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**The February 2022 Newsletter**  
The Next Regular Meeting will be  
**Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 3:00 pm in the  
Meeting Room in the  
McMillan Museum  
(mask required).**



**Guest Speaker  
Mike Bunn**

**The Program for the February 22, 2022  
Meeting: A Discussion of the  
Fourteenth Colony  
the Forgotten Colony.**

The program will be presented by historian, author, lecturer Mike Bunn. His presentation is based on his book Fourteenth Colony: British West Florida and the Gulf South's Revolutionary Era, 1763-1781.

*From his blog at <<https://www.mikebunn.net/>> this biography:* Mike Bunn currently serves as Director of Historic Blakely State Park in Spanish Fort, Alabama. Previously, he directed the Historic Chattahoochee Commission (a bi-state agency operating in southeastern Alabama and southwestern Georgia) Museum and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History's

*(Continued on page 2)*

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**OFFICERS ELECTED AT JANUARY 2022  
MEETING FOR THE NEXT BIENNIUM**

President, *Don Sales*  
Vice-President, *Charlie Ware*  
Secretary, *open*  
Treasurer, *John Angel*  
Echoes Editor, *Ranella Merritt*  
Librarian, *Sherry Johnston*  
Publicity, *Clay Lisenby and Stephen Salter*  
Historian/Curator, *Tom McMillan*

*Paul Merritt, Chairman of the Nominating Committee presented this Slate of Officers at the January Meeting which were approved by a unanimous vote of members attending.*

*Other members of the Nominating Committee were John Angel, Don Sales, and Ranella Merritt. John Angel, Don Sales, and Sherry Johnston will share the duties of Secretary until the office can be filled. Don Sales is open to any volunteer for the office.*



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Volume 49 No. 2  
February 2022

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## The Program

(Continued from page 1)

Museum of Mississippi. He has also worked with the Birmingham Historical Society and the Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society.

Mike obtained his undergraduate degree from Faulkner University, and earned master's degrees in history and higher education administration from the University of Alabama. He also completed a graduate certificate in public history at the University of West Georgia. Burns is author or co-author of several

books on Gulf South history focusing on the colonial, early statehood, antebellum and Civil War periods.

Mike is editor of *Muscogiana*, the journal of the Muscogee County (Georgia) Genealogical Society, and chair of the Baldwin County Historic Development Commission. He frequently teaches regional history courses with local continuing education programs, and serves as a lecturer with the Alabama Humanities Foundation bicentennial scholars program. Mike and his wife Tonya live in Daphne, Alabama with their daughter Zoey.

## An Interview with Mike Bunn

The article "Q&A: Author Mike Bunn" by Breck Pappas, March 8, 2021 appeared in *Mobile Bay Magazine* <<https://mobilebaymag.com/qa-author-mike-bunn/>>.

**Congratulations, Mike, on another beautifully written and produced work. You call this a "forgotten story" in the book's title. Why do you think the history of our region during the Revolutionary era has been overlooked?**

I think there are several reasons we have overlooked the British colonial period in Gulf Coast history, chief among them being our obsessive focus on developments in the 13 colonies in this period. This of course led to the formation of the United States, and that foundational story is rightfully front and center in any interpretation of our nation's past. But in the process of celebrating the nation's origins, I think we have forgotten there was an America beyond the Atlantic seaboard in 1776. I chose the title "Fourteenth Colony" specifically to communicate how extraneous anything beyond the number 13 can seem in American colonial history and to communicate the point that there is more to the story. In simplest terms, we have forgotten our history during the Revolutionary era because West Florida did not rebel against the British government. But that doesn't mean it was overtly loyal, however. It just means there is a compelling story yet to be told that



**Sacred Fire, at the Chattahoochee Indian Heritage Center in Fort Mitchell, eastern Russell County.**

will be entirely new to most readers.

