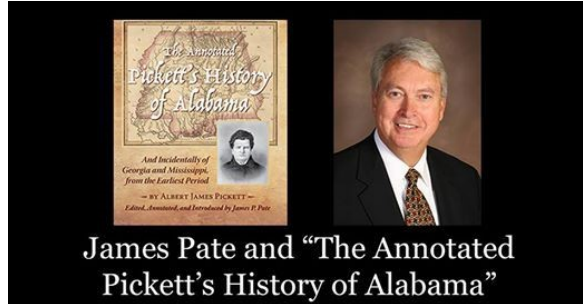




The
Escambia
County
Historical
Society,
Founded
1971

The April 2022 Newsletter
The April Meeting will be
Tuesday, April 26 at 3:00 pm in the
Meeting Room in the
McMillan Museum.
Wearing masks will be optional.



James Pate and "The Annotated Pickett's History of Alabama"

The Program: A Presentation by James P. Pate on The Annotated Pickett's History of Alabama

The following is a review of the Annotated History from The Historian's Manifesto at <<https://thehistoriansmanifesto.wordpress.com>>:

Highly respected professor emeritus of history at the University of West Alabama, Dr. James Pate has thankfully undertaken the daunting task of annotating this iconic volume. Requiring years of intensive research, the annotations correct longstanding errors and serve as a refer-

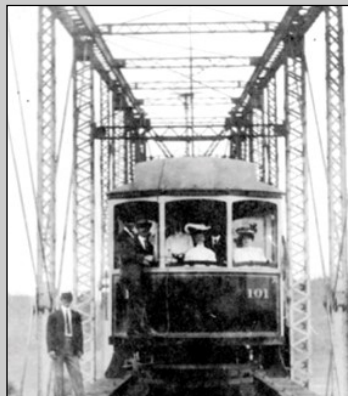
(Continued on page 2)

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The April Meeting
Refreshments will be served. Bring your favorite finger food. ECHS will provide water, coffee, and other beverages.

Program for the May Meeting
TBA



Trolley Across Tennessee River near Florence, Alabama



Southern Normal School Founded 1911 Brewton, Alabama



St. John's Episcopal Church, Tuscumbia, Alabama

Volume 49 No. 4
April 2022

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The Program

(Continued from page 1)

ence on the events mentioned in the book themselves. They are conveniently placed in the borders of the pages, allowing for easy scanning while still enabling the reader to enjoy the text as originally presented. Already a grand tour of early Alabama history, it is now a more accurate one and an impressive accounting of some of the best scholarship on the state's colonial, territorial, and early statehood years currently available.

Pate has also provided us a much-needed index to Pickett's noted work. Presented in a beautifully-bound hardback by New South Books, this annotated version on an Alabama literary classic should no doubt find its way into virtually every library in the state and many beyond, and is imminently deserving of a place in the private collections of anyone with an interest in the state's history.

Kudos to both Pate for the diligent work and to New South Books for its publication—a fitting contribution to Alabama's bicentennial celebration of statehood if ever there was one.

The Speaker: Dr. James P. Pate



The following brief biography of Dr. Pate is from Google Books at <https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Annotated_Pickett_s_History_of_Alaba.html?id=m2lDswEACAAJ>:

James P. Pate (shown at the left) is an independent scholar/writer and an Emeritus Professor of History at the University of West

Alabama where he served as a department chair, dean, and vice president for academic affairs (1967-1995). He also served as Dean of Arts and Letters at Southeastern Oklahoma State University (1995-1998), vice president for academic affairs at Northeastern State University (1898-2005), and campus dean at the University of Mississippi (2005-2014).

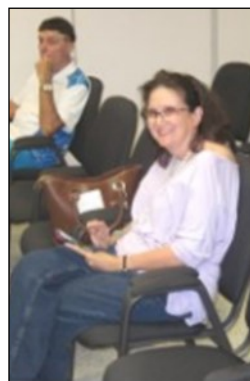
He is a graduate of Delta State University and earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Mississippi State University. He edited The Reminiscences of George Strother Gaines , When this Evil War Is

Over: The Correspondence of the Francis Family, 1860-1865 , and Cherokee Newspapers, 1828-1906: Tribal Voice of a People in Transition by Cullen Joe Holland.

He has received grants for his research and historic preservation work, including archaeological investigations at the Fort Tombeché/Fort Confederation site (1736-1797). He negotiated the transfer of this eighteenth century French-British-Spanish site (ownership of the site) to the University of West Alabama in 1986.

Dr. Pate completed post-doctoral study in Harvard University's Institute for Educational Management (1985) and in the Price-Babson College Fellowship Program for Entrepreneurship Educators (2001). He has received numerous honors and recognitions for his professional and civic activities. He and his wife Betty live in Vestavia Hills, Alabama. They have three children and eight grandchildren.

News and Announcements



Shannon Jones Has Accepted the Position as Secretary of ECHS.

Shannon is shown here at the August 2018 ECHS meeting. A long time member of the society, she has been an active member, organizing field trips, and serving as the publicity officer.

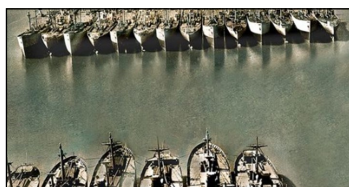
The History of Escambia County, Alabama, by Annie Waters to be Republished.

