

ECHOES

The Newsletter of the Escambia County
Historical Society
June 2004 - Vol. 31, No. 6
Editor, Ranelia Holley

Why Should We Preserve Historic Places? 'If we wish to have a future with greater meaning, we must concern ourselves...with the total heritage of the nation and all that is worth preserving from our past as a living part of the present'.

❖ *From With Heritage So Rich 1966.*



Figure 1: Brewton Mural: Train Depot & Joseph Bruton/Lovelace Hotel/Escambia County Court House/First United Methodist Church - Photograph Courtesy of Paul Merritt. These buildings today are only preserved in memory, photographs, and now the Mural.

THE JUNE MEETING:

Tuesday, June 22, 2004 in the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the Jefferson Davis Community College Campus at 3:00.

"How to List Historic Properties" will be the topic of the June meeting. Mrs. Dorothy Walker and Ms. Christy Anderson from the Alabama Historical Commission will discuss the Alabama Historical Register and the National Historical Register process.

LOOKING AHEAD:

The July meeting of the Escambia County Historical Society will be held on Tuesday, July 27, 2004 at 3 p.m. at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum. This date will be the anniversary of the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek which was fought on July 27, 1813--according to accounts in History of Escambia County Alabama by Annie C. Waters. We are privileged that day to have a **program about the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek, presented by local Brewton attorney, Chuck Johns**. Ninety-one years after the event, we will be remembering it with a program. Please join us in July to reflect on an important part of our history.

THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION:

The Web Page for the Historical Commission has excellent material on How to List an Historical Property. The Web address for the Commission is <http://www.preserveala.org>.

Also, a pamphlet (45 pages), **Handbook for Owners of Alabama's Historic Houses: A Basic Guide to Resources** by Camille Bowman, is recommended as a good starting point for someone interested in listing historic houses. Camille, who is with the Alabama Historical Commission, came to speak to ECHS a few years back when the Society toured Union cemetery and the cemetery near Jay Villa.

The following information is from a brochure of the Alabama Historical Commission:

The Alabama Historical Commission is the state agency charged with safeguarding Alabama's historic buildings and sites. It was created by an act of the state legislature in 1966 and consists of 20 members appointed by the Governor, or serving ex officio, who represent a broad cross section of Alabamians.

An executive director appointed by the Commission directs the day-to-day activities of the staff, which consists of preservationists, historians, architectural historians, archaeologists, architects, and planners. In addition to its state-mandated responsibilities, the AHC is designated as the State Historic Preservation Office, Alabama's official representative in the federal historic preservation program. The staff evaluates nominations for the Alabama Register and the National Register of Historic Places. Properties are listed if documentation gathered by the owners, volunteers, or staff indicates that the properties meet established criteria.

ALABAMA REGISTER:

The Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage is an official list of buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. It includes properties of national and state significance, as well as those of purely local importance.

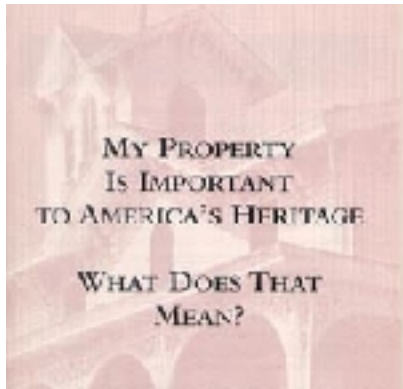
Listing a property in the Alabama Register is an honorary designation that carries no restrictions or financial incentives. It simply means that the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) has deemed it worthy of preservation.

The Alabama Register includes properties such as cemeteries, churches, moved buildings, and structures less than 50 years old that may not normally qualify for National Register status. Properties should be at least 40 years old.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND NATIONAL REGISTER:

The Web Page of the National Park Service (Web address:

<<http://www.or.nps.gov/nr/>>, which maintains the data base for registered sites, recommends the following book (cover depicted) as a good source for information about the benefits and process of registering historic places.



There are a variety of programs to identify and assist in preserving historic properties as living parts of communities, States, and the Nation. In 1992, the U.S. Congress reaffirmed the reasons for enacting these programs:

- ② The spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage.
- ② The historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people.
- ② Historic properties significant to the Nation's heritage are being lost or substantially altered, often inadvertently, with increasing frequency.
- ② The preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans.