**Tell us about your path to becoming the director of Historic Blakeley State Park, and did that role lead you in any way to your interest in this subject?**

I grew up in east Alabama just outside of Columbus, Georgia (*Community of Crawford, AL, Russell County*). That area has a rich history that includes it being the heart of Creek Indian country. It also has a colorful antebellum past and was

the site of a significant Civil War battle. That early fascination with the past led me to pursue my passion for history in college — I earned bachelor's and master's degrees in history — and in my career. I've worked with historical societies, museums, commissions and parks, the common denominator being they all allowed me opportunities to research, write, interpret and educate people about history. I came to Blakeley through my connection with former director Jo Ann Flirt, whom I met while working to encourage better state funding for Alabama's precious historic sites. I had always been intrigued with the Gulf Coast's unique history, and moving here allowed me to pursue it as never before. Stories like that of West Florida suddenly became no longer just intriguing history, but local history, and that is always an important distinction in my opinion.

(Continued on page 3)

## An Interview with Mike Bunn

(Continued from  
page 2)



**Blakely Park**

### **How long did you work on this project, and what was the research process like?**

Well, I came to this project having spent a little time investigating the Gulf Coast's colonial era in general, so I had a bit of a head start. Still, I spent over a year of research focused solely on this time period before I had enough material that would allow me to begin writing. My process during the research phase was to familiarize myself with everything on the topic — every book, article, thesis, dissertation and original sources I could find. West Florida existed for only a short while and has a relatively thin historiography compared to some subjects in regional history. I spent about a solid year trying to transform all my notes into a narrative account of the history of West Florida.

### **Were there any surprises or magical moments along the way?**

Yes, there were several things I discovered that I did not know much about previously. I found the inner workings of the representative government the British attempted to establish here to be fascinating. From a purely local perspective, I was really intrigued to learn about some of the details of the settlement of the Mobile Bay area, particularly the Eastern Shore, during the time period. It gave me a new perspective on the really deep roots of this area's history. I found the stories of the immigrants who came here to settle to be at turns entertaining and tragic, but always enlightening. I would say that what stands out to me more than anything, though, was getting the opportunity to piece together all of the details of the dramatic military campaigns, which swept over the region during the Revolutionary War. We forget that the Gulf Coast was a theater of operations for war between Spain and Great Britain during our nation's struggle for independence, and the story of those campaigns are some of the most colorful and poignant in our region's rich past.

**There are some wonderful firsthand accounts of Mobile scattered throughout these pages. One naturalist in 1765 described the streams of pre-**

**sent-day Montrose as “the finest water I have seen in this country.” Another observer described the entrance to Mobile Bay as “one of the most dangerous parts on the whole coast.” What other treats can a Mobile Bay-area reader expect to find in this book?**

Yes, the Mobile area gets significant treatment in the book, as it was one of only two major urban centers in the colony and a primary center of activity throughout the years of British dominion. I offer both the accounts of William Bartram, whose visit to Mobile led him to celebrate the area's natural beauty in rapturous prose, and the depictions of dejected British officers such as Robert Farmar, whose first impression of the city led him to suppose it a squalid, disease-ridden backwater place. Beauty is always in the eye of the beholder, I suppose! I try to let those I write about in the book speak for themselves about what they saw worth celebrating or decrying in the new environment they would call home. I think it is a unique and honest portrait of a time and place.

### **Since this is our Outdoors Issue, what advice can you give our readers about exploring the outdoors at Historic Blakeley State Park?**

Forgive my shameless plug, but Historic Blakeley State Park is a premier regional destination for anyone interested in outdoor recreation on the Gulf Coast. We have RV, tent, and improved tent camping, as well as cabins and camping shelters, all on one of the most unique historic sites in Alabama. We offer over 20 miles of hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails, enabling visitors to explore layers of history from the prehistoric past to the colonial era and of course the Civil War — we are Alabama's largest Civil War battlefield. But one of the best ways the park offers opportunities for visitors to connect with the environment is on board one of our cruises into the scenic Mobile-Tensaw Delta. We are the Delta's longest-running cruise operator and take multiple themed cruises into the waters of this natural wonder 12 months a year. To see all of our amenities and events, just check our website [blakeleypark.com](http://blakeleypark.com).

