



## The March 2023 Newsletter

The March Meeting will be  
Tuesday, March 28 at 3:00pm in  
The Meeting Room of the Museum  
On the College Campus, Brewton, AL



**Larry with examples of his ceramics and paintings.**

### The Program: Potter, Artist Larry Manning will Present a Program on the History of Pottery.

Larry is not only presenting a program for the March ECHS Meeting, he also has an exhibit of his paintings and pottery presently on display in the McMillan Museum Gallery on the ACCC campus.

Larry taught art at Jefferson Davis Community College (JDCC), now Alabama Coastal Community College (ACCC), in Brewton for 28 years, beginning in 1973. Since retirement from JDCC, he has been an adjunct at Pensacola State College teaching ceramics, art history and art for the non-art major.

Larry has been an artist and art instructor for over 54 years. He began his career studying at Pensacola Junior College and then transferred to Florida State, majoring in painting. After completing his bachelor and master

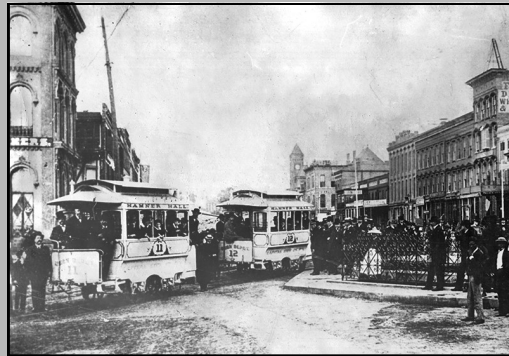
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**April Meeting: Rear Admiral Kyle Cozad, Pres. & CEO of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation will speak on his book Relentless Positivity.**

There will be refreshments after the March meeting. Bring your favorite finger food. Drinks will be provided by the Society.



**Montgomery was home to the first electric trolley! The streetcar system was opened in 1886 and named the Capital City Street Railway, also known as the Lightning Route. The trolley allowed people to move away from using horses, and the trolley made movement around the city much more efficient.**

*From Alabama Heritage Facebook.*



Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald Museum, Montgomery, AL

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## The Program

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degrees, he moved to Pensacola and taught art at the University of West Florida.

In further studies, he returned to graduate school at the University of Mississippi and received a Master of Fine Arts degree in ceramics with a minor in painting.

Along with his wife Diane, he presently owns and operates The Magic Kiln Pottery in Pace, Fla., a business they have had for 23 years. He remains an active art lecturer, arts judge and full time artist. His work is shown in both local and national galleries.

**Manning Exhibit in McMillan Museum Gallery**  
The exhibit opened March 1 and will run through March 30, open to the public Tuesday through Thursday each week from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Paintings and Ceramics by Larry on Exhibit at ACCC.**



## News and Announcements



**Archway to the Daniel Pratt Gin Company, Prattville, Alabama**

**75 Annual Meeting of the Alabama Historical Association**  
Prattville, AL  
April 13-15, 2023  
Registration Deadline, Monday, March 28 at 5 PM.

All details of registration, cost, lodging, can be found online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/aha-annual-meeting-in-prattville-tickets-514417595877>.

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

Thursday pre-meeting tours include two historic churches and a school in Autauga County, as well as a kayak tour of Autauga Creek. An opening reception will take place at Buena Vista Mansion that evening.

On Friday, events include a keynote presentation by Ann Boutwell of the Autauga County Heritage Association, numerous paper presentations from historians around the state and region, and tours of historical sites in Prattville.

Friday evening's award banquet will feature

award-winning authors Frye Gaillard and Cynthia Tucker, who will discuss their new book, *The Southernization of America: A Story of Democracy in the Balance*.

Saturday's session will include panels on public history, paper presentations on a variety of topics, and an address by AHA President Jim Baggett, director of the archives at the Birmingham Public Library and author of several books and articles on Alabama history.

For more information or questions, email [alabamahistory@gmail.com](mailto:alabamahistory@gmail.com) or call 334-844-6198.

