



**The January Newsletter:
The January Meeting will be
Tuesday, January 23, 2024,
in the Meeting Room of the McMillan
Museum on the Brewton College Campus.**



**Kelly Gates
Elmore**

The Program: Kelly Gates Elmore, Coordinator of Library Services and the Kathryn Tucker Windham Museum, at Coastal Alabama Community College, Thomasville, Will Present a Program on the Museum and its Collection about Storyteller. Author, Journalist, Kathryn Windham.

Kelly is a graduate of Auburn University with a degree in History and San Jose State University where she received a Masters of Library and Information Sciences. She joined the staff of Coastal Alabama Community College, Thomasville Campus, in August 2022.

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Refreshments at January Meeting

If you choose, bring your favorite finger food for refreshments after the program. The Society will provide drinks.



Coastal Alabama Community College has a new president, Aaron Milner, currently Superintendent of Schools at Saraland. His tenure begins Feb. 1.

Student Historical Society

The Historical Society for Students at Coastal Ala. College, Brewton Campus, now has ten members. The group is currently planning trips to local historic sites.



The Alabama River Bridge at Claiborne, Ala. which preceded the current Claiborne-Murphy Bridge.

*(Photograph by Albert F. Nettles.)
<<https://www.facebook.com/photo>>.*

Donations for a Digitizing Camera

Consider making a donation to this project. The Society needs the camera to copy valuable materials that are deteriorating. The camera creates documents that can be used with a computer. One example of such material that needs preserving is the collection of the original documents of Annie Waters, not only for her book The History of Escambia County, Ala. but also her other research.



**Kathryn Tucker
Windham in the Old
Live Oak Cemetery
Selma, Ala.**

**Volume 51 No. 1,
January 2024**

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The Program



The Museum

At the Left, The Front Entrance to the Kathryn Tucker Windham Museum. At the Right, the Sculpture of Kathryn by Charlie Lucas.



Three Exhibits of Various Periods of Kathryn's Life. At the Right, Kathryn the Journalist, At Bottom Left, her Childhood in Thomasville, and at the Bottom Right, Family.



(Continued from page 1)

The introduction to the Museum from [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathryn_Tucker_Windham) states: The Kathryn Tucker Windham Museum is a biographical museum located on the campus of Coastal Alabama Community College in Thomasville, Alabama. It is dedicated to preserving the works of native author, storyteller, and journalist Kathryn Tucker Windham.

The Windham Room, a reading and archive room, includes photos and accompanying stories beginning

with Ms. Windham's earliest photos taken with a Kodak Brownie camera she received at age 12.

The museum takes visitors through Ms. Windham's early childhood in Thomasville, her career as a journalist and her rise to national attention as a storyteller. The museum also includes a sculpture of Ms. Windham by Charlie Lucas, who was a close friend of Ms. Windham and her next-door neighbor (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>).

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Kathryn Tucker Windham

The following article is from the Encyclopedia of Alabama at <https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/kathryn-tucker-windham/>.



graduating in 1939. She first worked in Thomasville as a freelance journalist and in March 1940 was hired by The Alabama Journal in Montgomery as a feature writer and police reporter, replacing a male

Kathryn Tucker Windham (1918-2011) is best known for her series of ghost story collections, beginning with 13 Alabama Ghosts and Jeffrey in 1969, as well as numerous other publications, photography, and storytelling. Windham's work focused on the South's multilayered lifeways and evokes positive qualities of the human experience: family, community, tolerance, good humor, laughter, and joy.

Windham was born in Selma, Dallas County, on June 2, 1918, to James Wilson Tucker and Helen Gaines Tabb Tucker. She grew up in Thomasville, Clarke County, the youngest of a large family. Her interest in Alabama lifeways began early. Her father, a banker, was a gifted storyteller. Windham also absorbed family history and lore from her mother, a former teacher, and her aunt, Tab Forster, the Thomasville postmistress.