## **An Excerpt from the Book Forgotten Colony: The Story of the Gulf South During America's Revolutionary Era By Mike Bunn**

The Revolutionary Era is one of the most storied and studied time periods in America's compelling national saga. Conjuring visions of righteous colonial protests in Boston Harbor, sober state-making in the chambers of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and martial determination on the frigid meadows at Valley Forge, the 1760s and 1770s are venerated by Americans for having witnessed the formation of the United States from the cooperative efforts of thirteen former British colonies.

It is an era studded with iconic moments and rich with legendary figures that are a part of our shared national canon. It is sadly ironic that this grand pageant is a heritage from which Gulf Coast residents have long felt detached owing in large part to geography, for an important but little known chapter in America's colonial and Revolutionary drama played out along their sunny shores.

British West Florida, stretching from the mighty Mississippi to the shallow bends of the Apalachicola and incorporating large portions of what are now the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, is the forgotten fourteenth colony in America's founding era. The colony and its sister province, East Florida, were erected by the British at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War in 1763 on the ruins of the vast but rather vaguely defined territory formerly claimed by French and Spanish colonials.

Headquartered in Pensacola, with scarcely a European settlement west of Mobile Bay, the province grew exceedingly slowly and only began to come of age as the Revolutionary War flared up along the Atlantic seaboard. Eventually the colony featured clusters of European settlement at such places as Pensacola, Campbelltown, Mobile, Baton Rouge, Manchac, and Natchez, and it assumed a position as a dynamic and promising part of Britain's North American holdings. But despite the



**Map Is Cropped from the Map  
"The British Colonies in North America,  
1763-1775"  
from the Historical Atlas  
by William Shepherd (1911).**

grand visions of its leaders and the best efforts of its residents, the colony struggled economically and its representative government never quite became the force in provincial life that similar institutions in the east coast colonies did. In fact, West Florida is so obscure to us today at least in part owing to its relatively small population and its pressing daily concerns; the latter occupied residents and precluded their becoming a vital part of

intercolonial discussions during a period of political unrest. As it remained officially loyal to the crown throughout the Revolution, West Florida is usually regarded as an afterthought where little of consequence occurred.

Yet the Revolution did find the colony, and the story and the ways it did so colorfully and substantively shapes the history of the region. First came politely declined invitations by the Continental Congress to join its sister provinces to the east in working towards the establishment of a new, independent American nation. Next came a wave of immigration after being declared a safe asylum for besieged loyalists elsewhere. In 1778 came a daring raid by a ragtag American force along the Mississippi which exposed the province's inadequate defenses and caused a great deal of unrest even if never seriously threatening its takeover by a Continental army. Finally came an audacious, prolonged, offensive spearheaded by the ambitious and capable governor of neighboring Spanish Louisiana, Bernardo de Galvez, which would ultimately bring about the end of West Florida's days as a part of the British Empire.

Spain never formally allied itself with the nascent United States in its war for independence, but it recognized an opportunity to take advantage of a distracted colonial rival. Spain's stunning campaign to wrest control of West Florida from the British featured intense and spirited fighting from the fall of 1779 to the spring of 1781. This war within a war

*(Continued on page 5)*

## **An Excerpt from the Book Forgotten Colony: The Story of the Gulf South During America's Revolutionary Era By Mike Bunn**

*(Continued from page 4)*

helped divert vital resources from other Revolutionary War campaigns by the British and culminated in the martial conquest of the colony by the Spaniards.