This iconic book will soon be available again. The work on republishing has reached the stage of proofing. This will be a reprinting of the original book including the original maps and photographs which have been enhanced using today's technologies.

(Continued on page 3)

News and Announcements

(Continued from page 2)



Blakeley State Park Announces a Ghost Fleet Cruise, Sat., May 14, 2022, 9:00 am-11:00 am

This two-hour excursion, departing from the Blakeley Park dock, takes guests up the storied Tensaw River to discover the site where the famed “Ghost Fleet”—a naval reserve fleet of hundreds of vessels kept in readiness for service in the decades after WWII—were once moored. Along the way we explore the winding route of scenic and secluded McVay’s Lake, the man-made ship channel connecting the Tensaw with the Mobile River near Gravine Island, and the seldom-traveled Raft River.

Ticket information at www.blakeleypark.com/Things-to-Do/Events/AgentType/View/PropertyID/242.

McMillan Museum Now on Facebook



Sherry Johnston, administrator of the museum Facebook page, says: Allow me to introduce you to one of the best-kept secrets in the region: the McMillan Museum

of Cultural and Natural History of Escambia County, Alabama on the Campus of Coastal Alabama Community College, Brewton Campus. This institution is truly a gem and a treasure for the people of Northwest Florida and South Alabama.

Visit the Museum Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/McMillanMuseum>.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

From ADAH “Book Talk” on The Annotated History of Pickett’s History of Alabama

By James P. Pate

The following narrative is from the YouTube video of Dr. Pate’s presentation on “Book Talk,” from the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH).

Early Influences on Pickett

Albert James Pickett started his journey on the road to becoming Alabama’s first historian on the 13th day of August 1810 in Anson County, North Carolina. He was the son of William Raiford and Francis Dickson Pickett. They moved to Alabama in 1818 and during his formative years, young Albert was exposed to Creek Indians, to the reminiscences of Indian traders, to Indian countrymen and to stories from Revolutionary War veterans, both Patriots and Tories. These stories made a very deep impression on a young man at eight, ten, fourteen years of age, and he had the opportunity to attend Creek green corn dances and to listen to more and more tales.

Colonel Raiford Pickett

His father, Colonel Raiford Pickett, became a very successful business man and one of his first business ventures was to open a trading house near Autaugaville in Autauga County, and there he hosted Creek Indians and traders and other folk and, again, young Albert soaked up the social and cultural mores of this landscape, and they made a deep impression on him.

His father served 13 years in the Alabama House and Senate. In 1837 he was one of the electoral voters from Alabama in the election of Martin Van Buren. He was a Jacksonian Democrat, and, according to Albert, thought that was the only kind of Democrat to be.

Education

In addition to his family, Albert’s journey was influenced by three other factors. One was his education. He was educated in the schools of Autauga County, where he received the basics of a classical education. After those schools, Albert journeyed up

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

From ADAH “Book Talk” on The Annotated Pickett’s History of Alabama

(Continued from page 3)

to the East.

Initially he was going to a military science school in Connecticut, but when he got there, he found out that the former director of the U.S Military Academy had had a falling out with the directors of the school. So he decided to travel a little further south to a little place called Cambridge where he contemplated enrolling at Harvard College, but somewhere along the line he received a letter from his father saying, “No, you’re not going to Harvard. You’re going to Harwood Academy in Stafford County, Virginia,” where he spent two years. There he was again exposed to a very classical education, a heavy concentration of history, and readings in literature and philosophy.

He returned to Alabama in 1830 and began studying law under his brother, William Dixon Pickett. He never practiced law but his experience working with his brother, who was a judge of the 6th judicial circuit in Montgomery, exposed him to courtroom procedure, document analysis, and legal discovery, interviewing witnesses and writing depositions, very important skills that would support his quest into the history of Alabama.

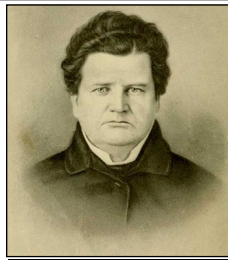
His legal study also exposed him to the hustle and bustle of Montgomery and its newspapers that began to accept his articles that he was writing using a pseudonym, primarily the Planters’ Gazette and the Alabama Journal. In a period, 1832 to about 1847, he produced literally dozens of articles of political commentary, social commentary, economic commentary, and some of those were eventually published as pamphlets, which gained him even more exposure.

Marriage: Sarah Smith Harris



1816-1894

The third turning point for every young man is when he makes the decision to marry. At the age of 22 in 1832, he married Sarah Smith Harris, shown at the left, of Montgomery County. Sarah was 16 when they married on March 20, 1832. They spent their young



Albert Pickett
1810 - 1858

life together either on her dowry lands of Forest Farm (1,100 acre plantation in Autauga County, a gift from Sarah’s father to the couple), or in Montgomery.

Pickett’s writing began to gain him attention statewide. He developed contacts not only with newspaper editors but also politicians, businessmen, legislators, community leaders. His son-in-law, Colonel Michael Leonard Woods, said, “He stood 5 foot 7 inches, weighed 175 pounds and was a very fine man.” This image of him, above, appears in the first reprint of his history published in 1896 by another son-in-law, Robert Carter Randolph.