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**History How-to, Research Rundown, From Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH)**

\**Research Rundown: Alabama History and Genealogy How-To* is a monthly online tutorial series on genealogical and archival research. The program is presented the first Monday of every month from September to May. It streams live on the ADAH's Facebook and YouTube channel. Past programs are available to watch anytime on YouTube.\*

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## News and Announcements

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### Research Run Down Upcoming Events

#### 1. Digitized Civil War and Reconstruction Governors Papers

**Date:** Monday, April 3, 2023; **Time:** 12:00pm

**Format:** Online; **Cost:** Free

Join ADAH Reference Coordinator Courtney Pinkard as she discusses the background of the ADAH's Civil War and Reconstruction Governors digitization project and shares some examples of interesting finds from the collection. Tune in to find out how you can get involved with transcribing the Governor's papers from home.

#### 2. Newspapers as a Research Tool: How to Search ADAH Collections and Newspapers.com

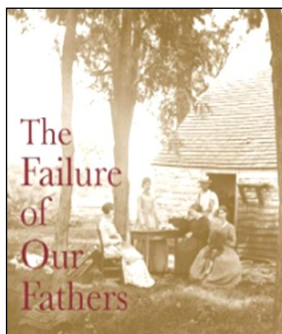
**Date:** Monday, May 1, 2023; **Time:** 12:00pm

**Format:** Online; **Cost:** Free

ADAH Reference Archivist Kayla Scott Gurner will discuss how to use the newspapers database to find titles in the ADAH's collections. She will also provide a tutorial on searching Newspapers.com for

your ancestor or other topics of interest. We will also discuss the types of information newspapers can provide and how they can help your genealogical and historical research.

### Food For Thought Upcoming Event



#### The Failure of Our Fathers: Family, Gender, and Power in Confederate Alabama

**Date:** Thursday, April 20, 2023

**Time:** 12:00pm CST

**Format:** In-Person & Online  
**Location:** ADAH

**Cost:** Free

An in-depth study of non-elite white families in Alabama—from the state's creation through the end of the Civil War.



#### JAM October 10th, 1981

**William Lee Golden threw a hometown party for close to 40,000 people at the airport in Brewton, Alabama. This was literally less than 5 miles from where he (and most of the family was born and raised also where the family farm and home still stand). He brought along a brand new group (at the time) named 'Alabama', Charlie Daniels Band, Delbert McClinton, the ORB & others.**

**Text and Picture by Alan Messer <<https://www.facebook.com/>>.**

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Professional Baseball Comes to Brewton



### The Brewton Millers of 1947

**The club poses during the recent play-off. The local club wound up second in league standing and was defeated in the seventh game by Greenville in the play-off series. Standing (left to right), are Manager Norman Veazey, Jim McCullough, Wendell Stokes, Henry Delay, Bob Elliott, Virgil Sullivan, Donnie Dowell, Jack Horton, Bob Caffrey, John DeNicola, Larry Cianciola and Roxie Humberson. Kneeling, in front: Leslie McGarity, George Ruzina, and Bat-boy, Veazey**

### By Charlie Ware

I was five years old when my dad took me to my first baseball game. The Brewton Millers were playing the Andalusia Arrows at Liles Field in Brewton. At that age I didn't know much about baseball, so the things I remember most about that night were a crowd of over a thousand fans clapping and cheering, good hot dogs, and the home plate umpire. The umpire was dressed in a dark suit and hid behind a big shield (chest protector). He wore a mask over his face and kept yelling STEEEE-RIKE!! He scared the stuffing out of me.

I didn't realize it at the time, but I was watching professional baseball. The teams were members of the Class D, Alabama State League which was sanctioned by the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues. The Millers were affiliated with the Major League Washington Senators.