But despite all this, somewhat few people know the colony existed at all. A forgotten Gulf Coast entity which graced regional maps for less than two decades, the province goes virtually unmentioned in most histories of the American Revolutionary Era and is all but unknown to the great majority of those living within its former borders today. The situation is understandable to some degree, as precious few historical sites commemorate the people, places, and events of the region's years as part of the British Empire, and almost no extant structures date to its mid-eighteenth century heyday.

Its name alone can confuse some, to boot, as "West Florida" naturally connotes to the modern ear a certain geographical specificity that takes some explaining to communicate the true physical footprint of the colony. Save for the findings of some archaeological investigations and a few scattered historic markers (and one magnificent memorial statue in Pensacola), the British period in Gulf Coast history can only be imagined through the pages of the rather limited historiography on the subject. While that historical literature is solid and features the work of some eminent



**Bernardo de Galvez Monument,  
Pensacola**

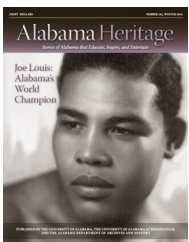
colonial historians, candidly it is not exactly brimming with best-sellers likely to be familiar to the casual historian.

But the fact that the seminal events in America's founding drama—the political unrest and legendary war between the immortal thirteen rebellious colonies and Great Britain which witnessed the birth of

the United States as an independent nation—occurred far away from the Gulf has probably been most responsible for rendering West Florida's story so overlooked, understudied, and poorly understood. Scores of textbooks and narrative histories chronicling the era do not so much as mention British West Florida, much less discuss its place in the Empire.

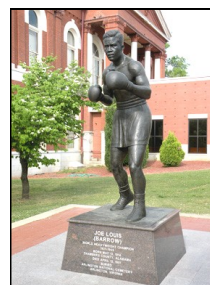
It is not uncommon to find within these books maps depicting Britain's North American colonies during the Revolution as existing only along the eastern seaboard, with the amorphous southwestern frontier behind them labeled as simply "Indian land" or "Spanish territory." In short, Americans, both scholars and lay historians, often so associate our nation's founding era with the thirteen rebellious colonies that we have collectively forgotten that there even was an America farther west than the Atlantic coast in 1776. In this book, I attempt to put West Florida back on the map of our historical consciousness.

### **Abstracts from Featured Articles in Alabama Heritage Magazine's 2022 Winter Issue**



#### **Cover Story: Joe Lewis Alabama's World Champion By Dot Moore**

Joe Louis, one of the world's most acclaimed boxers, was born to a humble Alabama family. Though he did not begin boxing until after his family relocated to Michigan, Louis returned to Alabama during his



courthouse lawn.

World War II service, and he fondly remembered special friends from his childhood in the state.

More than one hundred years after his birth, Chambers County commemorated its storied son by commissioning, installing, and dedicating a statue of him on the

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Abstracts from Featured Articles in Alabama Heritage Magazine's 2022 Winter Issue

(Continued from page 5)



### **Cheers and Jeers for Ireland: Éamon De Valera's Alabama Experience** By Mark Holan

New York City native Éamon De Valera was of European descent, as his father was Spanish and his mother Irish. Though he was an American citizen, he spent most of his life in Ireland, where he became a fierce advocate for Irish independence. During one tumultuous, tornado-filled week in Alabama, De Valera took his fight to the states, hoping to garner support for his cause. Though he eventually became president of Ireland, De Valera never forgot his time in Alabama or the people he met in the state.

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Alabama in the American Revolution** By Robert D. Temple

Before Alabama became a state, the area served as a lesser-known but critical seat of activity during the Revolutionary War. Along with Natchez and Pensacola, Mobile formed a strategic triangle, as together, the three towns offered important resources: a seaport, agriculture, and trade along the Mississippi River. Robert Temple elucidates how the Americans, British, Spanish, French, and Native Americans all worked to pursue their own interests in this area during the war—and how their efforts helped shape its outcome.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Copies of Alabama Heritage are available in the Alabama Room**



### **Bossie O'Brien Hundley, Suffragist & Fighter** By Monica Tapper

For nearly two years, Birmingham suffragist Bossie O'Brien Hundley advocated for women's right to vote, even traversing the state and holding public exchanges with congressmen. Though she successfully brought some skeptics to her cause, her efforts were ultimately unsuccessful due to entrenched ideas about the role of women and how extending the vote to white women might further enfranchise the state's Black citizens.