Becomes Dedicated Bibliophile, Correspondent

His intellectual curiosity transformed him into a dedicated bibliophile, building a great library, particularly between 1847 and 1848. He began to correspond with international book dealers in New York, with dealers such as Wolford and Bartlett. John Bartlett and Charles Wolford were two of the most prominent book dealers in the nation at that time. Another one was George Templeman in Washington D.C.

From these prominent book dealers he purchased hundreds of books, journals, travel accounts, memoirs. Most of them were in French, a language he did not read, which was sort of a handicap, as you might guess, so he hired a translator when he got deep into writing his history. He also received a series of books, publications and papers from an audience of correspondents. In fact, in the introduction to his book, he dedicates it to 32 people. He could have probably dedicated it to a hundred and thirty-two people because of their assistance in writing his History of Alabama, and from these people he received some original sources.

While he’s engaged in this extensive correspondence and receiving these research items, he begins to contemplate a trip, and he makes a trip to New Orleans in February of 1847 and this trip tremendously influenced the trajectory of his history. He made some very critical contacts with at least four,

(Continued on page 5)

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From ADAH “Book Talk” on The Annotated Pickett’s History of Alabama

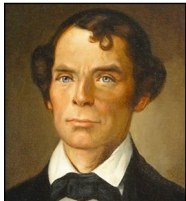
(Continued from page 5)

maybe six, very prominent Louisianans who would help him in writing his history.

Correspondents and Advisors

When he returned to Montgomery, he began to submit a series of articles to the Alabama Journal. As these articles came out, he started sending them to his correspondents asking for feedback on his writing and commentary. After about five or six articles were published, he published a pamphlet, Eight Days in New Orleans in 1847 and began to send the pamphlet to his correspondents asking for feedback and he got that feedback. He got it from very prominent local and state and national historians.

John Wesley Monette



(1803–1851)
**Physician
and
Historian**

One of the first was John Wesley Monette, the most prolific Mississippi historian of the antebellum period. He wrote a history of the discovery of and settlement of the valley of the Mississippi River, two volumes published in 1846, and he advised Pickett to start writing using a large blank notebook and using subheadings and ordering his events in chronological order, leaving space so as he acquired

more information, he could go back and fill in those spaces with the additional information. Pickett took this advice. He filled eight large notebooks, five of them you can see in the Alabama Archives.

William Gilmore Simms



(1806-1870)

A second important correspondent and advisor was William Gilmore Simms, the south’s most prolific writer who wrote a history of South Carolina, published in 1850. Gilmore is the man that Pickett most wanted to emulate. He becomes Pickett’s muse, if you will. They exchange at least twelve letters (that I’ve read) between 1847 and December of 1850. Simms advised Pickett on all manner of

things that Pickett wanted to know about Simms’s writing style. He wanted to know about organization,

punctuation, structure, and Simms replied that Pickett needed to come to South Carolina so they could sit down and visit about these issues.

Pickett never made it to South Carolina, but he did take some advice from Simms. One of the things Simms told him is to write on lined paper only on one side because that’s what printers or publishers wanted. Another piece of advice Simms gave to Pickett, which Pickett did not take, was that Alabama only needed a one volume history, and of course Pickett ended up writing two volumes.

Charles Gayarre

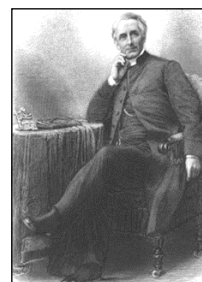


1805-1895

Another important correspondent and advisor was Charles Gayarre, the Creole historian of Louisiana, who wrote numerous volumes on the history of Louisiana. The first one or two, of course, were published in French and at one point the person who could not read French was Pickett.

Pickett talked about editing that first Louisiana history, which he never did of course. Gayarre became one of Pickett’s most important correspondents and a friend until Pickett’s death.

William Bacon Stephens



1815-1887

Another influence was William Bacon Stephens, the Professor of Belle Lettres at the University of Georgia, and the author of a two volume history of Georgia. The first was published in 1847, the second in 1859. Stephens told Pickett to collect all the documents and information he could collect from

*Cabaza de Vaca up to the present time and not to start writing until he had all the information.” Well, if Pickett had followed that advice he would never have gotten around to writing I’m afraid.

**Cabeza de Vaca (c.1490 -c.1660) is one of the four survivors of the Narvaez expedition which began in 1527. The expedition traveled west along*

(Continued on page 6)

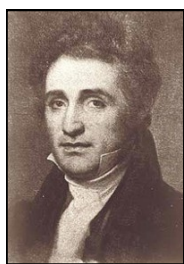
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the Gulf coast and into the American Southwest. He is sometimes considered a proto-anthropologist (study of humans before the invention of writing) for his detailed accounts of the many tribes of Native Americans he encountered.

Jared Sparks



1789-1866

The most important person next to Manette and maybe Simms to advise Pickett was Jared Sparks. He was the MacLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History at Harvard College and one of the most prolific historians of the day. He published 40 something volumes, a life of George Washington, a life of Benjamin Franklin, in fact, the papers of

Franklin, and he provided Pickett with a beginner’s seminar on primary sources for writing his history of Alabama.

