



The Escambia County Historical Society, Founded 1971

The September 2021 Newsletter
The September Regular Meeting will be
Tuesday, September 28, 2021
at 3:00 pm in the Meeting Room
in the Museum (mask required)
at Coastal Alabama College in Brewton.



The Program

Our speaker, shown at the left, is Richard F. Allen, who will discuss Major David Moniac (1802 - 1836), the first Native American to graduate from West Point.

From the website of the Law Firm, Capell and Howard, from which Mr. Allen has retired, this biography:

Richard F. Allen graduated from Florence State College (now the University of North Alabama) and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Regular Army in 1963. After seven years on active duty, including tours in Vietnam and Germany, Richard left the active Army in 1970 to attend law

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Above is the featured photograph for "Justice Not Favor: Alabama Women & the Vote," the exhibition, which opened last month in the Museum of Alabama. The image features suffrage leaders on the steps of the Alabama State Capitol as they lobbied legislators for support of a state constitutional amendment in 1915.

On January 21, 1915, Dallas County Representative J. W. Green introduced a joint resolution proposing a women's suffrage amendment to the state constitution. The resolution was defeated.

Alabama women would finally gain the right to vote five years later with the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



Drawing of Creek Youth

Volume 48 No. 9
 September 2021

The Program

(Continued from page 1)

school, but he remained a member of the U.S. Army Reserve. While at law school, Richard was the Managing Editor of the Alabama Law Review, and received many other honors.

After leaving active duty with the U.S. Army in 1970, and completing law school in 1973, Richard pursued a dual career as a lawyer and an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve

He clerked for Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Howell Heflin before joining Capell, Howard, Knabe & Cobbs P.A. in 1974. He became a partner in

1977. He has served as the Chief Legislative Assistant for U. S. Senator Howell Heflin, Chief Deputy Attorney General for Alabama, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Corrections, and Parliamentary Law Advisor for then Lieutenant Governor Kay Ivy .

His active duty assignments in the army include Company Command in Germany and Vietnam. His reserve assignments include Command of the 375th Field Depot in Montgomery and the 3rd Transportation Brigade in Anniston. Brigadier Gen. Allen has also been named Outstanding Alumnus of the United States Army War College.

News and Announcements



Brooklyn Baptist Church Bicentennial Celebration, Sunday, Oct. 10, 2021 Beginning at 10:30 a.m. Dinner on the Grounds Following Service

There will be a tent provided for those who would feel more comfortable seated outside. Speakers will be provided so those outside can enjoy the service.

Also, masks are required.

Guests are encouraged to bring and set up a table for sharing photos of their family members who have Brooklyn roots. The Brooklyn School and Community Annuals printed in 1949-50 and 1951, created by Principal Mr. W. A. Blair, have been reproduced and will be for sale the day of the Bicentennial by cash or check payable to the church.

The Brooklyn Baptist Church, established in 1821, is one of the oldest churches in Conecuh County.

The present church was built in 1861. The Church was added to the Alabama Register of Historic Landmarks and Heritage on March 24, 1983.

RAILROAD BILL
IMMORTALIZED IN FOLKSONGS,
OUTLAW MORRIS SLATER
ROBBER L&N TRAINS, GAVE TO
POOR, LONG EVADING CAPTURE.
KILLED NEAR HERE IN 1896.
ALABAMA FOLKLIFE ASSOCIATION
WILLIAM G. POMEROY FOUNDATION 2021

Historical Marker for Railroad Bill to be Placed in Atmore. Marker Unveiling on Thursday, Oct. 21, 4:00 pm Depot, Atmore.

Morris Slater, better known as “Railroad Bill,” was a laborer turned outlaw who gained notoriety for his brazen exploits against southern railroad companies during the late 1800s.

The legend of Railroad Bill originated following an incident that happened on the Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad in Alabama. The story goes that a railroad employee threw Slater off a moving train for not paying for the ride. The event spawned Slater’s vendetta against L&N and other railways of the South.

Slater went from being a worker at turpentine camps to a gun-toting outlaw and head of a gang of train robbers. As his crimes grew, so did his infamy. Numerous newspaper accounts explicitly dubbed Slater “Railroad Bill” and stories about his criminal activities proliferated. For many, the symbol of Railroad Bill became synonymous with Robin Hood. There were numerous claims that Slater gave the supplies and food from his train robberies to the poor.

Slater’s criminal acts became increasingly violent over time, with several deaths attributed to his doing. Known for carrying both a rifle and pistol, Slater was described as capable of doing just about anything to evade the reach of justice, including gunfights to the death. Eventually the law caught up with Railroad Bill. In March 1896, a group of lawmen ambushed him at a general store in Atmore, AL. While Railroad Bill was busy eating, a signal was given and the lawmen opened fire. He was killed on the spot. His body was eventually brought to Pensacola, Florida, where it was interred at St. John’s Cemetery.

Following the death of Railroad Bill, stories of his renegade life grew into song and legend. Famously, he is immortalized as the subject of the folk song, “Railroad Bill” (<https://www.wgpfoundation.org/>).

From West Point to Wahoo Swamp: The Career of Major David Moniac, Class of 1822

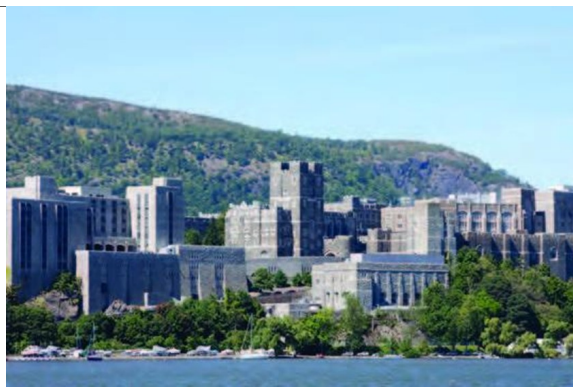
The following article by Herberto Dixon and Lawrence M. Hauptmon is from *Issus: Spring 1016, Vol. 17, No. 1* <<https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/west-point-wahoo-swamp-career-cadet-david-moniac-class-1822>>.

Introduction

David Moniac (1802–1836), a Creek Indian, entered the United States Military Academy in 1817 only a decade and a half after the institution's founding. Although not the first American Indian to attend West Point, he appears to be the first to have graduated.* As a commissioned officer, he was killed in action during the Second Seminole War. From the U.S. Army standpoint, he died a hero, but his brief career shows the ambiguity of many Native lives during a time of Indian removal and resistance.