Young Kathryn attended public schools in Thomasville and in 1930, at age 12, began writing movie reviews for the Thomasville Times, owned by her cousin Earl Tucker. That year, early one morning, she sat on the sidewalk in front of People's Drug Company in Thomasville to be first in line for a Brownie camera given away as part of Eastman Kodak's 50th-anniversary promotion. Writing and photography would become lifelong pursuits.

In 1935, Windham graduated from Thomasville High School as class valedictorian, then attended Huntingdon College in Montgomery,



Kathryn at Huntingdon College . She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree and soon began her career as a journalist with the Alabama Journal.

reporter who was entering military service. She was one of the first women to cover the police beat for a major daily newspaper in the South.

In 1942, she moved to Birmingham, where she served as publicity director for the Alabama War Bond Committee. The following year, Windham began working for The Birmingham News, editing articles on state news and aviation and serving as a courthouse reporter. There, she also took photographs with the newspaper's Graflex camera (*brand and type of camera popular with newspaper reporters and photographers*).

Windham married Amasa Benjamin Windham, a journalist, editor, and World War II veteran in 1946. The couple moved to Selma, where their three children were born, and Kathryn wrote freelance articles for Progressive Farmer magazine and many Alabama newspapers. From 1950 to 1966, she penned a locally syndicated newspaper column "Around Our House." After Amasa died in 1956, Windham joined the staff of The (Selma) Times-Journal, where she worked until 1973.

While in Selma, Windham began writing and publishing the first of some 20 books, the initial one being Treasured Alabama Recipes. Her eight-book series of ghost stories began in 1969.

Alabama: One Big Front Porch (1975), one of Windham's



Kathryn with her husband, Amasa Windham, and their three children.

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Kathryn Tucker Windham

(Continued from page 3)

most popular books, is a compilation of stories, lore, and recipes from across the state.

In 1982, Windham worked on a Birmingham Public Library project on Gee's Bend, a rural African American community in a bend of the Alabama River in Wilcox County, now nationally known for its quilters. During her visits to Gee's Bend, Windham produced a long report, including interviews and observations.

She and Birmingham photographer John Reese took extensive photographs, including a series depicting Pleasant Grove Baptist Church's Baptism ceremony in a local creek.

Windham was also known for her storytelling and radio broadcasts. In 1974, she was featured in the second National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee, eventually appearing there more than a dozen times.

Beginning in 1984, Windham's commentaries were heard every Friday morning on Alabama Public Radio. Between 1985 and 1987, they also were broadcast on "All Things Considered" for National Public Radio.

Windham also developed a personal interest in Progressive-era reformer Julia Tutwiler into a "living portrayal" of



Kathryn's daughter, Diley Windham Hilley, believes this is her mother's favorite photograph in her large collection. It is of a woman walking down a road carrying a rooster.

Ms. Hilley notes her mother commented on the encounter, "She posed with dignity and a fleeting touch of humor, holding the bird against her white shirt to dramatize his bright feathers. When I asked if I might give her a ride, she declined, saying, 'I ain't got far to go'" (<https://ktwindham.weebly.com/our-stories-blog>).

In an interview, Windham's daughter once commented: "People have often asked Mother, 'Where did you get the pacing for your storytelling?"

"She was inclined to talk a little while and then stop and take a pause and then begin to speak again."

That style followed the pattern of Windham's father, who would smoke a pipe while he told stories. His pauses were for him to take a draw on his pipe before he continued his story.

Windham's pauses tended to draw in her audience.

"It's an intriguing and unusual type of pacing for storytelling," Diley said. "They just were on the edge of their seats, to see what would come out of her mouth next."

From "Remembering Kathryn Tucker Windham" by Solomon Crenshaw Jr. at <https://alabamaneewscenter.com>.

Tutwiler, which she first performed in period costume at the Birmingham Public Library in 1981.

Even before she acquired her first Brownie camera in 1930, Windham had been interested in photography. From the 1940s, she took photographs as a journalist, and when she travelled around Alabama for pleasure or to cover stories, she was rarely without her camera.