He specifically talked about beginning with the explorations of Hernando Desoto and going through the French explorations and settlement of the Gulf in Mobile and Louisiana. Writing from Cambridge in November of 1847, he specifically told Pickett that he should concentrate on the journal of *the Gentleman of Elvas’ account of the explorations of Desoto and not rely on the account of *Garcilaso de la Vega, an account that he said was pure romance from beginning to end. Contrary to the advice, Pickett relied more on Garcilaso de la Vega than the Gentleman from Elvas.

In 1850 Pickett received recognition for his newspaper articles and for two pamphlets, one, Eight Days in New Orleans (1847), and a second one titled The Arrest of Aaron Burr in Alabama (1807), which becomes Chapter 29 of his two volume history of Alabama. But the most important pamphlet came out in late 1859. It was titled The Invasion of the Territory of Alabama by 1,000 Spaniards under Ferdinand Desoto in 1540. Before this became Chapter One, Pickett corrects Desoto’s first name to Hernando.

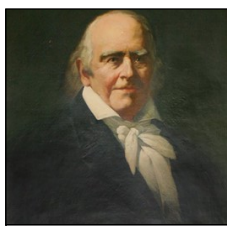
*The Gentleman of Elvas wrote a narrative of the expedition of Hernando Desoto into Florida, published at Evora in 1557. He was a member of Desoto’s expedition whose identity is unknown. He was Portuguese and joined Desoto from the town of Elvas, Portugal which lies on the border of Spain < <https://www.americanjourneys.org/aj-021/summary/>>.



(1539-1616)

*De la Vega, shown at the left, also known as “El Inca,” is one of the first American writers of mixed ethnic heritage (Inca and Spanish). His The Florida of the Inca (1605) is a romanticized and fictionalized account of the Desoto expedition and of native life in Florida at the time of contact. De la Vega himself never went to Florida, so he compiled his account by synthesizing and drawing on other explorers’ oral and written accounts < <https://www.learner.org> >.

Alfred Hennen



1786-1870

Another important person in Pickett’s journey to writing his history was a lawyer from New Orleans by the name of Alfred Hennen. He was a Yale graduate, a professor of constitutional law, and he sent Pickett primary letters written by *Alexander McGillivray and George

Washington, one of three copies of that secret article, a copy of the Treaty of New York (1790).

Pickett becomes the first person to write significantly about Alexander McGillivray.

* A controversial eighteenth-century Creek leader, Alexander McGillivray (c. 1750-1793) pushed to centralize Creek authority, negotiated treaties, alliances, and trade with Great Britain, Spain, and the United States, signed secret diplomatic deals that augmented his private holdings, and helped control much of the Indian trade in the Lower South. As a result, he amassed a tremendous fortune in slaves, cattle, and land and became one of the most powerful Creek

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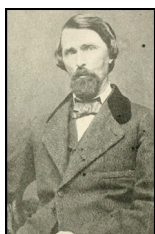
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(Continued from page 6)

Indians of his era, arousing the animosity of a large Creek opposition (from the Encyclopedia of Alabama).

John Francis Hamtranck Claiborne



1809-1884

Another important person was John Francis Hamtranck Claiborne, a Mississippi lawyer, newspaper editor, and historian, who sent Pickett the military papers of his father, Gen. Ferdinand Leigh Claiborne, who commanded the Mississippi territorial militia during the Creek War of 1813-1814. So Pickett’s correspondence contained fairly specific questions regarding people, places, and events, such as the Creek Red Sticks, the Battle of Burnt Corn, the siege of Fort Mims, Sam Dales’ canoe fight, *Andrew Ellicott’s line, early settlements, and Spanish occupation.



* Andrew Ellicott (1754-1820 (shown in a cameo from 1799), was an American surveyor. The “Ellicott Line,” latitude 31 degrees parallel north, is still the dividing line between Florida and Alabama,

Organization of Research

He organized all these letters (almost all are in the Alabama state archives) in the following way: letters from distinguished and well informed persons, (answering inquiries made of them by Pickett in relation to his History of Alabama), and interviews. In addition to his voluminous correspondence, he conducted oral interviews of very prominent early Alabama settlers, military leaders and people with particular information. Two of these people he interviewed between June 1847 and the spring of 1848.

Pickett made at least three trips to Mobile and Baldwin County when he interviewed *Dr. Thomas G. Holmes, survivor of the Fort Mims Siege and *George Strother Gaines, the factor of the Choctaw trading house. These two men afforded him firsthand information which he labeled in this manner, “notes taken from the lips of Dr. Thomas G. Holmes and

notes taken from the lips of George Strother Gaines.” Labeling in this way is something he continued to do.

Pickett described his interviews that he employed to glean this oral history of Alabama in the following way, “I have taken many of the following notes down in a hurry, as fast as people narrating would speak, and there are many mistakes in grammar, spelling and general arrangement. I wrote under many disadvantages, frequently surrounded by intrusion while asking questions, often writing in fields, on my knees in swamps, whenever I had an opportunity of meeting persons I desired to obtain information from. I have traveled much over South Alabama to complete my stock of historic information and was about twelve months engaged in it.” Pickett has been criticized for some of the inaccuracies that occurred because of the difficulties posed by the conditions of getting the interviews.

