

ECHOES

**The Newsletter of the Escambia County
Historical Society**

**July 2004 - Vol. 31, No. 7
Editor, Ranelia Holley**



Pictured are three of the beautiful quilts which were on display during an Open House in the Thomas E. McMillan Museum last month. Both the Quilt Display and Open House, which took place during the Blueberry Festival, were arranged by Carol Madden, Museum Coordinator. Photographs courtesy of Paul Merritt.

The July Meeting

Tuesday, July 27, 2004 at 3:00 in the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the Jefferson Davis Community College Campus. The program will be a presentation by local attorney **Chuck Johns** on **“The Battle of Burnt Corn Creek.”** Ninety-one years ago on July 27, 1813, the famous battle occurred.

The August Meeting

Tuesday, August 24, 2004 at 3:00 in the Woodfin Patterson Auditorium (lobby) located on the Jefferson Davis Community College Campus. The program will be **“Show and Tell.”** Note that the society is meeting in the lobby of the Patterson Auditorium rather than in the usual meeting room in the Museum because the meeting room will be used for voting for local elections on that Tuesday.

Chuck Johns - Our Speaker for the July Meeting

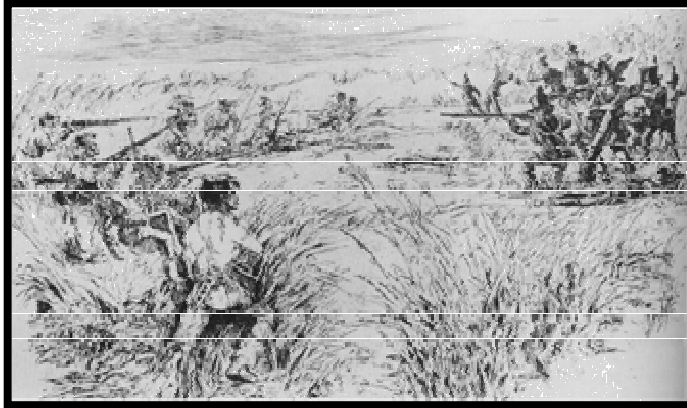
Chuck was born and raised in Brewton, AL. He is a graduate of T. R. Miller HS, Jeff Davis Community College (AA), the University of Alabama (BS), and Faulkner University's Jones School of Law. Chuck has worked with the District Attorney's Office and served as an Assistant District Attorney for Escambia County and as Commander of the Judicial Circuit Drug Task Force before entering the private practice of law here in Brewton. He has also served as Tribal Prosecutor for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

A Correction to the information in the last Newsletter, Echoes for June 2004

In the caption for Figure 1, a photograph of one of the murals in Brewton, the first RR Station Agent, after whom the town is named, Edmond Troupe Bruton (Brewton) was incorrectly listed as Joseph Bruton.

The Battle of Burnt Corn

This following account of the battle of Burnt Corn is taken from a Web site, PBLA, which is maintained by the Pensacola Beach Residents & Leaseholders © 1999-2002 <<http://www.pbla.com>>. The website also contains excellent material on the background of the battle and the resulting Creek Indian War.



Battle of Escambia River also known as "The Battle Of Burnt Corn"

Both the Upper Creek and Lower Creek Indian tribes faced a complicated diplomatic equation, trying to balance their interests against expansionist ambitions of the British, the

Spanish, and the United States. For much of the last third of the 18th century they were successful, particularly under the redoubtable leadership of Chief Alexander McGillivray.

Imperial Interests

The European imperial powers faced no less of a challenging situation. From the Spanish perspective, war between the United States and the Creek Indians would relieve the pressure on Spanish Florida, but interrupt profitable trade in goods that Spain desperately needed.

From the British perspective, Creek warriors were potentially useful but unreliable allies in the direct assault against American military land forces in the years immediately before, during, and after the American Revolution. Furthermore, Spanish and Creek domination of Pensacola and the surrounding area posed a potential threat to the British Navy's domination of the Gulf of Mexico, especially the strategically key ports of Mobile and New Orleans. The American colonies, and later the infant republic of the United States, saw in all three powers -- including the Creek Nation -- a barrier to further expansion of the western frontier as well as a hostile ally aligned with America's European competitors.

The Red Sticks

In southern Georgia, Alabama, and northern Florida, the hostile Creeks were known as "Red Sticks" because of the red-painted clubs they carried. The Indians sought more sophisticated weapons, however, and in late July, 1813, they journeyed to Pensacola under the impression they could obtain some from the Spanish Governor. The band of Creeks consisted of about 80 warriors under Peter McQueen and High Head Jim.

