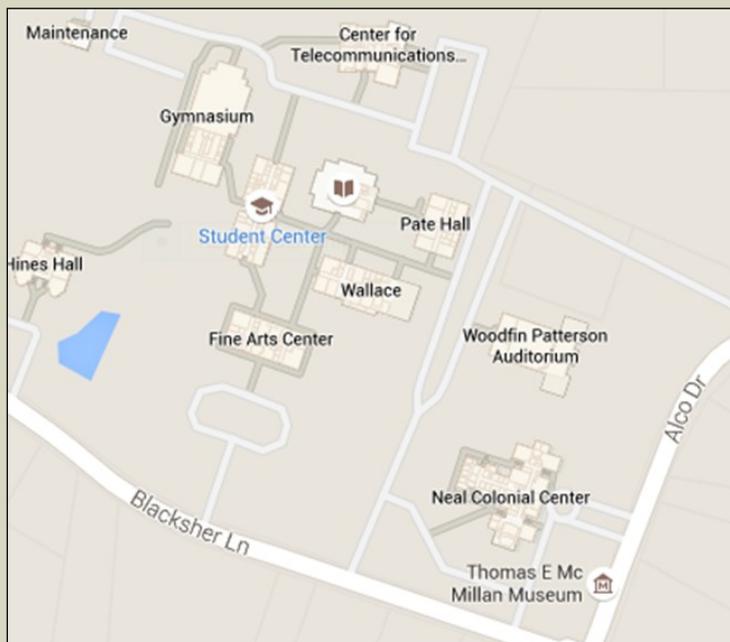


The July Meeting

Tuesday, July 28, 2015, 3:00 p. m.
Six-Hand Piano Performance
The Woodfin Patterson Auditorium
on the
Jefferson Davis Community College Campus

The Program



A presentation of six-hand piano music, three people at one piano keyboard.

The program will range from an arrangement of Chopsticks to a Mozart Minuet with plenty of popular American music including Souza's most famous march as well as jazz and blues selections.

Both the program and refreshments will be in the Woodfin Patterson Auditorium shown on the map of the JDCC.

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The August Meeting

Tuesday, August 25, 2015, 3:00 p. m.
McMillan Museum

The program will be a tribute to folk artist Bernice Sims.

Larry Manning, former art instructor at JDCC, and Debra Sims, Bernice's granddaughter, are sharing part of their collection of Bernice's art, with a gallery display on the walls of the meeting room in the McMillan Museum.

The McMillan Museum and Alabama Room Are Now Open
Three Days a Week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
9:00 a. m.—3:00 p. m.



At the Dedication of the E. O. Wilson Park

Volume 42, Number 7

July 2015

News and Announcements



Reenactors from 2013
Photo
Courtesy of Paul Merritt

**Saturday,
July 25,
2015,
Reenactment
of Battle of
Burnt Corn
at
Jennings
Park
9:00 a. m.—
2:00 p. m.**

**West Florida Genealogical Society
Meeting
August 1, 2015
at the
West Florida Genealogy Library
on 9th Avenue**

The Program will be a national webinar, “Bagging a Live One” presented by nationally known genealogist Mary Roddy. In this webinar, Mary will show how you can find distant relatives, perhaps ones you never knew existed.

These people may not be active researchers, but might be the ones who inherited the family bible or box of photos, or maybe they can pass on some stories Grandma told them.

Members and guests are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be available at 9:45. The meeting begins at 10:00.

Contact: Charlotte Schipman, 850-477-7166, <cschipman@mac.com>.



**Marva Collins,
Alabama Native
Who Achieved
National
Recognition as
Educator Has
Died**

Marva was successful in helping poor black students achieve high standards in the private school she founded. Raised in Atmore, she was a teacher in Alabama before she moved to Chicago.

She taught as a substitute teacher for 14 years in the Chicago. Then, in 1975, she quit her job and with \$5,000 from her pension/savings founded Westside Preparatory School.

In 1977, the story of her school was featured in an article in the Chicago Sun-Times. Eventually she was featured in a segment of “60 Minutes” and then was the subject of a made-for-television movie, The Marva Collins Story.

Don Sales is New Museum-Coordinator



**Don is shown with Katherine Wilkerson
enjoying refreshments after an ECHS
meeting.**

Don, a long time ECHS member, is also a member of the Panhandle Historic Preservation Alliance and the Alger-Sullivan Historical Society and served as an officer in both organizations.

News and Announcements (Continued)

Jim Eddins of the Perdido Vineyard Featured in Recent Newspaper Article



**Jim Eddins at the Perdido
Vineyard**

Characterizing him as, “winemaker, fighter, lobbyist, poet and South Alabama philosopher,” columnist John Archibald recounts the trials and tribulations of winemaker Jim Eddins as he has managed to keep his winery open since establishing it in the 1970’s.

