

THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O.Box 276
Brewton, Alabama 36426

April 18, 1978

ESCAMBIA ECHOES

Carolyn Pugh McLendon,
Secretary and Editor

Annual Dues - \$6.00

NOTICE OF MEETING -

April 25, 1978, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Brewton Public Library

Speaker: John David Finlay, Jr.

Topic: The History of Robbins & McGowin Co.

John David Finlay, Jr., President of Robbins & McGowin Co., will give the varied and colorful history of Robbins & McGowin Co., Brewton's oldest department store. Beginning in 1892 Robbins has been known throughout the years for its fine quality clothing and people have come from miles around to shop. In its earlier days it had a millinery shop for designing and making ladies hats, a dressmaker and a tailor for custom making and fitting ladies and men's wear. For many years it was also a mail order house which published catalogs that were distributed far and wide, also a weekly newspaper called "The Brewton Trade Record." As a young man working in his step-father's (J.E. Finlay) store, Mr. Ed Leigh McMillan would take a buggy out to distribute advertising material using a megaphone to attract attention. The megaphone had just been invented and he said it frightened some people and others would gather around to find out how he was able to be heard at such a distance. Mr. Ed Leigh McMillan as a boy also helped grade and clean sheep's wool for shipment out of Brewton by rail. John David Finlay, Jr. succeeded his father as President of Robbins & McGowin Co. after his death October 1, 1976. John David Finlay, Sr. was a charter member and had been Curator for this Society since its organization, his widow, Mrs. Emily Wallace Finlay, has succeeded him in the office of Curator. John David Finlay, Jr. is serving on our Program Committee for this year.

JEFFERSON DAVIS BIRTHDAY BALL AND COSTUME PARTY - Get your tickets now!
Only 300 tickets to be sold. This Society is sponsoring this ball, costume contest and dance contest as a benefit for the Thomas E. McMillan Museum and to stimulate public interest in the museum as well as to involve our area young people in historical preservation. The 50-piece Montgomery Symphony Orchestra has agreed to play for the ball at a minimal cost they were so enthralled with the idea. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas O'Dell, instructors for the Ballroom Dance Association of Montgomery will come and render several exhibition ballroom dances for our enjoyment including the Viennese Waltz, a most beautiful and difficult dance. They will also judge the dance contest which will

consist of one fast dance and one slow dance--knowing that the majority of the people of this area have had little exposure to ballroom type dances they will judge the dancers on grace, style and how well the couple dances together. Appropriate people will be chosen to judge the costume contest (Jeff Davis/Civil War era). The Ball and Party will be held in the Jefferson Davis Junior College gymnasium which will be decorated for the occasion with the Old South theme. Plenty of seating will be provided for those who only want to come to listen to the symphony and watch the proceedings. This is the only advance notice members will receive, so get your order in immediately so you won't be left out. Tickets will be sold on a first come-first served basis. The 300 tickets will go fast. Checks should be made to "Jeff Davis Ball & Party" for \$7.50 per person and mailed to P.O.Box 276, Brewton, Ala. 36426. This should be one of Brewton's most enjoyable and outstanding occasions.

LILLIAN DIXON MORGAN, one of our beloved members passed away on April 3 after an extended illness having lived in Evergreen since 1936. She was born at Pollard where her father Charles Rufus Dixon was Mayor for many years and until his death in 1959. She and her late husband, Hunter Morgan, were married in the old Pollard Methodist Church. Our sympathy is extended to her family.

Our members attending the Alabama Historical Association Annual Meeting in Mobile April 13, 14 and 15 were Mr. and Mrs. R.B. Watson of Atmore, Miss Fern Nix of Milton, Miss Bessie Mae Harold of Brewton, Roger Anderson of Brewton and Carolyn Pugh McLendon who presided at one of the Saturday morning sessions. Escambia County has only 7 members on the Alabama Historical Association roster which is 1500 members strong, membership is by recommendation. If any of you wish to join we will be happy to assist you.

Color slides of the pre-Civil War Pollard Methodist Church, the Brewton Universalist Church built 1896 and the Brewton Presbyterian Church built in 1923 have been made without charge to the Society by Billy L. Turner, Photographer, which are to be included in an "Alabama Churches" slide presentation now under preparation by the Alabama Historical Sommission and The Council on Arts and Humanities. We are grateful to Billy for his service. The slides are truly beautiful.

MUSEUM PROGRESS: Construction is on schedule and building should be completed by May 18th. Ron Roth, State Museums Co-ordinator was here last month going over the plans etc. and reports that things are being handled in an excellent manner and that he is of the opinion that ours will be one of the finest in the state. Roger Anderson is accepting items for the museum and research center. He can be reached at the Jefferson Davis State Junior College.

MUSEUM FUND: MEMORIALS -

ED LEIGH McMILLAN

By: W. W. Ruhlen

MR. AND MRS. COSBY HAYES

By: Mr. Martin Hayes

Miss Helen Hayes

MEMORIALS - (continued)

JULIA TRAVIS BAXLEY

By: Mrs. E. M. Brewton
Mrs. Hazel B. Wood

Present Balance in Museum Fund -----	\$ 17,991.37
Paid out to College to date -----	<u>170,131.00</u>
Total Receipts -----	\$188,122.37
Additional Commitments -----	\$ 1,100.00
*BALANCE TO BE RAISED -----	<u>\$ 10,777.63</u>
Commitment made to college -----	\$200,000.00

BLACKSHER-MILLER LUMBER CO. and
LOVELACE LUMBER CO.

In 1899 the Blacksher-Miller Lumber Co., a corporation, which was owned by T.R. Miller and D.W. Blacksher, woned a saw mill, planing mill and dry-kiln at Brewton; logging ditches for floating logs to the mill at Brewton from as far north as London in Conecuh County; and owned a logging railroad that brought logs to the log pond at London. They owned 60,000 acres of land in Escambia and Conecuh County, Alabama.

In 1899 Mr. Miller and Mr. Blacksher sold their stock in the Blacksher-Miller Lumber Company to Foshee and McGowin, which was a firm composed of S.J. Foshee and A. McGowin, Jr. for \$60,000.00. Foshee and McGowin operated the business from October, 1899 to January, 1900, and sold the capital stock in the corporation to Lovelace Brothers, a firm composed of E.M., W.Y. and J.H. Lovelace, for \$110,000.00.

The above information was given me by Mr. W.T. Neal today, August 19th, 1936.

--Ed Leigh McMillan

STAGE COACH DAYS IN ALABAMA AND FLORIDA

In reply to your letter asking about the old stage days, I can't tell you verymuch about them as the Stage Coaches and Pony Express had been taken off the route from Stockton to Montgomery about eighteen years before I moved to Hollinger.

I bought the Dave Peebles place in 1872 where they kept the stage stand at Hollinger's bridge, a toll bridge at that time. They canged horses every ten miles and carried both mail and passengers on the coaches except for special messages when they sent an Express Boy on a horse. Both horses and boys were changed every ten miles at the Stage stands, but I heard of one boy who rode the route, changing horses each time, and had to be lifted from his horse at Montgomery. Some time before the stage was taken off they put up a telegraph line, putting the bracketc on the trees, no poles were used then.

I wish I could tell you more about it, if I can be of any help always call on me.

--A.D. McNiel

From Ed Leigh McMillan Collection