By the 1980s, she began including some of her photographs in her books. In 1989, Windham's photographs were included in the major traveling exhibition In View of Home: Alabama Landscape Photographs, organized by the Huntsville Museum of Art. Her work also appeared in the 1992 Amazing Alabama exhibition in Montgomery, organized for the Retirement Systems of Alabama.

In 1993, the University of Montevallo granted Windham an honorary doctorate degree. In August of that year, the Huntsville Museum of Art invited Windham to make the presentation "Words into Pictures" for its endowed Marriott Lecture series. The museum mounted a one-person exhibition of 28 of her finest photographs: Encounters 24, Kathryn Tucker Windham.

This exhibition led to publication of a book of her photographs and stories, Encounters, Kathryn

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Kathryn Tucker Windham

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Tucker Windham, in 1998.

It is highly unusual for a talented wordsmith also to be a gifted photographer, but Kathryn Tucker Windham used both forms of media to communicate memorably about southern culture. Whether telling stories, commenting on southern customs, passing along cherished recipes, or capturing Alabama life in photographs, her work has a unity that centers on her powers of observation and memory and her love for the South, its people, and its lifeways.

Windham's achievements have led to numerous awards and honors, not the least of which is the Kathryn Tucker Windham Museum and

Library at Coastal Alabama Community College in her home town of Thomasville.

Windham died on June 12, 2011, and was buried in the New Live Oak Cemetery in Selma, in a custom-made pine casket that she had kept in a shed in her backyard.

Windham was inducted into the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame in March 2015. She was inducted into the Alabama Newspaper Hall of Honor at Auburn University in April 2018. In 2023, Windham was inducted into the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame.

STORYTELLING IS A WAY TO SAY, "I LOVE YOU."

"I think we need to be put back in touch with our childhood. . . to be reminded of what's important, like memories about people we loved, or things that happened to us that affected our lives, things we can laugh about and shed a few tears about. I think storytelling is a way of saying "I love you. I love you enough to tell you something that means a great deal to me."

Kathryn Tucker Windham

On New Year's Day, Kathryn would cook huge pots of black-eyed peas and massive amounts of cornbread, and she would open her home to all who wanted to come. She issued no invitations, but the "Pea Eating" was widely known throughout the region, and people came in droves.

Kathryn carried on this tradition for 30 years or more. People still talk about how they miss the event that insured their good luck for the new year.

From <<https://www.facebook.com/KathrynTuckerWindham/>>.



Kathryn's necklace in the picture depicts her own household ghost, Jeffrey.

"I just don't think you can beat the truth. The truth is just pure and it's all right there, and laid out open for you to see. Well, take my ghost stories. They're true. You can visit the places where they happened, the names are accurate, and the events surrounding the supernatural occurrence did take place. I used my investigative reporter skills to ferret out the truth about them. Truth is always stranger than fiction and it's also not as believable as fiction." Kathryn Windham

From "Kathryn Tucker Windham: Author, Storyteller and Photographer, Selma, Alabama" <<https://www.Eliabethderamus.com/>>.

"Some people are important to intellectuals, journalists, or politicians, but Kathryn Tucker Windham is probably the only person I know in Alabama who is important to everybody." Historian and Writer Wayne Flynt

From "Website Debuts a Lifetime of Work Online" at <<https://www.tuscaloosaneews.com/>>.

"I like cemeteries," she said in a 1987 commentary on NPR's All Things Considered. "I like to wander around in them and admire the craftsmanship of the stone masons and read the epitaphs and wonder about the people who are buried there."

From "Kathryn Tucker Windham's Life Was Quite A Story" By Debbie Elliott at <<https://www.npr.org/>>.

News and Announcements



Food For Thought Schedule for 2024

The Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) has announced the 2024 schedule for its popular Alabama history lunchtime lecture series, *Food for Thought*.

Lectures are held on the third Thursday of every month at 12:00 pm CT. Programs are presented both in-person at the ADAH and online via the ADAH's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Visit archives.alabama.gov for the latest information about individual programs. Admission is always free. Food for Thought 2024 is sponsored by the Alabama Humanities Alliance and the Friends of the Alabama Archives.