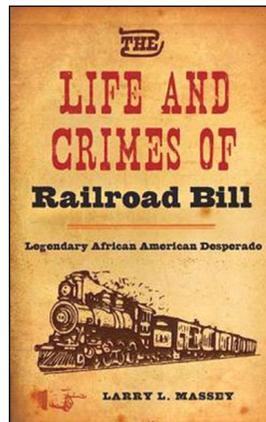
ECHS members visited the Perdido Vineyards this spring on a field trip to North Baldwin County. Mr. Eddins’ presentation about the current and past problems winemakers in Alabama have had was entertaining and informative. The best part was that we enjoyed sampling the vineyard’s wines and vinegars made from local fruits and produce.

A Query

ECHS has a query from a member of the public looking for a copy of The Heritage of Escambia County, Alabama (Vol. 27 of the Series). This set, which has a book for each county, was published in 2002 by Heritage Publishing Consultants,

If you have a copy of the one on Escambia County, Alabama that you would like to sell, please phone Ann Biggs-Williams at 251-867-2445 and she will put you in touch with this person.

The complete series of Heritage Books on Alabama are available in the Alabama Room.



New Book about Rail- road Bill Will Be Availa- ble in September

*Tom McMillan’s comment
on the book, from
Amazon.com::*

“Gives us a glimpse of how the early railroads—the heart of everyday life at the turn of twentieth century—set the stage for the dramatic exploits of desperate criminals

such as Railroad Bill.”

Author Larry Massey notes that his great-great-grandfather once worked at a Bluff Springs turpentine camp with Railroad Bill.

Lookalike Courthouses: The 1901 Escambia County Courthouse and the 1896 Conecuh County Courthouse

Recently ECHS member Ed Williams sent a postcard picture of Brewton’s 1901 Courthouse via email to Ann Biggs-Williams and asked if she had seen that particular post card picture before. His question led to quite an exchange between Ed, Ann, Tom McMillan, and Darryl Searcy. The post card was determined to be similar to one that appeared in Annie Waters’ History of Escambia County, Alabama.

Then Ed made the observation that the 1896

Courthouse for Conecuh County and the 1901 Courthouse for Escambia County are very similar in appearance.

Tom made the observation that the two were probably designed by the same architect (they are), observing that the earliest Baldwin County Courthouse at Daphne and the Leigh Place when it was first built in 1885, are lookalikes designed by the same architect.

Thus two pair of lookalikes.

(Continued on page 4)

Lookalike Courthouses: The 1901 Escambia County Courthouse and the 1896 Conecuh County Courthouse *(Continued)*

(Continued from page 3)

Escambia County's 1901 Courthouse on the left below and Conecuh County's 1896 Courthouse on the right, were both designed by the architectural firm of Frank Lockwood and Smith. Both buildings at some point had their tower removed, and both have been torn down and replaced by newer buildings.



The Escambia County Courthouse of 1901 to the left was occupied from 1902 until 1960 when the current courthouse was built.

All Postcard Images from ADAH Digital Collection



The Conecuh County Courthouse of 1896 above was remodeled in the 1950's and an annex was added. Both original courthouse and annex were razed in 2005. A new courthouse has been built.



Postcard of the Escambia County Courthouse with Grammar School Shown to the Left. The courthouse was used for 58 years. The stained glass windows used as a display in the Elvira McMillan Parlor in the McMillan Museum and the cannon from Fort Barrancas in Pensacola, now in front of the current Escambia County Courthouse (replaced 1901 building in 1960), are two of the few items that have been preserved from the 1901 courthouse.

Lookalike Courthouses: The 1901 Escambia County Courthouse and the 1896 Conecuh County Courthouse *(Continued)*



When the decision was made to demolish the old Conecuh County Courthouse and annex, shown at the left, an article in a local paper printed some of the reactions to the news. Everette Price of Brewton, who grew up in Evergreen, said of the “much unloved” annex, “The ones who ought to be shot are the ones who laid out that addition.” The annex was added in 1958.

Everette recalled other memories of the old courthouse, “It had a grand staircase going up each side, and we played football every Saturday on the courthouse lawn. I remember sitting in the courtroom listening to cases just like the kids in To Kill a Mockingbird. My father was the coroner, so I would watch cases when he testified.”

