

# ECHOES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MARCH 2006 - Vol. 33, No.3  
EDITOR, RANELLA HOLLEY

① March  
Program

## The March Program

Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2006 Time: 3:00 p. m.

Location: The Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the Jefferson Davis  
Community College Campus

The Program: Cemetery Preservation



Our Speakers: Ted Urquhart, President of the  
Alabama Cemetery Preservation Association, and  
the Alabama Historical Commission's Cemetery  
Program Coordinator, and Lee Anne Wofford,  
Architectural Survey Coordinator and Cemetery  
Program Coordinator. Handouts will be available  
and a period for Q&A will follow the presentations.

## ② Cemetery Preservation

This month's newsletter, features the photo of the  
grave marker of **Mariah Smith**, born May 4, 1848,  
died Oct. 16, 1936. Inscription on the headstone says "A Tender Mother and a  
Faithful friend." This grave along with those of

Caroline Hodge, born 1832, Died Oct. 14, 1907 age 75 years

J. B. Smith, Oct. 26, 1883 - June 3, 1912

Done Lodge, No. 310, A.F. & A.M

Father, Derry Debrow born 1812 - Sept. 13, 1919

Mother at Rest, Lutisey Debrow, born 1833, Died Apr 3, 1925

are just a few of the graves recorded by Don Smith, Mike Williams & Ann  
Biggs-Williams on the afternoon of March 12, 2006 when they visited an  
overgrown cemetery, not visible from an adjacent dirt road and littered with beer  
cans. There was even a hunting stand in the cemetery! This cemetery needs  
help! The cemetery is located on Debrow Road, three miles north of the  
McGowin Bridge over the Conecuh River in northeastern Escambia County.  
The cemetery is located in Township 2N, Range 13ENW, Section 4.

What do you do if you stumble across an abandoned cemetery in the woods?  
You don't really want to take responsibility for restoration of the cemetery but  
you would like to notify someone. Who do you turn to?

That's one of the goals of the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance. And  
guess what, you **CAN adopt a cemetery!** Preserving and maintaining a

Look at  
new  
Arrangements

cemetery is tax deductible. Alabama law exempts land legally designated as cemetery property from property taxation.

Why are cemeteries important? The website for the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance at [www.alabama-cemetery-preservation.com](http://www.alabama-cemetery-preservation.com) tells us, they are repositories of unique genealogical, historical, religious, cultural, societal, and medical information that may not be recorded in any other format. They are free public museums filled with history and irreplaceable artwork. They are places in which the average citizen has an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of his/her ancestors. They are sources of humor, pathos, and folklore. They are laboratories filled with antique biological specimens as many intriguing plants grow around graves in cemeteries. They are also habitats for birds and wildlife green spaces.

So join us on March 28th and learn more about how to help endangered cemeteries. **You** may just have a far removed ancestor buried in an overlooked cemetery somewhere. When you start looking for civil war era ancestors, they may have been buried in a small rural cemetery, unknown to you until you start tracing your genealogy

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### **3 Our Speakers**

*B: 5/28/17*

Ted Urquhart is a native of Montgomery and a graduate of Auburn. He retired from the Air Force at Eglin AFB and went to work as a Project Manager and Export Controls Officer with BAE Systems in Fort Walton Beach until he permanently retired in 2003. He was the founding 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and County Coordinator of the non-profit Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance (ACPA) and was elected President in 2004. Urquhart got into cemetery preservation after his pioneer family cemetery was found after years of searching but then "Now that we've found it, what do we do with it?" Not much information was available and soon he found others also searching for info; heads came together and the ACPA was formed to help others across Alabama.

