



## The May Newsletter: The May Meeting will be Tuesday, May 28, 2024, 3:00 pm in the Meeting Room of the McMillan Museum on the Brewton College Campus.



**Kevin McKinley**

### The Program: Attorney, Historian Kevin McKinley Will Present a Program on the History of Canoe, Alabama.

Our speaker, Kevin McKinley, is no stranger to ECHS. He has presented programs previously. This attorney and historian is also an author who writes the column "All Things Southern" which appears in several south Alabama newspapers.

Kevin has also published a series of books entitled Shadows and Dust, which are a compilation of these newspaper articles. A Civil War historian, Kevin's Shadows and Dust series contains many

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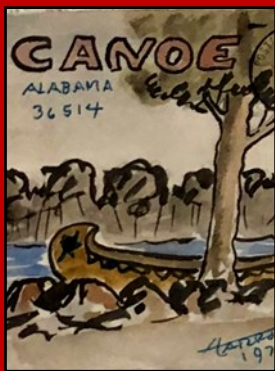
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This circa 1918 photograph shows Alabama Gov. Charles Henderson (on right) and pilot Ross L. Smith after the governor's flight in a Curtiss JN4D "Jenny" aircraft. It is likely that Henderson was the first Alabama Governor to fly in a plane. *Photo and text from ADAH.*

### Reinstating Refreshments after Meetings

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



Post Card from Canoe, with Old Zip Code. From Canoe Civic Club Facebook.

Volume 51 No. 5  
May 2024

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# The Program

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stories of the War and the engagement of Confederate and Union forces in the Canoe area.

He is especially interested in Canoe and its history. His stories about the people, the places and events connected with this community often appear on the

Canoe Civic Club Facebook, his column “All Things Southern” and Southern Shadows and Dust on the YouTube video website.

An attorney with offices in Atmore, he has practiced law in Mississippi and Alabama since 2006. He is a graduate of the Thomas Goode Jones School of Law of Faulkner University in Montgomery.

## Canoe Station Historical Marker



**Inscription.** Settled by A.J. Hall in 1852 and occupied by Confederate troops because of its value as a railroad stop during the War Between the States (1861-65), Canoe was the site of a March 27, 1865 encampment of Union forces. The 1870s brought expansion through the A.M. Lowery sawmill. The Farrar, Lowrey, Stanton, Watson, and other stores prospered (1890s-1950s). Schools educated the young and the L&N Railroad provided passenger service (1890-1960s).

The mineral springs was a social center and water was bottled and shipped from the site (early 1900s). WPA employed residents during the Great Depression (1930s). Local sons fought in WWII (1941-45). Many businesses had closed by the mid-1960s as larger commercial centers attracted Canoe's residents.

**Erected** 2007 by the William Carney Camp Sons of Confederate Veterans & Residents and the Alabama Historical Association.

## News and Announcements



### Byron Franklin Findley, Jr. Former ECHS Member, Passes Away May 10.

A native of Brewton and a long time resident of East Brewton, Byron Findley was a 1960 graduate of W.S. Neal High School and a 1969 graduate of the University of Alabama. A U.S. Navy veteran and a member of the American Legion, Mr. Findley was a retired city clerk from the City of Tuscaloosa.

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### The Alabama Historical Association Announces Dates and Locations for Meetings



Fall Pilgrimage Will Be October 12, 2024 in Phenix City.

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# News and Announcements

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The 77th Annual Meeting for the Alabama Historical Society will be in Opelika, Alabama, April 9-11, 2025.

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## Upcoming Events at the Alabama Department of Archives and History



**Event: Book Talk:**  
**Topic: Discussion of Odyssey of a Wandering Mind: The Strange Tale of Sara Mayfield**  
**Date: Thursday, May 30, 2024**  
**Time: 12:00 pm CDT**  
**Presenter: Jennifer Horne, Author.**

*From ADAH:*

Join us in person or online Thursday, May 30, at 12:00pm CT for a book talk on Odyssey of a Wandering Mind: The Strange Tale of Sara Mayfield, given by author Jennifer Horne.