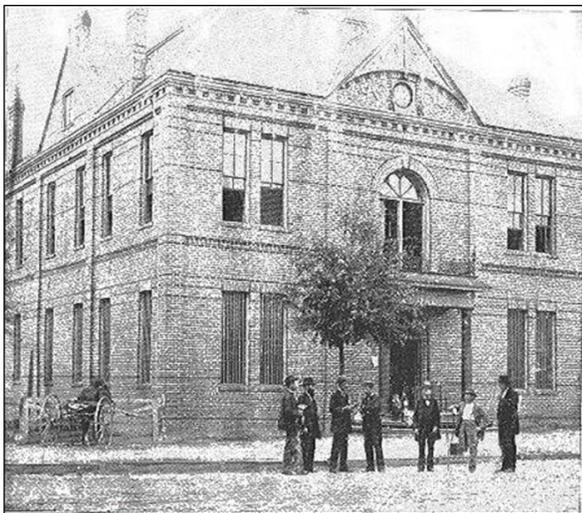
Lookalike Courthouses: The 1885 Leigh Place in Brewton and the Courthouse in Daphne (Probably Built in 1886)

Both Courthouses were designed by Rudolph Bunday of Mobile. They appear to be identical. The Daphne Courthouse is shown with shutters.

Another similarity between the two courthouses is that they are in counties where courthouse records were stolen and moved to another town.

The citizens of Bay Minette stole the courthouse records from Daphne when Daphne refused to give them up and the citizens of Brewton stole the courthouse records from Pollard when Pollard refused to give them up.

The theft of the records from Daphne is commemorated in a mural in the post office in Bay Minette.



The Leigh Place

The following history of the Leigh Place comes from Lygia Cutts.

(Continued on page 6)



The Daphne Courthouse

The following description of the Daphne

(Continued on page 6)

Lookalike Courthouses: The 1885 Leigh Place and the Courthouse in Daphne (Probably Built in 1886)

(Continued from page 5)

The Leigh Place (Continued)

On January 25, 1883 the county seat was moved from Pollard to Brewton. The County Officials moved into a vacant building until such time as a courthouse could be built.

The new courthouse, now known as "The Leigh Place" was completed and received by the county commissioners on September 10, 1885. Mr. Rudolph Bunday of Mobile was the architect, Mr. Charles Scheider was the contractor and Mr. J.B. McGovern was the plasterer.

The lumber for the framing and interior of the building was shipped here from Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The brick building consisted of two stories. The first floor housed county offices and the second floor consisted of a large courtroom with a jury and witness rooms.

This courthouse served Escambia County for 17 years until the growing county saw need for a larger building. A notice for sale appeared in the Pine Belt News on June 19, 1902 by N.R. Leigh, Sr. Judge of Probate. Although the courthouse and lot were on the market, it did not remain empty. In November 1902, the Brewton Rifles occupied the building and it also served as an armory for awhile.

The courthouse was taken off the market on August 25, 1904 and remained empty for some time. Mr. E.M. Lovelace, President of the Escambia Tobacco Co., later bought the building and lot and the old courthouse served as a tobacco warehouse in August 1909.

On August 1, 1910, Mr. C.H. Conoley, a native of North Carolina purchased the property and converted it into one of Brewton's most attractive Colonial style homes. After the death of Mr. Conoley, his widow sold the property on August 8, 1919 to Mabel C. Leigh. The property later came into the possession of Mr. Thomas McMillan.

In 1969 the Leigh Place was remodeled and is currently being used as an office building. It seems to me that The Leigh Place has come full circle. It's beginning

was as a Courthouse, a place with offices and for taking care of the business of Escambia County and it presently serves Escambia County as an office building (<http://files.usgarchives.net/al/escambia/history/leighplace.txt>).



The Leigh Place Today

(Continued from page #)

The Daphne Courthouse (Continued)

Church Museum of Daphne (OMCMD), Davis Collection:

The former courthouse in Daphne shown above became the Alabama State Teacher College on Mobile Bay and the normal school for grades one through 12 in 1907.

A single-engine pump that transported the water to the wooden water tower filled the school's water tank. Classes were mainly in the building that once served as the county jail.

<<http://www.mobilebaymag.com/Mobile-Bay/June-2012/Daphne-the-Jubilee-City/>>

Down-Home Festival on the Niger River

By Darryl Searcy

This essay is the result of Darryl's most recent trip as the leader of a group to gather plant samples from a rain forest.

The account is so vivid that you can almost hear the music.

Before I begin this essay on an event that occurred, and one for which we were privileged to have taken part, I need to tell you just a smidge of what Nigeria is all about. Our small expedition group of 10 left the United States on the evening of June 16, 2015 and arrived in Abuja, Nigeria some 27 hours later, departing JFK Airport. Tired and weary from lingering jet lag, we had no chance to “clean up and rest” until we reached our destination at the Federal Capital of Abuja. Housed at the Chesbury Hotel for a scant few hours, we managed to find a brief period of comfort before we loaded onto cargo vehicles and headed to the Niger River Delta.