A native of Tuscaloosa, Wofford has served on the staff at the Alabama Historical Commission over 5 years. She travels the state educating the public on documenting and preserving historic buildings and cemeteries. Wofford is also an Ex-Officio board member of the ACPA. She earned a Bachelor's degree in History and a Master's degree in American Studies, both from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

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### **4 The February Meeting**

#### **A Message from the President**

If you missed the ECHS February meeting, you missed the opportunity to see some rare photos brought to the meeting by members and guests. I hope that some of these photos will reappear when the Society has its annual "Show & Tell" program in June. The mission of the Escambia County Historical Society is to search for, collect, preserve, and publish any and all materials, artifacts, fossils, and items of historical significance pertaining to the people and area now known as Escambia County, Alabama. If you have a historic photo of Escambia

County, please visit the museum and let Jerry Simmons scan it. He can scan your photo, then and there and return the photo to you unharmed, on the spot. Historic postcards such as the 1909 post card of Belleville Avenue that was superimposed on the cake used in the February refreshments scan good as well.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, there is a list of "What **You** can Do!" A historical society cannot be run by one person, or even, just by the officers. The Escambia County Historical Society needs every member to help preserve our rich cultural heritage that is slowly slipping away. Please check the volunteer list, weigh your talents, and call me at 251-867-2445 or E-mail to [escohis.escohis.org](mailto:escohis.escohis.org) to volunteer.

Occasionally, I will publish a "Top Ten List" to recognize activities that facilitate the Society's mission. Look for the ten people recognized in the March ECHS Newsletter.

## **5 Draft of Minutes of the Meeting,** **February 28, 2006 minutes, subject to approval**

Ann Biggs-Williams, President welcomed members and introduced 6 guests. Martha Simmons, who recently received a lifetime membership from the Society was also welcomed. It was announced that Mr. Buddy Mitchell, who was unable to attend, had also recently joined the Society. Darryl Searcy, Vice-President led in the Pledge to the Flag.

The minutes, which were previously printed in the February newsletter were approved without corrections. Willellen Elliot made the motion and Paul Merritt seconded.

Susan Crawford, Treasurer, reported a January balance of \$1,127.23 plus \$385 in dues and money collected for a cookbook. The February balance was \$1,033.86 plus dues that are turned in during the meeting. The financial report was approved.

A matter of unfinished business was the trustee vacancy. The bylaws state that the vacancy must be filled at an annual meeting. Ann said she would appoint a committee to revise the bylaws so that a trustee vacancy could be filled when needed. The trustee position will remain vacant until that process is completed.

Jerry Simmons, Museum Coordinator, gave a preview of the new ECHS website at [www.escohis.org](http://www.escohis.org)

Ann announced that Darryl Searcy had presented a memorial to the society in memory of Ray McArthur, son of Charles and Pat McArthur. His name was added to the memory plaque and a note was sent to his parents. A flowering Cherry Tree was presented to Ray's parents from friends in the Society.

Two framed photos of the Brewton Civilian Conservation Corps were presented on temporary loan to the museum. The photos had previously been presented to the Society by Bob Pasquill, Forest Archeologist and Historian for the National Forests in Alabama when he presented a program to the Society. Mr. Pasquill located the photos on Ebay.

Darryl Searcy, Vice-President, introduced Frances Robb, guest speaker from the Alabama Humanities Foundation who gave a presentation entitled "Snapshots and Snapshooters: Imaging our Lives." Members and guests shared many interesting photos that they brought. Mrs. Robb was then presented with a City

of Brewton memorial plate to add to her plate collection. The meeting then adjourned.

Refreshments were provided by Ann Biggs-Williams and served to the 30 members and guests in attendance. A unique cake with a superimposed historic, edible, postcard of downtown Brewton was the focal point of the refreshment table.

## **The April Meeting**

### **The Program**

Kevin McKinley will do a multi-facted presentation on **Pollard, Alabama**, including the role the town played in the war, the camps located in and around the town and the socio-economic forces that dealt the town a fateful blow during and after the war. I will also compare the town with the old county seat of Conecuh county-Sparta in that the two were so similar.

### **Proposed Bylaws Changes**

Please read these proposed changes that have been recommended by the Society's Board of officers. They are proposals to both update the bylaws concerning dues changes and give the society a chance to have a full complement of Trustees at all times.