**Note: From Dixon and Hauptman's article, "Cadet David Moniac: A Creek Indian's Schooling at West Point, 1817-1822." According to the records housed in the United States Military Academy Library's Archives and Special Collections Division, two other cadets of American Indian descent attended West Point and were graduated prior to Cadet Moniac: Lewis Loramier (1806) and William Wayne Wells (1821). Little information is available about these cadets, even though Wells attended during Moniac's years at West Point <<https://www.jstor.org>>.*

Moniac entered West Point only three years after the conclusion of the bloody Creek War, also known as the Red Stick War, of 1813–1814. The U.S. Army, with American Indian allies including Lower Town Creeks, fought against Upper Town Creeks* led by Moniac's uncle, William Weatherford, Chief Red Eagle. Even before General Andrew Jackson's final victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, the Creek Country in today's Alabama and Georgia had been laid waste. In the Treaty of Fort Jackson in March 1814, the Creeks were forced to cede more than 22-million acres in Alabama and southern Georgia.



West Point Today

Moniac's life demonstrates the difficulty of generalizing about the Native experience. Creek identity was multidimensional, dependent mostly on which town happened to be the individual Creek's birthplace, or which Scottish trader happened to gain economic or kinship ties. Just as self-interest motivated American colonists in the Revolution to become rebels or loy-

alists, Creeks chose different sides throughout their history. As late as the Civil War, they once again found themselves fighting each other in a bloody conflict.

**Note: "The Creek Nation was divided among the group known as the Upper Creeks, who occupied territory along the Coosa, Alabama, and Tallapoosa rivers in central Alabama, and the Lower Creeks, who occupied the areas along the lower Chattahoochee, Ocmulgee, and Flint rivers in southwestern Georgia" (<http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/>).*

The Creek youngster entered West Point in 1817 with more complex motives than a burning desire for a lifelong military career. His first priority appears to have been self-improvement, taking advantage of a free education. He clearly saw the advantage of this training as well as a government stipend paid to cadets at the time. In some ways, he was no different from many other cadets. Patriotic military service often took a back seat to economic realities after the War of 1812; 30 percent of Moniac's Class of 1822 left military service for civilian careers in the decade after graduation.

The Path to The Academy

David Moniac, whose name also appears as MacNac, Manak or Monack, was born around Christmas day in 1802 at Pinchong Creek, Montgomery County, Mississippi Territory. His father, Samuel Takkes-Hadjo Moniac, was descended from the son of a Creek woman and her Euroamerican husband, Dixon Moniac, who had been in the region since 1756. His mother, Elizabeth Weatherford, was

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From West Point to Wahoo Swamp: The Career of Major David Moniac, Class of 1822

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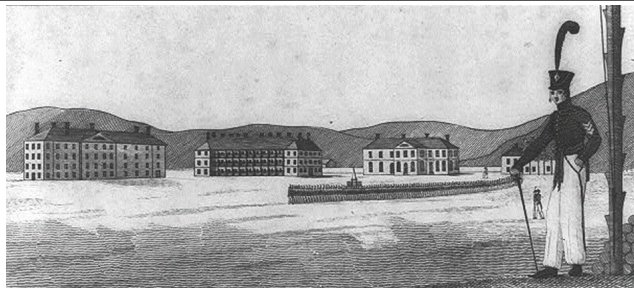
the sister of Red Eagle from the Upper Creek town of Tuskegee. At the time of Moniac's birth, his parents were living in Tuskegee, at the forks of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers, not far from the battlefield of Horseshoe Bend.

The Creeks, including David's own relatives, had intermarried with Euroamericans, mostly Scots traders. Although these whites prospered by this arrangement, in some ways, the Creeks also benefited. Clan and village leaders recognized the importance of connections with the deerskin traders and interpreters in their midst. These whites frequently married women of the prestigious Creek Wind Clan, such as David's mother Elizabeth, and these marital ties helped advance trans-Atlantic trade. Consequently, many prosperous Creeks spoke English, herded cattle and even owned slaves.

Creeks gained control of non-Indian trade practices. Until the devastation brought on by the Red Stick War, intermarriage with traders allowed the Creeks to receive a steady flow of trade goods and fair prices for their skins. Sam Moniac, David's father, benefitted from these connections. He prospered before the war as a rancher and slave owner, but also as the proprietor of a tavern on the famous Federal Road, the major commercial route that cut through the heart of Creek Country.

Moniac's path to West Point began well before the Red Stick War. In 1790, Chief Alexander McGillivray, David Moniac's grand-uncle, negotiated a treaty with federal officials with a secret provision for the education of four Creek youths by the United States. Young Moniac attempted to take advantage of the treaty codicil by applying formally to West Point.

Moniac's academic preparation was limited but comparable to other entering cadets. At the time, the Military Academy had minimal academic admission standards, even taking boys as young as 12 or 13! Despite his youth, Moniac, at several months short of 15, was not the youngest cadet in his class. He was older than or approximately the same age as 13 of his classmates. Moniac had not had formal



**West Point
Picture from Library of Congress**

schooling, having been tutored privately. But his prominent Creek lineage, his exposure to the customs, ideas and religious beliefs of his white relatives, and the growing presence of Scot traders and Moravian missionaries all contributed to his education.

On March 1, 1816, in one of Moniac's references, Colonel Gilbert Russell wrote that the boy's father was one of the friendly Creeks in the Red Stick War. Despite Moniac's age, only 13 at the time, the colonel insisted that he was an industrious lad, more mature than boys of his age and that, as the only tribal member put forth to attend West Point, his application had the support of the Creek Nation. Russell then stated that Moniac's admission would further the national interest by strengthening ties with the Creeks. Although this strong recommendation did not lead to the Creek boy's immediate appointment, the Moniacs and their supporters continued to lobby for his admission. After a second effort, he was accepted to the school in September 1817, at the age of 14 years and eight months.