* Thomas Galphin Holmes (1780-1952), was the assistant surgeon at the Mims stockade, He chopped through the stockading with an axe, making his escape with the mortally wounded Dixon Bailey, and hid in the stump hole of a fallen tree (from Southern Anthology website).

Capt. Dixon Bailey, a Creek, and his 45 American and Creek militiamen repelled the Red Stick onslaught and for four hours successfully defended hundreds of civilians huddled inside the flimsy, one-acre stockade. Only when the attackers set the fort's buildings ablaze with burning arrows did resistance collapse (from Encyclopedia of Alabama website).



*George Strother Gaines (1784-1873) played a pivotal role in events that shaped the early development and history of Alabama and Mississippi. In a public service and business career that spanned nearly 70 years, Gaines was a federal trade agent to the region's Indian tribes, a state senator, an explorer, and a supervisor of the forced removal of Choctaw Indians. He was also instrumental in developing and operating a state bank, overseeing Choctaw land claims, and promoting a railroad. Gaines spent his later years in Mississippi as a cattle rancher, legislator, and nursery owner (from the Encyclopedia of Alabama).

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From ADAH “Book Talk” on The Annotated Pickett’s History of Alabama

Illustrations by Jacob le Moyne Used in Pickett’s History. All are labeled as “Drawn from Life by Jacque le Moyne in 1564.”



Indians Preparing Meats to Be Deposited in Their Winter Hunt Houses.



Indians Engaged in Scalping and Cutting Up the Slain Enemy.



Indians Employed in Planting Corn.



A Chief Addressing His Warriors, Who Are Armed, Painted and Plumed, and Ready to March against the Enemy.



Chiefs with their Ornaments and War Implements upon their March against the Enemy.



Indians Bearing in a Chair a Young Girl Who Has Been Selected as One of the Future Wives of the King.

(Continued from page 7)

Illustrations

The Illustrations by *Jacque Le Moyne

By Christmas of 1850 Pickett had completed the writing of his history and finalized his travel plans to New York City where he had identified an engraver by the name of *John William Orr. He stayed in New York from about mid-February to the latter part of March while Orr executed his engravings and maps. He used these that were based on the watercolors of the French artist Jacque le Moyne to discuss the Timucua Indians encountered by Desoto and other early explorers in Florida and Georgia.

Pickett uses six of these illustrations that were done by John Orr in the history and he references another 20 of the illustrations. They all came from

the second volume of Travels (The Great Travels, also called The Discovery of America) by Theodore de Bry in 1591.

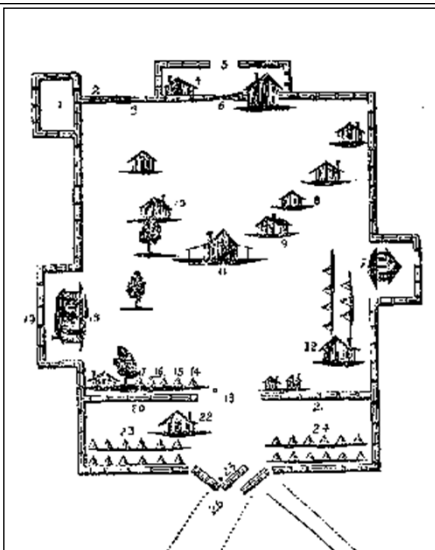
Le Moyne had planned to publish his own travel account but he died in 1588, and his widow sold his watercolors to *Theodore de Bry, an engraver and publisher who eventually, he and his sons, published twelve volumes of Travels to America, including in Volume Two some 43 of le Moyne’s watercolors or else water colors attributed to le Moyne.

**Jacques le Moyne de Morgues (c. 1533–1588) was a French artist and member of Jean Robault’s expedition to the New World. His depictions of Native American life and culture, colonial life, and plants are of extraordinary historical importance (from [Wikipedia](#)).*