### **Other Featured Abstracts from Alabama Heritage**



### **Portraits & Landscapes Monju Spirits in a Bottle** By David Kyle Rakes

To many people, an old blue bottle might not spark any interest. But for author David Rakes, it posed a mystery: where and when did it originate, and for what purpose? With a lot of careful sleuthing and a little bit of luck, he uncovered the rich history of this humble object, learning about nineteenth-century Mobile and the alcoholic beverage industry in the process.

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Alabama Governors Rufus W. Cobb** By Colin Rafferty

Alabama's twenty-fifth governor, Democrat Rufus Cobb, oversaw a number of important developments in the state, including the creation of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial School and ushering the state through the early years of Reconstruction. However, after his term ended, it was tainted by scandal relating to his treasurer, leaving a somewhat checkered legacy for Cobb.

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## Abstracts from Featured Articles in Alabama Heritage Magazine's 2022 Winter Issue

(Continued from page 6)

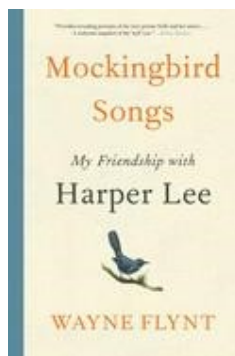


### **Behind the Image What's in a Name? By Frances Osborn Robb**

A photograph taken in a watermelon

patch around the turn of the century leads to some interesting discoveries about its subjects, Jane Smithson Jones Graham, and Flavius Josephus Graham, and about Alabama life during that time.

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Reading the Southern Past The Book that Never Was By Stephen Goldfarb**

In this quarter's installment of "Reading the Southern Past," author Stephen Goldfarb's subject is Alabamian Harper Lee, whose early success with To Kill a Mockingbird was followed by a lengthy absence of additional publications. Goldfarb reviews

Casey Cep's Furious Hours: Murder, Fraud, and the Last Trial of Harper Lee (Alfred A. Knopf, 2019), which explores an unpublished true-crime text Lee worked on for numerous years and Wayne Flynt's Mockingbird Songs: My Friendship with Harper Lee (Harpers, 2017), in which the noted historian reminisces about his friendship with the author.

## News and Announcements

### **Eufaula Annual Pilgrimage of Homes Set for Friday, April 1—Sunday, April 3**



**Shorter Mansion, Eufaula**

The Eufaula Heritage Association is proud to welcome back the 55th Annual Eufaula Pilgrimage. Eufaula hosts Alabama's oldest tour of homes and has more than 700 structures listed on the National Register.

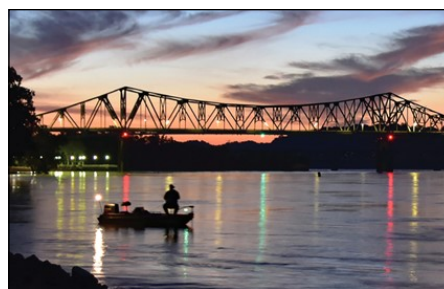
Each spring, the city of Eufaula opens its doors to share this historical wealth. The city's main street, Eufaula Avenue, lined with dogwood, magnolias and oaks, is flanked by antebellum mansions that "rise like ornate wedding cakes," as described by Alabama Tourism Director Lee Sentell, author of The Best of Alabama.

Visitors can take guided tours of homes and sites and also enjoy an art show, concerts, a wax museum and much more.