A School In Disarray

When Moniac arrived at West Point in 1817, the academy was in crisis. Little had been done to improve training. Despite new barracks, a mess building and an instructional academy, the library was inadequate; cadet discipline was undermined by administrative favoritism; faculty morale was low and a comprehensive and rigorous curriculum was non-existent. The school did have several distinguished faculty, however, notably Claude Crozet, assistant professor of engineering. Crozet was a graduate of the French Ecole Polytechnique, and had earlier served in Napoleon's army. He later went on to head the Virginia Military Institute. The brilliant Crozet, who barely spoke English on his arrival, soon found that even if the cadets understood his limited English, his level of instruction was over most of their heads. Since, in the age of Napoleon, many of the military texts were written in French, all cadets at West Point were required to take courses and demonstrate proficiency in the language. Unfortu-

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From West Point to Wahoo Swamp: The Career of Major David Moniac, Class of 1822

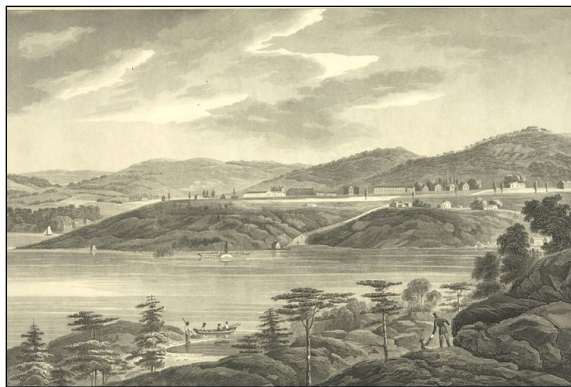
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nately for Moniac, this language requirement was his major stumbling block.

Cadets were exposed to other classics, such as Emmerich de Vattel's The Law of Nations and Jedidiah Morse's American Geography. Morse's work was a compendium of knowledge: anthropology, astronomy, biology, geology, geography, history and philosophy, but it had direct relevance to the Creek people. Through his crystal ball and religious faith, Morse, a Congregational minister, predicted America's continental destiny, namely the annexation of Florida, the Mexican War and the Oregon settlement. He taught that predestination, geographical and religious, ensured the success of the rising American empire. To Morse, whose works were widely read, the Indians had to be removed and assimilated as quickly as possible for their own good. His view was obviously not lost on a Creek cadet studying his book at West Point.

Of the 119 students who entered with Moniac in 1817, only 40 were graduated in 1822. But no matter their level of academic ability, cadets faced challenges beyond coursework. Sheer existence at West Point in these years was difficult. The academy was largely isolated. Except for the occasional riverboat from New York City, its inaccessible location in the often fog-covered Hudson Highlands and the poor roads of the time made overland travel difficult, especially in the winter months. The only diversion for the cadets was an illicit visit to the North (Gridley's) Tavern just outside the post's gate. Moreover, cadet accommodations were Spartan at best. The barracks had no running water or central heating. Cadets had to haul buckets from a well and bring firewood from the wood yard near the barracks. Because of the constant threat of fires, a water bucket and a tinderbox were required in the barracks, which otherwise contained little furniture. Cadets had to buy all furnishings from their \$18-a-month federal stipend.

Just as Moniac arrived in 1817, a new superintendent, Sylvanus Thayer, took over the reins of administration at the United States Military Academy.



Photograph of Painting of West Point 1821, Library of Congress

Thayer demanded a higher level of academic performance. To Thayer, the primary mission was to train engineers or soldiers, and all other instruction was irrelevant. To contend with the lax admission standards that required proficiency only in reading, grammar and arithmetic, the new superintendent began a system of tracking cadets; they could be transferred to more advanced or slower sections

according to their oral and written performances. Much weight for class evaluation was placed on daily oral recitation at the blackboard. Certain subjects, especially mathematics, counted most for their final academic standing.

Moniac's Performance

Cadet Moniac obeyed nearly all of the rules of the academy. His overall rank in conduct was 15, placing him in the top 40 percent of his class in this category. At a time when Thayer instilled a stern hand and students were subject to military courts-martial, Moniac's record was impressive. He received very few demerits at a time when 200 per year led to automatic dismissal from the academy. Moniac was cited 21 times for alleged delinquencies, none of which were alcohol-related or involved fights with his classmates. Ten of the infractions dealt with his cutting or talking during study hall. Twice he was written up for failing to sign his name when he was paid his monthly stipend. Twice he was reprimanded for staying in bed after morning roll call, and on another occasion he was cited for not being in bed before curfew. He was also delinquent for cutting two classes in tactics and once for missing military drill. On two occasions he neglected to hail the officer of the day, perhaps the most egregious of his offenses while a cadet. He also appears to have served as mentor for at least one plebe just before his departure from West Point.

Moniac's overall record in his coursework must be read with care. Even though he was graduated 39 out of 40 in overall rank, two-thirds of the classmates who entered with him in 1817 had dropped out by 1822. The Creek cadet's rank in the hierarchy is also

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From West Point to Wahoo Swamp: The Career of Major David Moniac, Class of 1822

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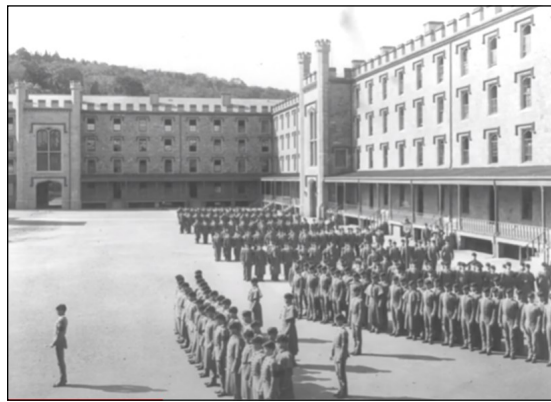
somewhat ambiguous and hard to interpret. For example, in August 1820, he was appointed Fourth Sergeant of the second company of cadets. Later, in June 1821, he was promoted to First Sergeant, but after only a week, he stepped down from this appointment.

Reluctant Celebrity

In 1818, the Swedish government sent Baron Alex Klinkowstrom, a lieutenant colonel on its general staff, to study and report on the United States' achievements in the decades after the American Revolution. In one of his reports, the baron contrasted the training of cadets at West Point with the military schools of Europe. He pointed out that the United States Military Academy demanded more mathematics than its European counterparts, but less training in equestrian skills and less foreign language proficiency.