The Double Life of Asa Carter
January 18 • Dan T. Carter

**History Lives On: Preserving Alabama's
Rosenwald Schools**
February 15 • Gorham Bird

Alabama's First Ladies of Flight
March 21 • Billy Singleton

The Battle of Fort Blakely: Mobile's Last Stand
April 18 • Mike Bunn

**Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of
Captivity in Early America**
May 16 • Christina Snyder

Birmingham and Black Baseball
June 20 • Frank E. Adams Jr.

**Documenting the Architecture of the Everyday in
Alabama**
July 18 • Christy Anderson

**"Alabama, Mother Mine": Portraits from Early
Alabama**
August 15 • Bill Eiland

Mexican Culture and Cuisine in Alabama History
September 19 • Michael Innis-Jiménez

**Exploring the Collections of the Air Force
Historical Research Agency**
October 17 • Timothy Brown

**Symphonic Composers of Alabama: The Works of
William Dawson, Margaret Bonds, and Others**
November 21 • Jamie Reeves

Montgomery's Tourism Renaissance
December 19 • Wanda Battle

ALABAMA
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION 

76 Annual Meeting, Huntsville
Wednesday, April 10, 11 am
Through Friday,
April 12, 2 pm.



**Big Spring International Park,
Huntsville**

Schedule of events, programs, speakers, tours, and notable sites in Huntsville, as well as information on cost for attending, reservations for hotels, and registration for the meeting can be found in the Spring 2024 Newsletter at

<https://www.alabamahistory.net/_file/ugd/3aaf16_3b018dd19cb14a379df403033346127c.pdf>.

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Frisco Comes To Atmore

By Charlie Ware

When I was growing up here in Atmore, the two railroads in town were the L&N (Louisville and Nashville) and the Frisco (St. Louis and San Francisco). The bridge where the Frisco crossed the L&N was an iconic symbol of Atmore to me. Anytime I would try to visualize the city, I would picture that bridge. If you climb up for a close look, you can still faintly see the “Frisco” logo on the span above the highway. On the center support of the bridge is stamped the date “1927” which means the bridge has been there for almost a hundred years.

When I was a kid, I often rode the Frisco from Atmore to visit with my grandparents in Pensacola. They lived just a few blocks from the ornate Frisco depot just off Garden Street. I was always fascinated by the trip and would often stand at the window and watch as the train wound its way through the thick forests along the Perdido River. Many years later I would walk this route up the tracks from Pensacola to Atmore. I often wondered where this



Atmore’s Frisco Depot around 1950



Date Plate on Atmore Rail Overpass



Date Stamp, 1927, on the Top of a Column, Atmore Rail Overpass.

railroad went and when and how it had come to be.

I recently came across a Frisco Employee Magazine from 1928 that answered many of those questions. The article was titled “The Frisco Meets the Gulf.”

The story began shortly after the Civil War when, in 1877, the Pensacola and Mobile Railroad and Manufacturing Company (PMR&M) rebuilt an old logging railroad from a connection with the L&N railroad in Cantonment, Florida west to Muscogee, on the Perdido River. The line was later extended on into Alabama toward Bay Minette. In 1881, The Muscogee Lumber Company purchased the line and used it to haul logs to their sawmill at Muscogee and finished lumber to Cantonment where it connected to the L&N line.

In 1906, the Southern States Lumber Company purchased the railroad and constructed a line from Cantonment, north to Local, Alabama (Huxford). This was the first north-south railroad in the Atmore area, but at the time, it

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The Frisco Comes To Atmore

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by-passed Atmore, crossing the L&N tracks about a mile west of the city. There are still some remnants of the old railroad bed to be seen today.

In 1911, Southern States extended their line from Cantonment into Pensacola paralleling the L&N line. This gave them direct access to the port in Pensacola and eliminated the need to transfer their lumber to the L&N. They also acquired waterfront property and began construction of wharfs and coaling facilities at the port near where the new Pensacola baseball stadium is today.