Horne's book tells the story of Sara Mayfield, a brilliant but troubled author and inventor who struggled against the conventions of gender, class, family, and ultimately of sanity, yet survived to define a creative life of her own. Throughout her life, Mayfield kept journals, wrote fiction, and produced thousands of letters while nursing the ambition that had driven her since childhood: to write and publish books. In Odyssey of a Wandering Mind, Horne draws on years of research and an intimate understanding of this vast personal archive to sensitively render May-

field's struggle to move through the world as the person she was—and her ultimate success in surviving to define the terms of her story.

*The program will be held in person in the Alabama Department of Archives & History's Joseph M. Farley Alabama Power Auditorium. It will also stream live on Facebook and YouTube, and a recording will be available after the program.*

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Alabama History  
Lunchtime Lectures

**Subject: Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America**  
**Date: Thursday, June 20, 2024**  
**Presented by Christina Synder.**

*From Amazon.com:* Slavery existed in North America long before the first Africans arrived at Jamestown in 1619. For centuries, from the pre-Columbian era through the 1840s, Native Americans took prisoners of war and killed, adopted, or enslaved them. Christina Snyder's pathbreaking book takes a familiar setting for bondage, the American South, and places Native Americans at the center of her engrossing story.

Indian warriors captured a wide range of enemies, including Africans, Europeans, and other Indians. Yet until the late eighteenth century, age and gender more than race affected the fate of captives. As economic and political crises mounted, however, Indians began to racialize slavery and target African Americans. Native people struggling to secure a separate space for themselves in America developed a shared language of race with white settlers. Although the Indians' captivity practices remained fluid long after their neighbors hardened racial lines, the Second Seminole War ultimately tore apart the inclusive communities that Native people had created through centuries of captivity.

Snyder's rich and sweeping history of Indian slavery connects figures like Andrew Jackson and Cherokee chief Dragging Canoe with little-known captives like Antonia Bonelli, a white teenager from Spanish Florida, and David George, a black runaway from Virginia. Placing the experiences of these individuals within a complex system of captivity and Indians' relations with other peoples, Snyder demonstrates the profound role of Native American history in the American past.

# Places in Peril for 2024

## Alabama's Endangered Historic Landmarks

Each year since 1994, *Alabama Heritage* has highlighted threatened historic sites throughout Alabama. The “Places in Peril” list has identified more than 215 imperiled historic resources throughout the state, and is compiled by the Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation.

The locations highlight the results of deferred maintenance, perceived obsolescence, development pressures, and lack of funding—forces that now more than ever threaten our cultural legacy. But awareness is a powerful force, too, and can cultivate a renewed determination to be responsible stewards of our heritage (<https://www.alabamaheritage.com/places-in-peril/archives/05-2024>).

### The Sand Town Community



**A historic marker faces Spring Hill Avenue for the Sand Town community in Mobile.**

The Sand Town community is the oldest African American neighborhood in Mobile and one of the oldest African American communities developed in the United States. Established in 1845 by former enslaved persons and free people of color, the community was built on land deemed inhabitable by the city. Located west of I-65, the community currently occupies roughly forty acres, a small portion of its original size.

The original inhabitants constructed their own schools, churches, residences, and other buildings. At the conclusion of the Civil War, over half of Ala-

bama’s free Blacks called Sand Town home. Mt. Hebron Methodist Church was founded in 1874, and in 1875, the Rising Sons Cemetery was established behind the church. The church housed the Spring Hill School for Negro Children until the late 1940s. The cemetery is still extant today. Spring Hill College initiated the construction of a log cabin in 1937 that served as the St. Augustine Catholic Church for Colored Catholics in the area. The cabin stood until 1963, and salvaged windows and doors are evident in the current Mt. Hebron AMEZ Church.

The Sand Town community is a significant story of resilience. The descendants of those who worked tirelessly to establish this historically significant African American neighborhood continue to reside in the area. Though many of the community’s original physical components have disappeared from the landscape, the community strongly desires to salvage and revitalize what remains, prohibit any unsympathetic development, and preserve its long history to ensure Sand Town and its stories and memories remain in the consciousness of generations to come.

### Dunbar High School, Bessemer, Jefferson County



The city of Bessemer was founded in 1887 as a manufacturing center that rivaled neighboring Birmingham as the top steel producer in the state. As a result, Bessemer grew rapidly as people moved for job opportunities in coal mining and manufacturing.