Order tickets now by calling the Shorter Mansion at 334-687-3793. Online tickets available soon.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **The Alabama Historical Association Annual Meeting, Florence, AL April 7-9, 2022**



**O'Neal Bridge over  
Tennessee River  
Near Florence, Built 1939.**

Details for the annual meeting—including paper presentations, keynote speakers, tours, and more—are available in the spring newsletter. Visit [aub.ie/](http://aub.ie/)

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Cold Weather/School Closings Then And Now

By Earline Crews



**Earline  
Presented a  
Program for  
ECHS Feb.  
2020**



**Chandler School, Wallace,  
Early 1900's**

Circa 1950, late January, early February. 4th grader me. The weather was rip roaring cold, colder, coldest, drizzly, freezing, ice spewed up in the ditches blue COLD.

Our old unheated school-bus driven by Mr. Bill Grissett struggled to grind along the rutted-out dirt road around the Beasley Loop. I won't go into a long explanation for that name, just trust me, it was named the Beasley Loop because the Beasley families had lived and owned the land along that road since the early days of settlements in Escambia County Alabama. No road signs, simply known as The Beasley Loop.

Before my time here there was once a little one room school situated along the Beasley Loop. Known as the Chandler School. Mr. Lemley Chandler an immigrant from Ireland and a Confederate War soldier had made his home here and built a school so as to have a place for his children and his kin and neighbor's children to have a place to get educated. He hired a teacher to live at his home to teach his children and the community children because he believed in education for everyone.

Mr. Chandler's daughter Essie married Carrie Beasley. Mr. Carrie and Miss Essie had a large Family; one of their daughters Cleo, was a year younger than myself. Lots of other Beasleys lived on the loop; many still do and at the time of this writing the road has a county designated sign stating, Beasley Loop.

At the time of this memory the Chandler School was long gone and our school was named A. D. Kelly at Wallace Alabama. We simply called our school Wallace.

So, on this day of cold winter weather our bus got to sticking and sliding sideways in the deep ruts caused by the pulp wood trucks that had passed earlier at daybreak to get to the woods where the menfolk had gone to work loading pulpwood and fat

stumps. Mr. Bill wrestled the steering wheel on our bus as if he was in a calf roping competition.

We all stood and laughed and clapped and craned our necks to watch the descent into the ditch. After a very graceful slide and a firm thud against the ditch bank, the old bus shuttered and settled. The door was pressed against the

ditch bank.

We all clapped and pushed to unload out the back emergency door. This day was headed for a good time for the Bill Grissett run.

Those days our communities were without phone service. Electricity had come to us in 1946, so phones were not so urgent. The only phones outside Brewton were located at Wallace School in our Principal Mr. B.G. Tew's office and at Ollie Gilmore's Store in downtown Wallace. A wall hung crank phone was the 911 call center for the community.

If memory serves me well, Mr. Bill walked out to the main road between Barnett Crossroads and Wallace to find a way to go call the county office for help with the "ditched" bus.

We all scattered about and some older students decided we would spend our time walking on to school, a distance of about 5-6 miles. Wallace being a Jr. High School since 1948, the oldest kids were 9th graders and the group had all sizes back to 1st graders. The older girls flirted with the older boys and the younger of us straggled along and played in the mud and frozen puddles. We came to the old brick lined CCC (*Civilian Conservation Corps*) crossing at Narrow Gap branch to see the swollen waters rushing downstream. What to do was determined by the take charge 9th grade boys and girls.

The older boys took off their shoes and socks, rolled up their dungaree pant legs, or khaki pant legs to carry the older girls across those roiling muddy waters to the other side. Lots of screaming, lots of flirting, lots of pretending to be frightened, but for darn sure, lots of fun. Some of the 9th grade, muscled up boys carried 2-3 little kids at a time across the freezing branch waters that fine day to make it to

(Continued on page 9)



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Cold Weather/School Closings Then And Now

(Continued from page 8)

school in time for a late lunch and to reload onto another bus for the trip home again. Our arrival at school had us frozen solid, hungry as bears after hibernation and full of tales about our hard-won fame from sliding in the ditch and crossing Narrow Gap Branch when it was out of the banks from all the rain.

