

# June Meeting



Elim Church 1920s

## Queries

Monica Helton, an historian who lives in Monroeville, Alabama, is writing a history of Monroe County. She would like to have information about the county's history. Interviews with people who lived in the county, especially those who lived there in the 1930's 40's and 50's, would be welcomed. She also would like to look at old letters, journals, and other primary sources.

Ms Helton can be reached at 325 Godwin Drive, Monroeville, Alabama, 36460. Her e-mail address is

*(Continued on page 2)*

## June Meeting is Show and Tell

The annual "Show and Tell" meeting of the Escambia County Historical Society will be held on Tuesday, June 27. The success of this program depends on **you!** Look around your home and see what treasure you have that might bring back some wonderful memories for

someone else. If you have an unidentified item, we might be able to help identify it, so bring it anyway... This is always a fun meeting. Last year, Alan Robinson brought a World War II jeep!

Hosts for the June meeting are Jerry Simmons and Darryl Searcy.



## Minutes for May Meeting

The ECHS met at the old Luttrell Hardware Building on May 23, 2006. The building is now owned by Terrence Breckinridge, who gave a short history of the building, including the story of his purchase of the building and discoveries he and his partner, Rusty Miller, have made during the process of remodeling. Plans are to

have an antique business on the second floor and a Bed and Breakfast on the third. The business "Just Do" occupies the main floor.

President Ann Biggs-Williams welcomed members and guests, many of whom were dressed in period dress

*(Continued on page 5)*

### Inside this issue:

History of Elm Baptist Church	2
New Trustee Nominated	3
July Meeting	3
Meet The Officers	3
Bits and Pieces	4
Upcoming Events	4

### Last Newsletter

Check your records to see if you've paid your dues—so you can continue to get your newsletter.

# History of Elim Baptist Church

Roberts, Alabama

In the early part of 1800, the Southern part of Alabama was a wilderness. The land was covered by forests and inhabited by many kinds of wild animals. However this territory was open for settlement, and in 1817, when Alabama became a territory, many people moved into Alabama from other states. Included in this group were John, Noah, Sam, and Peter Parker, who moved from Georgia and settled in what is the present-day Roberts community. Of course, this area was already occupied by Native Americans who were not always friendly to the newcomers. Life in the new settlement was hard and the group of settlers returned to Georgia after living here for five years. However, this group eventually came back to their new homes in Alabama. Like Daniel Boone, they were appar-

ently willing to withstand hardships in order to establish their new homes in an area where hunting was good.

Like other settlers in a new territory, they not only set up homes in their new community, but a church and a



school as well. In 1825, about a year after moving back to Alabama, John Parker and others in the community, with the aid of Father Alexander Travis, a Circuit Rider in South

Alabama, organized Elim Baptist Church, the oldest Baptist Church in Escambia County, Alabama.

The founders of Elim chose the name from the Bible. "Elim" was the second station where the Israelites encamped after crossing the Red Sea and it was noted for its fountains of excellent water. Since the first church building was located near an excellent spring of water, it was fitting that the new church was called "Elim." Constructed of logs, the first building was located about two and a half miles northeast of the present site of the church.

After the settlers had worshipped in the small log church for a number of years, they built a frame building near the present building. In this church a partition or balcony was built, higher than the present floor, in order to provide a space for the Negro slaves to worship. This building had wooden shutters for windows. Later the build-

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Queries

*(Continued from page 1)*

[mehelton@frontiernet.net](mailto:mehelton@frontiernet.net).

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Helen Roberts Kennedy is doing research on the Roberts family. She is interested in her ancestor, Martha Johnson, who was born in October, 1833, in South Carolina. The last information that Helen Kennedy knows about Martha Johnson is that in the 1910 census she was living with her son, Irvin W. Johnson (born January 28, 186,) and his family, in Canoe in Escambia County, Alabama.

Since Martha is not listed in the

census records for 1920 a Helen knows that Martha was not living with any of her other children at that time, she assumes Martha must have died some time between 1910 and 1920.

Further information about Martha is that her husband was Irvin W. Johnson (b. 1834). Irvin Johnson's mother was Frances A. Johnson. Helen feels that Martha Johnson's husband had family in Escambia Co., Al.

Helen will pay a fee to anyone who will do a search of the Escambia, County, Alabama newspapers of the period 1910-1920 to see if there is an obituary on Martha Johnson. Anyone

who is interested can contact Helen at [<hmken@bellsouth.net>](mailto:hmken@bellsouth.net).