PLACES IN ESCAMBIA COUNTY ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER:

Escambia County has two sites listed in the National Register

- ② **The Brewton Historic Commercial District:** AL 3 and US 31; 130 acres and 33 buildings; Historic Significance: Architecture and Engineering; Period of Significance: 1875-1899, 1900-1924, 1925-1949; listed in 1982.
- ② **The Hart Hotel, also known as the Flomaton Hotel:** 120 Palafox Street, Historic Significance: Commerce and Exploration Settlement; Period of Significance: 1900-1924; Listed in 1986.

ALABAMA REGISTER FOR ESCAMBIA COUNTY: **Historic Places in Escambia County Registered with the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage Properties.**

The Alabama Register lists ten properties for Escambia County: This issue of the Newsletter pictures three of them:



Figure 2: Dooley Hall, North Rabb (Kirkland Rd.) Brewton, Circa 1911, Listed 11/13/78. First Dormitory at Southern Normal Institute and named after the Founder of the Institute.



**Figure 3: Owen-Lufkin House, 309 S Main St., Atmore, Circa 1906, Listed 8/22/85.
Still a private residence.**



**Figure 4: Porter McLauren Home, 500 Franklin Ave., Brewton, Circa 1889, Listed
9/7/80. Still a private residence.**

❖ **All Photographs Courtesy of Paul Merritt**

The Other Sites for Escambia County Listed in the Alabama Register:

- ② **Southern Normal Industrial Institute**, 1742 Kirkland Rd., Brewton, Listed 3/12/97. Now a part of Alabama State University.
- ② **Elmore Building 105-106-107**, St. Joseph, Brewton, 1886-1915, Listed 8/25/94. Now houses Milligan's.
- ② **Flomaton Hotel (Commercial Hotel)**, 120 Palafox St., circa 1906, listed 4/11/84, also on the National Register of Historic Places. A vacant lot between two buildings.
- ② **Fort Crawford**, Snowden St., East Brewton, Circa 1816, Listed 1/18/78. There is a committee working on finding the exact location of the Fort and doing a restoration or recreation of the Fort.
- ② **Horn-Eichold House**, ¼ mile west of intersection of James and Nokomis Rd., 1912, listed 11/17/95. Have no details other than those in the Alabama Register.
- ② **Leigh House**, Belleville Ave., Brewton, Circa 1885, Listed 3/11/76. Familiar landmark in downtown Brewton.
- ② **Moore, Charles Lawrence House and Cemetery**, 7077 Jack Springs Rd., Atmore, circa 1883-1884, Listed 5/19/99. No details other than those in Alabama Register.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- ② Welcome to New Member Joyce Gillis, who joined the society at the April Meeting.
- ② The Blueberry Festival and Museum Open House: The Thomas E. McMillan Museum will be having an open house and quilt display on the day of the annual Blueberry Festival on Saturday, June 19 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The Society has an opportunity to do a one day public relations outreach for the museum, the Alabama Room, and the Society if we can schedule two volunteers to be present for an hour or two hour period to assist Carol Madden. Volunteers could greet visitors, orient them to the museum/Alabama Room and answer questions.

Please phone or E-mail Ann Biggs-Williams at 251-867-2445 or annbw@bellsouth.net with the hour(s) you can volunteer.

As of Monday morning, Ann has the morning hours for assisting Carol covered but needs volunteers for the afternoon of the Blueberry Festival.

Ann has made a generous offer. Anyone who Volunteers to help can park at her house, 307 Alco, which is Across the street from the festival and the museum. Considering the problems with traffic with the Festival, this is a great offer.

A FAMILY HEIRLOOM AND FAMILY HISTORY:

The following article by Darryl Searcy tells the story of the Bonnet presented to the Society at the April Meeting:.

A Family Heirloom is Donated to the Escambia County Historical Society

On May 25, 2004, the children of August Searcy and Pauline Brown Searcy donated a family heirloom to the Escambia County Historical Society -- a black Levantine silk "Sunday" bonnet worn by their great-grandmother, Laura Rhea McClammy Snowden, was donated to the Society membership while on a field trip tour of the ancestral Victorian home of Doug Finlay and Sally Finlay.