During the first half of the twentieth century, baseball truly was the national past-time. Every town of any size had at least one baseball team. Most of these were "town teams" which were loosely organized

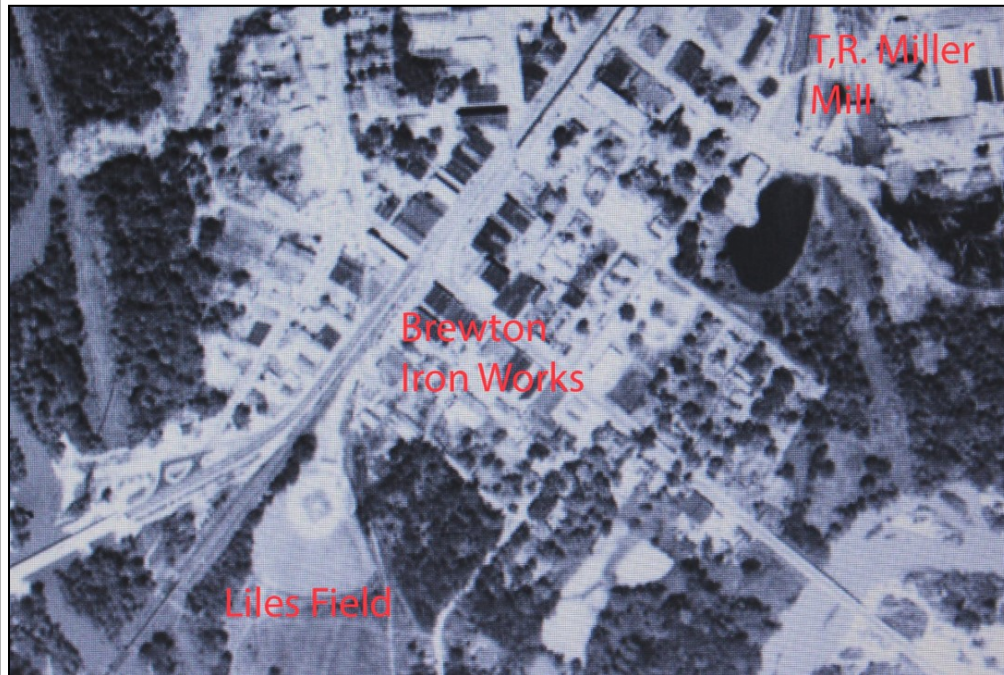
groups of local ballplayers that would play games against neighboring towns just for the enjoyment of the game. Many towns had semi-pro teams that charged admission and the players received pay, but the teams did not belong to a professional baseball league. Atmore had semi-pro teams for many years. There were also many company and military teams. But the ultimate status symbol for a small town was to be able to host a real professional baseball club.

The eight team Alabama-Florida League was organized in 1936 with seven teams in Alabama and Panama City in Florida. When Panama City announced it was dropping out of the league at the end of the 1939 season, a group of Brewton businessmen, led by Gladin "Scotty" Byrne, Sr. became interested in purchasing the franchise and moving it to Brewton. A committee was formed which worked for several months raising funds and putting the organization together. Finally, on March 14, 1940, the Brewton Baseball Club was incorporated and stock in the corporation was issued. The stockholders elected

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## Professional Baseball Comes to Brewton



**Areal View of Liles Field where the Brewton Millers Played. The field was built on land that was donated by Duncan P. Liles.**

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Troy Brannan as president and D.P. Liles as vice president. They also decided to name the team the Millers since the T.R. Miller Mill Company had made a large donation to the organization.

The first order of business was to bring Brewton's old baseball field to professional standards and to construct grandstands to accommodate up to 1,500 fans. Liles Field, which was located just west of the Brewton Iron Works where the Grede Industries plant is today, underwent a complete renovation including installing lights for night games. The lighting equipment had been included in the acquisition of the Panama City franchise.

The Millers hired former Major League catcher Yam Yaryan as their first manager. Yaryan, even though he was forty-seven years old, would also be the back-up catcher for the team. Most of the other managers in the league also saw double-duty as players. On March 22, 1940, the first players began to arrive to start spring training. Besides the players who had come from Panama City, there were a number of hopefuls who showed up for try-outs. The final team of fifteen players was selected and was ready to play baseball by opening day, April 18, 1940.