Due to bustling growth, schools were established shortly after the city was founded. A church served as the earliest school for African Americans in the city in 1889. By 1891, the Bessemer Board of Education

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## Places in Peril for 2024 Alabama's Endangered Historic Landmarks

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was established. Like those in other southern states, Alabama's African American schools struggled with lack of funding and systemic racism, and the state ignored federal mandates requiring "separate but equal" schools for both black and white populations.

The Bessemer Colored High School began construction during this period in 1922. The school opened its doors in 1923 and served as the city's only Black high school until 1960. Acclaimed Alabama architect D. O. Whilldin designed the two-story classroom block with Classical Revival details.

The building featured a brick foundation with brick walls and a flat roof. The front façade featured an entrance in the central bay flanked by two end pavilions that were constructed in advance of the main façade plane. The main entrance featured a porch with a shed roof with parapets supported by L-shaped pillars. The pavilions featured parapets with shallow peaks. The original configuration of the wood windows was six panes over six panes.

The floor plan was typical of the period, with classrooms on either side of a central hallway. A gym was also constructed in 1922, and an additional building constructed in the 1940s temporarily housed a lunchroom, band room, and shop facilities.

In 1928, the school's name changed to honor Paul Lawrence Dunbar, a Black poet and novelist born in 1872 who was highly regarded for his representation black life around the turn of the century.

Though the Dunbar School has been altered over the years, particularly between the 1930s and 1980s, several original elements remain, such as the unpainted brick and parapets. By 1960, the school had transitioned from a high school to a primary school. It was decommissioned in the 1980s and later became the Dunbar-Abrams Community Center.

The building has long been vacant. Due to extensive water damage, vandalism, and deferred maintenance, the roof system is failing, the masonry needs repointing, and the windows need to be repaired and replaced. Vegetation currently creeps along its facades. Community organizations seek to rehabilitate the former school building and are exploring ways to secure funding for this enormous task.



**Morgan-Curtis House, Phenix City,  
Russell County**

Atop a hill in Phenix City stands a neoclassical two-story residence constructed by Dr. David Elias Morgan in 1904. Hailing from Monmouthshire, Wales, Morgan arrived in America as a young man. At a train stop in Columbus, Georgia, on the way to what he thought was his destination of New York City, he met Minnie Alice McGehee, whom he wed in 1890. Morgan abandoned his plans to move to New York; instead, he and his bride settled in Girard (now Phenix City), Alabama, where he served as a practicing physician.

When an 1840s Columbus home suffered a fire, Morgan bought salvaged materials from it, using them to construct a Phenix City residence with a center hall floor plan. The first story main façade features a central entrance flanked by two sets of windows. A two-story porch wraps two of the façades, supported by two-story rusticated concrete columns. Seeing a need for space to treat patients, Morgan converted the second story of the residence into sanitorium patient rooms in 1914 and enclosed portions of the second story porch on one façade to serve as patient sunrooms. Morgan treated a variety of illnesses and delivered babies. Like many doctors of the day, he accepted a variety of payments, including artwork and chickens.

After Morgan died, ownership of the home passed to one of his daughters, Ruth Morgan Curtis, who served the town as a pharmacist. In 2000, the property was purchased with the intent to restore it. The house

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# Places in Peril for 2024

## Alabama's Endangered Historic Landmarks

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is currently vacant and suffers from vandalism and deferred maintenance. The interior has sustained significant water damage, and critical repairs to the roof and windows are needed. The community is seeking ways to rally support and rehabilitate this property to ensure its unique history and architectural features remain for generations to come.

### D.M. Brasher Department Store and Brasher Hotel, Carbon Hill, Walker County



Settled in 1886, the town of Carbon Hill incorporated in 1891. Reflective of the town's reliance on the railway, Main Street abuts a neighboring railroad line, which was instrumental in the coal mining industry's growth in the area. Col. Robert Galloway made possible the early development of Carbon Hill. Galloway purchased mines and properties in Carbon Hill from the Kansas City Coal and Coke Company

in 1890. Shortly thereafter, a post office and Methodist church were established, and the town continued to grow. The name of the town alludes to the dark coal found in the neighboring hills.