Klinkowstrom was taken to a class in mathematics where he witnessed what he considered an extraordinary scene. An American Indian student was demonstrating and analyzing the relation between cosine, sine and radius. The Indian did this by means of a rather involved calculation; the instructor repeatedly interrupted to refer him to other theories which might have some relation to the problem. The Swedish visitor added: "This youth is a descendant of the Creek nation; his name is Moniac. In all probability he does not intend to go into the service of the United States, but to return to his people in order to give them the benefit of his achieved knowledge. He can also check the American surveyors in case the United States wishes to buy more land from the Creek territory." Perhaps contrasting this scene with the Swedish government's policies of the time toward the Sami, the indigenous peoples of Scandinavia, the baron praised American efforts to uplift the Indians.

Moniac also attracted attention outside of the Academy. In August 1821, more than 200 cadets marched from West Point to Boston. When they arrived in the city, they performed their drills with precision, and their marching band played rousing mar-



West Point

tial music. One observer, Josiah Quincy, accompanied his famous relative, the former President John Adams, to the pageantry and wrote: "Here was a military corps, splendidly equipped and composed of the most promising young men in the country. The training at West Point was then far superior to any given at the colleges, and these young gentlemen were known to be

subjected to an intellectual discipline which was quite as severe as their physical drill." One of those young men was David Moniac.

Former President Adams invited the cadets to his home in nearby Quincy. There, the corps once again went through their exercises and musical performances. The venerable Founding Father then addressed the troops. The Commandant of Cadets, one Major William Worth, tried to induce Cadet Moniac to meet with the President, but Moniac refused. Worth informed the President that the cadet was too bashful.

Moniac was evidently embarrassed at becoming a center of attention. Celebrity was not a value taught in Creek Country. He had been inculcated with a group, rather than an individual, ethic as a child growing up in Tuskegee.

As a West Point cadet, Moniac had apparently become a curiosity. Major Worth added revealingly in his apology to President Adams: "I have myself been taken for the Indian all along the road. People would point to me, and say, 'Look there! There's the Indian!'" Despite Moniac's education in the white world of West Point and his long absence from Creek Country, he was still the Indian in the ranks, subjected to being gawked at for being the exception, the "civilized Red Man" in the bastion of American military power. He still saw himself in a foreign land, far away from his homeland, his Creek town, his kin, his people.

In April 1822, his last year at West Point, Moniac received an impassioned plea from home to return as quickly as possible because of his alcoholic father's inability to manage his family's financial affairs. Moniac, nevertheless, stayed on for his graduation in

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From West Point to Wahoo Swamp: The Career of Major David Moniac, Class of 1822

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June. His graduating class of 40 included five future generals in the United States army, two generals in the New Jersey militia, two high-ranking officers in the Confederate army, three college presidents and at least five civil engineers or chief operating officers of railroads. At least 10 of the 40 graduates resigned their commissions or died before the outbreak of the Second Seminole War in 1835. Seventeen of the cadets served on the frontier, including three in Creek Country, 10 in the Second Seminole War and one in the Cherokee removal. Three in the Class of 1822 died during the Second Seminole War, including Moniac himself.

Civilian Life, And War

After graduation, Moniac received a commission as second lieutenant in the 6th United States Infantry in early July. Although he accepted the commission that he had worked so long to achieve, he subsequently received a leave of absence and resigned from active duty on Dec. 31, 1822. He went back to Alabama, where he rebuilt the family's financial prospects by establishing a plantation in Baldwin County, Ala., where he raised cotton and bred race horses. He later married Mary Powell, the cousin of Osceola, the Creek-born leader of the Seminoles.

But Moniac's civilian life ended when the Second Seminole War erupted in 1835. He re-enlisted and received a military commission the next year. Major Moniac was killed in action at the Battle of Wahoo Swamp on Nov. 26, 1836. There, his Creek Indian regiment, part of General Richard Call's 2,500-man force composed of United States Army regulars and Florida and Tennessee militia, advanced on a camp of approximate-

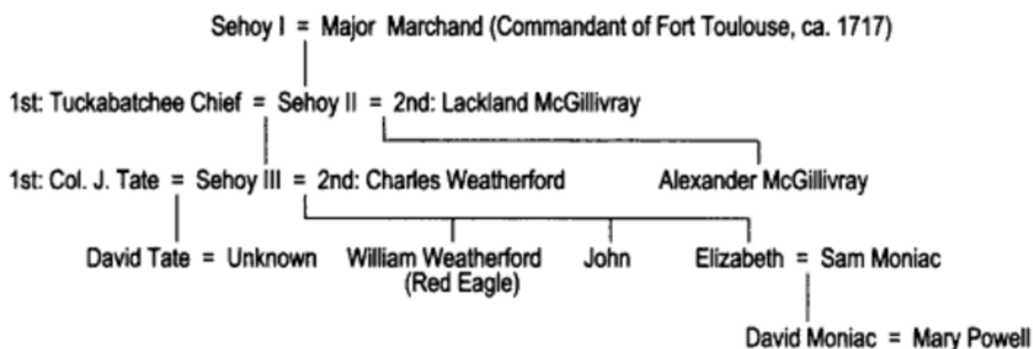
ly 600 Seminoles and allied African Seminoles. With the threat of removal from their Florida homeland and the return of their allied African Seminoles to slavery in Georgia and Alabama, the Seminole forces led by Osuchee (Cooper) and Yaholooche (Cloud) successfully resisted the onslaught. Fearing that his heavily laden army would get stranded in the mud of a stream that separated the opposing forces, Call refused to pursue the Seminoles when they pulled back and withdrew from the battle. Moniac himself was shot while trying to find a ford across the stream.

Today David Moniac is honored by his descendants at the Poarch Creek community in Alabama and elsewhere in the South. In the Town of Bushnell, Sumter County, the State of Florida has placed a historical marker emphasizing Moniac's bravery at the Battle of Wahoo Swamp. The United States Army has also named its reserve center in Montgomery, Ala., after him.

“I am searching for descendants of David Moniac, the first Native American to attend West Point. This was in 1817, only 4 years after Ft Mims. He served the United States for several years and then returned to Little River to take over his families' Plantation and to help his uncle, William Weatherford. Major Moniac was called to lead Federal Troops in Florida during the Second Seminole War . He died during a battle in the Wahoo Swamp in 1836. His remains were recently moved (2020) and re-interred in the Florida National Cemetery with a ceremony commending his leadership as an officer.

“If you are a Moniac descendant, please contact me at: <claudia_cmpbll@yahoo.com>.”