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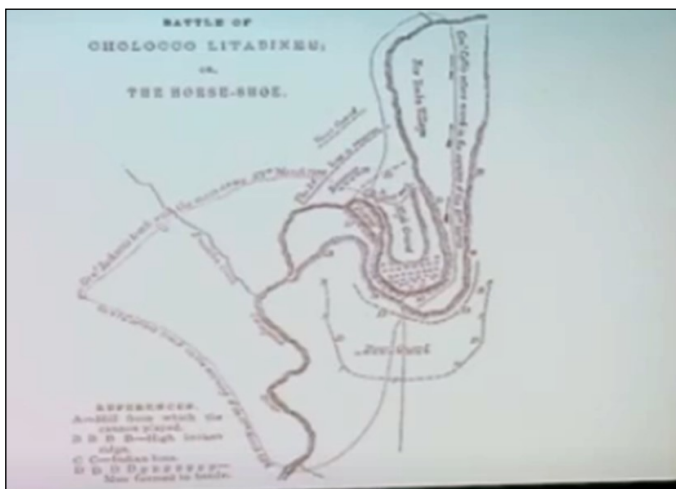
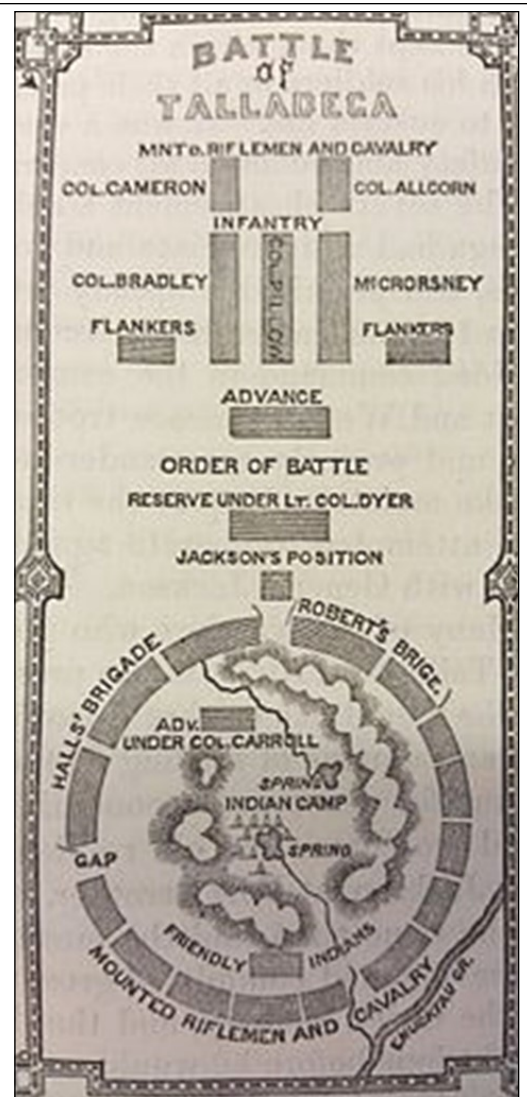
From ADAH “Book Talk” on The Annotated History of Pickett’s History of Alabama



To the left, the Sketch or Plan/Map for Fort Mims.

To the Right, the Plan/Map for the Battle of Talladega

Below, a Plan/Map of the Battle of Horse-shoe Bend.



(Continued from page 8)

*John William Orr (1815–1887), known professionally as J. W. Orr, was a prominent American wood engraver who drew many of his own illustrations and owned his own engraving and printing business (from [Wikipedia](#)).



* Theodor de Bry (1528 – 1598), shown at the left in a self-portrait at age 69, was an engraver, goldsmith, editor and publisher, famous for his depictions of early European expeditions to the Americas. The Spanish Inquisition forced de Bry, a

Protestant, to flee his native, Spanish-controlled Southern Netherlands. He moved around Europe, starting from his birth on the city of Liège in the Prince-Bishopric of Liège, then to Strasbourg, Antwerp, London and Frankfurt, where he settled (from [Wikipedia](#)).

Other Illustrations

In addition to the le Moyne illustrations, in volume one, Pickett had illustrations of some maps and/or battle plans. One is a fold out map (not shown above), engraved by a lithographer by the name of Napoleon Sarony. His firm was Sarony & Major of

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

From ADAH “Book Talk” on The Annotated Pickett’s History of Alabama

(Continued from page 9)

New York City. The Map is entitled “Map of the War in South Alabama.”

Dr. Pate points out that there is a map or sketch of Fort Mims (see previous page), from the Claiborne Papers (the papers of Gen. Ferdinand L. Claiborne) and there are illustrations for two battle plans for battles in the Creek War. One is for the Battle of Talladega which had not been published before, and the other a plan for the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. (Both of these are shown on the previous page.)

Dr. Pate continues: I’m not sure of the origin of these two plans (for Talladega and Horseshoe Bend), I think probably Pickett acquired them when he visited Andrew Jackson in the Hermitage in 1837. He and Sarah, a nine month old daughter, and Sarah’s sister traveled to Hot Springs, North Carolina, and from Hot Springs, they traveled across country through the mountains to Nashville and they ended up spending three days with Rachel and Andrew Jackson. So these plans either came from Jackson directly or from Jackson’s right hand man John Wesley Lynette, who published with Hartford Brothers in New York City and through whom Pickett probably found the two plans.

Publication and Reviews

Once he had completed his illustrations, he traveled to Charleston, South Carolina, arriving there about the 22nd day of March where he worked with his publisher Walker and James. He probably found Walker and James through William Gilmore Sims. In a letter to his wife, Sarah, on the fifth day of May 1851, Pickett announced the completion of volume one of his history, which he referred to as, “the hardest work of my life.”

The printing of the two volume history had been completed by early July but the first copies didn’t show up in Alabama until the 2nd of September, 1851. There they were available in two bookstores in Montgomery and the two volumes would cost you \$3. They were widely purchased.

A banker in Huntsville purchased 400 copies to sell in Huntsville and the Tennessee River Valley to friends and associates. A planter in Otago County

purchased twelve copies to give to his children and, of course, the governor, Governor Collier (Henry W. Collier, 14th governor, 1849-1853) got the legislature to appropriate a huge amount of money to send copies of Pickett’s history to libraries in the nation, a hundred and fifty dollars, a huge sum.