A tornado in 1917 and a subsequent fire in the early 1920s devastated and demolished several buildings on Main Street. The townspeople rebuilt their businesses along Main Street using materials from the aftermath of these terrible tragedies. The D. M. Brasher Department Store and Hotel building was constructed on the corner of Main Street and Third Street Northwest around 1917. The two-story brick commercial building housed two business storefronts along Main Street and multiple businesses along Third Street Northwest. The rear of the second floor housed the hotel. The front of the second story served as a restaurant that allowed staff access to the balcony that overlooked Main Street.

While the hotel rooms remain largely intact from the early 1920s, the buildings underwent changes as their functions changed from a department store and hotel to a furniture store, antique store, and event space. Interior walls have been opened and storefront windows modernized. Most of the windows and openings along the east wall are now enclosed. Drop ceiling tile has been added to some areas. The space currently houses a quaint restaurant and retail shops.

The current owners have replaced the roof and windows recently, but the building sustained damage from a 2020 tornado and still needs repairs to plumbing, lighting, ceilings and walls. The owners hope to rehabilitate the building for future generations and to welcome others by possibly opening a bed-and-breakfast.



**This watercolor showing an American lotus seed pod, a water snake eating a frog, a snail, a hummingbird, a dragonfly, pickerel weed, and arrowleaf, was created by naturalist and artist William Bartram in the late 18th century. It shows the biodiversity Bartram encountered during his journey through southeastern North America during the Revolutionary War era. During the 1775–76 leg of his journey, along what later became the Federal Road, Bartram passed through Alabama's present-day Russell and Macon counties to the future site of Montgomery and then turned southwest through what are now Lowndes, Butler, Conecuh, Escambia, and Baldwin counties. Bartram reached Mobile in July 1775 and sailed up the Tensaw and Tombigbee rivers on a route now called the Bartram Canoe Trail.**

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Historical Mineral Springs in Canoe

**By Kevin McKinley**

Mineral springs gave rise to many communities in our area and some become vacation locations as well. A mineral springs existed near Bowman Cemetery in the Wawbeek area that led to the rise of the long lost town of Evansville. The Roberts community had a spring as well. Other communities such as Herrington, had a hotel centered around their mineral springs.

Sometimes the mineral springs were believed to hold medicinal benefits. Such was the case with the mineral springs at Canoe, Alabama. The springs had been a major source of free, pure water for the community since the inception of Canoe in the early 1850s.

Confederate and Union forces used the spring to water their horses and their men. Camp Hunter, a Confederate camp, was located within sight of the spring and Confederate pickets guarded the springs during the war. Following the war, locals used the spring for water, eventually a gazebo was built over the spring and it became a site for various social gatherings. Mrs. Vivian Young once told this writer of going to the springs on Saturday mornings as a child and how local children would cook breakfast over a fire and enjoy the springs and socializing together at the waters.

Even earlier than Mrs. Young's recollections, the springs were commercialized, likely by Dr. Gordon. He was a veterinarian and a very progressive local farmer. He bricked the area around the spring, constructed concrete steps going down to the location and sold the mineral water to passersby. Of course, to take

a drink it was always free but a five gallon bottle would cost the buyer a \$2.25 premium for what was known as a "car-boy" bottle.

The Gordon Mineral Springs, as they were called during his time, were known far and wide. Newspapers in places like Camden and Claiborne ran a weekly ad for years and passenger trains would stop by the springs to allow travelers to drink from the waters.

One ad in the Monroe Journal read, "Take your auto full of friends and run down to Canoe, it will be a sensation. They come from fifty miles around to drink this fine water. Orders come from hundreds of miles around."

An Atmore Advance interview with an elderly lady, who was nearly 100 when interviewed more than a decade ago, recounted how her family had no well or other water supply other than the springs.

Mr. J.D. Page once recounted to this writer how popular the springs were in that earlier age and he too remembered people from many places stopping along the Highway 31 right of way near the Canoe Creek Bridge to drink the water.

In time the old spring was somewhat forgotten. The woods around the springs grew in and crowded out the majestic brick work that adorned the springs. Then in later years a logging crew damaged the structure. Yet in the woods beside Canoe Creek the gentle trickle of spring water continues to make its way down the bank and into the creek which eventually takes it on to the Escambia River and Escambia Bay in Pensacola.



