

ECHOES
The Newsletter of the Escambia County Historical Society
June, 2003 - Vol. 30, No. 6
Editor, Ranella Holley

Oops! The editor's apologies to members for listing **April** rather than **May** in the heading for the last Newsletter.

THE NEXT MEETING

Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2003; **Time:** 3:00 p. m.; **Location:** The Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the JDCC Campus; **Program:** Historical Society Member **Elizabeth Edwards** will present a program on **family artifacts dating from the Civil War period**; **Refreshments:** To be announced.

THE MAY MEETING

President Darryl Searcy called the meeting to order and led society guests and visitors in the **Pledge of Allegiance**. **Treasurer Peggy Bracken** reported that the Society has a **balance of over \$3900.00**. She also reported that a fund has been established to help Society member **Alma Hall** who lost her house because of fire (for further information, see the "Alma Hall Fund" section in this newsletter). The Society has **donated \$100** to the fund.

Darryl also showed the group the **picture of Lois and Ruth Sherrer** which has been sent to the Society in hopes that **a member of the family who would want the picture** could be located (see the section on "Queries" in this newsletter). If no member of the Sherrer family claims the picture (taken in 1908), it will become part of the collection in the Alabama Room.

Society Member Ed Seward was introduced and reported on the **plaque and flag** he had recently received **honoring his great grandfather**, who was Flag Bearer for the Seventh Infantry (Texas) in the Civil War. This great grandfather also was the lawyer who **successfully defended the outlaw John Wesley Hardin**.

Vice-President Lynn Wixon introduced the guest speaker, **Larry Caver**, who presented a program on **using newspapers in family history research**. Mr. Caver showed how newspapers can **fill in the gaps left by census reports**. He gave examples to show how early newspapers can:

- (1) help you determine **when and where an ancestor died** (Example, **"Mr. William SIRCEY died suddenly on a timber raft, near Molino, Florida, one day last week. . . a native of Pollard**

[February 7, 1884, The Banner, Brewton, Alabama”].), especially when the event occurred prior to a time when vital statistics (death certificates) were recorded);

- (2) tell you **the cause of death for an ancestor** (Example, “Omission was made in these columns last week of the deceased of **Jesse HOWARD**, one of Escambia’s oldest citizens. **He died on the 10th of dropsy** [January 24, 1884, The Banner, Brewton, Alabama”].);
- (3) give other **clues to an ancestor’s background**, such as **the birth place and date** (Example, “To the memory of **John NEWBERRY** **who was born in Jasper County, Georgia, December 18th, 1812 and died in Pollard, Alabama on the 25th of July 1879**... [July 31, 1879, Concuh-Escambia Star, Evergreen, Alabama”].);
- (4) tell you about other **related surnames** you never knew about (Example, “Married, **at the residence of the bride’s father, Mr. S. B. RICHARDSON, of Stockton**, on October 27, 1887, by M. M. ODOM, J. P. **Mr. Joseph E. HUBBARD**, of Escambia County, to **Miss Candis D. RICHARDSON** [November 2, 1887, Escambia & Baldwin Times, Brewton, Alabama”].);
- (5) help you **locate a marriage date and place** for an ancestor that you have had no luck in locating in the county where he/she resided (Example, “Married, **at Shubuta, Mississippi**, on the 13th, **Mr. F. M. PARKER**, of Escambia, to Miss Willie ROGERS, of Shubuta... [January 17, 1884, The Banner, Brewton, Alabama”].); and
- (6) give **personal information** (Example, “It is with feelings of sadness that we are called upon to announce the death of **Captain Jacob P. HOUSE**, who died at this residence four miles north of this place, on Tuesday night last... **He was the first white man to raise Cotton in the county, and was the first sheriff** [November 14, 1861, the Autauga Citizen, Prattville, Alabama”].) about an ancestor, information you never knew about.

Our speaker also noted that one should **research old papers in adjoining counties** in addition to the one in which an ancestor was known to have resided, because **local papers** reported information concerning **citizens of nearby towns and counties**, not just that of the immediate town in which the newspaper was published. Early papers used **“Correspondents” from nearby communities** who would report personal news of those communities.