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Holly Wearren is interested in information on the Shofner School. She is interested in the records of the school from the early 1900's since both her great grandmother, Bernice Robinson, and Bernice's sister, Alma, boarded at the Shofner Institute during this period. !

# Merritt Picked for Trustee Nomination

## Trustee Nomination

The revised ECHS bylaws now state that "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."

To that end, the ECHS Executive Committee met and discussed the names of five members for the vacant trustee position. The consensus of the board was to place the name of **Ranella Merritt as the proposed replacement for the vacant ECHS trustee position** in the June ECHS Newsletter and then to vote on the trustee vacancy at the July 25th

ECHS meeting. Ranella is a charter member of the Escambia County Historical Society. She has been newsletter editor for several years. Recently retired as an English Instructor from Jefferson Davis Community College, the ECHS Executive Committee believes that Ranella has the credentials and the creativity and now the time to take the trustee position in a new and more active direction. !

## July Meeting

The topic for the July 25 ECHS meeting is "The Legends of Burnt Corn: Revisiting the First Battle of the Creek War, 27 July, 1813."

Robert P. Collins, our July ECHS speaker, is a Georgia native with a degree in German literature from Emory University. From 1988 to 1992 he worked as a journalist in Georgia and north Florida. Since 1992 he has lived in Birmingham, where his wife, Dr. Jane Hiles, teaches English literature at Samford University. In Alabama.

Rob has been a writer, computer support technician, and a policy analyst for Arise Citizens Policy Project in Montgomery. Rob has also taught a class in journalism for the

University of Montevallo and a course in web design for the continuing education program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB).

Rob was editor of the 2005 Vulcan Historical Review, published at UAB, and is now working toward a Ph.D. in history at Auburn University, under the guidance of Dr. Kathryn H. Braund. His major research project is a study of the German and French papers of Lukas Vischer (pronounced "Fisher"), a Swiss traveler in North America from 1823 to 1838.

This summer, Rob is writing a manuscript on the history of Brewton. !

## Meet the Officers

### ECHS TREASURER

Susan Crawford

Susan was raised in the historic town of Marion, Alabama. She has been a resident of Brewton since



1972, having moved here to teach in the Escambia County School System. Susan retired from that system this May after having taught for thirty-four years. For twenty-five

of those years, she has been a Media Specialist for W. S. Neal Middle School.

In 1974, Susan married Charles Crawford and the two of them live in his family home which was built in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. A recent addition to their home has been a swimming pool, which the grandchildren as well as Susan enjoy.

Susan's interest in history springs from a natural interest in her own as well as her husband's family history. She was considered by her Mother, Elizabeth Parker, the historian of the family. Her Mother's family consists of Fitzgeralds, Pringles, and Heringtons of this area, so

her move here was like coming home.

When invited to come to the Historical Society's meetings by Mary Cath-

*Susan was eager to participate in an organization which sought to preserve and present local history which might otherwise be lost*

erine Luker, one of her Mother's closest friends, Susan was eager to participate in an organization which sought to preserve and present local history which might otherwise be lost. !



# Elim

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*(Continued from page 2)*

ing was repaired and enlarged as the community grew. During the pastorate of Reverend W. H. Murray, the old building was torn down and the present building was constructed. Since the Sunday school attendance had increased, an addition of four Sunday school rooms was added to the church building.

In 1954, the church was remodeled again adding the kitchen and bathroom. The Baptistry was installed in 1956, and in 1966, the cemetery was enlarged and a shelter and new tables were built for the annual homecoming.

"Father Travis," a Circuit Raider in South Alabama, was the first preacher of the Elim Church. Like all of the Circuit Riders, who traveled on horseback from community to community to preach, Father Travis served as a mission-

ary as well as a preacher to the south Alabama territory.

Other than "Father Travis," there are no records to show the "preachers" who served the church until the period of the Civil War when records were kept. The records for this time list Reverend John Cook who was followed by Reverend Zack Williams. There is an interesting detail about Reverend George Miller, who walked from Milton, Florida, once a month on a Friday, to preach at the Elim Church on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The records also indicate that Reverend Sam Johson served the church. He was followed by Reverend Ingram Spence, who served for two years.

