones. They don't always undulate away until they are out of sight, in the manner of ordinary watersnakes. Although no emotion can be read in the frozen half-smile and staring yellow eyes, their reactions and postures give them an insolent air, as if they see their power reflected in the caution of human beings and other sizable enemies.

### WRESTLING A MONSTER

I moved into the snake handler's routine: pinned the body back of the head, grasped the neck behind the swelling masseteric muscles, and lifted the snake clear of the water. The big cottonmouth, so calm to that moment, reacted with stunning violence. Throwing its heavy body into convulsions, it twisted its head and neck slightly forward through my tightened fingers and stretched its mouth wide open to unfold inch-long fangs. A fetid musk from its anal glands filled the air.

In the few seconds we were locked together the morning heat became more noticeable, reality crashed through, and at last I awoke from my dream and wondered why I was in that place alone. If I were bitten, who would find me? The snake began to turn its head far enough to clamp its jaws on my hand. I was not strong even for a boy of my slight size, and I was losing control. Reacting as by reflex, I heaved the giant out into the brush, and it thrashed frantically away, this time until it was out of sight and we were rid of each other.

(Continued on page 13)

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## E. O. Wilson's Brewton Experience From Naturalist

(Continued from page 12)

### DIGGING DEEP

This narrow escape was the most adrenaline-charged moment of my year's adventures at the hatchery. Since then I have cast back, trying to retrieve my emotions to understand why I explored swamps and hunted snakes with such dedication and recklessness. The activities gave me little or no heightened status among my peers; I never told anyone most of what I did. Pearl [his stepmother] and my father were tolerant but not especially interested or encouraging; in any case I didn't say much to them either, for fear they would make me stay closer to home.

My reasons were mixed. They were partly exhilaration at my entry into a beautiful and complex new world. And partly possessiveness; I had a place that no one else knew. And vanity; I believed that no one, anywhere, was better at exploring woods and finding snakes. And ambition; I dreamed I was training myself someday to be a professional field biologist. And finally, an undeciphered residue, a yearning remaining deep within me that I have never understood, nor wish to, for fear that if named it might vanish. €

## Brewton's CCC Camp



### CCC Camp Brewton Near Burnt Corn Creek

(Picture Courtesy of ECHS Web Page and Jerry Simmons, Web Master)

The following article by Lydia Grimes introduces the CCC Camps and focuses on the Brewton Camp and Owen Carroll, who was a member of the Brewton Camp. The article, entitled "Carroll, a Member of the CCC," was published in the Brewton Standard on September 7, 2003 < <http://www.brewtonstandard.com/2003/09/17/carroll-a-member-of-the-ccc/> >.

It's been seventy years since the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was organized in 1933. Most readers won't even know what the CCC was all about, but for a period of almost 10 years, it meant a lot to a lot of lives.

In 1933, the country was suffering through a terri-

ble depression. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had been elected by a "landslide" vote with the promise that he would do something to help the common man.

On March 9, 1933, he called congress into an emergency session to hear his program and the result was the Emergency Conservation Work Act which would later become the CCC. It was meant to recruit thousands of young men, enroll them in a peacetime army and send them into battle to fight the destruction and erosion of the nation's resources.

This turned out to be one of the most popular experiments to come out of Roosevelt's "New Deal."

(Continued on page 14)

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Brewton's CCC Camp

*(Continued from page 13)*

Within three weeks the bill had passed and was on the President's desk by March 31, 1933.

It was an act that brought two of the nation's most valuable resources together, young men and the land that needed to be saved. Roosevelt's plan was to put the two together and fight against soil erosion and declining timber resources with the unemployed of large urban areas.

The country had suffered through some really bad times and unemployment was rampant while at the same time the land had seen droughts and blowing winds erode farmland. The program turned out to be very successful and with the help of the U.S. Army, men were gathered together into camps all around the United States.

At the height of the program there were over 500,000 men involved. They made \$30 a month and were required to send \$25 of it home to their families. More than \$72,000 was sent home to families who in turn used it to help the economy thus saving many small businesses.

The camps were not that bad either. Young men worked hard, but they had plenty to eat. They improved millions of acres of federal and state lands and parks. New roads were built, telephone lines were strung and the start of millions of trees that would eventually be planted were in the ground.

An education program was begun with the workers, many of whom were illiterate. Before it ended in 1942, the CCC had organized American Indians, older Americans and veterans of the Spanish American War and World War I.

With the start of World War II, the public's thoughts turned to war. Anything not having to do with the war effort was put on the back burner and by 1942, the CCC was on its way out. It didn't last long but it changed many lives.

Some of those people lived right here in Escambia County. Not only did many young men from this area work with the CCC, but there was a camp here in Brewton. According to Mrs. Elizabeth Edwards, it was located right behind where Arby's now stands.

Owen Carroll was one of those men who volunteered at the very beginning. He was a young man who was helping to support the family by raising vegetables on the farm to sell. When he found that the CCC was paying \$30 a month, he knew that was what he wanted to do.