David Moniac's Genealogy



From “Cadet David Moniac: A Creek Indian's Schooling at West Point, 1817-1822” at <<https://www.jstor.org>>.

The Story of the Escambia County, Alabama Courthouse Cannons

This article from the Tri-City Ledger, "Story of the Courthouse Cannons," by Kevin McKinley tells the story of the cannons on the lawn of the Escambia County, Alabama, Courthouse:

Much has been written about the cannons on the Escambia County Courthouse lawn. They stand as silent sentinels, bearing witness to decades of local history and the ebb and flow of attorneys, judges and residents through our collective memory. Yet their own history beckons the curiosity of any who stop and examine.

The Thursday, April 5, 1906 edition of the Brewton Standard carried the story; "The United States government having presented to this county two cannons at Fort Barrancas, we suggest and recommend that the county commissioners have same removed to the county seat and properly set on the Court House grounds, paying out of the county treasury all expense therefor except the freight charges, which the town of Brewton has agreed to assume."

This wording apparently came from a recommendation from the Grand Jury of the County. It appears grand juries in 1906 had additional duties than what we think of a grand jury today.

The "Commissioners Court" section of the same date's paper carried the following:

"The recommendation of the Grand Jury that the County pay for the installment on the Court House grounds, of the two large cannons which were donated to the county by the US Government, was taken up for consideration, and the court adopted a motion appropriating \$250.00 for this purpose."

The commissioners present with Judge M.F. Brooks were Commissioners Hall (from Canoe Station), Jordan (he is buried at Traveler's Rest on Upper Creek Road) and Lovelace.

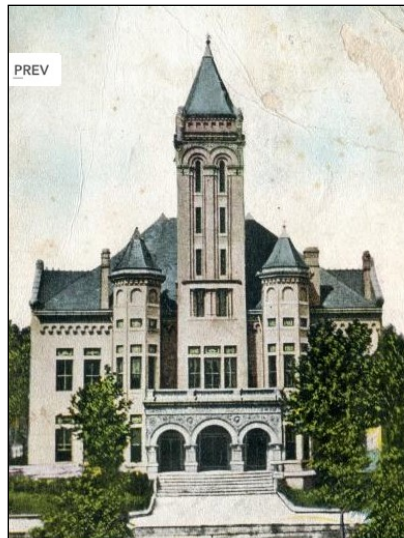


Picture Courtesy of Brewton Reborn, Facebook.

This placement of the cannons would have been located at the same site as where the cannons sit today. However, it was a very different courthouse. The gothic design of the early 1900s, with its cathedral-like spires, rose from the dusty streets below early in the last century and only artillery from the century

before would have been appropriate to guard its march into our modern times.

Fort Barrancas was one of several forts built around the coast line of the nation to defend against foreign attack. Several forts in the Pensacola area have Spanish origins but were refitted and Americanized in the early 1800s. During the War Between the States, Barrancas was occupied by the Confederate army. Later, after the Union took over the fort, it was used to house military personnel for the final push into our area in March 1865. Confederate deserters were also housed at the fort and eventually some of them were organized into the 1st Florida Cavalry USA and used as scouts when the blue



Brewton Courthouse Built in 1901. Cannons were originally placed on lawn of this courthouse.

clade invaders entered our area at war's end. Ms. Lydia Grimes noted on January 18, 2009, in an article in the Brewton Standard, how an earlier article from 1906 detailed the arrival of the cannons.*

"The cannons came to Brewton during the summer of 1906," noted Grimes. Citing Ed Leigh

"The cannons came to Brewton during the summer of 1906," noted Grimes. Citing Ed Leigh

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The Story of the Escambia County, Alabama, Courthouse Cannons

(Continued from page 8)

McMillan and John David Finlay, her article states, "the cannons were given to Escambia County by Fort Barrancas at Pensacola early in 1905, when the fort was disposing of antiquated artillery."

**Note: The earlier article Lydia Grimes is referring to is "Escambia County's Cannon – And the Tale of a Famous Murder" by Doris Brunner. Doris's article points out that the cannon happened to come to Brewton when the county was shocked and outraged by the notorious murder of Jesse Troutman by F. L. Hancock.*

Doris wrote, "A small boy watching the heavy cannons being laboriously pulled from the depot up to the courthouse square by ox teams heard someone ask what was going to be done with the big guns."

Lydia Grimes reports that John David Finlay, Sr., who had been the small boy, recalled that one of the



**Escambia County, Alabama
Courthouse Cannons.**
<<https://mapio.net/pic/p-68839984/>>

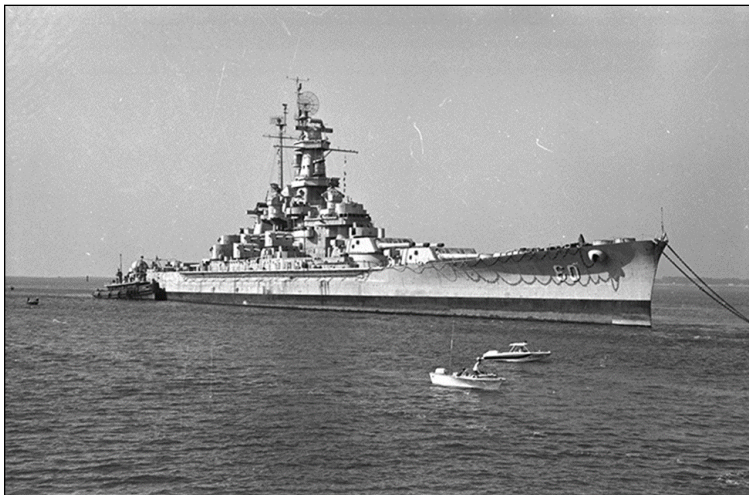
workmen answered the question of what was to be done with the big guns by referring to the trial. By that rejoinder, the small boy of 1906 was able to pinpoint the date at which the cannons were brought to Brewton.

Other sources note the use of a team of oxen to move the massive guns to their current site.

An interesting note from Kevin McKinley's article is that Fort Barrancas personnel were very familiar with Brewton in those days in that soldiers from Barrancas routinely came to Brewton to play baseball against Brewton's minor league team.

Kevin adds, "It has been said the guns would have been scrapped during the World War II recycling efforts but, fortunately for those of us who admire their presence, there was no crane available to move them."