The season would consist of 140 games, a game

almost every day from April through August. The other teams in the league in 1940 were the Andalusia Arrows, Dothan Browns, Greenville Lions, Troy Trojans, and Tallassee Indians. The teams alternated home games and away games since they could not afford hotel accommodations. After an away game, the team returned to Brewton that same night. Sometimes, after late games, the team bus would not arrive back in Brewton until after sunrise, just time for a quick nap before reporting for the next game.

After the 1941 season, the league was suspended because of World War II. It would not resume play until 1946.

Brewton supported the Millers with loud, enthusiastic crowds and an evening at the ballpark became a big occasion for many families. The game night often included other entertainment such as band concerts and beauty contests. A few couples elected to have their wedding ceremony at home plate before a game. Many games were broadcast on WEBJ radio, and all games received front page write-ups in the Brewton Standard. There were the typical ballpark concessions like score cards, souvenirs, hot dogs, popcorn, and peanuts.

The Millers' best season was in 1947 when they made it into the league playoffs only to lose the

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## Professional Baseball Comes to Brewton

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seventh, and deciding, game of the championship series to the Greenville Lions. Attendance that year averaged around 700 fans per game. Some weeknight games would see only 300-400 fans, but on many weekends or holidays, the stands would be full. The record attendance was the seventh game of the playoffs when a standing-room-only crowd of over 2,000 packed the stands.

Players signed a contract with their team and the contracts could be traded or sold to another team, so the players never knew when they would have to pack up and move to a different city. Most players rented rooms from local families and occasionally the families would allow them to stay without charge just for the honor of hosting a professional baseball player. Some players developed lasting relationships with their host family and continued to visit with them for many years. Sometimes three or four players would get together and rent a small house and share the expenses.

The league had a limit on how much each team could pay in salaries. Most players earned around \$150 a month (about \$3000 in today's dollars) and received \$1.50 a day for meal money. That doesn't sound like much, but a good meal could be had for 60 cents back then. Sometimes, if a player made an outstanding play or became the hero of the game, fans would pass around the hat and collect a bonus for that player. Obviously, players had to have regular jobs during the off season and many of them had part-time jobs that could be squeezed in between games.

Class D was the lowest rung of professional baseball, but it provided a potential pathway to higher, better paying divisions and eventually to the Major Leagues. Frequent report cards would be sent up to the affiliated Major League team so they could monitor the progress of their players in the minors. Scouts from different levels would be in attendance at most games. Each year, on average, five or six players from each team would move up to a higher class. Many players knew that they would never progress to the Major Leagues or even above Class D, but they continued to play just because they loved the game.

Over the history of the Alabama-Florida League and the Alabama State League, 126 players eventually made it to the Major Leagues. Probably the best

known of these is Virgil Trucks who played for the Andalusia Arrows and became an all-star pitcher for the Detroit Tigers. Trucks set the all-time professional baseball strike-out record for a season with 420 while playing for Andalusia.

Two players from the leagues had brief stops as Major League players but later earned fame as managers. Jack McKeon, who played for the Greenville Lions, later managed in the Major Leagues for thirty years. In 2003 he was manager of the World Series champion Miami Marlins. Bobby Cox played for the Pensacola Senators and became the Hall of Fame manager of the Atlanta Braves.

Umpires employed by the leagues were also competing to move up the ladder. They were evaluated often by league officials and those who were judged to be the best were promoted to the higher divisions. Two of the league umpires who made it all the way to the majors were Don Denkinger and Dutch Rennert.

The leagues provided good, entertaining baseball and each team had its stars. Over a 20-year period, there were 22 no-hit games pitched and 7 players were able to compile batting averages of over .400. One player, Neal Cobb, had a phenomenal batting average in 1954 of .432 and won the Silver Slugger award for the best hitter in all the minor leagues. Official records were kept and are still maintained for every player and team by the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues.