He was born into a family that moved around a lot. He

attended several schools as a youngster. His last year to receive any kind of formal education was at W.S. Neal School when he was in the sixth grade.

Carroll believed in hard work. It was a requirement of the times which were hard and took considerable effort to be able to make it.

This is what he was doing in 1933, when at the age of 19 he heard about the CCC. He signed up for a period of 15 months as soon as he could and was sent to Ft. Benning to get sworn in and trained. The CCC was set up just as an army unit and the men were sent to training before being sent to the camps that were set up all over the country. He was made a medic and then he worked in camps in several places.

The men worked on building roads, building fire lanes and on both state and national parks. He is right that the efforts of those thousands of men who joined and worked in the CCC accomplished jobs that even today can still be seen.

After he finished in the CCC he went into the military for six months as many young workers did. They had already had the training they needed to get started in the military while they were with the CCC. They were used to the way of camp life and many soldiers in World War II came out of the CCC camps.

Carroll worked with the state for a while after the military and then he went to work at T.R. Miller Mill where he worked from 1937 to 1951. He learned to operate most of the machinery in almost all departments. When he left Miller, he went to work at St. Regis and retired from there in 1975 after he got hurt.

During those years life was not easy for him. He got married in 1937 and lost his first wife to leukemia in 1940. He remarried in 1942 and lost that wife to cancer in 1964. He remarried in 1968 and lost that wife to Alzheimer.

He went back to farming after retirement and continued until he had a stroke. He spends a lot of time these days with friends at the Nutrition Center in East Brewton where he goes for lunch.

*Mr. Carroll passed away in 2006. €*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Roster of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 2403,



**Members of the Brewton CCC Camp**

### **Commanding**

KONEMANN, Capt. F.W.  
DANIELS, Leonard P. 1st LT.  
SMITH, Earl R. Educational  
Advisor

### **Foresters**

FORD, E.J.  
RAWS, G.W.  
PATTON, W.S.  
JONES, A.B.  
MILLER, G.W.  
FUQUA, Alex\*  
JOHNSON, H.O.  
POMEROY, J.F.  
BUNKER, P.S. Jr.

### **Leaders**

CHILDS, R.B.  
CARLTON, R.E.  
HUIE, W.C.  
KINGRY, R.C.  
LOWERY, Paul  
PARKER, G.T.  
REMES, Floyd  
RILEY, Fronk  
RUMBLEY, C.T.  
YELVERTON, H.O.

### **Assistant Leaders**

BURTON, R.E.  
DELOACH, Jimmie  
DUNN, P.E.  
GARY, J.R.  
HERSEY, G.W.  
LANGHAM, L.\*  
LEAP, Wendell  
MILLER, J.G.  
NEWMAN, N.H.  
NIX, O.C.  
OGLETREE, C.D.  
WIGGINS, H.L.  
WILSON, L.B.  
WISE, W.C.  
WILDER, Marcelle  
WRIGHT, A.H.

### **Members**

AARON, W.W.  
ADKINS, Hubert G.  
ALLMAN, B.C.  
BABB, Paul  
BAGGETT, L.D.  
BAGGETT, Ned  
BAILEY, Richard  
BATES, J.T.  
BELL, Rummie\*  
BIGGS, C.H.  
BLACKBERBY, Leo  
BODI, Marvin

BROWN, C.E.  
BROWN, Buster\*  
BURKETT, Columbus  
CAMPBELL, A.L.  
CARROLL, O.H.  
CARTER, C.E.  
CLEMENT, S.O.  
COBB, J.W.  
COKER, Jennings\*  
COKER, T.W.  
COOK, Ralph\*  
CORTRIGHT, B.F.  
CUTTS, C.C. (Charlie)\*  
DAVIS, Jack  
DAVIS, J.E.  
DOARMOND, J.A.  
DEASON, R.C.  
DUNSON, Cecil  
EVANS, W.L.\*  
FLOWERS, Hughie\*  
FOUNTAIN, H.T.  
GILBERT, Lee  
GODWIN, L.M.  
GRAVES, Grover\*  
GRIFFIN, P.F.  
GROVE, Bernard  
GUISBY, H.Z.\*  
HALL, R.O.  
HANKS, S.C.

