

# **ECHOES**

## **THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **SEPTEMBER 2005 - VOL. 32, No. 9**

#### **EDITOR, RANELLA HOLLEY**

#### **The September Meeting**

Tuesday, September 27, 2005, 3:00 p.m. in the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the Jefferson Davis Community College Campus.

#### **The Program**

Eddie Nall, senior Vice-President of the Bank of Brewton will speak on the history of the bank.

#### **The Bank of Brewton**

The following material is taken from the Web site of the Bank of Brewton.  
"History." Bank of Brewton <BankofBrewton@Magbelle.com>.

The Bank's First President, Charles L. Sowell, was employed in the milling and lumbering business until the Civil War broke out. He enlisted and took part in "the bloody battles of Murfreesboro, Mission Ridge, Lookout Mountain, Chickamauga, Franklin and Nashville." Wounded in the left arm in the Nashville battle (a rifle ball shattered the bone and his arm had to be removed at the shoulder), he was made a prisoner.

After the war, he was appointed as station agent for the L & N Railroad at Brewton. In 1869 he resigned and engaged in the timber business, buying and selling timber and eventually building a large saw mill which employed a large work force. By 1888 the citizens of Brewton, as well as Mr. Sowell, could see that Brewton needed a bank. Mr. Sowell disposed of his mill in that year and organized the first bank in Escambia County, the Bank of Brewton, which opened for business on Monday, January 7, 1889. At the time it was the only bank between Mobile and Montgomery.

The first bank building was on West Saint Joseph Street. The Standard Gauge (predecessor of the Brewton Standard) on January 10, 1889 announced the bank was open for business: "Bank of Brewton is open for business. C. L. Sowell, President; O. F. Luttrell, Cashier." The newspaper

continues, “The new bank building is a model of elegance. Mr. Sowell has put in one of Diebol’s large safes, a large fire and burglar proof vault, with the very best combination locks made. He has shown good taste in having his counters made of our native curled pine, oil finished and varnished, showing the beautiful texture of the wood.”

In 1912 the bank moved to a new building next to the Lovelace Hotel. This building is still part of the Bank today, and is recognizable for its “façade of imported, white tile decorated with a green border.”

### **Upcoming Events**

**The October Meeting** – Robert Thrower of the Poarch Indians will present a program on the culture and history of the Creek Indians.

**November** – the Society does not meet.

**December** – Christmas Party - time and place to be announced.

### **Welcome Our New Members**

Ashley Wilson of Brewton and Elton Jernigan of Tallahassee.

### **Making Donations to the Society**

We would like to encourage society members to consider making a monetary donation to the society. Because of the rising cost of printing and postage, the buffer of extra money in our funds has slowly been dissipating over the last few years. Thanks to the generosity of five members, who wish to remain anonymous, we have received a total of \$450 in donations this month, which will ensure we can cover the cost of printing and postage for the journal and the newsletter for the rest of this year.

In order to help us build back our “buffer,” please feel free to make contributions to the society at any time, as did those who gave \$450.00 this month. In addition to a regular contribution, a second kind of contribution is to have someone's name put on the Memorial Plaques in the Society's Parlor in the Fine Arts Building. You can do that by contributing a minimum of \$25. For either a regular contribution or for a memorial gift, send a check to Peggy Bracken, our treasurer, at P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36426.

## **LOCAL ARTIST BERNICE SIMS' PAINTING SELECTED FOR ONE OF SERIES OF STAMPS HONORING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**



**Fig. 1. Postage Stamp based on Brewton artist Bernice Sims' picture of the bridge in Selma which is famous as part of the Civil Rights Movement. Picture of the stamp courtesy of the Southern Poverty Law Center Web Site.**

The Postal Service has recently paid tribute to the Civil Rights Movement by issuing a series of stamps depicting critical moments in the movement. The stamp collection is called "To Form a More Perfect Union."



**Fig. 2. Picture of the Old Shell Station in Brewton. Picture courtesy of the Montgomery Advertiser Web Site.**

Thanks to the initiative of Lydia Grimes about a year ago, the photo of the abandoned gas station on Highway 31 in Brewton near Burnt Corn Creek

Park is pictured on the July-August 2005 issue of Preservation Report by the Alabama Historical Commission.

Every year in May, in observance of National Historic Preservation Month, the AHC and the Alabama Preservation Alliance join forces to sponsor "Places in Peril," a program designed to highlight some of Alabama's most significant endangered historic sites. Number one on the listing for 2005 is "Historic Gas Stations Statewide," and the Brewton gas station was selected for the photo.

### An Inquiry

Does anyone know the history of the gas station pictured above? The historical society would love to publish a story of its history in the newsletter. Contact us if you have information.

### Exhibit of Model A Cars

On October 8, 2005, the Alger Sullivan Historical Society is sponsoring an event exhibiting the cars of the Gulf Coast Model A Club. Jerry Simmons has sent us a flyer with the following information:

### **Help Bring Old 100 Home**

**October 8, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. the Gulf Coast Model A Club is coming to exhibit their cars! Listen to the Model As "Cadillac." If you don't know what that means, come see!**

**Barbeque Plates, cold drinks, and good clean fun.**

**Authors Tony Simmons (Century native), Pensacolian Ray Fortner, and Ethel McKinley from Atmore will be signing their newly released books**

**Cloggers, Dixieland Jazz, country music, dance groups, maybe more**

**Bring your lawn chairs**

**Free tours of the Society's museums  
See your old friends and make new ones**

7510 Jefferson Avenue - Century, FL 32535

For more info or directions call 850-256-2029, 256-2661, 256-3980  
ashs@algersullivan.org www.alg The Alger-Sullivan Historical Society  
P.O. Box 100ersullivan.org

### **Williams Station Day in Atmore**

This year Williams Station Day will be held on Saturday, October 22, 2005, 9:00 AM 5:00 PM with events and exhibits on the grounds of and in the Lions Community Center/YMCA Building on Pensacola Avenue in Atmore. From the brochure of the Atmore Chamber of commerce describing the celebration:

### **ALL ABOARD FOR A GREAT FAMILY OUTING!**

October 22, that's the date to be in Atmore, Alabama as residents turn back their clocks to 1866 when their community was named Williams Station – just a supply stop along the Mobile and Great Northern railroad. It was a simpler time, when life revolved around the railroads and folks marked time by the sound of steam engines chugging through town or the whistle of the local lumber mill. We hope you'll join us in Atmore for an old fashioned sampling of southern heritage seasoned with the blues, arts, and crafts, cane milling and railroad memorabilia.

For more information contact the Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce  
Phone - 251/368/3305  
Emails: <atmoreal@frontiernet.net> or <atmorechamber.com>

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

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#### 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**

<b>Name</b> _____		
<b>First</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Last</b>

<b>Address</b>				
	<b>Street</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip</b>
<b>Phone</b>				
<b>Email</b>				