By 1949, attendance at Millers games had started to decline. Television, drive-in theatres, more automobiles and better highways, and other diversions were beginning to take their toll. At the end of the 1950 season, the Millers found themselves deeply in debt and many of their quality players had been drafted for the Korean War. Despite efforts by the fans to raise funds for the next season, the Brewton Baseball Club decided it was time to cut their losses and sell. What was left of the team was moved back to Panama City for the 1951 season.

The Alabama-Florida League continued in existence until 1962 at which time the professional baseball organization was realigned, and the Class D designation was dropped. The teams in the league for that final season were the Selma Cloverleafs, Andalusia Dodgers, Dothan Cardinals, Montgomery Rebels, Pensacola Senators, and Ft. Walton Beach Jets.

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Professional Baseball Comes to Brewton

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Thus ended Brewton's professional baseball experience. The Millers provided good, clean, exciting entertainment for area residents for seven years. It was an era that has passed and perhaps people didn't really take the time to appreciate it as much as they should have at the time. I love baseball and sometimes attend Wahoo games in Pensacola. They

play good baseball and have a first-class ballpark and I always enjoy the outing. But I often think how much fun it would be to get together with friends or family on a balmy summer evening and go out to the local park, buy some peanuts and Cracker Jacks, and root-root-root for the ole home team

## The Heyday of Drugstores in Alabama



**In "Drugstore Soda Fountains; Are there Any in Your Hometown?" Charles J. Dean writes that soda fountains were once common place in drug stores, places for cherry cokes, ice cream cones and grilled cheese sandwiches, such as in this old fashioned soda fountain pictured, location unknown.**

**Shown in the background are two soda jerks, the term a nickname for the soda clerk who operated soda fountains as late as the 1950s. The "Soda Jerk" title was inspired by the jerking action a server used to swing the soda fountain handle back and forth when adding soda water to a fountain beverage.**

*From <[https://www.al.com/wire/2014/01/drug\\_store\\_soda\\_fountains\\_are.html](https://www.al.com/wire/2014/01/drug_store_soda_fountains_are.html)> .*

### By James R. Kuykendall

Most Alabamians over fifty years old have fond recollections of drugstore experiences, and those pharmacists whose careers have spanned five decades or more often share many interesting remembrances. These memories reflect a variety of social values and patterns of Alabama life during the Great Depression, when the local drugstore was a community gathering place. Drugstores of this era reflect a variety of social values and patterns of Alabama life during the Great Depression, when the local drugstore was a community gathering place. Drugstores of this era reflect the lifestyles of the years before the end of World War II and the attitudes of Alabama citizens on many issues.

The most memorable recollections of those whose childhood or youth occurred in that period include

those involving the soda fountain, a standard feature of almost every drugstore. In an era before the advent of television, home freezers, air conditioning, and a car in every garage, this institution attracted local citizens young and old; by contrast, today's teenagers often congregate in malls or shopping centers while some adults gather in bars.

McGehee Brothers Drug in downtown Montgomery had a fountain that extended along the left side of the store. Overhead, black ceiling fans churned the air. With the entire front of the store open, customers could sit near the sidewalk and enjoy an atmosphere similar to that of French sidewalk cafes. Another downtown Montgomery store was Exchange Drug, located in the Exchange Hotel. This ornate structure

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## The Heyday of Drugstores in Alabama



### Toulminville Soda Fountain, 1948

By 1920, nearly every pharmacy in America had a soda fountain, at the center of which was a tremendous counter flanked by swivel stools, soda spigots and ice cream galore. At this particular fountain, located inside Toulminville Drug Store, two soda jerks look on as three girls, possibly sisters, polish off their ice cream cones, treats that would have set them back 5 cents apiece.

**The girls' outfits — crop-tops and play shorts — are indicative of 1940s fashion, and their bare feet are a true nod to summers in the South. The hot, lingering season lent itself well to many a child's shoeless jaunt to stores or even school. While some kids chose to forego footwear, others, however, may not have had a choice. In 1948, shoes were still seen as status symbols, as not all families could afford to keep up with their children's ever-growing soles. Text and Picture <<https://mobilebaymag.com/toulminville-soda-fountain-1948/>>.**

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once served Jefferson Davis' Confederate cabinet and played host to much of the social life of Montgomery. Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald was among the celebrated people who danced in the ballroom of the historic structure.