That same year, the Gulf, Florida, and Alabama Corporation (GF&A) was formed and acquired the trackage of the Southern States Lumber Company. By 1913, the main-line was extended north to Jones Mill (Frisco City) and in 1916, the line was finished to Kimbrough, Alabama, a tiny community about 20 miles northwest of Camden, where it connected with the Southern Railway System with service to Birmingham and Mobile.

The GF&A started as a logging railroad with



Frisco Logo on Atmore Rail Overpass.



Early Gulf, Florida, and Alabama Corporation (GF&A) Train Approaching McCullough.



Gulf, Florida and Alabama Corporation (GF&A) First Train January 1, 1913. The Label on the Side of the Train Reads "Deep Water Route."

three or four scheduled trains a day but soon added passenger service with two scheduled trains a day in each direction. The passenger trains served 38 locations between Kimbrough and downtown Pensacola. Many of these locations were flag stops where the train would only stop if there were passengers to drop off or be picked up.

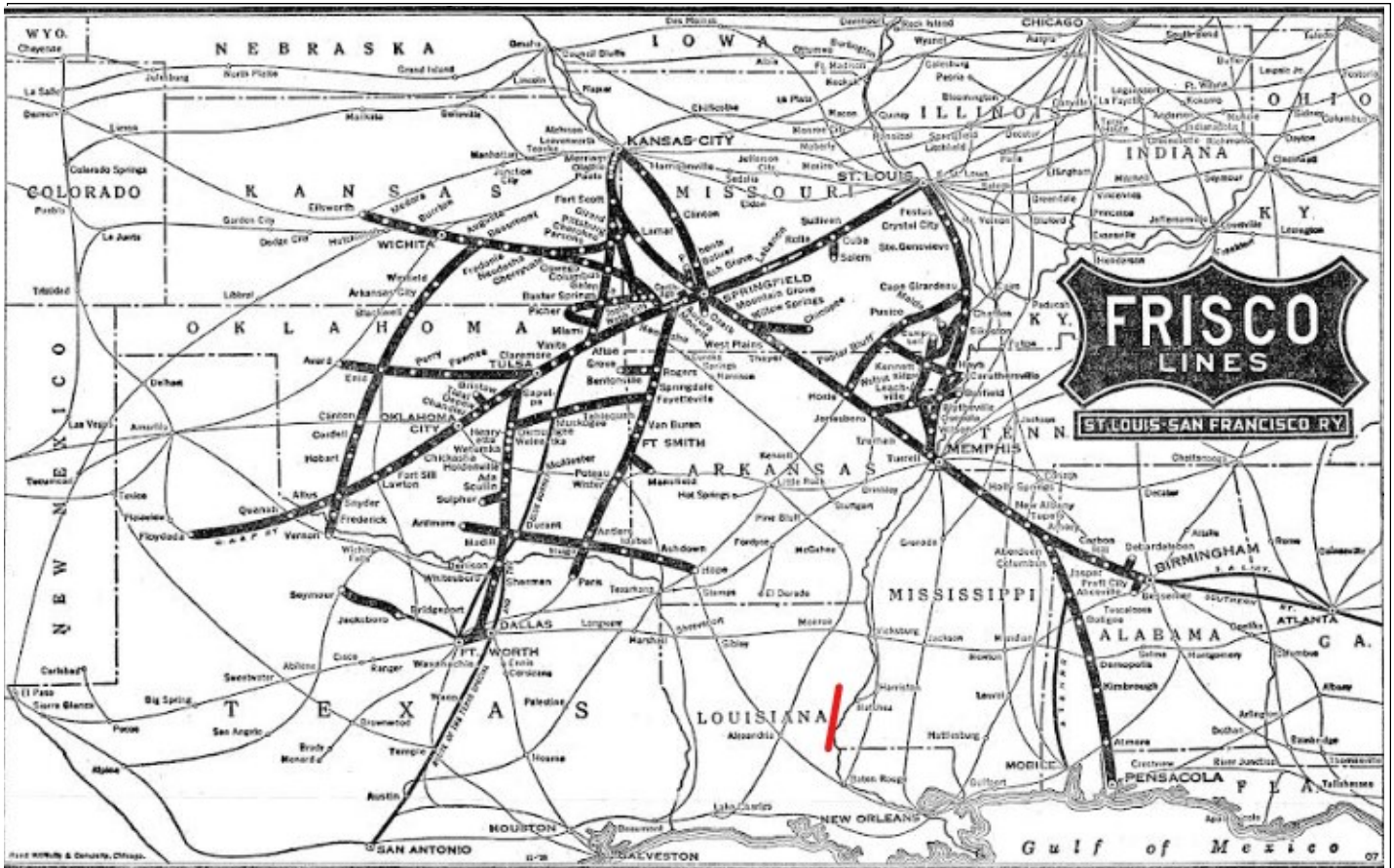
Atmore was a scheduled stop, so apparently there was once a depot located somewhere near where Swift Mill Road is today. Trains also stopped at Local (Huxford), McCullough, Poarch, and Freemanville. The GF&A became known as the Deep Water Line.

