

THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O.Box 276
Brewton, Alabama 36426

November 12, 1973

Newsletter

Carolyn Pugh McLendon, Editor

NOTICE OF MEETING --Our monthly meeting will be held on November 20, 1973, at 7:00 p.m. at the Jefferson Davis Junior College Student Center with Buddy Mitchell in charge of the program. We are fortunate to have Buddy as one of our researchers. He spends a great deal of his free time searching old records and ~~should~~ have a very interesting program for us. Mrs. Wilbur P. Parker will furnish refreshments for the meeting. Come, enjoy the meeting with us, and bring a friend.

"OLD FASHIONED" CHRISTMAS PARTY PLANNED! We wanted to have one more fabulous get-together this year, so we have planned a Christmas Party, for Tuesday, December, 18, at 7:00 p.m. (our regular meeting date and time), but to be held in the new auditorium at the college. Yesterday refreshments will be served and an old movie (possibly Charlie Chaplin) will be shown. Get out your old gray bonnet, because we're going to award a prize for the best "yesteryear" costume. You don't have to enter the contest, but it will be fun for those who can.

MORE NEW MEMBERS! Total now 217! They are Mrs. Gladys Chavers, Mrs. Ralph Barbour and Robert L. Whitcomb all of Brewton; Mr. and Mrs. Wilburn Nall, Repton, Alabama; and Bryant C. Smith, Jr., Burbank, California.

The Baldwin County Historical Society is now accepting new members and are to be congratulated on the publication of their first quarterly. It includes a drawing of the John Melish Map of Alabama with early roads and routes, information on the formation of Baldwin County with listing of Senators and Representatives, Memorial to Robert D. Byrne, Montgomery Hill Church history and cemetery listing, and many other interesting articles. Membership and subscription to the quarterly is \$5.00 and should be sent to Lynn Jones, P.O.Box 69, Stockton, Alabama 36579.

Covington County Historical Edition - published by The Opp News, Opp, Alabama, can be purchased for \$2.50 plus \$1.00 postage. It represents five years of work in collecting pictures and data, and is worth many times its price. Preston Turner, who goes through Opp about once a week has offered to pick up as many as we want to save us the postage. If you will let me know, I will notify him and he will leave them at my office for you. Call me at 867-4881 or 867-2382.

As you all know by now, the Fort Mims trip was a success, with approximately 130-135 in attendance. We appreciate all the efforts of those who made it so interesting and pleasurable. A special

thank you goes to the following Persons:

Sheriff "Scotty" Byrnes who furnished us with the best guide available for the motorcade--J. W. "Boots" Teal, who knew every "whoop and hollow" along the way;

Professor N. Read Stowe for giving us a guided tour of the Fort Mims site and gave expert descriptions and a realistic view toward the happenings before and during the massacre. It is hopeful that he will come to Brewton for our February or March meeting;

Mr. and Mrs. John M. Hastie, our hosts at Live Oak Landing, one of the loveliest places in the South;

The Baldwin County Historical Society, for joining with us in the tour and providing a guest registry;

Mrs. Dumas Jennings and Buddy Mitchell for making the arrangements for the trip;

The Brewton Standard, WEBJ, The Atmore Advance, The Baldwin Times, Andalusia Star News, The Fairhope Courier, The Mobile Register, and The Tri City News for publishing notices of the tour; and follow-up stories by The Brewton Standard, The Baldwin Times, The Fairhope Courier, and The Mobile Register;

Mr. and Mrs. John David Finlay, Sr. for assistance in assembling printed material on the Battle of Burnt Corn which was given out at Fort Mims.

We also thank Tom Gardner of the Brewton Standard and Buddy Smith of The Mobile Press/Register for excellent coverage of our third quarterly.

QUERIES - Mrs. Wilma Baisden Woodham is working on the Liles, Hart and Dixon families (Reuben Hart, Jeremiah Dixon and Sherrod Liles) and would like to correspond with anyone who can help. Address - Mrs. John Will Woodham, 431 Church Street, Andalusia, Alabama 36420.

Mrs. Dorothy Harrison Smith is researching the family of Sidney Elmore Whittle Smith, son of Emseylee Elmore Whittle. Sidney's wife was Susy Blackmon whom he married on November 13, 1900, in Escambia County, Alabama. Any help will be appreciated by Mrs. C.R. Smith, Route 1, Box 264, Burleson, Texas 76028.

RED EAGLE AND LILLA BEAZELY

By Annie Waters, 1973

Lilla Beazely's mother was an Indian princess and her father was a white soldier known to the Indians as "White Wolf." Lilla's mother had died and it was said that her father loved nothing on earth except his motherless daughter. They belonged to the settlement of Fort Mims in the fateful August of 1813.