During this period when drugstores catered to a "soda fountain society," the ceramic tiling at the entrance often spelled out the firm's name. Upon entering the store, one found the aroma very distinctive. According to one octogenarian pharmacist, the medicinal odors included the pungent smell of asafetida, used in preparing Dewee's Carminative, and the aromatic peppermint water, used as a vehicle for prescription mixtures. These, combined with the delectable soda fountain aroma, the pleasant fragrance of colognes and perfumes at the cosmetic counter, and the odor of tobacco from the cigar case, constituted a certain intangible drugstore smell.

Tom Dark's City Drug, on the courthouse square in Huntsville, featured a soda fountain with a mirrored back bar of solid cherry arches with marble columns, which was reported to have been part of an early Huntsville saloon. People's Drug in Calera, located next door to the train depot, was equally imposing,

with a heavily carved wooden pediment with marble columns. The store's entrance faced the railroad tracks where twenty-two passenger trains stopped daily during the 19230s and early 1949s, only a few feet in front of the store.

Soda fountain treats are among his fondest of childhood memories. Archbishop Oscar H. Lipscomb of Mobile recalled. "It was high festivity indeed when parents would take you to a movie and top off the evening with a stop at Leggett's for ice cream. Leggett Drug's rear entrance conveniently opened into the lobby of the elegant Saenger Theater.

Throughout Alabama, there was usually special activity at the soda fountain on Sunday. For many years there was a parade of Scottsboro people headed for the nearby drugstore on the courthouse square during the interval between Sunday school and church. In that brief time, there was some meaningful social life among friends of four religious faiths.

Drugstores before the end of World War II sold items familiar today, such as cosmetics and over-the-counter medications, but some stores also made their own ice cream to serve their fountain customers. Some stores carried unusual items. Brannon Drug in Roanoke kept supplies of the now famous Roanoke

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## The Heyday of Drugstores in Alabama



### Alabama's Longest Operating Drugstore, Milner Rushing Discount Drugs in Florence, Alabama

**Its first proprietor, an Englishman named Joseph Milner, began the business in Florence in 1853. The store did eventually move from its original Court Street location, but it remained in the Milner family for more than a century.**

**In the picture, the Milner Store in 1833 at its original Court Street location in Florence. Crowds were gathered for President-elect Franklin Roosevelt during his trip to see the Wilson Dam in Muscle Shoals.**

**Text and Picture from <<https://www.thisisalabama.org/2020/08/03/alabamas-oldest-drugstore-has-an-illustrious-history/>>.**

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dolls. Gadsden's Snelgrove Drug had a large stock of items to entice the military personnel at nearby Camp Sibert. These specialties included satin pillow cases, usually with fringe and sentimental wording for a mother or sweetheart. Some items commonly displayed today were not in evidence in drugstores during the former era. "We did not know what sex was as far as contraceptives were concerned, in the early thirties," commented Birmingham's Proctor Tubba. He explained, "We kept sanitary napkins, such as Kotex, wrapped and completely out of sight; condoms were kept in drawers in the rear of the store and sold by male employees in a very discreet manner."

By 1832, with the four-year college degree mandatory for licensure, many Alabamians were graduates of the Auburn University or Howard College (now Samford University) Schools of Pharmacy. The pharmacists compounded most prescriptions and mixed some of their own remedies for over-the-counter sales. Haralson Drug in Fort Payne manufactured Haralson's Mixture for indigestion; this was elixir of lactated pepsin and bismuth subgallate powder. This product sold very well for more than half a century and was popular during the years when Haralson's rolling store traveled over the often muddy roads of Sand Mountain. Frequently, nonprescription items

were exchanged for farm products.