These proposals will be presented at the March Meeting and voted on at the April meeting.

### **Article XIII, Section 2 (Concerning the Selection of Trustees) now reads:**

Any vacancies arising in the office of the Charter Trustees may be filled by the society at the first annual meeting following the occurrence of the vacancy.

#### **Suggested Revision**

The vacancies arising in the office of Trustees may be filled by vote of the membership of the society at any regular meeting. Only a simple majority of those present will be required to elect this new trustee.

The Executive Committee will meet and select candidates for any opening. The candidate's name will be published in the society's newsletter one month prior to the regular meeting wherein the membership present will elect the new trustee.

Alternate Trustee: There shall be no provision for Alternate Trustees in the bylaws of the corporation. The allowance for election of trustees at any regular meeting makes this unnecessary.

## **Article IV, Membership Fees**

In 2002, the Nominating Committee asked Darryl to be a candidate for the office of President of the Society. With much reluctance, he agreed and his election to office was a landslide victory. His acceptance words were, "I work in the swamps, I enjoy the woods, and I dress as if every day is a field trip. So, what you see is what you get. But regardless of all that, I promise to do my best for the Society and to make you proud." With those words, he became very active, steering the Society through changing times, the most notable being the combining of the Museum and the Historical Society archives into a single entity; the naming of two alternate trustees, and numerous changes in the Society by-laws to bring the rules into the mainstream of current times.

Darryl declined re-election to the office in 2004, but did accept the position of Historian-Curator. Working with Ranella Merritt, they changed the face of the newsletter and journal, gearing the publications to the surrounding communities and counties, rather than on Escambia county alone.

In 2006, again with reluctance, he accepted election to become Vice-President of the Society, an appointment accepted only because Ann Biggs-Williams would be at the helm.

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Please join them to be a part of preserving history.

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### A Query

Betty Brown of Racine, Wisconsin needs any information on a Joseph Pugh or Joe Pugh and Gladys Roberson or Robinson. Her parents lived in Mobile, Father was born 1904 or 1905 in Grove Hill, Al. Mother was born in Evergreen, Al on Sept. 26, 1916. Mother died in Mobile on Sept. 22, 1959. Her mother's name was Jewel Rabb Roberson on Robinson and father was Willie Roberson or Robinson. She is looking for midwife records. Phone number is 262-633-5622. .

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### ECHS Calendar of Events

**March 28** ECHS Meeting, "Cemetery Preservation," 3 p.m.

**\*April 6**, Art & Architecture, Brewton Spring Tour of Homes

**April 8**, 105th Anniversary of the Naming of Century, Florida

- James Houston Jones Historical Park (Model A Show)

**April 20-22**, Alabama Historical Association Annual Meeting  
Fairhope, Al

**April 22**, Earth Day Cleanup, Brewton City Park, 8 a.m.

**April 25**, ECHS Meeting, "Pollard Civil War Camp", 3 p.m.

**May 6**, "Flesh on the Bones: Putting Your Ancestors in Historical Perspective"

- Alabama Genealogical Society Spring Seminar by Sharon Debartolo Carmack,
- Samford University, Birmingham, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**May 23**, ECHS Meeting at the old Luttrell Hardware Building in  
Historic Downtown Brewton., 3 p.m.

- Tickets for the Art & Architecture Brewton Spring Tour of Homes will be available for purchase 15 minutes before the March 28th ECHS meeting.
- The Bracken Home at 414 Belleville Avenue will replace the Smith Home on the April 6th Tour of Homes.

**Saturday, September 23, 2006**, at the school on Old Highway 31 in the McCall community.

- A reunion for students of a unique school, one of only two in the State of Alabama to be named an A+ school and the only one in Escambia County.