Also, he pointed out that these **early newspapers (nineteenth century)** published information, such as **probate notices, land notices, and ads, on the front page** (rather than later in the paper as is the custom today), which could contain information for family research. **Other sections of the paper** he suggested one look, beside the “Obituaries” and “Local News,” include the **“List of Letters,”** (a list of the names of those with unclaimed letters in the local Post Office), **“Bed and Board Notices,”** (give notice that a man is declaring he is not responsible for debts), and the **“Divorce Notices.”**

Mr. Caver gave out handouts of pages from the book **History and Bibliography of Alabama Newspapers in the Nineteenth Century** by Rhoda Coleman Ellison, published by the University of Alabama Press, 1954. He recommended this book as an **excellent first source to consult about newspaper research**. He pointed out that the **State Archives in Montgomery** has both microfilm and print copies of **early Alabama newspapers that no other collection has**, which should be consulted. He called attention to the **Conecuh/Escambia Star** which was **one of the earliest papers covering Escambia, Baldwin, and Conecuh Counties**, and thus is an excellent source. He also noted that **during the Civil War** most papers in individual towns stopped publishing, but the **Montgomery paper** continued to publish and is a good source for the years of the war.

Pat McArthur and Darryl Searcy served delicious refreshments in the Museum Parlor at the conclusion of the program.

SPEAKERS AND ACTIVITIES FOR SOCIETY MEETINGS FOR 2003

- **June 24, 2003** – **Elizabeth Edwards**. Ms. Edwards will display and discuss **family artifacts** dating from the **Civil War period**.
- **July 22, 2003** – **Jerry Simmons, Alger-Sullivan Historical Society**. Mr. Simmons will welcome member of the Escambia County Historical Society to **“Old” Century, FL** as well as guide us on a **tour** of the **Alger-Sullivan Museum**.
- **August 26, 2003** – **Dr. Chris Bachman and Stephanie Cassidy**. Dr. Bachman will show slides and talk about his wonderful and sometimes terrifying experiences while **fighting the seas, coping with nature, and escaping from pirates** on his, and Stephanie’s, **trip all the way around the world in a small sailboat**
- **September 23, 2003** – **Bob Pasquill**. Mr. Pasquill will discuss the activities and display pictures of the **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)** and **WPA projects in Escambia County**.

- **October 28, 2003** – A picnic and nature outing at **Turtle Point Environmental Center**. The outing will include a boardwalk Stroll through the big Escambia Creek swamps.
- **November** – No meeting planned.
- **December 13, 2003** – A Christmas Party. Meeting time and place to be announced.

ALTERNATE TRUSTEES NAMED FOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The **Executive Board of the Escambia County Historical Society** has named **two Alternate Trustees: Mary Catherine Luker and Willellen Elliott**. They will **act on behalf of those Sitting Trustees** who are **unable to attend occasional meetings** of the Society, who are **unable to participate in the annual Meetings**, or who are **unable to actively participate in the important business decisions** of the Society. When a **Trustee Chair** has been vacated, the **senior person** named as Alternate Trustee will automatically be seated as a **Full Trustee of the Board**.

The **Alternate Trustees** will be introduced as part of an **official announcement** at the **June 24, 2003 meeting** of the Society.

ALMA HALL FUND

Society Member Alma Hall's house in Damascus **burned** during the early morning hours of May 20. Alma, who was not at home, says she believes the fire started because of **lightning**. Everything in her home was lost but luckily **the manuscript of her book** was at her son's house. The **Society** has started a **fund for Alma**. Anyone wishing to contribute can mail a contribution to the Society Post Office Address: **Escambia County Historical Society, P. O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427**.

JEAN SHELTON

Society member, **Jean Shelton (wife of Les Shelton)**, died **May 29, 2003**. Jean and Wes have been good members and friends of the Society. Jean will be missed.

QUERIES

Request for Information on Lt. William R. King

William R. (Bill) King of Houston Texas is searching for information about **William R. King** who **died of disease in May 1848 in Mexico** while serving as a **Lt. with the Alabama Militia** during the War with Mexico. His

body was brought back from Mexico and is **buried at the Belleville Baptist Church Cemetery** in Conecuh county.

Mr. King is searching for **details of the return of Lt. King's body** from Mexico, probably by boat through Mobile in June 1848. Mr. King is seeking **early newspaper article or other data** relating to this Lt. William R. King. He furnished the following information about the Lieutenant: **Born July 15, 1822 in South Carolina, died May 3, 1848; the son of John and Elizabeth Coleman King; married Ursula Crosby** about 1842 in Conecuh County; member of the Belleville Baptist Church; location of the **gravestones of Wm R. King, Ursula Crosby King, Chesley C. King and Amanda King Lee** indicate that **William R. King was the son of John and Elizabeth Coleman King.**

William R. King can be contacted at his mailing address: **14106 Carolcrest Circle, Houston, TX 77079-6803**; or email: [<WKing13@houston.IT.com>](mailto:WKing13@houston.IT.com).