With its 177 million people, Nigeria is the 7th largest country in the world by population. It is the 32nd largest country in the world by area with 923,768 square kilometers, slightly larger than the state of Texas, which has a total population of only 27 million. English is the official language; however, when dealing with tribal leaders in the Niger River Delta, one must use interpreters who are familiar with ethnic languages like Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), and Fulani, not to mention over 500 additional indigenous dialects.

British influence and control over what would become Nigeria and Africa's most populous country grew through the 19th century. A series of constitutions after World War II granted Nigeria greater



Crowd Gathers to Watch Taureg River Festival.



Segou Street Performer

autonomy and independence finally came in 1960. Following nearly 16 years of military rule, a new constitution was adopted in 1999, and a peaceful transition to civilian government was completed.

The government continues to face the daunting task of reforming a petroleum-based economy, whose revenues have been squandered through corruption and mismanagement, and institutionalizing democracy. In addition, Nigeria continues to experience longstanding ethnic and religious tensions. Although past presidential elections were marred by significant irregularities and violence, Nigeria is currently experiencing its longest period of civilian rule since independence. The general elections of 2007 marked the first civilian-to-civilian transfer of power in the country's history and the

elections of 2011 (overseen by President Jimmy Carter) were generally regarded as credible. In January 2014, Nigeria assumed a nonpermanent seat on the UN Security Council for the 2014-15 term.

It was our second night on the Niger River when we camped near the village of Lokoja. We saw the site and we heard the buzz as our guide pointed out that street performers were warming up a small crowd that had gathered to hear the sounds and festivities of an evening concert. The crowd was quite excited as the festive evening was about to begin. A promenade ground along the river bank was filled with early arrivals, and dozens had gathered in a circle around an elderly nomad-like person who was draped in a blue robe and dark veil. Tossing the black veil and turban aside and replacing them with a blue veil, he began his performance. Robe flying, the

(Continued on page 8)

Down-Home Festival on the Niger River

(Continued from page 7)

toothless man hurled himself to the ground, flipped and twirled with the loose-limbed dexterity of a teenager. Two women were seated cross-legged on the ground, serving as his musical back-ups. One beat a rhythm on a calabash with a plastic sandal, while the other played a tapered wood-and-goatskin drum known as a tendé.

At riverside, amateur light and sound engineers were prepping the stage, which was nothing more than a huge barge moored just off the bank and tied up to what appeared to be a few very unstable poles. Obviously this was to be the stage for the evening's main event of performances by bands that had traveled from far-away points either upstream or downstream; Idah, Sahel, Mali, Geinea and Patani or Yenagoa-Basso Faso. This was an annual event and not a soul in the village, jungle or otherwise, was going to miss it.

We had arrived at this place some hours earlier, after a rough four-hour drive on a decaying tarmac road from Bamako. Our guide took it all in stride with eagerness as he knew all about the festival and had attended a couple of them in former times, which we guessed had been more than a couple of years past. The guide spoke with reverence of having shared the road with an armored French convoy based in Cameroon that was speeding to the front lines in Mali to drive out a small band of jihadists who had occupied a small station near Timbuktu in Mali West Africa.

But now the country was quiet, more or less, and after a year's hiatus because of the skirmishes, which were put down by the French in conjunction with Malian and Nigerian military, the festival on the Ni-



Kaira Arby Performs



Beautiful Royal Barge Drifts on the River While its Pilot Enjoys the Festivities

ger was back in business. The performers traveled hundreds of miles along the river to ply their trade in hopes of remuneration for their efforts. Many of the country's best musicians often performed before crowds numbering in the thousands, including whatever foreigners were on the land at the time. The highlight of each performance was a golden-voiced singer who kicked off a loud music boom. Most tongues spoken were strange to us but the rhythm was always the same - a steady beat to which the crowds swayed and often moved in unison to something resembling a conga line.

Our expedition group are certainly not African music aficionados, but "Festival on the Niger" had been overshadowed by a rival concert called "Festival in the De-

sert" (or better known as "African Woodstock"), set in the sand dunes far north of Nigeria. Big-name western performers like Robert Plant, Bono, Jimmy Buffett and Manu Chao made pilgrimages to the desert to play alongside local bands and to promote their brand of humanitarian aid. But in early 2012 an alliance of Tuareg separatists and jihadists from Al Qaeda occupied the north and imposed their own Sahara law, smashing guitars, burning studios and threatening to kill musicians. Consequently, half a million people, including all western performers, fled to home grounds or to the south to help develop another brand of jungle festivities. With the "Festival in the Desert" out of commission, the "Festival on the Niger" had become the place to hear live music. The desert's loss has been the river's gain and we had landed on these muddy banks at just the right time.