The USS Alabama



The USS Alabama arriving in Mobile Bay from Washington state. Picture by Anthony Falletta for the Birmingham News, Sept. 14, 1964.
Picture and text from Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH).

In 1964, the battleship U.S.S. Alabama came "home" to Mobile Bay. In 1962, after learning that the battleship, which had been in commission during World War II (1942-1945), would be scrapped, a group of concerned Alabamians approached the state legislature, which established a commission to explore the possibility of acquiring the vessel for the state.

Through the efforts of that commission and the contributions of private citizens (who raised more than \$750,000 for the effort--including more than \$100,000 from Alabama schoolchildren), the ship made its journey from Bremerton, WA, to its final dock in Mobile Bay. There the ship was refurbished and became the centerpiece of Battleship Memorial Park, which officially opened January 9, 1965 (From Alabama Department of Archives and History) .

The ECHS *Journal* Section

David Tate Moniac-A First

The following article by Charlie Ware is a reprint. It was first published in Echoes, June 2016.

Moniac is a name that figures prominently in the heritage of many from the Poarch Creek community. I was recently doing research into my own family history and came upon the name of the man who was my great, great, great, great uncle, David Tate Moniac. The information I was reviewing contained a note that David Moniac was a graduate of West Point. This immediately captured my interest and prompted me to do an internet search of West Point records and graduates and to try to find out as much as I could about this historic man. At the west-point.org web site I was amazed to find the following:

This page is dedicated to a real First among the many notable graduates of West Point:

**The FIRST minority graduate of West Point...
The FIRST American Indian Graduate of West Point...
And the FIRST West Pointer from the Great State of Alabama.....
was MAJOR DAVID MONIAC-West Point Class of 1822...
this graduate was a Creek Indian."**

David Moniac was indeed the first Native American to graduate from West Point and, since Alabama became a state while he was enrolled, he became the first graduate from the state of Alabama. He had lived in the Little River area, only about 25 miles from Atmore.

David's father, Samuel Takkes-Hadjo Manac (spelling later changed to Moniac), was a Native American Creek. He was born in what is now central Alabama. In 1790 he was chosen to accompany the famous Creek leader, Alexander McGillivray, to



**Depiction of Davis Moniac
Leading a Charge**

New York to meet with George Washington to attempt to negotiate a treaty between the young United States and the Creek nation. Samuel and the other Native Americans at the meeting were presented medals by George Washington.

Samuel married Elizabeth Weatherford, the sister of William Weatherford (Red Eagle), and they opened an inn along the old federal road near Pintlala in what is now southern Montgomery County. Samuel became a very successful businessman, acquiring a large plantation where he raised horses and

cattle. It was here that their son David was born in 1802. David was named after David Tate, a half-brother of William Weatherford. David Tate was highly educated and was greatly respected among the Creeks.

In 1813 when a hostile band of Creeks (Red Sticks) revolted against the United States, Samuel refused to join the uprising. Instead, he headed a party of friendly Creeks (White Sticks) and served as a guide for the army. As a result, Samuel's plantation was ransacked, his house burned, and he and his family were forced to flee. They lost almost all of their possessions. After the war, Samuel received some compensation from the government and was able to acquire more land. He once again became a prominent farmer and community leader.

Little is known of David's boyhood and education, but apparently he had received some degree of basic education for by the time he was fifteen years old, he was thinking of attending college in the north and possibly becoming a military officer. There was a provision in the treaty of 1790 that required the United States to provide higher education for a small number of Creek boys. Also, Samuel was still highly regarded by many of the military officers with whom he had served, so in 1817 he was able to get an appointment to the United States Military

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Academy at West Point for his son.

David still had to pass entrance exams before being allowed to start classes at West Point so it was decided he needed to attend a preparatory school prior to reporting for his class. He went to Washington D.C. where he studied under a private tutor for about six months. David passed all of his exams and on September 18, 1817, began his first classes at West Point.

Apparently David adapted very well to the strict discipline and academic pressures of West Point and, even though his presence there was still considered quite unique, he seemed to make friends and enjoy a fairly normal social life. West Point records show that he occasionally got demerits for socializing too much during study hours. At the west-point.org web site there is an analysis of the demerit history of each cadet. A portion of the analysis for David Moniac reads: *“Interestingly, the nature of David's transgressions provide unique insight into his basic nature. I think we see in this record a young man who clearly has friends, does not mind enjoying himself, and is a bit willful.”*

At the end of his first year, even though David was passing all of his courses, he was not satisfied with his progress. He felt that he could fall even further behind, so he requested, and was given permission, to repeat the first year. His academic record was not outstanding, but over the next four years he was able to complete all the requirements for graduation. Academically he finished 39th out of a graduating class of 40, but, it should be noted, 69 of the members of his first year class never finished. This was quite an accomplishment for a young teenager from the backwoods of Alabama. On July 1, 1822, David Moniac marched proudly with his class onto the parade ground and tossed his hat into the air as a graduate of the United States Military Academy.

David was commissioned a second lieutenant and was assigned to the 6th Infantry Regiment, but he



1822 West Point Uniform

only served for about six months. He resigned his commission and returned home to Alabama. There is some speculation as to why he returned to Alabama but it was probably due to the fact that his family was losing much of their property to land speculators and swindlers and were being forced to move onto reservations. Also, at that time, the army was allowing officers to resign from the regular army to help form and train local militias.