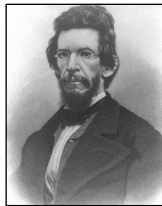
My third edition, by the way Pickett’s history went through three editions between July and December of 1851, it was a tremendous success, cost me \$200, I mean 200 times what it was selling for in Montgomery in September of 1851.

Contemporary Reviews

Unlike the brief newspaper reviews that were published about this history, De Bow’s Review in New Orleans and the Southern Quarterly Review in Charleston published in depth reviews of Pickett’s history. But even before those were published, three literary journals in New York City published positive reviews. In fact, The International Monthly Magazine published the first review of Pickett’s history in July. Apparently this magazine got a copy of volume one and published a positive review. The Literary World published a review in November, followed by The Knickerbocker in December 1851, generally very complimentary reviews.

In fact, one of the biggest complements came from the fact that Pickett had spent 20 pages of his manuscript on Aaron Burr, which was a criticism later. One of the comments was that the reviewer was surprised to see a quality book printer in the south, sort of like William James’ comment that he didn’t know anyone in the south who could read. (*James was a famous late 19th century philosopher, historian, and psychologist.*)

James Dunwoody Brownson De Bow



(1820-1867)

J. D. B. De Bow was the editor of De Bow’s Review in New Orleans. He published a 27 page review of Pickett’s two volume history and although he did not say it was a great literary masterpiece, he complimented Pickett on producing “a worthwhile history, minute and truthful narrative with a simplicity of style, and predicted it would become a permanent text.”

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and truthful narrative with a simplicity of style, and predicted it would become a permanent text.”

But De Bow was not happy with Pickett. He had a tremendous issue with the fact that Pickett had stopped his history in 1820 with William Wyatt Bibb’s administration (*Bibb was Governor of the Alabama Territory August 1817-December 1819 and first Governor of the state, December 1819-until his death July 10, 1820*). De Bow urged Pickett to publish a third volume bringing Alabama up to date in regards to its commerce, its manufacturing, its intellectual progress.

As most of you know, De Bow was a very big promoter of the south and wanted to counteract the negative publicity coming out of the northern presses, so he used 27 pages to write about Pickett but he really didn’t think it was a great, great masterpiece.

William Gilmore Simms



(1806-1870)

Another review, another 27 page review, was produced by William Gilmore Simms in the Southern Quarterly Review in the January issue of 1852. Simms doesn’t use Pickett’s name until the ninth page of the review.

Simms talks about a history by Alexander Beaufort Meek. Meek and Simms were correspondents. Meek (a poet, historian, orator, attorney, public official, and journalist), was the foremost literary figure in Alabama in the pre-Civil War period. He was one of Pickett’s nemeses.



Meek
(1814-1865)

In fact, Meek wrote Simms that he didn’t think Pickett had the ability to complete a history of Alabama. Pickett showed him that he did. And if you look for a copy of Meek’s History of Alabama, you have to come to the Alabama archives because its 800 plus manuscript was never published. “The primary compliment that Simms gives Pickett comes in a letter, actually, that he wrote in June 1851 to the former governor of South Carolina, James Henry Hammond, and he told Hammond, “By the way you could be well

printed and apply for good work in this city. Walker and James have accumulated all the means and appliances for doing good work. They are now doing a History of Alabama by Pickett, one of the prettiest specimens of book making ever done in America despite some inaccuracies, some writing style peccadilloes, digressions, over reliance on single sources.”

More Recent Reviewers



1902-1995

Most modern historians still hold Pickett in high regard. *John Walter Caughey in his masterpiece on McGillivray, McGillivray of the Creeks, compliments Pickett on writing the first serious information on McGillivray.

*John Walter Caughey, author and educator, taught at UCLA, was considered the dean of California Historians and a leading intellectual Civil Libertarian.



(1928-2013)

*Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr., complimented Pickett on his research methods, his evaluation of available sources, his careful source citation, all showing Pickett’s development as a good historian.

*Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr. (1928-2013), a member of the Auburn University faculty, taught in the History Department from 1960-1995.



Harper Lee
(1926-2016)

Probably the most complimentary review of Pickett came in March of 1983 from Alabama’s most consequential writer of the twentieth century, Nellie Harper Lee. Lee delivered a paper “Romance and High Adventure” at the Alabama History and Heritage Festival in Eufaula. She praised his long digressions on the native populations in the region between the time of Desoto and the arrival of the French presence in the Gulf South, saying for this alone, Pickett deserved a place in American literature.

She closed by calling Pickett’s work a unique

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treasure, one that should be found in every high school library in Alabama.



*Leah Rawls Atkins, writing in Alabama, History of a Deep South State, one of the best if not the best one volume histories of our state, complimented Pickett as a historian, called him the writer who made the most historical contribution to Alabama in the antebellum period.

She says it remains a valuable work.

**Leah Atkins (date of birth 1935), historian and former water skiing champion, taught in the History Department of Auburn and served as Director of the Auburn University Center for the Arts and Humanities. She was the first woman inducted into the Alabama Women’s Hall of Fame.*



(1948-2015)

Michael O'Brien (1948 – 2015), English historian at Cambridge University specializing in the intellectual history of the American South, wrote two penetrating articles about writers in the antebellum south that were influenced by southern romanticism, which he called the historicist narrative. He claimed that Pickett,

John Wesley Monett, American physician and historian, and Charles Gayarre, historian of Louisiana demonstrated an understanding of the layered effect of history before the writers on the Atlantic seaboard.

