



## March Newsletter. The March Meeting will be Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 3:00 pm in the Meeting Room of the McMillan Museum on the Brewton College Campus.

### The March Program Will Be a Presentation by Dr. Kenneth Turner.

Kenneth Turner is an instructor for the Coastal Alabama Community College campus in Thomasville. He will be presenting on how the Enlightenment ideas lead to the American Revolution. He will discuss the inspiration found in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. Dr. Turner earned his Ph.D in Philosophy from Faulkner University. He has graduate work in Communications, History and English. Dr. Turner is a veteran of Desert Storm/Desert Shield.

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#### Just a Reminder:

2026 dues are due by  
February 15

#### Next Meeting:

April 28, 2026

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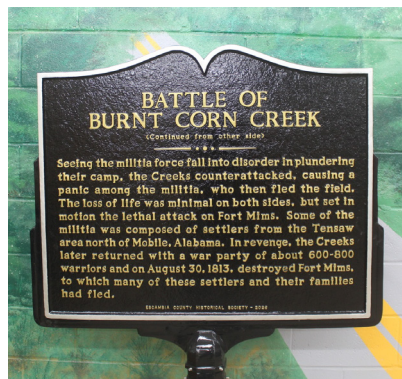
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#### Marker Update:

Phase I complete. The sign will be visible from the ice cream shop and when turning the corner of the farther path at the other end of the park. it's located in the general vicinity that the battle reenactment is held and gives that side of the park a boost and it's near a lamp post, which will bathe it in an eerie light during the night.

There's also about 5' of pole in the ground, so it has good wind resistance.



#### Fleming Engineering

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"Alabama's Oldest Bank"



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No. 3  
2026

## News and Announcements

### Book Honoring Veterans of Escambia County

The Society is collecting material on veterans from Escambia County to honor these veterans. Don Sales is in charge of this project. If you have a veteran in your family, we would like to have a picture and a short biography. Material can be sent to Don Sales, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427. Don can also be contacted at the society email [escambiacohistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:escambiacohistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or by phone at 251-809-1528.



Alabama Historical Association, April 9-11,  
Fairhope, AL.

### Mockingbird Night

by Robert B. Smiley

O mockingbird that mocks not me,  
But winter's end, and sings all night  
Thru moonlit skies.

How peaceful the night. Your notes like  
a soft blanket cover me.  
Twixt waking and sleeping I hear it. Song  
Blended with cricket and tree frog trill, and  
Softened by a summer's night.

Angels leaning o'er Heaven's rim  
Are hushed and envy thee.

### Brewton Flood March 1929



Survived, but damaged in the Brewton  
Flood, March 1929. E.C. Boykin Drug  
Company Located in the Thomas E.  
McMillan Museum

## Stories from the American Revolution: Salem Poor

by John Angel



Salem Poor (1747-1802), was born into slavery on a farm in Andover in the Province of Massachusetts Bay. The farm was owned by John Poor, Rebecca Poor and his son John Poor, Jr. Slave children were often given the last names of their owners when born under those circumstances. He bought his freedom on July 10, 1769, from John Poor, Jr. for £27, a year's salary for an average working man at the time. That would be equivalent to about \$5,600 in 2019 dollars, as an example.

In May 1775, Poor enlisted in the militia when he was about 28 years old. He served under Captain Benjamin Ames in Colonel James Frye's regiment. Colonel Frye's command consisted of Lieutenant Colonel James Bricket, Major Thomas Poor, Adjutant Daniel Hardy and Surgeon Thomas Kittredge. His regiment, with two others, totaled 850 soldiers. They marched from Cambridge to Charlestown, Massachusetts, where the officers decided to fortify Breed's Hill. At Breed's Hill, the regiments built a fort on the top of the hill using pick axes and shovels. The men worked quickly and quietly to ensure the British army occupying Boston did not know they were there.

Salem Poor was one of three dozen African Americans who fought on "Bunker Hill". As many as five thousand soldiers, both free and enslaved African Americans, fought for the Patriots. Meanwhile, about twenty to thirty thousand black soldiers fought for Britain. The British had an army twice the size of the Americans; they would assault Breed's Hill on June 17, 1775. The Americans would push the British back in two assaults, but would run out of ammunition and retreat during the third assault.