Our teachers were spell bound from hearing our ordeal. Our lunchroom ladies rushed about to feed us some PBJ's and milk. We got all the fresh oranges and government prunes we could eat that day. Mrs. Essie Roberson, Mrs. Ruth Crutchfield smiled and made us feel important as they slapped those delicious sandwiches together for us. That was a day that will live in twisted infamy for me.

It was COLD but so much fun Y'all, so much fun. My dress sashes were frozen solid from dragging



**Wallace School Early 1900's**

in the water, I couldn't feel my toes for hours, my nose stopped running from frozen snot.....I  
It was COLD.

Nobody worried about us kids being left with a bus stuck in the ditch, nobody came looking for a bus load of school kids out on the frozen roads. We understood how to get to school without being chaperoned and accounted for. We knew how to take

care of our situation because we learned by example from our parents and community.

I remember that day every time I hear of cold weather closing schools due to inclement weather.

Seeing and hearing about the schools being closed tomorrow lets me know I lived in the best of times. I'm not judging how things are done today, just wish our kids could enjoy the times like I did. Time changes everything.....some better, some worse---

## History of the Alabama's Governor's Mansion

This article is from the *Alabama Department of Archives and History* <<https://archivesalabama.gov/mansion.html>>.

The first official residence for Alabama's chief executive was acquired in 1911. Before that time governors lived in private homes or even in local hotels during their terms of office. Built in 1906 by Moses Sable, the imposing Beaux Arts brownstone was located on the southwest corner of South Perry and South Streets in Montgomery.

A special commission of seven members was authorized by Act #24 of the 1911 legislative session to contract for the erection, purchase, or improvement of a residence and the acquisition of grounds. The Sable home cost the state \$46,500.

Governor Emmett O'Neal (1911-15) was the first to



**Historic Marker in Front of Governor's Mansion**

occupy the mansion.

The current official residence superseded the original executive mansion in 1950. A state commission established by the legislature in that year purchased the home of the late General Robert Fulwood Ligon from his heirs.

It was located at 1108 South Perry Street, just a few blocks away from the existing mansion. Purchased at a cost of

\$100,000 by the Capitol Building Commission, another \$130,000 was spent on renovations and furnishings.

Originally built in 1907 for General Ligon by the architect Weatherly Carter, the current executive residence is in the Neo-Classical Revival style with Corinthian columns at the front. It features a

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## History of the Alabama's Governor's Mansion

*(Continued from page 9)*

spacious interior with a double staircase leading from the foyer to apartments above.

A formal garden surrounded by a high ornamental wall originally covered the entire back lawn of the property which extends through the block to South Court Street. A pool in the shape of the state of Alabama was built in the mid-1970s, along with a stone grotto with waterfall.

Governor Gordon Persons and his family were the first to occupy the former Ligon home when it became the Governor's Mansion, moving in on the day of his inauguration - January 15, 1951.

The former official residence housed the state offices of the Adjutant General and the Military Department until May of 1959, when the property was sold to the Montgomery Academy, a private school.

In 1963, the original Governor's Mansion was demolished as part of the construction of Interstate Highway 85.



**Moses Sabel House  
Alabama's First  
Executive Mansion  
1911-1959  
*Photo from Wikipedia***



**Present Governor's Mansion**

**At the Right,  
Main Staircase in  
the Entrance Hall**



## Why Latin is Used to Identify Plants and Animals

**By Darryl Searcy**

Certainly many have wondered why we use Latin instead of the common name of a plant. Well, we do use the common name, but using Latin is for good reason too. Latin brings it all together regardless of what one calls the plant, and it's the only language used by all professional people of the world as a means of common recognition. Thus one person may call a plant a sunflower while another might call it a buttercup. Are they wrong? No, but it can be confusing to the untrained. Latin describes the plant in com-

plete detail and separates, if you will, apples from oranges.