Often a physician maintained his office over the drugstore or in a building nearby, but if the town had no doctor, the pharmacist often filled the vacuum himself. Such was the case in Madison, ten miles from Huntsville, where for several decades, pharmacist Walton Hughes gave emergency care to patients because the town was without a physician. Often he went beyond the limitations of a pharmacist and consequently found himself in court a number of times. "I practiced medicine here for forty-five years after the four doctors that were over my store died one by one," he once admitted. Although area pharmacists did not endorse his activities, his customers and patients defended and supported him. As Hughes observed, "I was only trying to do public service."

Pharmacists also dispensed remedies other than drugs. At Gibbs Fort Drug in Birmingham, Elbert W. Gibbs regularly dispensed advice regarding marriage, finance, and education to his customers, who included members of the exclusive Southern Club located across the street from his store.

The drug-related problems of the 1980s were unknown fifty years ago. According to drug inspector Carl Limbaugh, "Police controlled the streets during the 1930s and 1940s when our drug problems were mainly the abuse of paregoric." Robberies of drug-

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## The Heyday of Drugstores in Alabama



**Drugstores in the 1940s often served as gathering places for local residents to listen to the radio for the latest news, as depicted in this photograph from a drugstore in Maywood, Illinois, from 1945.**

*Text and Picture from*  
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41109911?seq=3>>.

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stores to acquire drugs were unknown, and security systems or alarms were unnecessary.

Drugstores of the 1030s provided services which are rare, if not extinct, today. Most drugstores delivered items to their customers regardless of how insignificant the purchase. Gene Cox, current owner of Cox Drug in Mobile, established in 1872 by Cox's grandfather, grew up making deliveries on his bicycle. Often, the item delivered was only a nickel spool of thread.

Services also included consideration for the customer. William Walker, president of Walker Drug Company, Birmingham, one of the South's largest wholesale drug firms, remembered that his father impressed upon him that each customer must be treated as if he were a very important person. On one occasion when a customer asked for a bottle of "ank," young Billy responded, "Oh, you mean 'ink?'" After the transaction, his father took the boy to the back of the store, removed his belt, and taught the lad a firm lesson in how to treat the public in the drugstore. "If a customer asks for 'ank,'" he commanded, "you sell him 'ank.'"

Curb service was also available at drugstores. When Gordon Musgrove began work at the age of fifteen at his uncle's Prattville Drug, his first job was to "catch the curb." The store provided curb service on other merchandise besides soda fountain treats, too. On extremely cold days, denatured alcohol or wood alcohol were poured into automobiles at a time before anti-freeze was available at "filling stations."

Joe Pilcher, Sr. owner of Pilcher McBryde Drug Company in Selma, began work at the store at the age

of sixteen in 1920. He recalled that for years the "number two man in the store was the head soda fountain man." When Pilcher began work at the drugstore, there were sometimes twenty cars parked at the same time to receive curb service.

During this age of limited entertainment, drugstores often hosted promotions. Brannan Drug sponsored medicine shows set up outside the store on a regular basis. At Carlisle Drug in Alexander City, the John Bevill family made periodic appearances. A singing quartet with stringed instruments, they performed outside the store, unlike most medicine shows. Promoting their own family product, Bevill's Lotion, made in Birmingham, the performers often arrived at a store without prior arrangements. They entertained by piping their music to outside listeners through loudspeakers and thus effectively advertised their lotion for athlete's foot, ringworm, and eczema. They paid the store owner a commission and moved on to another town. In a few situations it became necessary for the Bevill family to mix and bottle their product while they were on the road, usually on the outskirts of a town, in a wooded area. After more than sixty years, family members continue to manufacture Bevill's Lotion today with its same ingredients: salicylic acid, methyl salicylate, ether, and ethyl alcohol.

Haralson Drug in Fort Payne hosted "Doc" Colby's shows for a week at a time. A monkey named Peanuts provided entertainment. An herb mixture, which sold for one dollar, was recommended for arthritis, rheumatism, and "anything that you might have on your mind."