By 1917, the logging operation had begun to decline, and fewer log trains were required. In 1919, the GF&A declared bankruptcy and in 1922, was acquired by the Muscle Shoals, Birmingham, and Pensacola Railroad (MSB&P). Unable to obtain adequate financing, the MSB&P soon filed for bankruptcy itself, but continued to operate the freight and passenger service, in and out of bankruptcy, until July 7, 1925,

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Frisco Comes To Atmore



ONLY ONE COUPON . . .
"TEXAS SPECIAL ROUTE
FRISCO - M-K-T LINES"

From St. Louis to Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, Temple, Austin, San Antonio, Wichita Falls, Houston and intermediate points in Texas

Frisco Lines Map 1933.

(Continued from page 8)

when the line was purchased by the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Company (Frisco).

The Frisco was a major railway company, founded in 1876, with vast operations throughout the Midwest and South-Central United States. Their primary hubs were in St. Louis, Memphis, and Kansas City. For years, the Frisco had been attempting to expand their line to a port on the Gulf of Mexico but had met with disappointment in all their efforts. They finally saw their opportunity in the MSB&P with its newly constructed facilities at the port of Pensacola.

The plan was to construct a new line from the MSB&P terminus at Kimbrough, northwest through Demopolis, Alabama and Columbus, Mississippi to

Armory, Mississippi. At Armory, it would join an existing Frisco line running between Birmingham and Memphis. Frisco's long-standing dream of an outlet to the gulf was finally realized with the completion of the line to Pensacola in June 1928.

Frisco not only constructed the new line between Kimbrough and Armory but rebuilt most of the old MSB&P line to accommodate more frequent and faster trains. Part of this project included eliminating the by-pass of Atmore and rerouting the tracks to pass through the downtown and constructing the overpass over the L&N and US-31 that we see today. These bridges were completed in 1927 by the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company.

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The Frisco Comes To Atmore

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On the early morning of June 26, 1928, two specials, gaily decorated passenger trains of eleven cars each, departed Memphis for the first official trip along the new line to Pensacola. On these trains were all the high officials of the Frisco, hundreds of businesspeople and potential shippers, and numerous reporters. The trip would take two days as the trains stopped at all the major stations along the way for welcoming ceremonies of various forms.

Cheering crowds gathered all along the line to wave to the trains as they made their way south. Riders were treated to high school bands, bathing beauty parades, barbecues, and numerous speeches by city officials. The town of Jones Mill officially changed its name to Frisco City in honor of the occasion.

When the trains arrived in Atmore, all the city's fire and police sirens and mill company whistles were wide open. At least a thousand people were on hand to welcome the Frisco to Atmore. A June 1928 Atmore Advance article described the event. "The Lions Club furnished lemonade and cake which was dispensed by the young ladies of the town who went through the train serving all who desired to participate. A prospectus containing a word of greeting to the Frisco and facts about Atmore was distributed to members of the party. Boy Scouts drew a cheer from the travelers for a large welcoming sign which they carried between long poles."