(Continued on page 9)

Down-Home Festival on the Niger River

(Continued from page 8)

We surmised that no doubt the festival was greeted as a welcome reprieve from the specter of Ebola as well, which killed many people in Nigeria after leaving thousands dead in Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. In mid-April the World Health Organization reported that the last confirmed Ebola patient in Nigeria had left the hospital, and the last person who had contact with someone with Ebola had been declared virus-free after a three week quarantine.

There was some grumbling from a band called the “Peace Caravan Performers” about being relegated to a second-class venue some distance from the barge. Suspicions were voiced that the treatment reflected lingering resentment toward the Berber people whose latest uprising and alliance with Al Qaeda had torn apart a small section of the country. But a standing-room-only crowd of locals, United Nations peacekeepers, Nigerian generals in camouflage uniforms and red berets, Europeans and a few American tourists filled the modest concert space; the complaints quickly faded leaving us with a quiet sense of safety and the urgent need to relax and enjoy.

Khaira Arby, a half-Tuareg, half-Arab diva known as “the Nightingale of the North,” had fled Mali when the jihadists took over Timbuktu a few years earlier. It seems the Al Qaeda militants had trashed her guitars and studio and threatened to cut out her tongue if they captured her. But here she stood this evening in a sequin-studded gold gown and a tiara of gold coins, and rows of gold bracelets jangling on



Ahmed Ag Kaedi Presented a Program of Magical Guitar Music



Timothy Moye Dances to the Amusement of Women and Children.

her arms. She swept back and forth across the stage, gesticulating grandly, her voice booming as she sang in Tamasheq, which we did not understand. Nevertheless, it was a treat for us to witness firsthand the Nigerian answer to Aretha Franklin of the jungle. As she sang and pranced, a crowd gathered closer to watch and launched into an impromptu mass chant while swaying to her on-stage gyrations.

A name totally unfamiliar to us, Ahmed Ag Kaedi, a guitarist from Lagos, and his band followed Ms. Arby onto the stage. One of our military escort persons told us that Kaedi had just returned from a sojourn in the desert to find his house in flames and his guitars doused in gasoline and set afire. A message had been left with his sister stating that when he came back to play music again his fingers would be chopped off. That

unfortunate circumstance aside, his music was stark, haunting, hypnotic and magic. It was call-and-response vocals and finger-picking guitar solos that we thoroughly enjoyed. The music evoked Carlos Santana, as he played tune after tune to a spellbound multitude of black faces.

Alas, it became dusk and beyond - time for us to return to our hammocks and tents, but not before all the musicians gathered onstage for a jam session, joined by hundreds of jubilant spectators. As one member of our group danced to the music in American-style fashion, others had the foresight to record some of the music and to film videos. I find the haunting songs enjoyable and every day I await an opportunity to hear and watch them over and over again. €

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Recollections of My Boyhood in Brewton (1880-1896)

By Robert Colley Granberry

The following is a wonderful account of Brewton in the late 19th century. The author states in his introduction that he was frequently asked by his family and friends what it was like to grow up in Brewton, a small town of four to five hundred when he was a boy.

He has thus written this account of small town life from his perspective and with the help of stories and information from his family. He dedicates his "Recollections" to his three children: Margaret Granberry Richardson, Mary Granberry Boulton, and Robert Colley Granberry, Jr.

The author left Brewton when he was sixteen to attend school in Massachusetts and eventually attended and graduated from Harvard.

In his career as an educator, he was the longest serving president of Limestone College in Gaffney, South Carolina. The material on Dr. Granberry and his family will appear in several installments in the newsletter.

Thanks to Tom McMillan for sharing this remarkable material with us.

Now to the "Recollections"

My Boyhood (1880-1896)

My family has often made inquiry of me concerning my boyhood days in south Alabama. To record any part of my life would have no particular interest for anyone other than the members of my immediate family, and perhaps a few close personal friends

No record is here being made of any part or section of an autobiography. I would not be presumptuous enough to believe that an autobiography would have any particular value. The several chapters of my life have not been particularly eventful or especially significant.

Neither am I attempting, in any sense, to write a brief history of Brewton, the town of my birth, during the sixteen years of my residence in that community. I am merely recording here some of the experiences which came my way as I passed those



Photo of Robert Granberry from Archives of Limestone College. Longest serving President at the College 1923-1952

early years in that small Alabama town. In a real sense the days of my boyhood were quite remote from the present period, and the recording of some experiences may prove to be of interest to those for whom this record is made

I shall record, thus, my recollections of the years from the date of my birth, June 21, 1880, until I left Brewton to attend school in Boston, Massachusetts, in the month of September 1890, at the age of sixteen.