Having received intelligence that the Creeks might have been successful in purchasing guns and ammunition in Pensacola, Col. James Caller organized a party of about 180 militia to intercept them on the road home from Pensacola. The soldiers soon came upon the Creeks. They were encamped in a plains area within the bend of the Escambia River that had low growth pines surrounded by a semicircular range of hills. The area lies within present-day Escambia County, Florida, a mile and a half south of the Conecuh County line.

The Battle

The soldiers dismounted and charged down the slopes upon the Red Sticks. The Creeks were totally surprised and fell back to a nearby creek known as "Burnt Corn Creek." Having run them off, the American soldiers made the fatal mistake of stopping to loot the camp instead of pursuing the enemy.

The Red Sticks regrouped and quickly counter-attacked. Col. Caller could not gather his troops into a defensive line, so he ordered them to retreat into the hills. But the militia men, untrained and scared, broke and fled in panic. A small knot of soldiers remained with their officers and fought a rear-guard action for about an hour before fleeing themselves.

The Creeks pursued the military troops for a mile, but abandoned the chase when they could not keep up. The battle of Burnt Corn (sometimes called the Battle of Escambia) was a clear-cut victory for the Creeks.

Casualties: Americans: 2 dead, 15 wounded.

Another Account of The Battle of Burnt Corn - The following account comes from Carol Middleton's Genealogy Homepage <<http://homepages.rootsweb.com>>.

Burnt Corn, AL, a town in **Monroe Co.**, was rich in the history of the early **Alabama Territory**. Close by was the famous **Federal Road**, a former Indian horse path, which crossed the territory into **Georgia**. For nearly a century whites and **Creeks** had lived in peace with good trade relations, intermarriage, and reliable treaties. There was almost full assimilation. But this was soon to change. In the fall of 1811, the great **Shawnee Tecumseh** came into the area to incite the **Creeks** against the whites. He gave a speech at **Tuckabatchee**,

challenging the Creeks to regain their former glory. In **Florida**, the **Spanish** were also encouraging discord among the Creeks; it was to their advantage, both politically and monetarily. Thus arose the struggles of the whites against the Creeks to claim the land. And here in **Monroe Co.** whites staged a surprise attack on the **Red Sticks** in the first battle of the **Creek War of 1813-1814-- the Battle of Burnt Corn.**

The hostile **Creeks** were called **Red Sticks** because of the red-painted clubs that they carried; the name was a proud name for them. They sought however more sophisticated arms and journeyed to **Pensacola** to purchase guns and gunpowder from the **Spanish**. On 7/27/1813, 80 Creeks under **Peter McQueen** and **High Head Jim** were returning from Florida to the **Upper Creeks**. They camped for the night at on the banks of **Burnt Corn Creek**.

The whites had heard about the gun purchase and were afraid of the consequences of such action; relations with the **Creeks** had so seriously deteriorated. About 180 white militia under **Col. James Caller** organized an attack to halt this threatening flow of supplies to the **Indians**.

As the **Creeks** relaxed before the evening meal, the horde of militia crept over the hill above and swooped down into the midst of the camp. A complete surprise! Horses scattered as did the **Red Sticks**. A war whoop went up! At first, the whites had the advantage. The startled **Creeks** stood their ground but soon began to run for cover in the swamps. The exultant militia began plundering, gathering horses and guns and whatever they could find. In their zeal for booty, they forgot their mission. Seeing this from their hiding places in the cane brake, the **Creeks** went on a furious attack. Panic ensued and the whites began to flee! Some, like the wounded hero **Captain Sam Dale**, fought on bravely but in vain. The whites' numbers were now greatly reduced. The situation was hopeless. Now it was the whites who retreated in humiliation with the Creeks in swift pursuit. The tragic **Creek War** was begun but for now **the Red Sticks had won the day!**

Amongst the wounded at **Burnt Corn** was **Alexandre Hollinger**, son of **Adam Hollinger** and **Marie Joseph Juzan**.

Before the **Creek War** and after, whites and mixed bloods lived in the town of **Burnt Corn**. Among the mixed blood families were these names: **Weatherford, Tait, Durant, McGilbray (McGillivray)**. Those were families of high descent among the noble **Wind Clan of**

the Creeks; they were of the elite of the great **Creeks**. Also living there were my great great great grandparents, the **Hightowers**; my great great grandfather **James A. Hightower**, was born there in 1814.

<u>Books for Sale</u>	Mailed	Regular Price
<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

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