

ECHOES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The September Meeting will be Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 3:00 pm at the McMillan Museum. Phillip Mahare will be speaking.



THOMAS E. MCMILLAN
MUSEUM-ALABAMA ROOM

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THOMAS_E_MCMILLAN_
MUSEUM



BERNARDO DE GALVEZ

The Gulf Coast Campaign (1779–1781) was Spain's conquest of British West Florida during the American Revolutionary War, led by Bernardo de Gálvez, governor of Spanish Louisiana. After Spain declared war on Britain in 1779, Gálvez preemptively launched offensive operations, learning the British at Pensacola were planning their own surprise attack on New Orleans.

Key campaigns:

- **Lower Mississippi (1779):** Gálvez led a growing force (peaking over 1,400 troops) that captured Fort Bute and then besieged Baton Rouge, where Lt. Col. Alexander Dickson surrendered after nine days, also handing over Fort Panmure (Natchez).
- **Mobile (1780):** Gálvez assembled 750 men, sailed to Mobile Bay, and after a two-week bombardment forced the surrender of Fort Charlotte. A later British attempt to retake Mobile in 1781 failed, killing its commander, Colonel Johann von Hanxleden.
- **Pensacola (1781):** After an earlier hurricane destroyed his invasion fleet, Gálvez returned with a force of about 8,000 (with French and Spanish naval support). Following a lengthy siege beginning in March, a lucky shot detonated a British powder magazine on May 8, leading General John Campbell to surrender the next day — handing over all of British West Florida to Spain.

The campaign effectively ended British control of West Florida and marked a major Spanish contribution to the American Revolutionary War.

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Homecoming for PFC. Joseph D. Chancery



On March 24, 2026, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency identified the remains of Pfc. Joseph Dile Chancery, missing from the Korean War

Chancery entered the U.S. Army from Alabama and served with Battery A, 57th Field Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division. He was reported killed in action on November 28, 1950, during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in North Korea, as his unit fought Chinese Communist Forces at the P'unghyuri Inlet, on the east side of the reservoir. The soldiers of Batteries A and B fought CCF troops hand-to-hand to prevent them from capturing the artillery pieces. Battlefield conditions made it difficult to evacuate those lost in battle and Chancery's remains were not accounted for during or after the war. In 1954, the United Nations Command, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army exchanged the remains of war dead in an effort called Operation GLORY. The U.S. was unable to positively associate any Operation GLORY remains with Chancery using the forensic tools available at the time and in 1956, all unidentified Korean War remains were transferred to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. On March 29, 2021, DPAA's Korean War Disinternment Project team exhumed a set of remains from the NMCP and sent them to the DPAA laboratory for further study and forensic analysis. The laboratory analysis and the totality of the circumstantial evidence available identified the remains as those of Chancery.

He is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. His name is also inscribed on the Korean War Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

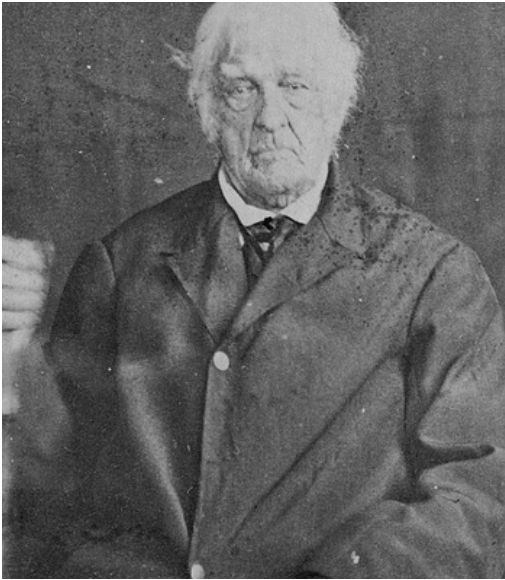
Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

<https://dpaa-mil.sites.crmforce.mil/dpaaProfile?id=a0Jt00000003Pr5gEAC>

LEMUEL COOK

Stories from the American Revolution

By John Angel



One of the Last Living Pensioners of the American Revolution

Lemuel Cook was born in Litchfield County, Connecticut in 1759 and served as a private in the Continental Army. His wartime service included participation in the Battle of Brandywine (1777) and the Siege of Yorktown (1781).

Cook enlisted in the Continental Army in 1775 at the age of 16. He was assigned to the 2nd Continental Light Dragoos (a cavalry unit), and at his death, he was the last surviving member. He fought at Brandywine and in the Virginia campaign, was wounded several times. He was present at Lord Charles Cornwallis' surrender in October 1781; receiving an honorable discharge at Danbury, Connecticut signed by George Washington on June 12, 1784.