A Photograph from 1908

A photograph of **two beautiful young children** has been submitted to the Historical Society in hopes of **locating the family to which the photograph belongs**, and to which the **children are family members**. We ask your help in locating someone in the **Sherrer family** who knows these children and who would like to have the photograph. The image is of **Lois and Ruth Sherrer** and it was made in 1908

Anyone with questions may contact **Ms. Shelley R. Cardiel at 11502 NE 90th Kirkland, WA 98033** or at the email address: [<familia@sprintmail.com>](mailto:familia@sprintmail.com).

JEFFERSON DAVIS LIBRARY HOURS FOR SUMMER 2003

Monday – Thursday 7:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Friday 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

- ❖ The library **will close on August 8** and **reopen** on the first day of classes for the fall term, **August 18.**

BOOKS FOR SALE

	Mailed	Regular Price
<u>A History of Escambia County</u>	\$55.00	\$50.00
<u>Headstones and Heritage</u>	\$40.00	\$35.00
<u>Historical Society Cookbook</u>	\$ 7.50	\$ 5.00

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

Address: Escambia County Historical Society, P. O. Box 276, Brewton, AL

36427; **Phone:** 251-809-1612; **Email:**

**Membership: \$10.00. Clip the following form and send to Treasurer:
Peggy Bracken, 602 Edgewood Drive, Brewton, AL 36426.**

Membership Renewal/Application Form

Name _____
 First **Middle** **Last**

Address _____
 Street **City** **State** **Zip**

Phone _____

Email _____

THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Anyone wishing to add a loved one to our **Memorial Plaque** should send his/her request and a donation of \$25.00 or more to the treasurer. A notice of the memorial will be placed in the Newsletter at the time the name is added to the plaque. Those members wishing to make a tax exempt gift to the Society may send the gift to the treasurer. The latest names added to the **Plaque** include **Mary C. Skelton, Irene M. Carmack, Doris Atkins, Jessie Mae Weaver-Ashton, Frank R. Ashton, David P. Elliott, Sallie Bell Weaver-Brooks, Alvin Byron Weaver, Maclyn A. Weaver, Maury O. Weaver, Herchel A. Weaver, and Gordon E. Weaver**

SPONSORS FOR PUBLICATION OF THE NEWSLETTER OR JOURNAL

If you know of any **person or business** who would like to **sponsor the publication of an issue of the Newsletter or Journal**, please contact the society at the email or mailing address noted below.

NEWS FROM THE PAST

Thanks to our speaker for the May meeting, Larry Caver, we have these items of news and comments from nineteenth century papers which he transcribed from microfilm holdings of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Newspaper Transcriptions From The Conecuh-Escambia Star

February 24, 1876:

• **J.V. McMILLAN vs. John JOHNSON; W.L. WITHERINGTON, Garnishee**

In this cause it appearing to the Court by the affidavit of the plaintiff that the defendant, **John JOHNSON**, is a non-resident of the State of Alabama and resides at or near Lanier, Cass County, Texas. It is therefore ordered that publication be made in the *Conecuh-Escambia Star*, a newspaper published in the town of Evergreen, Conecuh County, Alabama, for four successive weeks requiring the said JOHNSON to answer the complaint in this cause, in default of which judgment will be rendered thereon against him. –W.D. TOMLINSON, Notary Public, Evergreen, Ala., Feb. 2, 1876

- Died, in Evergreen, on the evening of the 17th instant, **Austill Hunter**, youngest child of **Mr. and Mrs. J.B. COOPER**.
- Died, in Conecuh County, on the 13th instant, **Mrs. Jane S. KINDALL**.

July 17, 1879:

- Died, in this county, on the 13th instant, **Mrs. Hannah VARNER**, consort of **Mr. J.N. VARNER**.
- **Mr. J.J. DARBY**, a gentleman who married a **Miss TURK** of **Conecuh**, died at his home in Troy, Alabama the 12th.
- Married, in this county, recently, **Edmond L. ETHERIDGE** to **Miss Mary S. HAMMONDS**.
- In Escambia County recently, **Mr. Tom OWENS** was badly cut by **Riley WILLIAMSON** with a drawing knife, inflicting dangerous wounds.
- **Mr. J.E. SPOON** has bought the **FARNHAM** lot near **Mrs. ROBINSONS'** residence and will begin the erection of a dwelling house thereon at an early day.
- **Mrs. Amanda ASHLEY** sends us a large cabbage for which we return thanks. The cabbage weighed 5 ¼ pounds and measured 3 ¼ inches in circumference.

July 24, 1879:

Mr. S.M. PARKER is agent for the *Conecuh-Escambia Star* at Lewis' Station, Escambia County, Alabama.

The wife of **Hon. Augustus W. JONES**, formerly of Conecuh County, died in Florida on the 24th of June last.

