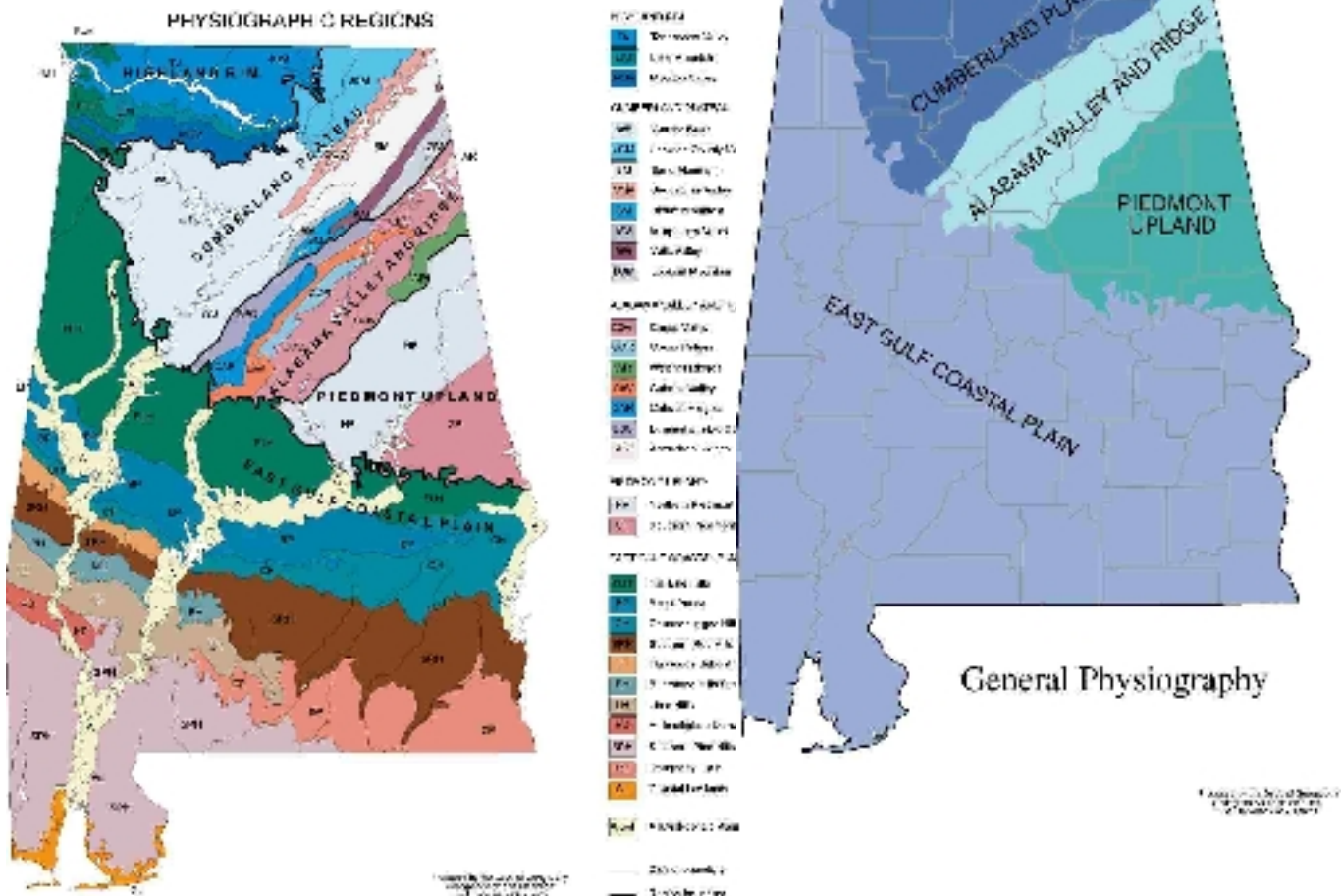


ECHOES

The Newsletter of the Escambia County
Historical Society
January 2005 - Vol. 32, No. 1
Editor, Ranelia Holley



Figures 1 & 2. A Detailed and General Map of the Physiography (the Land Regions) of Alabama. Maps Courtesy of the University of Alabama Department of Geography.

Attention Members: A Change in Society's Dues

At the December meeting, the society voted for dues to be **\$15.00** beginning **January 1, 2005**. However, the society will accept the **\$10.00** payment for dues for 2005 of those **Early Birds** who have already mailed in their checks.