Following the war, Cook became a farmer and married Hannah Curtis of Cheshire, Connecticut, living for a while in that area, after which they moved to Utica, New York. During a contemporary interview, he stated that he had frequent encounters with the Indians who still lived the region. "One with whom he had some difficulty about cattle, at one time assailed him at a public house, as he was on his way home, coming at him with great fury, with a drawn knife.

Mr. Cook was unarmed; but catching up a chair he presented it as a shield against the Indian's thrusts, till help appeared. He says he never knew what fear was, and always declared that no man should take him prisoner, alive". They had seven sons and three daughters. He was an active Mason and Democrat since the party's establishment in 1828. His church was Congregational. He lived in Plymouth, Connecticut (then Northbury) until 1790, when he moved to Clinton, New York. In 1795, he returned to Plymouth, then moved to Pompey, New York in 1805. He moved to North Bergen, New York in 1821 and finally to Clarendon, New York in 1832.

Cook was one of the oldest, and among the last, living pensioners of the American Revolution. He died May 20, 1866, at the age of 106, having lived to see the start and end of the Civil War, a conflict he stated he was adamantly against. He was buried with full military and Masonic honors in Clarendon. At the time of his death, only three other revolutionary veterans, Samuel Downing (1761-1867), John Gray (1764-1868) and Daniel F. Bakeman (1759-1869) were still alive.

MARTHA BALLARD: REVOLUTIONARY MEDICINE

Martha Moore Ballard (February 9, 1735-May 7, 1812) was an American midwife, healer and diarist. She kept a diary with her patients and everyday life for close to thirty years. This diary has served as an instrumental view into the lives of women in colonial and frontier women's lives. Her diary is a rarity as it is written during the time period when women's voices were rarely heard especially in regards to the everyday events in family life.

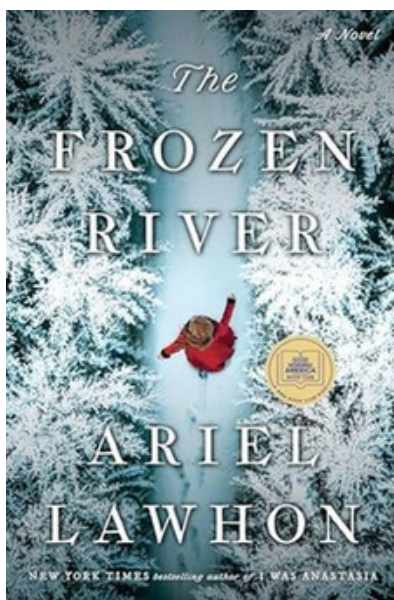
She began her diary around the age of 50 as she served as the town midwife until late into her life. She and her family moved to Kennebec Valley in Maine in 1777, two years after her husband, Ephraim Ballard began a career as a land surveyor. The couple had nine children between 1756-1779. She lost three of her children to a diphtheria epidemic in 1769.

Midwives during this time period were not professionally trained, but learned from accompanying other women as they treated patients or helped women give birth. They used primarily herbs to treat illnesses and maladies.

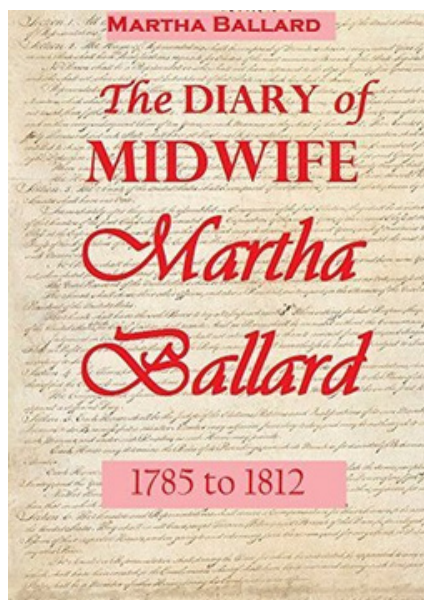
According to her diary, she delivered at least 816 babies over 27 years and was present at more than 1000 births. She reported these births for the record at town council meetings to the circuit judge for record keeping. She attended autopsies and also served as witness in rare instances, primarily paternity cases in which young unwed mothers refused to name the father.

