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ESCAMBIA ECHOES

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McMILLAN

January 17, 1978

Published by

The Escambia County Historical Society  
P.O.Box 276,  
Brewton, Alabama 36426

Annual Dues - \$6.00

Carolyn Pugh McLendon, President and Editor

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NOTICE OF MEETING:

January 24, 1978, 7:00 p.m. Tuesday

Place - Brewton Public Library, 206 Jackson Ave.

Speaker: W. WARNER FLOYD, Executive Director,  
Alabama Historical Commission

Subject: Alabama Register of Landmarks and the  
Century and Heritage Farm Program

Special Event: Presentation of Award of Merit  
to Carolyn Pugh McLendon

Business: Election of Officers 1978 and 1979

It has been 18 months since we have had the privilege of having Warner Floyd meet with our group although his able assistance and advice has been felt in many of our endeavors. Warner has been staff administrator of the Alabama Historical Commission since its establishment in 1967. Born near Luverne, he grew up in Troy and graduated from Troy State University, also doing graduate work at the University of Alabama and Auburn University-Montgomery and attending Jones Law School. Aside from being one of the hardest working people in this state he is an eloquent speaker whom we are always pleased to have with us. Warner will present the Award of Merit from the Alabama Historical Commission to your President and Editor mostly for her dedicated efforts on behalf of the Escambia County Historical Society, holding sundry offices within the group and initiating in 1973 and editing its monthly newsletter and historical quarterly since that time; but also for her efforts and vision in establishing a museum for the Escambia County area, acting as Fund-Raising Chairman for the museum in what Warner refers to as being "one of the most successful fund raising campaigns ever held within the State of Alabama"; for her efforts in researching and preserving written history, for encouraging the publication of historical quarterlies in the Baldwin and Clarke county areas, assisting in registering landmarks for Escambia and Conecuh Counties. Mrs. McLendon is a member of the Alabama Historical Association and acted as Chairman for its 1975 Pilgrimage to Brewton; member of the Deep South Genealogical Society, and the Clarke County, Baldwin County, Pike County, Pearridge, Butler

County, and Pensacola Historical Societies, and member and director of the Alabama Genealogical Society.

The Nominating Committee--Mrs. Gladys Byrd, Miss Janel Redditt and Mrs. Margaret Riley will present for election a slate of officers for 1978 and 1979 and ask for change in By-Laws to provide for 4 Trustees for the group.

THE THOMAS E. McMILLAN MUSEUM - At the December meeting the Society acknowledged with appreciation the commitment of the family of Thomas E. McMillan of \$150,000 for the museum fund and voted to name the museum in his memory. Mr. Tommy or Tommy as he was affectionately known has been an avid and enthusiastic member of the Escambia County Historical Society since its beginning in 1972, lavishly entertaining the group at Jay Villa Plantation, The Leigh Place, and in his home on many occasions. Although he did not consider it a worthy project for the group he paid the cost on behalf of the Society for moving the old Sowell house to the college campus, always standing ready to help the group with his advice and finances. Your editor remembers on two occasions his meeting with Milo Howard of the Alabama Department of Archives and History and Warner Floyd to consider the Sowell House Project on the very grounds where the museum is being erected. It is our pleasure to name the museum for our beloved deceased member and benefactor. We grieve that Thomas E. McMillan, Ed Leigh McMillan, John David Finlay and W.Emmett Brooks, all enthusiastic supports of the museum project, cannot physically share with us the dedication ceremony and seeing the museum become a fine educational institution for this area--but who is to say that each of them will not be present with us in spirit form.

TRIBUTE to ED LEIGH McMILLAN who died December 27, 1977 follows the listing of Museum Fund donations in this newsletter.

FORT CRAWFORD - Forms have been completed by Mrs. Annie Waters to have Fort Crawford listed as a landmark on the Alabama Register and will be included in a book on Alabama Forts now being prepared. Warner Floyd commented that this is the best documented fort registration in the files of the Alabama Historical Commission. Our hats are off to Mrs. Waters again.

DUES - \$6.00 are due for year beginning January 1, 1978 to January 1, 1979, statement attached to this newsletter so those who have not sent in their dues can place it with their unpaid bills and will not overlook it.

Rev. W.P. Parker recently sent in for our use his well documented research paper on the 1883 Yellow Fever Epidemic. Both he and Mrs. Parker were active in our society while they resided in Brewton. Their present address is 6 Orchard Street, Middletown, New York.

JUNE/SEPTEMBER, 1977 QUARTERLY is now in the printing and assembling process by the R.S.V.P. and will be mailed out within the next two weeks. The 1976 Index has been prepared by J. Vernon Brantley and the stencils are also being typed by him. Jan Redditt has completed the 1975 index and it is ready for typing.