Brewton

Brewton is the county seat of Escambia County in south Alabama, ten miles from the Florida line. Escambia is an Indian name meaning "clear water." The county of Escambia was created December 10, 1868. Brewton was incorporated as a town on February 13, 1885. The town was named for a family

by the name of Brewton.

Brewton was a community, therefore, for about twenty years before it became incorporated into a town.

As far as I can remember, in 1880, when I was born, Brewton was a community of about 400 population. In 1896 when I left the town, the population was about 900. The living accommodations of the people, as well as their general approach to life and its problems, were quite unlike the thinking and feeling and the accommodations of our people of the present.

During my boyhood days in Brewton, there were no paved streets or paved sidewalks, I remember there was a broad sidewalk that extended from the hill on which we lived down past the little Methodist Church to the Principal business street in the village. It was through this business street that the Louisville and Nashville Railroad ran, — and still runs.

In Brewton when I was a boy, there were no electric lights or water works. Automobiles were unknown. We had no telephones; but we did have, part of the time, a few street lamps lighted with oil.

(Continued on page 12)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Recollections of My Boyhood in Brewton (1880-1896)

(Continued from page 11)

There could not have been more than a dozen or fifteen of these lamp posts, with their oil lamps; and as I remember them, they were usually smoking, and gave but a very little light, if any.

During those days, the stores were kept open from day break to eight or nine o'clock at night. The big business which centered in and around Brewton was lumbering. Agriculture played a very small part in Escambia County in those days. Lumber, pine lumber, was the financial backbone of the area, and out of that product many men made much money, and they still do.

Hunting and fishing, especially fishing, were engaged in by most everyone; game was plentiful. In the lakes and streams of that area, fish abounded. Small boys do not know very much of what is going on in a community. They are not particularly interested in and do not think in terms of government, politics, or business. Boys of the age about which I am writing are very much engaged in playing and in competitive games, but I remember that one matter was talked about a good deal in Brewton in 1888.

There was quite a lively discussion in 1888, whether they should allow hogs to run on the streets. It was decided, therefore, that when the election was to be held in January of 1889 to select the mayor and the council, that they should print on the ballot two questions, viz.: "HOGS?" and "NO HOGS?" Each voter was to express his preference by checking after these questions. The managers of that election in 1889 were E. F. Lovelace, C. L. Sowell, and my father, J. M. Granberry.

Father and Mother

The name of my father was John Marcellus Granberry. After serving as a lieutenant in Lee's army for four years during the War Between the States, my father left Georgia, and settled in Escambia County. He located in that territory about 1868. Twenty miles away from Brewton was a country community known as Brooklyn, where lived the daughter of a Scotch country doctor. Her name was Sara Elizabeth MacIver. My father and Sara Elizabeth were married in 1869, and settled permanently in Brewton.

The first house for the teaching of school was built by my father, and he was the first teacher in it. My grandfather Rev. George Granberry, had spent his life mainly in Georgia in the neighborhood of Columbus, and was an unusually well-educated man. He had passed on to my father much of his learning. Both my grandfather and my father were well-versed in ancient languages. Rev. George Granberry died in 1859.

I mentioned the education of my grandfather and his interest in educating my father, because it was my father who taught the first school in Brewton. He was always interested in education. Frequently did I hear my father say, when I was a boy, that he was not interested in leaving money to any of his children, but that he was most concerned in giving them a good chance at an education, if they would take it. Father conducted a circulating library in the town in the late eighties.

As a member of the Brewton community, my father also was interested in beautifying the streets of the town. He planted scores of water oaks,—now these trees are tremendous in size and objects of real beauty. It seems to me that he has left a living monument in the town of his adoption. Never have I seen anyone looking for a shady place to rest go to a cemetery and sit under a monument.

One of Brewton's many lovely shaded streets is named "Granberry Street" in his memory. When I was introduced by Charles Harold, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of Brewton, at its annual meeting October 11, 1946, he referred to my father, and mentioned the interest he had had in beautifying the town during the years between 1885 and 1895.

Our Home

The house in which I was born June 21, 1880, looks about as it did in my boyhood days. The house is number 303 Belleville Avenue, directly across the street from the Escambia County court house, which was erected in 1901. Mr. and Mrs. Garrett now reside in the house in which we lived when I was a boy.

I was the youngest of four children. The oldest was John Marcellus Granberry, Jr., then came Nannie Baker Granberry, our only sister, and George Folsom Granberry. A brother of my father was named

(Continued on page 13)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Recollections of My Boyhood in Brewton (1880-1896)

(Continued from page 12)

Robert, from whence I got my name, and my middle name, Colley, was for Mr. Mark Colley, a merchant in Brewton and a great friend of our family.