Poor is remembered for his actions during the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, where he was credited with mortally wounding British Lieutenant Colonel James Abercrombie, as he jumped onto the redoubt and yelled, "Surrender, you rebels!!" While Abercrombie suffered multiple wounds in the battle, he managed to compose reports in the two days following the incident. Fellow officers who visited and spoke with him noted that the fatal shot that ultimately killed him came from friendly fire behind his position.

A petition sent by Colonel Prescott and another 13 officers suggested the Continental Congress offer Poor "The Reward due to so great and Distinguish a Character." This recommendation was dated at Cambridge, Massachusetts on December 5, 1775 and, although his bravery was recognized, he never received anything monetary. While the battle is thought to have been fought on Bunker Hill, it was actually fought on Breed's Hill. A monument commemorates the battle on Breed's Hill, where General Warren fell on June 17, 1775. Daniel Webster gave two speeches at the 1843 ceremony, later known as the Bunker Hill Orations, commemorating soldiers like Salem Poor who fought in the battle. The monument's cornerstone was laid by Lafayette in 1825.

Salem Poor was married four times and had at least one son, Jonas (1776), with his first wife Nancy Parker, and records suggest he fathered at least one other child with his second wife, Mary Twing. Details are scarce, and most sources indicate he had only one child by the end of his life. He spent time in the Boston Almshouse (a charitable institution that provided food and shelter) in 1793 and died in Boston in 1802.



## Betsy Ross: Legend or History?



The Continental Congress met on June 14, 1777 and passed the Flag Resolution, stating, “Resolved, That the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.” According to legend, George Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross visited Betsy Ross. Washington showed a sketch of a flag with thirteen red and white stripes and thirteen six pointed stars. Betsy then showed the gentlemen how it was easier to create five pointed stars and the men agreed.

While there is not a written account of the meeting, there are a few pieces of evidence provided by historians that give truth to the legend:

- George Ross, a member of the Flag Committee, was the uncle of Betsy’s late husband, John. This could be one reason why Betsy was chosen to make the first flag. Another uncle-in-law, George Read, was a delegate from Delaware and a member of the Marine Committee with Robert Morris. Since making the flag was an act of treason, it is significant that these men would know of her allegiance to the Revolutionary cause.
- Historians at Mt. Vernon recently discovered documents that showed Betsy and John Ross made bed hangings for George Washington in 1774. This indicates that Washington would have been familiar with her and the quality of her work.
- On May 29, 1777, Betsy Ross was paid a large sum of money from the Pennsylvania State Navy Board for making flags, and on June 14, 1777, Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as our official national flag. Coincidence?
- Betsy continued to make flags for over 50 years, many of which were through government contracts and many receipts exist for her work in the first two decades of the 19th century. For example, in 1811, Betsy made over 50 garrison flags for the U.S. Arsenal on the Schuylkill River.
- In the 18th century, flags were not revered as they are today. The flag had not yet become a symbol of liberty or patriotism; it was more frequently regarded as a military tool like a tent or a uniform. Betsy Ross told her children and grandchildren the legendary story not because she had made the first flag, which was probably somewhat insignificant in her mind, but because General George Washington, a great man who would later become the first President of the United States, visited her home and asked her to make something for him.

So, whether you choose to believe Betsy Ross made the first flag, there is no doubt that she was a prominent early American flag maker who stitched flags for the federal government for more than 50 years.

<https://historicphiladelphia.org/stories/did-she-or-didnt-she>

# GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

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PAPER TRAILS:  
FINDING AND ORGANIZING  
DOCUMENTS

Second  
Session:  
April 8  
at 1pm

Open  
to the  
Public



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**ECHOES**  
**THE NEWSLETTER FOR**  
**THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY**  
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251-809-1528 or  
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[www.escohis.org](http://www.escohis.org)

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**Books Available by Contribution**

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History of Escambia County, Alabama	\$90.00	\$97.00
Headstones and Heritage	\$20.00	\$27.00
Escambia Historical Society Cookbook	\$10.00	\$16.00
Wildflowers of The Conecuh/Escambia River Basin CD	\$10.00	\$16.00
History of Brewton and E. Brewton (SC)	\$40.00	\$47.00
Flomaton Centennial Scrapbook	\$30.00	\$37.00

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**Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year**  
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**advertisement 10 months of the**  
**year.**

*ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) corporation, is published monthly except November and December. 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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