Employees of small town drugstores were often the first in the community to know any unusual local or

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## The Heyday of Drugstores in Alabama

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national news. In 1919, Brannan Drug received the results of world events by telegraph and posted messages on the front glass with liquid chalk. The fight between Jack Dempsey and Jess Willard was reported in this manner.

Drugstores mirrored the financial distress of the general population during the Depression. James L. Harrison, founder of the Harco Drug Chain, faced many financial difficulties. Even though this firm was recently named the number one small drug chain in America, during the worst of times, Harrison's wife offered her wedding ring to a furniture dealer when they were unable to make payments. More debts accumulated before Harrison sold his own business and worked for another firm until 1941, when he purchased Central Drug in Tuscaloosa. Starting with a small sandwich business operated from her home, Elizabeth Harrison developed a small catering service, supplying sandwiches, drinks, and ice cream to University of Alabama students. At first, Harrison made deliveries each night. Later, students were hired to make the deliveries to dormitories. The business thrived, and the Harrisons paid all their debts, including those for the drugstore. Jim Harrison, Jr., President of the Harco chain credits his mother's sandwiches in helping to save the first of what became sixty-seven drugstores.

Events sometimes occurred at drugstores that would be highly unusual today. A wedding once took place at Lantrip's Drugstore in Jasper. A traveling salesman for the Upjohn Company served as best man at this event, which was witnessed by a large crowd consisting primarily of strangers to the bride and groom.

The 1930s saw the first woman graduate from the four-year college program of Auburn University School of Pharmacy. Lela Irwin Legare accepted her first job at Snow Smith Drugstore in Birmingham in 1932. Nearby was the county jail where the "Scottsboro boys" were being held. The drugstore routinely supplied customers in the jail and a black porter from the firm delivered ice cream, tobacco, candles and toilet articles to the prisoners of the Scottsboro case, which was receiving international attention. On one occasion, the Birmingham Police Department was notified that a mob was enroute to free the black prisoners. Lela Legare was provided a police escort from

her YMCA home to the drugstore. She and other employees were informed to "stay indoors and to lie flat on the floor if shooting occurs." With the presence of artillery and machine guns, the neighborhood observed a long, tense day. About sundown, they were relieved to learn that the mob had not materialized.

The Western Union office was at Haralson Drug in Fort Payne, and messages and money orders were sent to and from military personnel and their families during World War II. The booming business produced responsibilities and some unpleasant duties. I was a young employee there, and it was unnecessary for the lady operator to announce the type of message to be delivered. Her facial expression and her instruction "Make certain that this person is not alone when you deliver this," warned me of a death announcement. Carrying such a telegram was a traumatic experience for a young teenager; fortunately, most of my deliveries were joyous messages.

The heyday of the drugstore as a Southern social center ended by the late 1960s. The Allies' victory ended years of wartime sacrifices and shortages, and Americans were free to indulge their pent-up desires in a material sense, especially those related to the automobile. This transportation revolution gave Southerners a mobility unknown earlier, and the social centers shifted away from the neighborhood.

In today's computerized pharmacy, there are still reminders of the so-called heyday of drugstores in Alabama. The J. T. May Drugstore in Greensboro continues operation with twenty-four mahogany store fixtures purchased for \$1200 in 1936. The 1899 Beaux-Arts style courthouse with its giant oak trees on the square in Lafayette is reflected in the apothecary show globes which have continued to hang in the windows of Collins' Drug since 1920. Upstairs over this Barbour County firm, a young attorney opened his first law office during the 1940s. He later gained prominence as Governor George C. Wallace.

The role of the pharmacist also underwent major changes. From the old mystery and art of the apothecary who compounded most prescriptions, to the patient-oriented clinical practice that began in the 1970s, his role is vastly different. Thus, the demise of the drugstore as a center for social activities reflects the changed social scene in post-World War II Alabama and the rest of our nation.

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

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*ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) corporation, is published monthly except November. Comments are welcome. You may email the Society at [escambiahistoricalociety@gmail.com](mailto:escambiahistoricalociety@gmail.com) or call 251-809-1528.*

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