I was about twelve years of age before I realized that everybody did not own the house in which they lived. Those I knew in Brewton all owned their own places of residence. This realization came to me one day as a real intellectual shock. Within a block of where we lived was the school house, the church we attended and within a couple of blocks was the one business street of town.

Leading Families

It was stated some paragraphs back that a boy is not particularly interested in the larger and more important aspects of a community, being very much otherwise engaged at the time. I am rather surprised as I sit down to make a list of the names of the Families which stand out prominently after these fifty years. As I survey Brewton between 1880-1896, names of families occur to me in a vivid sense: Miller, Downing, Foshee, McMillan, Harold, Neal, Brooks, Parker, Sowell, Rankin, McGowin, Lovelace, Blacksheer, Malone, Larkin Luttrell, Rabb, Leigh, Davidson, Strong, Arends, Robbins, Tippins.

There are probably others which would come to mind if I should engage in conversation the older citizens of Brewton at present. But I am amazed that I can recall so many men of outstanding ability, men who made a distinct impression upon a boy because of their industriousness and achievements.

As a matter of fact, I had not realized until I began to write these recollections that so many men of unusual strength resided in a community of only five hundred inhabitants. These men were able men. They succeeded exceptionally well in business endeavors. It is truly a remarkable list, and Brewton should regard this company of pioneers as a rich and precious heritage. I doubt that a similar list of men who did things, and often on a big scale can be matched by many communities the size Brewton was then.

Several of these men came to Brewton out of the Confederate Army, as my father had done. Some of them had been wounded in battle; my father was, and

carried the battle scars until his death in 1901. I remember that one of the citizens, Mr. Charles Sowell, had lost his arm in the conflict.

Intermarriage among these leading families was the usual order of the day. The men married on an average of twenty-three years of age, and the women were around eighteen. There are many descendants of these leading families of the pioneer days of Brewton now in that community, and they are measuring up in interest in the town, in ability, and in accomplishment.

Earliest Recollections

My earliest recollection, which comes trooping out of the storehouse of memory, is in the fall of 1883, following the terrible scourge of yellow fever in Brewton.

In those years medical science had no understanding of the cause of yellow fever, and knew but little concerning its treatment. Yellow fever, in that general area north of New Orleans and Mobile, was a terrible and appalling scourge. Whenever people could do so, they fled toward the Tennessee and Kentucky territory, even at the faintest rumor of the presence of or the possible approach of yellow fever.

In mid-summer of 1883, a resident of Brewton visited Pensacola for a brief spell, and, upon returning to Brewton, was taken suddenly and violently ill. He died after a few days of illness. No one knew that he had died of yellow fever; the doctors were not experienced in its diagnosis. His many friends had called to see him when he was so sick, and they went to the funeral.

Following this first death, the fever spread rapidly. State officials came from Montgomery and announced that the malady was none other than yellow fever, which had been brought into Brewton from Pensacola. Everyone who could do so fled the town. Some of the merchants left their keys in their doors in order that their neighbors and friends who could not get away might have food if they needed it.

For some reason, our entire family was caught with fever in Brewton. All of us were stricken,—father. Mother, four children. We secured a trained nurse from Mobile but she soon came down with the fever.

There were only two doctors in town,

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Dr. H. H. Malone and Dr. Farish, and they were worked by day and by night. Sometimes in taking the pulse of a patient, seated by the bedside, the doctor would fall asleep from sheer exhaustion.

Dr. Farish died of the fever.

My father was so low that the doctor gave him up to die, and had the casket (pine box) sent to the home. The casket was left in the hall, outside father's room. But father recovered. He had a fine sense of humor, and in the later years I often heard him say, with a twinkle in his eye, "When I knew they had placed that box outside my room it made me mad, and I wouldn't die for spite."

The town authorities took charge of all of the food in the stores, and a horse-drawn wagon was sent around every morning, leaving at each door its share of food for that day. Food got so low that at one time only two eggs were left at our house for the entire group stricken with the fever. In later years I heard my mother tell about the shortage of food and the awful fever, and how she suffered because she knew that her family was starving. Some friends of my father in Georgia heard of the distress and of the raging fever, and sent every week a box of cooked foods, and that was all that saved us during those hot days of famine and fever.

The trains would not stop in Brewton during the epidemic. Miles away from the town, all windows and doors of the trains were closed, and under orders engineers opened their throttles wide, and ran full speed through the town. Express men opened their doors and kicked those boxes of food out as they passed through. An old Negro man, whom father had befriended, picked up the boxes from the dirt road hauled them to our home in an ox cart, and opened them.