NEW MEMBERS: Mr. and Mrs. Glenn McDaniel, P.O. Box 54, Evergreen, Al. 36401  
Mrs. June Martin, Rt. 2, Box 107, Brewton, Al. 36426  
Mrs. Bertha H. McNellage, Rt. 2, Box 403, Grand Bay, Al. 36541  
Mr. Stanley T. Barnhart, 14552 Bowling Green St., Westminster, California 92683.

Bert and Betty Campbell are doing a fine job in keeping records of our Museum Fund and making proper acknowledgments to the families for whom memorials are paid and sending receipts to the donors. This has been a tremendous task for them and I hope each of you will express your appreciation to them. They are both dedicated workers in the First Presbyterian Church here, in addition to having three sons to keep up with. Bert is manager of Commercial Credit in the Brewton Heights Shopping Center, and Betty teaches third grade in the Brewton School System.

MUSEUM FUND - Present Balance in Museum Fund Savings Accounts- \$104,783.34. Additional commitments McMillan family \$80,000, Bank of Brewton \$500, Allied Foundry \$500, and a \$100 personal pledge. This leaves an additional \$14,116.66 to be raised to fulfil our pledge to the college. The building has been scheduled for completion in May, 1978. Roger Anderson has been named as Curator.

DONATION ; Mr. and Mrs. Barnes F. Parker

MEMORIALS:      JOHN DAVID FINLAY, SR.

By: First National Bank, Brewton  
Col. and Mrs. J. M. McLellan

MRS. A. B. CARTER, JR.

By: Mrs. John David Finlay  
Mrs. Alice T. Beall  
Mrs. Joe Larkin  
Mr. and Mrs. T.C.Hurd, Atmore  
Miss Rita Jane Boykin

MRS. RALPH LARKINS

By: Mrs. Alice T. Beall  
Mrs. Joe Larkin  
Miss Rita Jane Boykin  
Gid and Barbara Boykin, Knoxville, Tenn.

THOMAS E. McMILLAN

By: First National Bank, Brewton  
Harold Bros. Veneer Co., Inc.  
John R. Miller, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Douglas  
Ed Leigh McMillan  
Ed Leigh McMillan II  
Thomas E. McMillan, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. W.N. McGehee, Evergreen, Al.  
Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Hurd, Jr., Atmore, Al.

ED LEIGH McMILLAN

By: Miss Ethel Davison  
Miss Marjorie Davison  
Mrs. J.D. Crosby, Sr., Bay Minette, Al.  
John David Finlay, Jr.  
Mrs. Orleen B. Beeson, Birmingham, Al.  
Mrs. Carolyn Pugh McLendon  
Mrs. Lenastine Sanders  
Mr. and Mrs. J.M. McLellan  
Mr. and Mrs. Lucien D. Gardner, Jr., Birmingham  
Union Bank and Trust Co., Montgomery  
First National Bank, Brewton

MEMORIALS:

ED LEIGH McMILLAN (continued)

By: Harold Bros. Veneer Co., Inc.  
John R. Miller, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Douglas  
Mr. and Mrs. John B. McCracken  
Mrs. John David Finlay  
Mr. Thomas B. Hill, Jr., Montgomery  
Mr. James J. Carter, Montgomery  
Mr. Nicholas S. McGowin, Mobile  
Mrs. David Cochrane, Tuscaloosa  
Mr. and Mrs. David Cochrane, Jr., Tuscaloosa  
Mr. James McCracken  
Mrs. F. A. Luttrell  
Mrs. Ruth Harold Sowell  
Mrs. Alice Till Beall  
Mrs. Joe Larkin  
Miss Rita Jane Boykin  
Gid and Barbara Boykin, Knoxville, Tenn.  
Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Dees, Evergreen  
Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Hurd, Atmore  
Mrs. J. S. Oliver, Castleberry

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TRIBUTE TO ED LEIGH McMILLAN who was to your Editor a friend, father figure and employer as well as being my inspiration in historical endeavors. On many occasions I accused him of deliberately giving me "the historical disease" because my interest in history was infinitesimal at the time I became his secretary June 11, 1960, he never denied the charge--not only did he preserve history in his time, he left someone to carry on the work. My tribute to him as an historian was best expressed in the following letter of August 6, 1975 in recommending Mr. McMillan for an Alabama Historical Commission Award of Merit:

August 6, 1975

"Mr. Warner Floyd, Executive Director  
Alabama Historical Commission  
725 Monroe Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Re: Recommendation for Award of Merit,  
Ed Leigh McMillan, Historian/Benefactor

"Dear Mr. Floyd:

In accordance with my conversation with you over long distance on August 4th, I am writing this letter so that you may present it to your Board to consider Ed Leigh McMillan for an Award of Merit from the Alabama Historical Commission.