**A Sunday Outing.**  
**Residents in the Canoe area on a leisure Sunday afternoon at Mineral Springs.**  
**They came in horse and carriage and some in autos.**  
*From Canoe Civic Club Facebook.*

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## 1880's-90's Our Area Was a Different World

### By Kevin McKinley

If one could time travel to our area in the 1880s and 90s it is likely they would find a world unrecognizable to the modern eye. Virgin pine forests, hamlets ebbing and flowing and seeking to turn from tiny train station stops to towns and cities could be visited across many a creek bank as hard working men and women shouldered the burden of building our modern era on their backs.

Turpentine stills and their puffing boilers dotted the landscape in between huge patches of pine trees which stretched towards Heaven and left a pine needled carpet on the forest floor below. Turpentine stills were also known as naval stores. Canoe Station had two of them in the 1880s and Williams Station had several, mainly operated by Carney and at least one at Indian Pond, which was the site of his early saw mill before he moved it the more familiar location of what is now Atmore from Main Street to the end of town eastward.

These turpentine stills were dangerous operations. The boilers would sometimes explode and leave destruction in their wake. The Greenville Advocate reported on July 13, 1882 that "Canoe Station had two stills, both of which are doing a good business." McCoy, Dotty, Graham, and Carney are just a few of the men who had stills in the area. Men went into the woods and attached clay, and later, metal cups to trees which had the bark scared in a "V" pattern to allow the sap to run into the cup. The collected amounts were then taken to the still. One local newspaper reported the Carney still shipping 4000 pounds by rail in the early 1880s.

The men who worked these stills were hard workers, some were "fond of the bottle," and some were a "little rough around the edges," yet they gave a hard days work and drew their pay without asking for a handout or charity from any man with their handshake as their bond.

The saw mills of the area employed many and



**South Canoe Road, 1900s**

could also be places of danger as well. We know from history of the bigger saw mills like Carney, Alger-Sullivan, Foshee and TR Miller but smaller mills like the McCoy saw mill at Canoe Station in the 1880s are all but forgotten except for occasional references in old papers.

The Montgomery Advertiser corrected a false report of it burning in the September 2, 1884 edition of the paper. There was

also a community known as McCoyville which existed somewhere in the confines of what is today the eastern area of Atmore.

The newspapers of the era also reported on dastardly killings, accidental shootings and conflicts between individuals in this era. The Greenville Advocate noted a murder near Canoe Station in its Thursday August 4, 1882 edition, "A COWARDLY MURDER Near Canoe Station on the Mobile and Montgomery Railroad, W. Brit Mims was murdered last Friday in what seems to be a cowardly manner."

The murder was committed by Elijah Richardson and Arthur Bailey of Bluff Springs, FL. Richardson a deputy sheriff and had a warrant for Mims' arrest for some trifling offense and followed him into Alabama, where he shot him. Mims had a brother in business at Midway, Monroe County, this state. Another chapter to the record of crime."

Earlier in the year, in the April 4, 1882 edition of the Greenville Advocate, quoting the Brewton Blade newspaper reported the accidental shooting of a young male which led to a cook's arrest. In the reporters' words, "A little negro boy, by the name of Louis Martin, who was cooking for the M. and M. Railroad at Canoe Station, was practicing with a pistol on the track in a careless manner on last Monday, and some parties of the colored persuasion being in the vicinity-a stray ball from the pistol overtook one of them at the distance of 166 yards, bringing him down and producing death instantly. The boy is now

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## 1880's-90's Our Area Was a Different World

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in jail to answer for his carelessness.”

Another story which made headlines in the era involved a disagreement between Mr. J.R. McClammy, a highly respectable farmer who resided near McDavid Station on the L&N, and Noah Brewton. The Pensacola News reported the story in its September 19, 1893 edition: “A MIDNIGHT BRAWL-“He [McClammy] is charged with assaulting one Noah Brewton by striking him over the head with a gun,” so said the telegram from County Solicitor Jones from A. W. Brewton at McDavid.

“Mr. McClammy does not deny the charge, but told a representative of the News yesterday that on last Wednesday night he was aroused from sleep by the cursing and loud yells of a lot of men near his residence. He thought that some person was being mobbed and perhaps killed, and seizing his gun, rushed out. When he reached the spot he found Noah Brewton and his brother Allen and two others whom he knew. One of the men informed him that Noah Brewton was drunk and they were trying to get him home. While Mr. McClammy was standing there Noah Brewton rushed upon him and struck him a severe blow to the face.” The report states that he started to strike him again but the quick thinking McClammy raised his gun and delivered a blow to the head of Brewton which took him to the ground and ended the row.