JANUARY 2005 ECHS PROGRAM

Thanks to Ann Biggs-Williams, we have this information about our program for the January Meeting, the speaker (Dr. John Hall), and the Alabama Humanities Foundation Bureau of Speakers:

John Hall, Research Associate for the University of Alabama Museum of Natural History, and member of the Alabama Humanities Foundation speakers bureau, presents "Alabama History: A Naturalists' Perspective," on January 25, 2005 at 3 p.m. at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum, located in the Fine Arts Center at Jefferson Davis Community College in Brewton.

There is considerable confusion over what Alabama looked like at the beginning of the historic period. This presentation connects a number of natural history topics that affect Alabama history. These include a brief survey of the geology of Alabama, including the fall line and topography; the influence of the Ice Ages on Alabama river valleys, Alabama's forest cover including ecological succession and the myth of old-growth forest; the observations of the early explorers; and why historians, archaeologists, and biologists look at the same data and come to dramatically different conclusions as to what Alabama looked like. Hall also discusses distinctive landscapes such as the longleaf pine belt, hardwood forests, the Black Belt, canebrakes, cypress, and other swamps. Finally, Hall touches on the Native Americans as landscape-shaping forces, and using the Federal Road as an example, on how a wetter early Alabama influenced early settlement and travel. This presentation is part of the Alabama Humanities

Foundation (AHF)2005-2006 Speaker in the House program.

John C. Hall is a well-known Alabama naturalist. For 20 years he served as Assistant Director of the Alabama Museum of Natural History. Since his retirement, he continues to teach and does natural history and museum consulting. His articles on Hernando De Soto, Alabama meteorites, and Eugene Allen Smith have appeared in Alabama Heritage magazine, and he has written for the well-known Discovering Alabama Public Television series. He has taught at both college and secondary levels. John is well known in the Alabama natural history and museum community for his teacher workshop leadership and as founder of the Museum Expedition series of archaeology and paleontology summer camps, now in their 26th year.

Dr. Hall has served as Executive Director of the Alabama Museums Association, and as an advisor to the Alabama Department of Conservation and to the Alabama Historical Commission where his specialty is explaining complicated scientific and historical stories to the general public. In one or the other of his living history characterizations, he is frequently seen at Indian festivals and historical events around the state. His continuing research interests include William Bartram, the myth of Prince Madoc in Alabama, and the original appearance of Alabama in the early historic period.

The Alabama Humanities Foundation is a nonprofit organization funded by the National Endowment for the

Humanities (of which the AHF is the state affiliate), as well as by corporate and individual donors. The Foundation is dedicated to the promotion and celebration of the humanities throughout the state of Alabama and, to that end, conducts its own statewide programs and awards grants, on a competitive basis, to nonprofit organizations for humanities projects.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS FOR 2005

February 22, 2005: Jacob Lowrey, a native of Burnt Corn, Alabama and currently a resident of Greenville, South Carolina, will present a program on several topics of local historical interest. These topics include: "The Wolf Trail--Some Different Facts to Consider," Research on the origins of "Neyatoonchee," the Indian name for Burnt Corn Creek, and info on the Fort Crawford story about soldiers who set up "dummies" to fool the Indians. All of these historical topics are part of Escambia County's history.

March 22, 2005: Lee Otts, retired Brewton attorney, will discuss his World War II diaries and letters that became the basis of an account of his wartime experiences in an American rifle company in Patton's famed Third Army during World War II. The book, G Company's War: Two Personal Accounts of the Campaigns in Europe, 1944-1945 by Bruce E. Egger and Lee MacMillan Otts is distinctive as voices of two ordinary GIs in the same company, who did not know each other at the time, record parallel accounts of the same events--one from an enlisted man's view and one from an officer's vantage. Please join us to hear one of Brewton's citizens from "The Greatest Generation."

Memory Plaque Added

John B. Wixon (Jack), Society President Lynn Wixon's husband, was added to the Memory Plaque in December. Jack passed away Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2004. Born in Rumford Rhode Island, Jack served in the U.S. Navy as a Chief Personnel man. After his retirement from the Navy, he worked with the State of Florida. For the past twelve years he has operated his own business. He is remembered as a highly respected business man and outstanding neighbor.