Friday before the third Sunday in August next, a protracted meeting will begin at **Arkadelphia Baptist Church**, Conecuh County.

At **Sepulga Baptist Church** on Saturday, before the first Sunday in August next, a protracted meeting will commence.

Evergreen is one of the healthiest places in Alabama. Since January 1879 only three persons (white) have died in this place; **Mrs. THOMAS**, a child of **Dr. LEE**, and a child of **Robert J. McCREARY**. Evergreen has a population of six or seven hundred.

Died, at Monroeville, at the residence of **Capt. W.S. WIGGINS**, July 14, 1879, **Mrs. Mary Jane HENDERSON**; she was a daughter of **Mrs. Betsy WIGGINS**, a sister of **Capt. W.S. WIGGINS**, and mother-in-law of **Dr. H.P. SMITH** of Buena Vista. She was born in Conecuh County, July 17, 1827.

Married, in this county recently, **Mr. James H. HAYS** to **Miss Lanveah WATSON**.

Croquet parties by lamplight are a new feature in Evergreen life. They are enjoyed by the young ladies and gentlemen.

The **Courthouse** would present a much better appearance if it was repainted and recovered. Cannot the Commissioners have it done?

NOTICE!

It is with pleasure that we call the attention of our readers to the advertiser of the **Evergreen Academy**. This is a first-class institution, and we trust that the citizens of Conecuh and adjoining counties will patronize it liberally.

Brewton, Ala., July 15, 1879

Editor:

It is with pleasure that I inform you of the **improvements that are being erected in the town of Brewton and vicinity**. By the energy and benevolence of our esteemed citizens we are erecting **two chapels**, one of which will be used by the **Methodists** and the other by the **Baptists**... Our esteemed citizen, **Mr. C.L. SOWELL**, is having erected a **large saw mill** situated on Big Juniper Creek five miles from this place; the erection of said mill, with other improvements, will furnish employment for about thirty or forty hands, which at this dull season of the year is an important consideration to the bread-eaters... Mr. SOWELL is one of our most enterprising citizens, and we have plenty of room for as many such as will come. By the way, Mr. Editor, I must not forget to inform you that we have a **brickyard** in the course of erection, under the efficient management of our townsman, **Mr. James McMILLAN**; said brickyard is located about a half mile below this place... There is talk of **Messrs. G.G. HAROLD & Bros.** building a large brick storehouse in this place... *[No author listed]*

Newspaper Transcriptions From The Conecuh-Escambia Star

July 31, 1879:

There was a **pleasant gathering** of young ladies and gentlemen at the residence of **Mr. S.B. STROUT**, in Evergreen, on the evening of the 28th instant. The occasion was the celebration of the birthday of B.H. STROUT.

The farmers are now complaining of **too much rain**. Cotton has begun to shed considerably on account thereof.

D.W. RANKIN was **killed** at Perdue Hill by **Charles ROBERTS** Monday, 21st instant... RANKIN was shot in the breast with a shotgun loaded with buckshot and killed instantly... *(Lengthy article)* –Monroe Journal

Mr. Drewry McMILLAN, aged 74 years, died in Monroe County on the 24th instant.

Tribute of Respect

To the memory of **John NEWBERRY**, who was born in Jasper County, Georgia, December 18th, 1812, and died in Pollard, Alabama on the 25th of July 1879. Our departed friend was one of the oldest and most useful citizens in Escambia County, whose demise has created a void that will be difficult to fill. He was an active and unceasing promoter of the public interests of the community in which he lived... The affectionate husband,

the doting father, the unwavering friend, the public-spirited citizen is no more...

August 7, 1879:

Mrs. A.C. STEARNS, one of the noblest and best of women, is visiting her daughter, **Mrs. Hortense MITCHELL**, of Baldwin.

Mr. Elliot GANTT has been confined to his room for several days...

We are glad to see our friend **Mack ETHERIDGE** out again. He has had a serious time of it but is now about all right.

Mrs. P.F. PERRINOT, a lady who formerly resided in Conecuh County, and was well known to many of our citizens, died in Rockport, Texas recently.

August 21, 1879:

The colored **baseball club** of this place was badly beaten by the Greenville colored club... Brooklyn, Conecuh County, has caught the baseball fever. A club has been organized in that place.

Married, at Louisa C.H., Virginia, August 6th, 1879, **Mr. Lewis FINCH**, of Evergreen, to **Miss N.C. HUDSON**, of Virginia.

Married, in this county, on the 14th instant, by **Rev. Ingram SPENCE**, **William R. CASSIDY** to **Miss Lou WIGGINS**.