- Those planning the reunion are hopeful that a few of the “old pioneers” will attend.
- Please send any information about former students, teachers, coaches, class pictures with names and dates if possible, individual school pictures with dates and names, sports information and memorabilia, (anything pertaining to the school and its history), to
- Dinkey Odom Johnson 228-475-3742 or [Russdink@aol.com](mailto:Russdink@aol.com), Wynette Odom Coleman 251-867-6881, or
- Judy Powell Champion 251-296-2859 or 251-296-HOME.

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## Escambia County Historical Society Lifetime Members Roster

*Members*

The dues structure for the Escambia County Historical Society includes a \$100 lifetime membership level. Welcome four members who have recently renewed at the lifetime level. They are: Margaret A. Collier, Betty L. Hoomes, Katie Pittman McLeod, and Dewitt Uptagrafft. They join previous lifetime members: Ann Biggs-Williams, Jacob Lowrey, Thad Moore, Darryl Searcy, and Martha Simmons.

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## Welcome to These New Members

Please welcome three new members; Mr. Buddy Mitchell joined in February, Mr. Alan Baker and Mr. James Rogers joined in March.

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## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Serve as a greeter at the meeting for visitors and give them a name badge.  
 Take photos at meetings.  
 Volunteer to be a membership Chair.  
 Clip newspaper article about Escambia County from The Mobile Register.  
 Provide refreshments for a meeting.  
 Serve as a liaison with area history teachers in the schools and colleges.  
 File in the Alabama Room.  
 Help inventory books in the Alabama Room.  
 Put the ECHS Meets Here Today Sign out and take in after each meeting.  
 Write an article about Escambia County for the Newsletter or journal.  
 Volunteer to serve as the Escambia County Rep for the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance  
 Clip newspaper articles about Escambia County from the Atmore News and the Atmore Advance  
 Answer a query for an out-of-town researcher.  
 Send greeting cards on behalf of the Society.  
 Clips articles from The Montgomery Advertiser about Escambia County.  
 Make a donation for supplies for the museum.  
 Make a donation for supplies for the Alabama Room.  
 Ask someone to join the Escambia County Historical Society.  
 Invite someone to attend a meeting.  
 Plan a field trip for the Society.

13 **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>Escambia Historical Society Cookbook</u>	\$10.00	\$ 5.00

14 **Get in Touch with Us**

**Address:** Escambia County Historical Society, P. O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427; **Phone:** 251-867-7332; **Email:** [escohis@escohis.org](mailto:escohis@escohis.org)

15 **Membership: \$15.00/person. Clip the following form and send to: Treasurer, Susan P. Crawford, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427.**

**Membership Renewal/Application Form**  
(**\$15.00 per person or \$100.00/person for Lifetime dues**)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please Check Renew <input type="checkbox"/> New	
Name(s) _____ First                      Middle                      Last	
Address _____ Street                      City                      State                      Zip	
Phone _____	
Email _____	
Dues (\$15.00/person) _____ (or \$100.00/person Lifetime)	
Donation _____	
Amount enclosed _____	

**Please double check your records to see if you have paid your Society Dues for 2006. Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year. Membership fees are due and payable at or prior to the January meeting.**

Civil War Expo

Add to Calendar

There is a Civil War Expo scheduled for May 19--21, 2006 in the Rhodes Civic Center in Bay Minette, AL. This is the third annual Gulf Coast Civil War Expo. Might wait and put this in the April Newsletter due to Kevin McKinley's April program about Pollard. I will look for a website before then. Might want to add to Upcoming Events in March Newsletter.

At the Exploreum in historic downtown Mobile, Alabama  
From the British Museum, "Mummy: the inside story"--an exhibit and 3D virtual experience, Now thru July 31st. Tour Nefertari's Tomb and view the Imax Film adventure, "Mystery of the Nile." More info at [www.exploreum.net](http://www.exploreum.net) or call 252-208-6873 or 1-877-625-4FUN

(16)

Accolades to the following ECHS members for just **some** of the processes that have helped search for, collect, preserve, or publish information about items of historical significance pertaining to Escambia County, Alabama:

1. **Peggy Bracken** for learning the tedious procedures for reporting the taxes on book sales during her tenure as ECHS treasurer.
2. **Willellen Elliott** for preserving and sharing information on Dr. Shofner and the Downing Industrial School.
3. **Ranella Holley Merritt** for composing, assembling, and mailing the ECHS Newsletter each month.
4. **Carol Madden** for the excellent reorganization of the Thomas E. McMillan Museum and replacing historical exhibits in the Escambia County Courthouse.
5. **Paul Merritt** for the thankless job of bylaws revision for the Society and for assisting Ranella with the newsletter.
6. **Joe Ross** for preserving and sharing artifacts, photos, and newspaper clippings relating to Escambia County history.
7. **Darryl Searcy** for giving ECHS memberships as gifts and writing many, many, articles for the Escambia County Historical Society journals.
8. **Jerry Simmons** for designing, maintaining and financing the start of the newly revised ECHS website at [www.escohis.org](http://www.escohis.org)
9. **Jacqueline Stone** for hours and hours of clipping articles from The Brewton Standard, The Tri City Ledger, and The Monroe Journal, recording the bibliographic information, and filing in the vertical files in the Alabama Room.
10. **Lynn Wixon** for preparing numerous computer generated award certificates for ECHS speakers and other award recognitions.

*By Sophia Ruffin*

(17)

The Dixon Home Place has been added to the Alabama National Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

Dixon  
Home Place

"The historical register recognizes buildings that have historic value and are worthy of being preserved. The Dixon Center is very historic and it is very well deserved for preservation," said center representative Rhett Johnson.

The Dixon Home Place is a site built on 80 acres of land. The house was original constructed in 1850 as a dogtrot. In 1900, the breezeway was enclosed.

In 1978, Solon and Martha Dixon donated the house to Auburn University for the use of its forestry education center.

The home was the primary residence of many Dixon family members who were prominent in the forestry industry in Alabama.

"The home is now the centerpiece of the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center complex in Covington County. It is one of the finest field facilities of its type in the nation," Johnson said.

The Dixon Center offers comfortable, efficient classroom and living accommodations and a diverse 5,300-acre natural resources base for the benefit of students and visitors.

Since the dedication some years ago, the center has managed its natural resources and programs to meet the objectives of the Auburn University students.

"The students come here to have hands-on experience in forestry education," Johnson said. "The Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Science manages the Dixon Center. Each Auburn forestry student spends one 10-week summer term at the Dixon Center taking

basic field forestry coursework prior to their junior year and more advance on campus courses."

The Dixon Center has served as the site for research projects in a number of fields. The Forestry research has known for its herbicide usage, forest growth and yield, forest regeneration and recently longleaf pine regeneration and management.

The Dixon Center also serves as the home base for the Longleaf Alliance, a regional organization dedicated to the retention and restoration of this once dominant native southern ecosystem.

Johnson said, "This place could become a great tourist attraction for Covington County. But, right now the center administrative department is trying to restore the home. When every thing is up and running perfectly, visitors will be able to come and tour the building for the Family Regional Museum."

The National Register designation was made in September.



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*Membership and What's Happening to members*  
 (18) Paul Merritt has been named Parliamentarian for the Society. Paul has graciously volunteered several times for the thankless task of revising the bylaws. Keep us in order, Paul.

(19) Wedding bells!

Congratulations to Jerry Simmons, Museum Coordinator and Dianne Stokes who were married March 18, 2006. Also, John Hoomes, well known in Escambia County for his collection of fossils from the Conecuh and Sepulga Rivers, will be married to Kelly Clark-Greer on April 29. John is now a Park Ranger at Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kitty Hawk, N.C. where he met Kelly who was also a Park Ranger.

(20) **Mrs. Cleo Jordan Ansley** of Pensacola, Florida enclosed a donation to the Society with her dues renewal. Thanks to Jerry Simmons for the idea to include a line on the dues renewal form for donations. All donations are greatly appreciated.

(21) ~~Memorial~~ Memorial