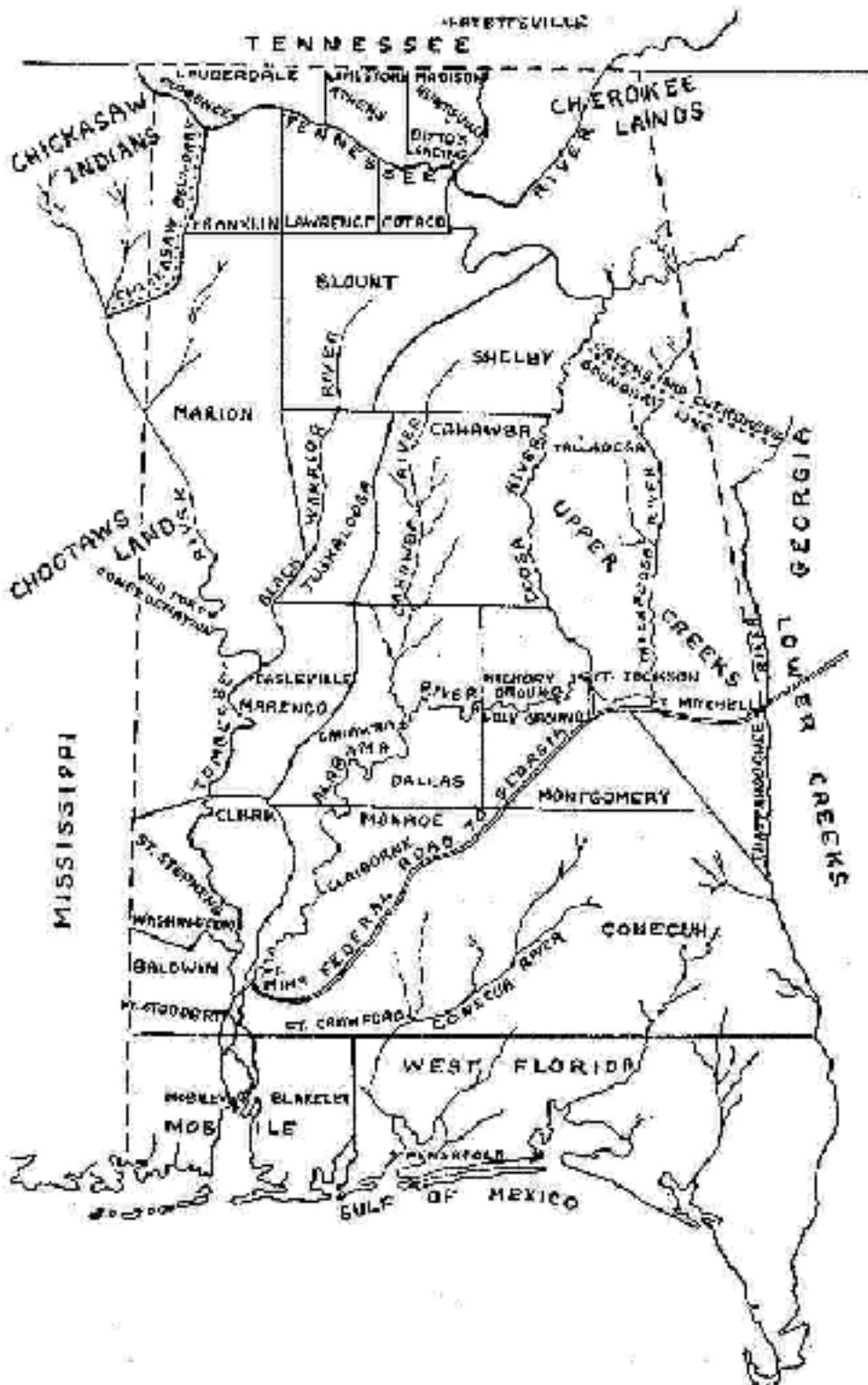
Our deepest condolences to Lynn who lost not only her husband, Jack, but also a brother and sister, all within a month.

THE OLD FEDERAL ROAD

The following article is taken from the website <http://homepages.rootsweb.com>

Fig. 4 Map of the Alabama from 1818 shows the Old Federal Road.

Back in 1806 when the Nation was still young and rapidly growing westward, a horse path for postal riders was opened through the Creek Nation stretching from middle Georgia to coastal Alabama. As the likelihood of another battle with Britain increased, the crucial need to quickly move troops to protect the American Gulf Coast was becoming more evident. In June 1810, Fort Stoddert's commanding officer Col. Richard Sparks was ordered by Secretary of War William Eustis to



Map of Alabama, 1818, according to John Melish. Courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History.

inspect and document these horse paths in order to mark a military road so that troops and supplies could be sent to defend the Gulf Coast. A second scouting party from Fort Stoddert was led by 1st Lt. John Roger Nelson Luckett. Luckett made the first significant survey for road construction in land that would later become Alabama. In addition to being charged to keep journal notes of each day of his trip, Luckett's party carved Roman numerals into trees marking each mile along their journey. On July 11, 1811, Brigadier General Wade Hampton was directed to immediately begin construction of three wagon roads through the Creek Nation – the second of these roads became known as the Federal Road.¹