David returned to Alabama and settled in the Little River area of north Baldwin County. He resumed work on the family farm and soon began acquiring additional property and established himself as a success-

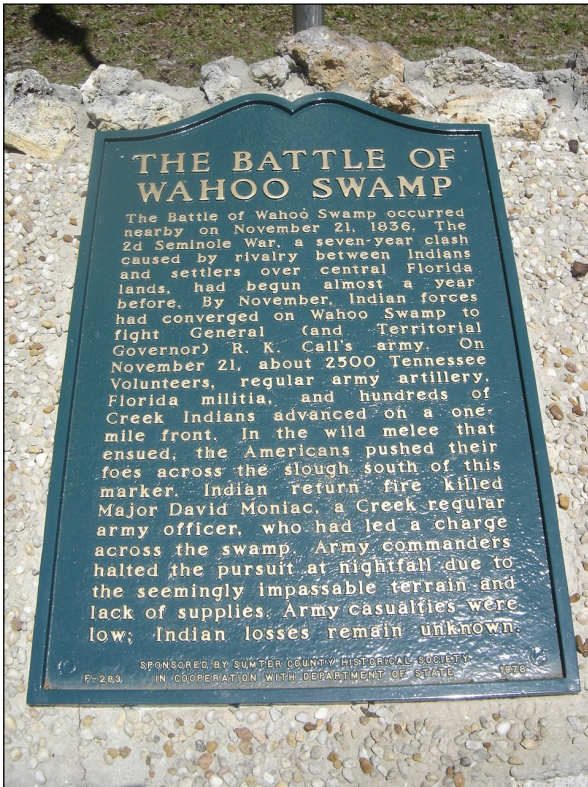
ful farmer and businessman. He was said to have enjoyed raising racehorses and seemed to be your typical country gentleman. An acquaintance was quoted as saying, "He was a high-toned chivalric gentleman and cordially esteemed by all who knew him." In 1828 he married Mary Powell and they had a son and a daughter. Their son, David Alexander Moniac, would later become sheriff of Baldwin County.

In 1836 the United States army became involved in what would become the Second Seminole War in Florida. Bands of Seminoles, who were distressed over a string of treaties which had been broken by the United States, were attacking and killing settlers and army troops throughout central Florida. The United States army was ordered to put down this uprising. The army requested volunteers from state militias throughout the south to augment the regular army units serving in Florida. A regiment of 700 Creek volunteers from Alabama was recruited with David Moniac serving as a Captain in the regiment. The Creek regiment departed on August 17 and soon joined with the other volunteer regiments and with the regular army units. The first battle took place on September 30 with the Creek regiment seeing almost daily action for several weeks thereafter. Captain Moniac was soon promoted to the rank of Major for heroism in battle.

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Inscription on the Marker for the Battle of Wahoo Swamp

The Battle of Wahoo Swamp occurred nearby on November 21, 1836. The 2d Seminole War, a seven-year clash caused by rivalry between Indians and settlers over central Florida lands, had begun almost a year before. By November, Indian forces had converged on Wahoo Swamp to fight General (and Territorial Governor) R. K. Call's army. On November 21, about 2500 Tennessee Volunteers, regular army artillery, Florida militia, and hundreds of Creek Indians advanced on a one-mile front. In the wild melee that ensued, the Americans pushed their foes across the slough south of this marker. Indian return fire killed Major David Moniac, a Creek regular army officer, who had led a charge across the swamp. Army commanders halted the pursuit at nightfall due to the seemingly impassable terrain and lack of supplies. Army casualties were low; Indian losses remain unknown.

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The Seminoles were pursued deep into the swamps but they were very familiar with this territory and could use it to their full advantage. They could hide out in the thick brush until the army was almost on top of them, open fire and then disappear deeper into the swamp. This would go on for days with the army stalled and unable to advance. On November 21 the Seminoles made a stand in an area called Wahoo Swamp which is in what is now Sumpter County. They were waiting in ambush along a river bank with the army pinned down on the other side, unable to move further. Someone had to do something to rally the troops and get the charge going again.

An article titled "Warrior From West Point" originally published in the February 1974 edition of Soldier Magazine described the battle and the death of Major David Moniac:

All forward movement of the attacking force had stopped. In the complete stillness the Major crouched and looked across the obstacle that had halted the advance. The swampy stream was not very wide but he had no way of knowing how deep it was. What he was certain of was that the Seminole warriors they had been pursuing were waiting and watching on the other side of the stream, but no sign betrayed their presence.

He had to get the attack moving again. There was only one way to do it-with a yell the Major leaped to his feet and charged into the stream, his troops following close behind. War whoops and a ragged volley of shots greeted the assault and the Major's body slipped beneath the murky waters. A well-placed Seminole musket ball had stopped the attack and ended the story of the first Indian graduate of West Point.

They buried him not far from the battlefield but no memorial to him was ever raised. He died as he

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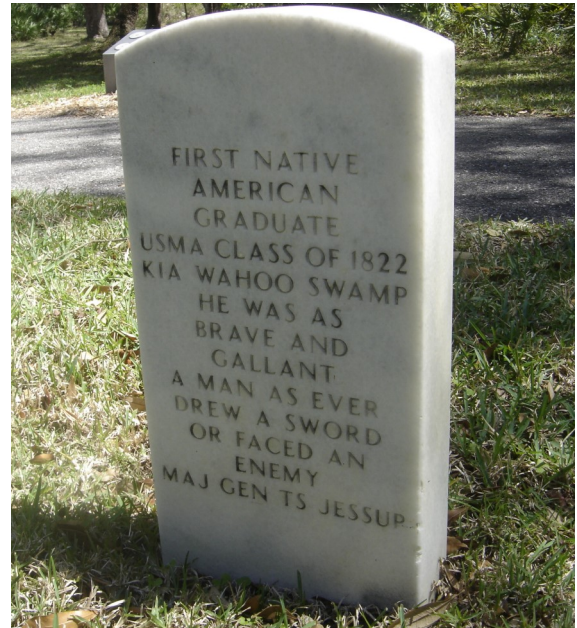
David Tate Moniac-A First

Front of Tombstone



**IN MEMORY OF
DAVID
MONIAC
MAJ
ALABAMA
MOUNTED
CREEK VOLUNTEERS
2ND SEMINOLE WAR
LT. 6TH US INF
DEC 25 1802
NOV. 21 1834**

Back of Tombstone



**FIRST NATIVE
AMERICAN
GRADUATE
USMA CLASS OF 1822
KIA WAHOO SWAMP
HE WAS AS
BRAVE AND
GALLANT
A MAN AS EVER
DREW A SWORD
OR FACED AN
ENEMY
MAJ GEN T S JESSUP**

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lived, in two worlds: as a Major in the service of the United States Army-and as an Indian warrior in the service of his people.

The Wahoo Swamp area lies along present day SR-48 about six miles west of Interstate-75. The state of Florida is currently attempting to acquire about 850 acres of the land containing Wahoo Swamp in order to create a memorial park and land preserve. There is a historical marker along the highway near the site. A portion of the marker reads:

In the fierce engagement fought from tree to tree in mud and water, American troops pushed the Seminoles across the slough south of this marker. The Indians' return fire resulted in the death of Major David Moniac, a Creek regular army officer who led a bold attack across the swamp.