Her diary consisted of over 1400 pages and included daily tasks and weather. She recorded events and scandals in the town and with her family. Her diary has been used for various reasons by historians to learn about daily life, medical treatments and women's life in the colonial era. Her final diary entry was May 7, 1812. The diary was eventually gifted to her great-great-granddaughter, Mary Hobart who is one of the first female physicians to graduate from the New York Infirmary for Women and Children in 1884. Martha Ballard's lineage can also be traced to Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross who was her sister's granddaughter.

Robert McCausland and Cynthia McCausland later spent 10 years transcribing Martha's diary and made it available for free online in digital format. In 1991, Laural Thatcher Ulrich produced *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard* based on her diary 1785-1812 which received the Pulitzer Prize. In 1997, PBS produced *A Midwife's Tale* in their series *The American Experience*. In 2023, Ariel Lawhon published *The Frozen River*, a historical fiction account inspired by Ballard and her role in the 1789 trial of Judge Joseph North.



The Frozen River by
Ariel Lawhon-
Historical Fiction



*The Diary of Midwife
Martha Ballard* by
Martha Ballard-
Nonfiction

WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY OF NOKOMIS

Traveling west on U.S. Route 31 just over 4 miles west-southwest of Atmore is the unincorporated community of Nokomis. Nokomis is bordered by three US counties, Escambia, Alabama, Escambia, Florida and Baldwin, Alabama.

While a small community, the pride runs large in Nokomis. Edmund Brewton and Charles Pollard were railroad developers in Escambia County. They named the community “Nokomis” after the poem “Song of Hiawatha” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Other communities such as Canoe and Wabeek also gained their name from this poem.

The settlement began as a part of Sullivan’s Mill Pond. The name of the settlement was Sullivan’s Station when first established between 1875-1880. Sullivan’s Cemetery is the only reminder of Sullivan’s Station. Sullivan’s Mill was owned by an English company which is why there is not a long list of ancestors from the Sullivan line. The mill boasted at one time 200 workers who would process the timber and place it on the Perdido River to float.



Coastal Alabama Historical Society

The Coastal Alabama Historical Society had their first meeting for the 2026-2027 school year on September 9, 2026. They met on the Brewton Campus with 15 members. They held officer elections listed below:

President: Libby Williams

Vice President: Jenna Fountain

Secretary: Anna Chancery

Treasurer: Gracie Tolbert

Archivist: Hanna Galloway

The Last Canoeist

by Robert Smiley



The River of Time never stops moving and we are
carried along with it until one by one we slip under its
surface and are gone.

As the circle of friendship draws smaller and smaller
the last remaining canoeist shall raise a glass, give the
final toast, and quietly fade away. The circle ends. The trips all
done.

But on white sandbars under soft moonlight clear waters
still run and the wipewills still call.

And spirits that leave no footprints on the sand will
gather round the campfires of souls, and the murmur of
their dear voices will mingle with the sound of the running
water and the soft night wind, and create music fit for
the harps of angels.

Those gone on before await us at that final campfire
where all are young again, where smile greets smile, and
soft laughter blends with the mist of what has been.

Far, far away in that dear land we'll meet again. The
circle complete again will stand and the final trip begin.

With the Sea of Eternity before us, eager hands clasp
paddles, eyes glow bright, and with joyous faces we face
the light.

*Written in June 2024 after a 3 day canoe trip down Big Escambia Creek,
Escambia County, AL. In dear memory of those no longer with us.*



EXPLORE

American images, names and stories infuse American history and life. "Americans," developed by Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and Museum on Main Street, explores how American Indians have been part of the nation's identity since before the country began.

You can take a deeper dive into these national and local stories at Encore at the Strand

September 16 -November 4, 2026

Encore at the Strand

120 S Main St

Atmore, AL 36502

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THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

251-809-1528 or
escambiahistoricalociety@gmail.com

www.escohis.org

The Museum is on Facebook at
McMillan Museum
NEW on Instagram Thomas E.
McMillan Museum

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Donations and contributions that are not for books or membership dues may now be made online through PayPal

to [<escambiahistoricalociety@gmail.com>](mailto:escambiahistoricalociety@gmail.com). Please continue to use the form shown for book requests and membership dues, by mail, as your complete name and address are needed for our records. Thank you again for your support!

Books Available by Contribution

	Regular	Mailed
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

Clip the following form and send to ECHS
Treasurer, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427

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(\$25.00/person; \$35.00/ family at same address; Lifetime, \$500.00/person; \$100.00/year business)

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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 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 or call 251-809-1528.

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