*(Continued on page 16)*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Roster of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 2403,

(Continued from page 15)

HARRIS, Crawford  
HARRIS, James  
HARRISON, Ben  
HARRISON, Woodrow  
HART, L.P.  
HARTLEY, H.C.  
HAWKINS, L.P.  
JAMES, F.I.  
JERNIGAN, G.S.\*  
JOHNSON, E.J.  
.JOHNSON, H.H.  
JOHNSON, J.I.\*  
JOHNSON, Jesse I.\*  
JOHNSON, W.B.  
JONES, J.S.  
JORDON, Grady  
JOYNER, Elmore  
KAHALLEY, Eddie\*  
KNOWLES, Cephue  
KNOWLES, Jim  
LANEY, Cecil  
LANGHAM, Clarence\*  
LEE, Lawrence  
LESTER, Travie  
LEWIS, Robert  
LONG, T.P.  
LUCAS, Ebb\*  
MANLEY, Melvin  
MATHIS, F.W.  
MARLER, R.W.  
MAYNARD, Claude  
MILLER, I.G.  
MITCHELL, Charles  
MONTGOMERY, N.D.  
MOODY, Carlon  
MCLAIN, W.H.  
MOYE, R.L.\*  
MURPHY, Woodrow  
MCGINTY, Ralph  
MCNEILL, B.E.

NAIL, Travis  
ORR, W.H.  
OWENS, Finaly\*  
OWENS, Otha  
OVERSTREET, T.R.  
PALMER, J.P.  
PARKER, G.M.\*  
PARNELL, James  
PEARSON, Lee  
PIERCE, C.L.  
PIERCE, L.G.  
PITTS, P.L.  
POWELL, Roy  
RAILY, W.R.  
RAMSEY, C.B.  
RICHARDSON, F.  
RILEY, Pharoah  
ROBINSON, R. A.  
ROBINSON, S.P.  
ROGERS, L.F.  
SALTER, Sam  
SCOTT, H.E.  
SELLERS, J.S.  
SHARPE, Lathan  
SHARPE, N.B.  
SHIPP, O.L.  
SHOFFEITT, Milton  
SHUMAN, L.A.  
SMITH, Albert\*  
SMITH, Felix  
SMITH, R.E.  
STEWART, J.D.  
STONE, Verner  
STRICKLAND, L.  
SUMNER, Pierce  
TAYLOR, R.L.  
THOMLEY, Marshall  
THOMPSON, Wade\*  
THORNTON, Ed  
THARIKILL, W.B.  
TILLMAN, E.E.  
TOLBERT, Eafie\*

TRAMMELL, Prentys  
TREHERNE, Ray  
TUCKER, Clarence  
TURNER, Bruce  
TURNER, Charlie  
TWILLEY, C.B.  
VAUGHN, Reese  
VICK, R.C.  
WAITS, H.W.  
WALLS, R.C.  
WALTERS, J.B.  
WARREN, Delmarx  
WHATLEY, Cecil  
WATERS, E.E.\*  
WELCH, H.N.  
WEMETH, H.L.  
WHEELER, Chester  
WHIDDON, Mildrie  
WHITE, J.D.\*  
WHITE, Ray  
WHITTEN, A.L.  
WILKINS, Harold  
WILLIAMS, Albert  
WILLIAMS, B.J.  
WILLIAMS, Fred  
WILLIAMS, R.L.  
WILSON, Alonzo  
WILSON, B.S.  
WILSON, H.O.  
WILSON, Samuel  
WILSON, T.N.\*  
WINDHAM, R.P.  
WINDHAM, W.R.  
WRIGHT, Clemmie  
WRIGHT, J.C.  
WRIGHT, Robert  
WYATT, J.J.\*

An \* indicates that person is from  
Brewton. €



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Historic Churches in Jefferson, Alabama



### To the Left, Jefferson Methodist Church (1856)

This church was dedicated on the first Sunday in June, 1856 by the Reverend Phillip Phillips Neely, minister from Marion, Alabama.

It was built on two acres of land deeded by John D. Catlin, May 30, 1842, to Daniel E. Ellis, James Turner, David Compton and John Besteder, trustees of Methodist Episcopal Church known as Asbury Meeting House.

*Text and photograph from <<http://www.ruralswalabama.org/attractions/jefferson-methodist-church-at-jefferson-al>*

### To the Right, The Jefferson Baptist Church

This is the Jefferson Baptist Church in the community of Jefferson, AL in Marengo County.

The church was established as Mt. Pleasant Baptist in 1820 and is among the oldest in the Demopolis area. The present church building was built around 1860.

Buried in the church's cemetery are John Gilmore, Reuben Hildreth and John Sample – Revolutionary War veterans who founded Jefferson and helped establish this church.

*Text and photograph from ><http://www.ruralswalabama.org/attractions/jefferson-baptist-church-c-1860/#>>.*



**Both Churches are part of the Jefferson Historic District. The material at the website refers to thirteen Greek Revival buildings in the Historic District. These two churches are very close together on Highway 28 in Jefferson.**

**ECHOES**  
**THE NEWSLETTER FOR**  
**THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

P.O. Box 276  
 Brewton, AL 36427  
 Phone: 251-809-1528

E-mail: [escohis@escohis.org](mailto:escohis@escohis.org)

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<u>Escambia Historical Society Cookbook</u>	\$10.00	\$ 5.00
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<u>History of Brewton and E. Brewton (sc)</u>	\$51.00	\$45.00
<u>Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook</u>	\$30.00	\$25.00

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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 251-809-1528.*

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