The heirloom is significant, not because of its age, but because it was worn by the wife of William Snowden. The Snowden brothers, James and William, were among the first settlers and founders of the area known today as Brewton (Escambia County), Alabama.

James Snowden remained in Brewton and established himself as a prosperous merchant and lumberman, along with notables Aaron Loveless (Lovelace), Benjamin and Joseph Bruton, Martin Franklin, and Elisha Godwin. His wife, Mildred, operated a hotel and boarding house; becoming a very prominent businesswoman in her own right. The present day Mildred Street is named in her honor. The Snowden's owned 300 acres of land that extended from Mildred Street north to Granberry Street. Their home occupied what is now the 600 block of Belleville Avenue.

William Snowden moved further northeast into Conecuh County and established himself as a successful gentleman farmer. His son, William Jasper, born in 1853, grew up on his father's plantation and later developed his own large estate near the area known today as Skinnerton, located in Monroe County, Alabama. After the Civil War the Snowden's continued to prosper and each offered his land to share-cropper use, as well as to farm large tracks of cotton for themselves.

William Jasper married Laura Rhea McClammy of Escambia County, Alabama on November 19, 1876. Their daughter, Cummie Madonia, born in Monroe County, married James Monroe Brown of Conecuh County on August 6, 1903. The marriage is recorded in the Monroe County records. The union of James Brown and Cummie Madonia produced seven daughters and one son.

While there is no paperwork currently in hand to prove or disprove otherwise, it is common knowledge throughout the family, old and young alike, that Laura McClammy was the great-granddaughter of an Indian (Cherokee) princess. The true name of her mother of noble birth likewise cannot be proved, but the name she assumed upon her marriage to a white man was Sarah Elizabeth Polly, which is also the name used when the U.S. Government Agent for Indian Affairs classified Laura Rhea McClammy Snowden as being of high percentage Indian blood.

The genealogy of Sarah Elizabeth Polly might well be those reflected in Indian Agent records, which state that she was the daughter of Phillip Shuck of the Cherokee and Princess Sarah (Schooling) of the Black Foot. If this is indeed the case, the marriage to a white settler might have occurred around 1810. Such a union, while seeming impossible, has a ring of truth as Cummie Madonia Snowden told of having been descended from an Indian princess of a civilized Indian tribe.

It was the father of Cummie Madonia, William Jasper Snowden, who donated the land on which the Mt. Pleasant Church and cemetery are located today (Hwy-83 north, Conecuh County, Alabama). The original church was built circa 1920, and the cemetery plot was marked off at the

same time. It was also on this plantation land that a second home was built by their daughter following her marriage to James Monroe Brown.

James and Cummie erected a large house across the road from the cemetery and church (now designated as County Hwy 83 in Conecuh County). In time they were obliged to offer shelter to her aging mother after Will Snowden died. Upon his death in 1933, any and all operations of the vast plantation and its remnant acreage were dissolved. The original plantation home came into disrepair and was demolished in 1939, shortly after the death of Laura Rhea McClammy Snowden.

The large bungalow home built by them remains standing today, although it was sold in 1944. Several families continued to occupy the home for a period of time and to work small parcels of the land for a number of years. Because the old home was constructed of solid yellow pine heartwood, it remains in fairly good condition. All the land and homestead were sold, and the Browns moved to a small town near the larger metropolitan area of Mobile. The proceeds from the sale provided a life of comfort and ease for them until their deaths.

<u>Books for Sale</u>	<u>Mailed</u>	<u>Regular Price</u>
<u>A History of Escambia County</u>	\$55.00	\$50.00
<u>Headstones and Heritage</u>	\$40.00	\$35.00
<u>Escambia Historical Society Cookbook</u>	\$10.00	\$ 5.00

Get in Touch with Us

Address: Escambia County Historical Society, P. O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427;

Phone: 251-809-1612; Email: Ranny1@earthlink.net

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
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Address _____

Street	City	State	Zip
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Phone _____

Email _____