McClammy took a signed paper from leading citizens of the community as to his character for peacefulness in the community and offering to go his bond on the charges.

Allen Brewton thereafter spoke with the Pensacola News for its September 21, 1893 edition and told the Brewton side of the story. Brewton told the paper, “that himself, his brother, Noah, and others, were passing on the public road about 300 yards from McClammy’s about 10 o’clock at night; that Noah was under the influence of liquor and they stopped to allow him to exchange horses; that while they were engaged in doing this Mr. McClammy came from his house with a gun and struck Noah Brewton before he knew that he was there, that Brewton was attempting to get on his horse when he was struck and that he made no attempt to strike McClammy.”

The case went to trial in early November 1893 and J. R. McClammy, who had been charged with aggravated assault, was found not guilty.

In these bygone days of the 1880s and 90s the creeks flowed with more passion and current, as did the common man in his daily dealings. Hard work, a stiff drink and the barrel of a rifle could sometimes be found in the pine forests of the area....but just across the field one could also find a warm fireside, a packed church and a welcoming community-all under the sun in the South.



**Roller Skating on Highway 31 in 1930s Canoe, AL. Sondra McKinley points out, “This is likely in front of the modern Canoe Civic Center looking towards Atmore; note that on the new mural on the Civic Center the photo on the mural looks to the east and this photo is looking west. It’s a great comparison of historic 1930s downtown Canoe.”**

**Photo and Text from Canoe Civic Club Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/canoecivicclub/>).**

**Canoe Mural on Side of Civic Center.**

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Canoe: Common Threads, Collective History

**By Kevin McKinley**

Several weeks ago, Dave Bethea—a friend and former Canoe resident—took a drive with me around Canoe and reflected on the community’s history and her people. It is always an honor and privilege to have people place trust in me with their recollections in that, for myself, my memories are among my most precious possessions.

We began our trip at the Canoe mural, on the wall of the Canoe Civic Center. If you want to tour Canoe, this is where you should start, in that the photo shows Canoe as it existed in the early 1930s and it illustrates all the town was, and all she lost over the decades.

Looking at the mural brings reflection. Everyone sees something or someone differently than the last visitor. It may be a memory of a store, a loved one, a train trip or an event. For Dave it was a memory of parents. “My parents first met under the big oak tree [in the picture] just to the east of Stallworth’s Hardware.”

From there we went to Lowry Lane where Dave grew up. “We lived in a house along this road,” reflected Dave. Stopping at the intersection with Cowpen Creek Road Dave noted, “Maize Stanton lived at the intersection of Lowry Road and Cowpen Creek Road.” Maize was the daughter of Phillip Stanton. The Stantons at one time owned a hotel in Canoe, Phillip, sat on the Canoe Bank’s board of directors and were storekeepers in the town. Her brother Albert, died in the closing days of World War I in France.

The road is different today. It’s paved, no longer dirt, and with different family names and individual initials dotting the mailboxes and front doors along the road but Dave can reflect back to another time and the neighbors that added texture to the community. “Jack Marshall lived further down Lowry Lane with his family.” Jack’s family included several siblings, among them were Rayford, John Henry Marshall, Erskin, J.C. and at least one sister. J.C. Marshall has been the subject of several articles in this column over the years. He was a colorful character



**Farrar's Store , Canoe in the 1930s.**

who always had a smile and a joke to share regardless of where you might run across him. He and I shared several adventures over the years, and I miss his wit at this season of my life.

Ola McNeil, Emma Leatherwood, and Ima Watson all lived along the road too. These three women were, in and of themselves, institutions in Canoe. They taught generations in the Canoe schools, helped found

churches, and were the foundations of Canoe. “Emma Leatherwood’s husband Neil worked for the L&N; there were four section houses for the railroad workers still standing along this road when I was growing up,” stated Dave.

Later in time, these three sisters lived together because of their advancing age and the need for their collective good. I met them once when I was a very young boy as my dad worked on their old butane stove. I remember my dad telling them it was hard to get parts for such an old stove. As a child it seemed odd at the time to think that something could be so old that parts for it couldn’t be found in Watson’s, Builder’s, Atmore, or Escambia Hardware that might fit.