Ministers of note include J. E. Deer, a resident of the community, who is remembered not only for his service as a "preacher," but also for his actions as a pastor, working tirelessly with the people of the

community. He is recorded as having served the church at various times until his death in 1935. Reverend E. Bell of Brewton was a much loved pastor for fifteen years. Reverend E. B. Crumpton, who served as pastor for several years, is remembered for once remarking to the congregation that they sang better than most congregations.

Other ministers include: J. E. Taylor, N. W. Gorgon, a Reverend Stewart, R. W. Brooks, B. F. Lindsey, W.H. Murray, H. B. Compton, George Shears, a Reverend Clifford, V. D. Raines, and a Reverend Murray. Mr. Murray is noted as serving for a number of years at different times and being very influential in the community. Reverend Raymond Schneider of Century, Florida served after Mr. Murray. In more

*(Continued on page 5)*

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## Bits and Pieces

It is with deep sorrow that we report the death of Fred L. McGhee, 56, Tribal Chairman of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians on May 18, 2006. Chairman McGhee had been seriously ill earlier in the week but his family was anticipating that he would be discharged from the hospital that day. However, he died that morning. His family lineage includes a long line of Poarch Creek leaders. Our sympathies go to the McGhee Family and to the Tribe in this great loss.

Susan Crawford, ECHS Treasurer, retired in May from her "day job" as Media Specialist at W. S. Neal Middle School. Congrats Susan!

Paul & Ranella Merritt represented The Escambia County His-

torical Society at the Memorial Day Service on the lawn of the Escambia County Courthouse in Brewton on Monday, May 29th.

Lydia Grimes, ECHS Member and Publicity Chair, has started a new series of articles on historic buildings in Historic Downtown Brewton in her weekly column in The Brewton Standard entitled "Forgotten Trails." The first installment started with the Wed. June 7 issue. The articles are also accessible on line at [www.brewtonstandard.com](http://www.brewtonstandard.com).

Mary Catherine Luker donated the book, History of Conecuh County, Alabama by B. F. Riley to the Alabama Room Collection.

Kevin McKinley donated the book Shadows and Dust: The Journal of the Confederate Experience In

Northwest Florida and Southwest Alabama, which is based in part on the author's column in the Tri-City Ledger. To order copies, you can contact the author at the address: Kevin McKinley, 357 Page Road, Atmore, AL 36502, or email him at <mckinley2971@yahoo.com>.

At the June ECHS meeting, Terrence Breckenridge, speaker donated a diary to the Thomas E. McMillan Museum that he found while renovating the Old Luttrell Hardware Building in downtown Brewton.

Kathy Quave of Dallas, Texas renewed her ECHS dues, made a

*(Continued on page 6)*

# May Meeting Minutes

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*(Continued from page 1)*

appropriate to the early years of the Luttrell Hardware Company. Approximately forty people attended the meeting including Barbara Hall, Deborah Wilson (who has joined ECHS).

Deborah Wilson invited the society to the 181<sup>st</sup> birthday celebration of the Elim Baptist Church which was held on May 28, 2006. "Sugar" Sherrer, a descendant of J.W. Adkisson, a partner in the Luttrell Hardware business, donated a 1906 order catalog that had been used by Luttrell Hardware to the society.

Norma and James Rogers reported on progress on cemetery research in Escambia County. LeeAnne Wofford, a member of the Alabama Historical Cemetery Register presented Mayor Ted Jennings with a certificate recognizing Union Cemetery in Brewton as being placed with the state registry. LeeAnne Wofford also presented a certificate to Mary Catherine Luker showing that the Franklin Cemetery has also been listed on the state registry. Sugar Sherrer reported on the contributions made to the Union Cemetery in the past by the Cemetery Committee, a committee chaired by her grandmother, Mrs. Adkisson, and Mrs. McMillan.

Susan Crawford gave the Treasurer's report which was approved by the members.

President Ann Biggs-Williams reminded members and guests of the Brewton Blueberry festival which will be held on June 17 in Burnt Corn Creek Park and a seminar on researching the state archives planned for June 24.

Concerning old business, Ann reminded members to be aware of the By-Laws changes concerning nomina-

tion of trustees which had appeared in the last newsletter.

In new business, Ann reminded members that the WPA Post Office Mural had still not been found. She suggested that trying to find it could be a project for ECHS.

Tom McMillan announced that he is getting information for a book on the history of Brewton. Tom introduced Rob Collins who will write the book ([collinp@auburn.edu](mailto:collinp@auburn.edu)).