One critic really compliments Pickett for losing his Anglo Saxon prejudices and concentrating on the European influence on Alabama from the Gulf Coast, the French, the Spanish, and the British.

More recent scholars have been a little more critical. They feel like Pickett wrote more about heroes, villains, and bloody encounters, than about social and political tragedy. One of these critics claimed that although Pickett included all types of people within a slave society, he is obscuring causes by fo-

ocusing on heroic individuals and highlighting his narrative with bloody action-packed drama, the very thing that Harper Lee complimented him for.



More recently in the finest one volume study of the Creek War, A Conquering Spirit: Fort Mims and the Redstick War of 1813-1814, *Gregory Waselkov writes that Pickett’s account of the Redstick War is primarily oral history. His notes from interviews with

Thomas G. Holmes (survivor of the Fort Mims Massacre), *Jeremiah Austin, *Abraham Mordecai and many other careful observers form the evidence for his book’s hundred pages on the Redstick War.

** Gregory Waselkov is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Department of Sociology/Anthropology/ Social Work at the University of South Alabama*



**Jeremiah Austill (1794-1879) was one of 11 militiamen accompanying U.S. Army captain Samuel Dale during the Canoe Fight, a skirmish of the Creek War of 1813-14 that took place in Clarke County in November 1813. After the war, Austill remained in southwestern Alabama as a merchant, planter, county court clerk, and state legislator.*

**Abraham Mordecai (1755-1850) was among the earliest white residents, and likely the first Jewish resident, of what is now Alabama. Mordecai played a role in virtually all of the events that shaped the Southeast, including the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Creek War of 1813-14, and in Alabama's early statehood and economic development. During his long life, he was variously a negotiator between the Creeks and federal and state agents, a trader, a military guide and scout, and an early founder of the cotton industry around Montgomery.*

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Pate’s Evaluation of Pickett’s History

I think that we can all agree that Pickett’s history remains a relevant study of Alabama’s *protohistoric, colonial, territorial, and early foundations as a state, and his work has been cited repeatedly by prominent writers, authors. Hopefully they’re now using this edition of Pickett’s history which has Pickett’s narrative in the middle and my notes on the side trying to control some things and elucidate on other issues that Pickett wrote on.

**A branch of study concerned with the transition period between prehistory and the earliest recorded history. the period in a culture immediately before its recorded history begins.*

Plans for a History of the Southwest

After the publication of his history, of course, he dies in 1858, of a pulmonary edema probably, on the 28th day of October 1858. He had been planning, after having published this history, to write a history of the southwest, and we know from his son-in-law, Colonel Michael Leonard Woods that the manuscript was out there.

One of the newspapers, *J. J. Hooper’s, announced that Pickett had completed at least two thirds of that manuscript.



1815-1862

**Johnson Jones Hooper (1815 -1862), was an American humorist. He moved to Dadeville, Alabama in 1835 where he edited a newspaper and practiced law. Along with George Washington Harris, Johnson Jones Hooper is the best known of the Southwestern humorists <[https://twain.lib.virginia.edu](https://twain.lib.virginia.edu/projects) > projects.>.*

Michael Leonard Woods (*a Pickett son-in-law*), in his Personal Reminiscences of Colonel Albert James Pickett says Pickett had completed three fourths of that manuscript.

In my research here (the Alabama archives) and elsewhere, I found a reference which said that there was a manuscript out there and his wife, who ends up living in Montgomery until her death in July of

1894, says, “I had loaned that manuscript to someone in 1879 and the name, that person’s name, escapes me.”

Visits to Texas, Blandon Springs Resort in Choctaw County, Mobile and Point Clear

Pickett went to Texas in the winter of 1856-57. He didn’t buy land but he was very impressed with Texas. He came back and began to worry about his health. He went to Pensacola in the summer or spring of 1857 and wrote a series of letters to the Alabama Journal and other publications that were published about the history of Pensacola, and then in the spring of 1858 he goes to Bladon Springs in what would become Choctaw County.

He spent several weeks there at that resort, taking the baths, and then he and Colonel Woods turned back down to Mobile and the Mobile Register announced Pickett was going to Point Clear to enjoy the breezes. From Mobile and Point Clear he returns back to Montgomery and dies in October of 1858.

Before he died he bought a house in Montgomery, the Figh-Pickett house which is now the headquarters of the Montgomery Historical Society.

He was buried originally at the family cemetery at Forrest Farm but he was exhumed following his wife’s death and was buried in Oak Grove Cemetery in Montgomery.



The Figh-Pickett House in 1934 & Today.

The house was built around 1837 in Montgomery by contractor and brick manufacturer John P. Figh. In 1858, he sold the home to Pickett.

Pickett would never live in the house. He purchased it on Oct. 14 and died on Oct. 28. However, Sarah, his widow, occupied the house for 36 years.

ECHOES
 THE NEWSLETTER FOR
 THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
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