I could extol for hours the virtues of Mr. Ed Leigh McMillan and his love and interest in the people of this area, their history, and the history of this area. In my humble opinion, no one is more worthy than he of such an award, although he has never received any recognition for his efforts in the field of historical preservation.

Possibly being born ED LEIGH McMILLAN, September 16, 1888, the son of Sheriff Edward S. McMillan of Escambia County (who was killed in the line of duty by the notorious outlaw Railroad Bill), the grandson of C.S.A. Calvary Captain Norvelle R. Leigh (later Probate Judge of Escambia County) and his wife, Kate Burnett (many of whose

"relatives were prominent in the legal profession of Conecuh County) brought about an interest in history from his birth, Captain Leigh having told him many bedtime stories of his early life and the "war years." That he later in life married the daughter of T.R. Miller (whose history is deeply embedded in the history of this area) enhancing his interest in historical preservation, because she was a genealogist, tracing the ancestry of all of the families to whom they were related and writing many volumes of genealogy and related matters.

Embarking in his chosen profession as a "country lawyer" in 1910, he was exposed to the early court records of the area and experienced a growing awareness that no history had been written regarding this area, that time was erasing many historical facts and that few of the "old-timers" were left to tell the story. As revealed in his many volumes of memoranda and vast history files, he began to seek out the "old-timers" and made records of the incidents they related to him.

Over the years Mr. McMillan has tirelessly given of his time in answering inquiries regarding the area history and genealogy, many of which came from Dr. Peter Brannon, former Director of the State Department of Archives and History, and opening his files and records to students from the area schools and to persons coming in search of their ancestry. In Escambia County there has been no one for people to go to for history except to Ed Leigh McMillan. Historical inquiries received by the Post Office, Probate Office and Chamber of Commerce are sent to him so that he can furnish the information requested.

In addition to the factual history collected Mr. McMillan has four large cabinets filled with this area's Indian artifacts, early American tools, fossils, petrifications etc. which he gladly shows and explains to groups on request.

Mr. McMillan gave blanket permission to The Escambia County Historical Society to publish at its discretion any of his materials.

As you can see from the attached biographical sheet Mr. McMillan has not confined his interest in history to his immediate area but has been Chairman of the Board of Regents of the Alabama Museum of Natural History and is a Charter Member of the Alabama Historical Association. While President of the University of Alabama Alumni Association (1938-39) he was instrumental in having General Gorgas' home on the University of Alabama campus preserved and set aside as a memorial, and in raising funds to purchase the bust of General Gorgas for the University of Alabama.

Mr. McMillan is respected as Mr. History for this area and is considered an authority on historical matters.

For his gracious efforts I recommend Ed Leigh McMillan to the Alabama Historical Commission for an Award of Merit in historical preservation.

Thanking you for your consideration of this recommendation, I am,

Respectfully,

/s/ Carolyn P. McLendon

For the Society

ON THE DEATH OF AN AGED FRIEND

You are not dead--life has but set you free!  
Your years of life were like a lovely song,  
The last sweet poignant notes of which, held long,  
Passed into silence while we listened, we  
Who loved you listened still expectantly!  
And we about you whom you moved among  
Would feel that grief for you were surely wrong--  
You have but passed beyond where we can see.  
  
For us who knew you, dread of age is past!  
You took life, tiptoe to the very last;  
It never lost for you its lovely look;  
You kept your interest in its thrilling book;  
To you Death came no conqueror; in the end--  
You merely smiled to greet another friend!

--by Roselle Mergier Montgomery

(The above poem was used by Rev. Ed Hardin of the  
First United Methodist Church, Brewton, at the  
graveside funeral services of Mr. Ed Leigh McMillan)

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TO THOSE I LOVE

If I should ever leave you whom I love  
To go along the Silent Way, grieve not,  
Nor speak of me with tears, but laugh and talk  
Of me as if I were beside you, for  
Who knows, but that I shall be oftentimes?  
I'd come, I'd come, could I but find a way!  
But would not tears and grief be barriers?  
And when you hear a song I used to sing,  
Or see a bird I loved--let not the thought  
Of me be sad, for I am loving you  
Just as I always have...  
You were so good to me...  
So many things I wanted still to do...  
So many, many things to say to you...  
Remember that I did not fear...  
It was just leaving you I could not bear to face...  
We cannot see Beyond....But this I know;  
I loved you so--'twas heaven here with you!

--Author unknown

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Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in  
thy holy hill?  
He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and  
speaketh the truth in his heart.  
He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his  
neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.  
In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them  
that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and  
changeth not.  
He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward  
against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never  
be moved.

--Psalm of David, Fifteen