Go now to the year 300 BC. The predominant language was Latin. The Roman Empire was the most powerful ruling body, and Holy Roman and Hebrew were the primary spiritual teachings of the time.

It became known that a noted but primitive scientist by the name of Theophrastus had written an essay called "Inquiry into Plants." The writing was done with much authority and in Latin. The Church saw

*(Continued on page 11)*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Why Latin is Used to Identify Plants and Animals

(Continued from page 10)

the benefits of such a writing and the head of the Roman Church (the Pope) commanded that his monks and priests would likewise catalogue everything they saw, whether plant or animal, and each would be classified in such a way as to fall into a system whereby all living things would be given into a family group, or in a sub-family, tribe or clan behind the family.

These holy men were the right people for the job as they were assigned to travel with the conquering armies, which were spread throughout the known world. The monks, priests and rabbis were not only the most respected individuals of the time, but were the teachers, scientists spiritual leaders, and medics to all people.

The clerics began their work in earnest, starting with humans, which they called homosapiens (Latin, 'homo' meaning mankind). The system then as devised was at best complicated and few people could remember the long descriptions needed to describe an object. But it was all written down and those writings remain in the Vatican archives today.

Until 1753 AD the scholars named plants by using a one word generic name followed by a descriptive phrase to indicate the species. Imagine that just two species of a white rose were known; one might be named *Rosa alba, caule, aculeate, peduncules laevitatus, calycibus semipinnatis glabris*. The other white rose might be called *Rosa alba, caule petuolisque aculeate, calycis foliolis indivisis*. What this means is that one opens to the left and the other does not; one has three to five leaf segments while the other has seven to nine, and both have prickles. As new species were added, the names became incredibly complex. No one could remember or work with such clumsy names.

So it came that in 1753 a world body of scholars met in Rome to decide if the system was any good and whether it should be discontinued. When the Church was consulted it said the scholars should "Do with it what you will, we don't care, but the use of Latin as a means of common communication between the brothers and sisters of the faith would continue." This system has survived and is in use to this day. The words are Italicized because that's how it was originally written.

It was almost decided that the system would be scrapped as it was too complicated to remember. But, a young botanist from Sweden had an idea and he had devised a binomial, or two-word system, for naming plants and animals. His system would use one word after the generic name to indicate the species. This permitted referring to a species without having to quote its full, confusing description. It revolutionized the naming of plants and animals and his system continues in use today. The young botanist was Carolus Linnaeus.

Linnaeus showed us that all needed be done was to assign a family name (noun); Aster, Canna, Phlox, etc., followed by a one word description that would be used as an adjective. It all made sense, and it was agreed that's how it would be done, thus eliminating the need for every language in the world having to restructure the system to fit it's tongue. The system would remain uniform throughout the world. In fact, it became the first international use of a language -- just as English or French is used at the United Nations today.

Although Latin is a dead language, its use as a scientific descriptive tool has remained ongoing. Any person, in any land who uses Latin when referring to plants and animals will be understood by his colleagues without knowing a single word of the other's tongue.

A similar use of Latin was been adopted by the legal and medical profession as a means of communication between their professional equals in other parts of the world. The system continues to flourish after more than 2,600 years of use. Today there are over 200 plant families containing thousands of sub-families, tribes, clans, sub-tribes and sub-clans and over 350,000 species of living plants known throughout the world.

Now, in a more practical sense, let us assume that an individual has a medical problem, but is still able to travel through many cultures and languages. All that individual need do is tell his/her physician the plan and the medical doctor will write prescriptions with instructions in Latin. If the individual should need a refill while traveling, regardless of the country and language, any legal pharmacist will be able to interpret and fill the prescription.

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

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