With construction at last beginning in 1811, the “Old Federal Road,” was built from west to east connecting Fort Stoddert, Alabama, to Fort Wilkinson, Georgia. (Several spelling variations include Stoddert, Stoddart, etc.). Constructed in 1799, Fort Stoddert was named for the Acting Secretary of War Benjamin Stoddert. Fort Stoddert was located at the Mount Vernon Landing on the Mobile River in Mobile County east of current day Mount Vernon. Located at the Federal Road's other end, [Fort Wilkinson](#) was near [Milledgeville](#) on the Oconee River in Baldwin County, Georgia. At that time, Milledgeville was the capital of Georgia.

The Old Federal Road successfully connected Fort Stoddert to the Chattahoochee River. At that point, the Federal Road merged with the earlier postal riders' horse path that linked Athens, Georgia, to New Orleans, Louisiana. Unlike the old horse path, the Federal Road went eastward making a connection with lands ripe for the recruitment of soldiers and obtaining supplies for the military. This path quickly became a major travel route for pioneers to the area once known as the Old Southwest.

From its start as a narrow horse path used to carry the mails, the Old Federal Road underwent great development and became a major military road connecting early American forts in the Creek Lands and the Mississippi Territory. Acting as the interstate highway of its day, when “Alabama Fever” raged through the Carolinas and Georgia, the Old Federal Road carried thousands of pioneers to the Old Southwest. As such, the Federal Road directly contributed to the dramatic increase in Alabama's population between 1810 and 1820 – with Alabama's population growing far faster than that of either Mississippi or Louisiana during this time. Alabama continued out-distancing both Mississippi and Louisiana in population growth through 1850.²

The Federal Road became a well traveled stagecoach route for those going through Alabama. In 1824, Adam Hodgson wrote *Letters from North America Written During a Tour in the United States and Canada* wherein he described his 1820 travel along the Federal Road from Chattahoochee to Mobile. Hodgson found adequate over-night lodgings and described one stop as having three beds in a log building with a clay floor. Noting the ground formed a “perpetual undulation,” Hodgson concluded that “[t]he road, which is called the Federal Road, though tolerable for horses, would with us be considered impossible for wheels.”³

Nearly two centuries later, the Federal Road remains visible. For those interested in making a modern day trip along this important historical path, the [Monroe County Heritage Museums](#) has marked the portion of the Federal Road through Monroe County with eight monuments along its route from Price’s Hotel near the Monroe and Butler County lines through MacDavid’s Hotel where the Federal Road continues through Escambia County, Alabama.

No More Carnivals in Burnt Corn Creek Park

Congratulations to society member Darryl Searcy for his successful presentation to the City Council requesting and receiving a pledge that the City will no longer allow carnivals and circuses sponsored by local groups as entertainment and money raising events to use Burnt Corn Creek Park. Society member Joe Gordy, president of the city’s Tree and Beautification Board, also wrote a letter requesting that the park not be used for these events. As reported in the [Brewton Standard](#) article, “Council Outlaws Carnivals in Burnt Corn Creek Park,” Darryl pointed out that “he had watched in horror as ‘certain groups damaged and ruined the park with little regard for walkways, plantings, water lines, and grass and the park in general.’” Creating the park has been an important part of the “beautification” of the downtown historic district. This action to preserve the beauty of the park and prevent the city from having to pay for the costs of repairs to damages by visiting events is welcome news.

Fourth Annual Genealogy Workshop – Old Courthouse Museum, Monroeville, AL

This February, Elizabeth Wells, special collections librarian at Samford University will discuss preservation of historic records, oral history

resources, and how to organize research. For further information, call (251) 579-7433 or email <www.tokillamockingbird.com>

New Member for 2005

Welcome to New Member, Clair Cooper Sanborn

Have You Seen Elvis?

We have this item from Ann Biggs-Williams:

The Mobile Register did a story on January 7, 2005, Page E1 asking HAVE YOU SEEN ELVIS?

Emst Jorgensen, an authority on Elvis Presley working for Sony-BMG Music, and researcher Danny Kane are seeking information on Presley's earliest appearance in the Mobile area, in 1954 and 1955. Helpful memories, documents and photos may ultimately be used in a planned book and other projects.

Those with memories of Presley before he was "the king" are urged to call Kane at 718-247-4448 or to send e-mail to dannykane@cox.net.

<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: \$15.00. 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	<hr/>			
	Street	City	State	Zip
Phone	<hr/>			
Email	<hr/>			