Lilla loved the trees and wild things of the forest, often walked in the woods near the fort, and a favorite sport was swinging in the grape vine swing that hung from a tall tree outside the fort.

Previous to the Battle of Burnt Corn, White Wolf was friendly to the Indians and had given his consent for Lilla to marry the handsome young chief, Red Eagle. But now the Indians were crying out for revenge upon White Wolf because he was one of Colonel James Caller's

soldiers who ambushed the Creeks as they returned from Pensacola. Beazely had therefore forbidden Lilla to see Red Eagle any more.

However, one day as Lilla was swinging outside the fort the young chief suddenly stood before her and asked, "Why do you sit outside the fort when the Red Men are making ready to drive the white men into the sea? Our braves who lost their lives at Burnt Corn must be avenged. Even now our warriors are gathering around Fort Mims."

Lilla answered, "I know the Red Man is my father's foe, but surely my mother's daughter will be safe from Indian hatred. Besides, I thought that we were soon to have peace."

"There can be no peace until the White Wolf has paid with his own blood for the braves who died at Burnt Corn. Fly with me to Holy Ground where you will be safe from harm. Fort Mims will be destroyed," said Red Eagle.

"No, no," cried the angry maiden, "I will never marry you! If famine or death come, it will find me by my father's side," and she ran weeping toward the fort. Red Eagle ran after her, but a bullet whizzed past his head. Beazely, who had hidden himself nearby, had come very near ending the young chieftan's life.

When Fort Mims was attacked, Weatherford (Red Eagle), seeking and finding the wounded Lilla, took her to his home where she was cared for as though she were his sister. Lilla, thinking that her father was dead, often wept and openly showed her anger toward Red Eagle. When she recovered she often wandered away from the Indian Camp. One day she came near the camp of General Jackson and peering from behind a tree she saw her gray-haired father whom she had thought dead. With her heart beating loudly she slipped back to her place with the Indian women and children. There stood Weatherford tired and worn and her heart filled with pity. Stepping before him she said, "My father lives, I saw him. I forgive you."

Red Eagle, placing an arm about Lilla, sadly said, "Chief Red Eagle must give himself up to General Jackson to get food for the starving women and children."

Lilla followed along behind Red Eagle when he marched into the camp of General Jackson and from behind a tree she saw him stand before the general with folded arms and heard him say, "I ask no mercy for myself; I come to beg you to send food to the women and children. They are starving in the woods."

Lilla then ran from her hiding place into the arms of the astonished White Wolf. Beazely, though wounded, had escaped from Fort Mims and made his way to safety in a neighboring village. When he recovered he joined Jackson's forces and served as a guide.

After the Creek War ended Lilla Beazely and Chief Red Eagle were married. - Condensed by Annie Waters

FACT OR FANCY? Who can say. 'Tis recorded in "History Stories of Alabama" by L. Lamar Matthews, also in one of A.B.Meeks' poems. The history was copyrighted in 1924 and used for several years in the public schools of Alabama. In the Weatherford file at the Alabama State Archives we read that at the Battle of Holy Ground, Red Eagle's wife and infant son awaited him across the river. Two days later his wife died and his infant son, also named William, was entrusted to relatives. This son was among those who were herded together and carried to Oklahoma along the "Trail of Tears." This son was never

heard of again. The file gives the names of three other wives, none of whom were named Lilla.

From the Creeks themselves I have heard the tradition that Red Eagle had a total of nine wives, 3 of Indian blood and 6 all white. When asked if it was possible that he was a bigamist his relatives evaded the question. Being a rich man, he had several homes located in different areas and may have had more than one wife at a time, although it is known that several of his wives died and he subsequently remarried.

His third wife, Mary Stiggins, had a white man's wedding and the famous Sam Dale was one of the guests. Sarah Stiggins, niece of Mary, the third wife, married Henry Conway and they were Rev. M.G. Water's great grandparents. The Stiggins were of English ancestry and came to Alabama from Virginia.

Ione Weatherford, one of Red Eagle's great granddaughters, married Henry Godwin, my mother's oldest brother. I taught school with Hazel Sizemore McClammy, one of Weatherford's great-great granddaughters.

Red Eagle was said to have been only one-fourth Indian.

--- Annie Waters, 1973

Thomas Jefferson, WRITINGS -

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

"Perhaps an editor might.....divide his paper into four chapters heading the first, Truths; second, Probabilities; third, Possibilities; fourth, Lies."

"Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves or we know where we can find information upon it."

-Samuel Johnson