Rob has been invited to speak at the society's July meeting concerning the Battle of Burnt Corn Creed.

Ann invited members to attend the brown-bag luncheon meeting of the society's officers in the Museum on the second Tuesday of the month at 11:30 - 12:30.

Terrence Brekinridge presented the society with a diary written by a member of the Luttrell family telling of his life in Europe during WWI. The diary was found during remodeling on the third floor of the Luttrell Hardware Building.

Several members commented on the plow on the top of the building and the stories and legends about when and why it was placed on the roof.

Ann presented both Terrence Brekinridge and Rusty Miller with a copy of The History of Escambia County by Annie Waters and a certificate of appreciation.

After Ann adjourned the meeting, those attending traveled to Willie's for refreshments and a chance to meet the new owners of the restaurant, Al Brisco and Cecil Bryden. Another owner, Anita Bryden, could not be present. Jacque and Louise Stone served refreshments. !

## Elim

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*(Continued from page 4)*

recent years the following pastors served the Church: Q. E. Wells, John L. Smith, a Reverend McCreary, J. H. Wright, C. A. Lee, R. C. Jones, W. C. Clifford, C. W. Riddles and Charlie Shellman.

In 1872, the Elim Association, one of the earliest church associations formed in Alabama, was created at the Elim Church. Ministers listed who created the Association, which was a part of the Bethlehem Association of Baptist Churches, are J. L. Bryars, G. W. Miller, S. C. Johnson, and H. G. B. Ray. The Elim Association took in all of Es-

cambia and Baldwin Counties in Alabama as well as Santa Rosa and Escambia Counties in Florida. Those who attended the annual three-day meeting of the Association at the Elim Church are reported to have come on horseback, in ox wagons, in buggies and on foot and to have had a "great time." In 1909, the Escambia County, Alabama part of the Elim Association was dissolved in a meeting held at Judson Church near Atmore.

This history was taken from the work of Miss Mollie Mae Parker. !

## ECHOES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR  
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Escambia County Historical  
Society  
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E-mail: [escchis@escchis.org](mailto:escchis@escchis.org)

We're on the web!

[www.escchis.org](http://www.escchis.org)

### 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

## Bits and Pieces

(Continued from page 4)

donation, and complimented Rannella Holley on the changes in the ECHS Newsletter. Kathy said she would like to see photos of more buildings and cemeteries located in the county in the newsletter.

ECHS members might want to check out a website that includes info on Escambia county as well as surrounding counties at <http://www.buriedsecrets.com>

Several ECHS members and friends attended the Civil War Expo at Bay Minette May 19--21. Don Sales, Margaret Collier, and Mike & Ann Williams were among the attendees. Mike Williams, husband of ECHS President, Ann Biggs-Williams was featured in a color photo in The Baldwin Press Register coverage of the Expo.

There is a new Hank Williams Trail in the works in Alabama for country music fans of the late Hank Williams. Historic markers will be put up from Andalusia to Birmingham with several in Montgomery. There will be at least 10 markers and they should all be in place by Sept. 17th, the 83rd anniversary of William's birth. There will also be a 24 page brochure completed by August along with posters, maps

*ECHOES, The newsletter for the Escambia County Historical Society is published monthly except November. Editor, Rannella Merritt; Assistant, Jerry Simmons*

*Comments are welcome. You may email the Society at [escchis@escchis.org](mailto:escchis@escchis.org) or call 251-867-7332.*

*Mailing address:*

**ECHOES**  
Escambia County Historical Society  
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## Upcoming events

- June 27, ECHS Meeting, Show & Tell, Thomas E. McMillan Museum, 3 p.m. (Bring an item of historical interest to display).
- March 9-July 31, "Mummy: the inside story exhibit at the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center in Mobile in cooperation with The British Museum continues. Check [www.exploreum.net](http://www.exploreum.net) or phone 251-208-6873
- July 8, 2006, **Antique Roadshow** comes to Mobile, Alabama.
- July 11, 2006 ECHS Officers and Committee Chairs Board meeting, 11:30 a.m. Elvira McMillan Parlor, Thomas E. McMillan Museum, JDCC, Brewton.
- July 25, 2006, ECHS, Robert Collins presents "The Three Legends of the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek," Thomas E. McMillan Museum, JDCC, Brewton, 3 p.m.