In 1990, the body of Major Moniac was moved to the new Florida National Cemetery which is located near Bushnell. On his tombstone are carved the words spoken about him in 1836 by Major General Thomas Jessup, the commander of all U.S. forces in Florida:

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“He was as brave and gallant a man as ever drew a sword or faced an enemy.”

There are several ironies surrounding the death of David Moniac. The first is that the Seminole Wars never officially ended. Some of the Seminoles were captured or surrendered and were later relocated, but many continued to elude the pursuing armies for years and moved deeper and deeper into the swamps of south Florida where their descendants still live today.

The second irony is that David’s wife, Mary, was a cousin of Osceola, the chief who was leading the Seminoles during the war.

The third was that within days of David’s death, his father Samuel also died. Samuel died in Pass

Christian, Mississippi and was buried there with the medal he had received from George Washington in his pocket.

Fourth, David served in Florida with a number of his classmates from West Point, three of whom also died in battle. It was one of his classmates who was responsible for naming one of the newly constructed fortifications “Fort Moniac” in David’s honor.

Finally, at the same time that Major David Moniac died a hero in battle while serving in the United States Army, this same United States was in the process of removing many of David’s family members and friends from their homes and from the lands they had lived on for centuries, and forcing them to relocate hundreds of miles away to “Indian Territory.”

Remembering Brewton’s Boys of Summer

The following article from the Brewton Standard is by Lydia Grimes at <<https://www.brewtonstandard.com/2008/09/24/remembering-brewtons-boys-of-summer/>>.

Introduction

In 1940, the only way Brewton residents could see a live baseball game was to go to a local pasture to watch local young men play. There were no televisions to bring the game into the home, but the love of the national pastime kept people coming to watch a good game.

Almost every community, no matter the size, had a space that was used to play a game of baseball. Brewton's was a field just south of the Brewton Iron Works, and it became home for everything from games among friends to farm teams for the major leagues. D.P. Liles, a local businessman, owned the field and allowed it to be used for several different athletic events.

But Brewton became home to organized ball when it joined a division of the Deep South Baseball League, and those same boys who played on the

The Brewton Millers were a Minor League Baseball team that represented the city of Brewton, Alabama. They played in the Alabama State League from 1940–1941 and from 1946–1950. A previous team played in Brewton in 1903 in the Interstate League.

field as youngsters became semi-pro players - although their pay was not what we would associate with major leaguers or even minor league players today.

Baseball Comes to Town

In the late 1930s, several small towns became members of the Deep South Class D Baseball League, according to Scott Parks, who maintains a Web site dedicated to the league. The Alabama Florida League, a division of Deep South, started with eight teams in 1936, with seven towns in Alabama and Panama City, Fla., hosting teams.

The new division was lucky enough to have attracted some major league players, including Everett “Yam” Yaryan, who started his career playing for the Chicago White Sox from 1921-1922. Yaryan was a catcher for the Birmingham Barons from 1926 to 1930, and he managed the Andalusia Bulldogs to a playoff championship in 1937.

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Remembering Brewton's Boys of Summer

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In 1940, with baseball growing in popularity, a group of Brewton businessmen decided to bring a team to the city. Early in January, the group met to determine whether they could even afford a franchise. They had a grand total of \$850 - not enough to buy the Panama City team, their target - but businessman Gladin Scott Byrne Sr. assured the Alabama Florida League the rest of the money would be forthcoming.

Byrne became president of the new team, now part of the Alabama State League since Panama City had sold its franchise. Everett "Yam" Yaryan was hired to manage the new Brewton Millers. Yaryan had a good record for winning games and had worked with legends in the sport. At the age of 47, he found himself playing once again when he couldn't find a catcher for the team.

Meanwhile, plans were made to improve Liles Park, which had been used for several purposes over the years. Additional grandstand seats, bleacher space and new lights were among the improvements planned.

The pitchers and catchers arrived on March 22, 1940, to begin practice on March 25. After some exhibition games the first game of the season was played on April 18. Besides the players who came from Panama City with the purchase of the team, there were plenty of locals who showed up, hoping to be selected. Brewton native Dick Jernigan was among the paid players. But Jernigan's baseball career was short-lived.

Playing Days

Brewton soon found itself supporting a semi-pro farm team, which was associated with the Chicago White Sox in 1945 and the Washington Senators in 1948.

Brewton resident Scotty Byrne, whose father had been one of the original group of businessmen who bought the club, also played in the league. He left school in Brewton to join the military during World War II and came back to finish high school. He spent a lot of time down at the ball field.

The younger Byrne began playing when Enterprise coach Ben Catchings invited him to play. Byrne played two seasons for Enterprise in 1947 and 1948

before he came back to play for the Brewton Millers in 1949.

The ballplayers boarded at a couple of places in Brewton. Mrs. Eunice Gillis not only took them in; her daughter, Sylvia, married one of the players, Henry Snow. Mrs. Annie Lee Strain, who ran a boarding house on Belleville Avenue, also took some as boarders.

Boarders weren't the only ones who made a little money from the league. Bennie Stokes ran a grocery store on Mildred Street at this time, and he and his sons ran a concession stand at the park.

The Brewton team did not fare too well the first season, and it was not clear if there would be a next season because of financial problems. When reminded of this, Byrne said, "That's nothing. Every year ended that way."

Family Fun

Despite the financial troubles, baseball gave Brewton residents - and even players - a place to take their families for fun.

Jernigan remembers taking his oldest son, Mike, to the park.

Some of the players met their wives in Brewton. Barbara Carden's sister-in-law, Faye Miller, married John "Denny" Di Nicola, who played second base.

Di Nicola was a Brooklyn native and regular visitor to Ebbetts Field while he was growing up. Right after he was discharged from the U.S. Navy in 1946, he responded to an ad and got a six-week course in a baseball camp.

Di Nicola remembers the city fondly. "I enjoyed those years in Brewton," he said. "The fans were the best, and without them I wouldn't have lasted three years. In my third year I met a young lady named Faye Miller from East Brewton. We married in March 1950 and next year we will celebrate our 59th anniversary."

Baseball once was alive and well in Brewton. For 10 years, excluding the war years, the park was the place to be. Of course there are still high school, Little League and other organized baseball teams, but the day is gone when players played just for the fun of it as a pastime.

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