At 9:15 p.m. on June 27, 1928, the two passenger trains arrived at the Frisco's piers in Pensacola. Frisco locomotives were at a major port city for the first time after four decades of effort. All along the approach to the city, enthusiastic citizens jammed both sides of the right of way. An escort of army airplanes circled over the trains as they made their way into the city. At the terminal, over five thousand people roared their welcome.



Pensacola Frisco Depot.

The next two days were days of celebration for Pensacola. Overnight, three more trains arrived from Memphis bringing several hundred additional guests, including over forty from Atmore, to the city. All the business leaders of the city along with city and state officials and all the officers of the Frisco, participated in numerous welcoming ceremonies and banquets. The city then

staged the largest parade in its history, measuring over eighteen blocks long, welcoming the Frisco to Pensacola.

The budding romance between the Frisco and the city of Atmore was short-lived however, when in August of 1928, city officials learned that the Frisco was starting construction of a passenger and freight facility in Atmore without having consulted with the city. The depot was to be located about a hundred yards north of the Howard Street (Jack Springs Road) intersection with the railroad. The mayor and many of Atmore's leading citizens wanted the depot closer to downtown near where the Frisco and L&N crossed. The mayor ordered the contractor to stop work on the depot and sent a letter to the president of the Frisco demanding a hearing. Construction continued, and after two weeks had passed and the city had not heard anything from the Frisco, Mayor W.E. Rushing had the foreman of the construction company arrested.

This action got the attention of Frisco officials, and they immediately sent a committee to Atmore to seek release of the foreman and to negotiate with the mayor. The Frisco contended that the depot location sought by the city would require trains to enter a spur line about a mile north of the city to reach the depot and then back out to the main line to continue. They claimed this would be too time-consuming and expensive.

After two weeks of negotiations, an agreement was finally reached which would allow the Frisco to con-

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tinue construction of the passenger depot at the Howard Street location, but the freight terminal would be located on the spur line near the Frisco/L&N crossing. By the middle of November, the passenger depot, which was to accommodate Atmore passengers for the next twenty-seven years, was completed.

Their differences finally worked out, the Frisco continued to serve Atmore for fifty-two more years. Numerous freight trains operated into the city and soon there were four additional spur tracks constructed to connect with various business establishments. Many potato and cucumber packing sheds sprang up along these spurs. There would often be dozens of freight cars parked waiting to be loaded or unloaded.

In addition, the Frisco operated a daily passenger train each way between Pensacola and Memphis. This train was known as the "Sunnyland" and was a full-service train with Pullman and dining car facilities. When the need arose, extra sections would

be added and sometimes, especially during World War II, there would be three or four passenger trains a day stopping in Atmore. Sadly, with rail passenger traffic in decline, the Frisco terminated the Sunnyland in 1955.

In 1980, the Frisco was acquired by the Burlington Northern Railroad (BN) that continued to operate the line until 1997. In that year, BN spun off the route between Kimbrough and Pensacola and the Alabama and Gulf Railroad (AGR) was formed to take over the operation. Today, the AGR provides as-needed freight service between Pensacola and Kimbrough with connections there to the Burlington Northern system.

So, in a sense, the Frisco line through Atmore has returned to its old Georgia, Florida, and Alabama Railroad roots of 1916.

Interestingly, despite its name, the Frisco never reached San Francisco. The line never extended beyond west Texas.



**Frisco crossing over L&N at Atmore, AL.
date & photographer unknown.
Posted on Facebook by Billy Pettey at
<<https://www.facebook.com/photo>>.**

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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www.escohis.org

The Museum is on Facebook at
<http://www.facebook.com.
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Escambia Historical Society Cookbook	\$10.00	\$15.00
Wildflowers of The Conecuh/Escambia River Basin CD	\$10.00	\$15.00
History of Brewton and E. Brewton (SC)	\$40.00	\$46.00
Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook	\$30.00	\$36.00
Addendum to Headstones and Heritage	\$20.00	\$26.00
Headstones & Addendum Together	\$40.00	\$52.00

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advertisement 11 months of the year.

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 or call 251-809-1528.

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