In an age before the internet and cell phones the home of these three retired teachers was almost like an internet server or a google. “They had a party line in their home through Southland Telephone Company and if we needed to make a call we could use their phone,” remembered Dave. Knowledge was also a free commodity in their home, “They also had a set of encyclopedias if you needed to look something up,” stated Dave. They also had a huge cellar beside the Lowry Road home.

Agriculture was more hands on back when men like Dave and my dad Henry McKinley were growing up. “Abner Harold had a big cucumber patch in the area -these were picked by hand,” remembers Dave. “Abner Harold was the first in the area to get aluminum siding on his house when it came into fashion,” reflected Dave.

Lowry Road, much like many of the dirt lanes

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# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Canoe: Common Threads, Collective History

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around Canoe, was the source of childhood adventure and summer activity back in the day. “There was Dobbins Branch and a gully at the bottom of the road. There was the Easterwood family living along the road (Mr. Easterwood was a crop duster pilot). Some of our favorite activities were a fishing hole along Dobbins Branch and setting high above the big ditch at the intersection of Jerkins Loop and Lowry Lane and shooting snakes,” remembered Dave.

It was a Canoe, Alabama from another time. Dave remembers his childhood when five churches stood watch over the souls of the community along Arthur Hall Road. St. Elizabeth’s Baptist Church, Canoe First Baptist, the Church of Christ, the Church of God and the Canoe Methodist Church all sang hymns on Sunday mornings and Canoe was filled with the sounds of hymns, church bells and sermons.

It was a Canoe, Alabama from another time when neighbors cared for one another, and children played all day in the fields and woods with little regard for the cares of the world at large as they stormed through imaginary forts, tied kite string together to try

and fly the highest and longest and played Saturday afternoon kickball games in the school yard.

It was a Canoe, Alabama from a different time as a busy commercial center catered to the needs of patrons. Dave reflected on those stores in our drive. “Each store had a little something different than the next,” reflected Dave. “The drug store sold comic books, Homer Lee’s grocery would sell you baloney by the slice, Maize Stanton’s store sold Zero bars and her store was the only store-in Canoe that sold them. Baker’s Grocery sold chocolate football candy,” noted Dave. Today it’s the memories of the good times that remain from the shadows of the past.

Today, it is a Canoe, Alabama where shadows from the past remain and whispers from that past call to us in muffled tones entreating us to not forget their stories. A friend mentioned to me that at her age she had started asking herself who would tell her story when she’s gone. As Thanksgiving nears and I watch the leaves fall, I think of the lives of those in our community who have fallen like leaves in the changing seasons of life over the last year and ponder who will tell their stories.

## The Herrington Springs Hotel and Resort

*In 2007 ECHS visited Keego which is the site of Herrington Springs.*

The Herrington Springs Hotel and Resort was prominent in the late 1890’s and early 1900’s. The hotel was built by James Herrington after a large mineral spring was discovered at the location during the construction of a railroad track. The spring’s waters had iron and chalybeate (sulphur), minerals which at the time were thought to be “good for what ailed you.”

The hotel was named for Mr. Herrington and the area became known as Herrington Springs. Mr. Herrington died shortly after completing the hotel and his heirs ran it for a time. In 1899, Dr. John E. Martin, a druggist in Brewton, sold his business and bought the hotel from the



**Hotel at Harrington Springs c. 1899.**

estate of Mr. Herrington

During its heyday, the hotel would have as many as 100 guests, who paid \$4.00 per week for room and board. Popular as both a health resort as well as a recreational place with good fishing and hunting, the hotel/resort was struck by a series of natural disasters. In 1910, a fire destroyed the hotel and some of the surrounding buildings.

Dr. Martin built a log house for those guests who continued

to come to drink and bathe in the mineral waters. However, in 1919 a storm, probably a tornado, destroyed most of the buildings at the spring. Finally in 1929, when the waters of the big flood of that year receded, it was discovered that the spring waters had disappeared also.

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

251-809-1528 or  
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**Books Available by Contribution**

	Regular	Mailed
History of Escambia County, Alabama	\$90.00	\$96.00
Headstones and Heritage	\$20.00	\$26.00
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

**Clip the following form and send to ECHS  
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**Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year  
 Many members give a membership as a gift!  
 Business members get a large scale  
 advertisement 11 months of the year.**

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