Of course, I heard all of these things related in after years by my parents. One of the facts which should be mentioned here is the loyalty of ten or a dozen Negroes, who refused to leave the town, stating that they were going to stay and help their white friends. And this should be recorded: Not a single Negro died of the yellow fever, while thirty-seven percent of the community perished during those awful days. Mr. Colley, for whom I am named, was among those who

died. But not a colored person had the fever. There must be some pigment in the Negro's skin which makes him impervious to the bite of the mosquito.

The fever was checked with the coming of the first frost. But as the little community went into the fall of 1883, there were many familiar faces which were missed upon the streets of the town, and there were many vacant chairs as families gathered about the table.

Now, my earliest vivid recollection is the big bonfire in our backyard when the clothing and household goods of the entire family were burned; bedding and all the personal wardrobes, together with such possessions as rugs, had to be burned. As stated above, the other facts which I have recorded about the yellow fever calamity of 1883 have come down to me from family conversation.

School Days

Prior to leaving Brewton in 1896 to go to a boys' school in Massachusetts, I remember attending three different schools.

The first was taught by an elderly lady by the name of Sis Brewton. I believe that there were about eighteen of us who went to that school. Everyone referred to her as "Aunt Sis." She taught the school in the house in which she lived.

I cannot remember very much about that school, but I do recall that after we had assembled one morning the clouds became heavy, and the thermometer dropped to an unusually low degree for that area. It was not long before a few flakes of snow fell, and we never had seen snow before that time; it was all so new and wonderful to us.

Aunt sis said that we might have some bad weather, and she told the boys to go in the backyard and pile all the wood they could find in her kitchen and on the back porch. When that had been done, she dismissed school for the day, and by the time we reached home, the sun was shining, and the thermometer was up considerably. I have often wondered if Aunt Sis felt that she might be snow bound!

Following that school, I attended a private school taught by my sister, Nannie Baker, in a little school house which father built for that purpose near our home at the top of the hill. My sister was a capable

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teacher, and very much interested in her pupils. She limited her school to twenty-five boys and girls. As I look back on that experience of about three years, I have the feeling that I occasioned her more trouble than all the others combined. But my Sister did not hesitate to

make use of the switch whenever she felt it would do good. It may be that I still bear on my body the marks—Anyway, I am very grateful to her for her undying interest in me, and for everything she tried to do for me.

The third school I attended was the Brewton Institute. A Miss Pet Parker was one of the teachers. Mr. Dan Gillis was principal, and I recall a teacher, Mr. J. V. Brown, who came directly from Auburn college, where he had played football.

The hours of school at the Institute were 8:00-12:00, and 1:00-4:00, unless for some reason the teacher kept you in after school until 4:30 as a disciplinary measure. As I recollect, I did not get out of the school until 4:30 almost daily.

One experience I had in the Institute, on a hot afternoon in the room taught by Mr. Brown, is indelibly imprinted upon my memory. There was a long bench across the front of the room. Mr. Brown had called about a dozen of us to that bench for a lesson; I sat at the end of the bench. All at once, to my great surprise, the teacher behind the desk exclaimed, "Robert, you opened your book and looked." As a matter of fact, I had not,—at that time. But in less time than it takes to tell this incident, Mr. Brown sprang from his chair, picked up the switch on his desk, and taking me by the collar, began to whip me severely.

I cannot recall exactly how it all happened, but I wiggled out of his hands in some way, ran from the front of the room to the back, jumped out of the window, landed on the ground running, and never stopped until I had rushed through the hall of our home to find my mother, and, loudly crying, I exclaimed, "Mr. Brown was beating me and it was not



Brewton Collegiate Institute

fair. I did not look in the book as he said I did. It wasn't fair."

Evidently I was so enraged by the experience that my mother must have told my father about it, and later on in the day,—as I heard in the after years,—he called on Mr. Brown and said, "Mr. Brown I helped to bring you here as a teacher. I am going

to support you at all times even if you are wrong, but I would like to know, since you are a young teacher, if you are sure of your position this afternoon when you disciplined Robert?"

I understand my father told him how outraged I felt. And, as I heard in later years, Mr. Brown stated quite frankly that he was not sure of the statement he made about my looking in the book, that after he made it, he felt that he must justify himself, and before he realized what he was doing, he was whipping me.

One of the surprises of my life came that next morning, after the school had come to order, when Mr. Brown made a statement to the entire group, stating how wrong he had been, and then he came to me and apologized for what he had done.

During all the years I have thought of Mr. J. V. Brown as one of the great men with whom I have come in contact. I have believed that anyone who could apologize to a barefoot boy, and before the entire school, possessed those fundamental qualities of real greatness. €

To be continued.

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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