

# ECHOES

## Tuesday, January 23, First Meeting for the New Year

### The January Program

John A. Jackson, archivist with the Baldwin County Department of Archives and History, will present a program entitled "The Job of a Lifetime: Historical Preservation in Baldwin County, Alabama."

John will have been on the job two years in May of 2007 and is quick to say that the projects Baldwin County has taken on have excited the public and the elected officials, which has cultivated a great spirit of historical preservation in our neighboring county.

Baldwin County has recently broken ground for a Bicentennial Park and village featuring a museum and cultural center, campgrounds, and a boat launch. The first phase is planned to be completed in December of 2009. The park is located 2.1 miles north of I-65 along Alabama



*The Baldwin County Archives are housed in the Tolbert M. Brantley Building named in honor of the former County Attorney and long-time Bay Minette lawyer whose dedication to the establishment of a dedicated archives facility led to the present Department of Archives and History.*

225.

Please plan to attend the January meeting and be inspired as we work together this year for our vision of historical preservation for Escambia County, Ala-

bama. The Society plans to invite representatives from other area historical societies to the meeting. Please be there to welcome them on Tuesday, January 23rd at 3:15 p.m.

### The February Program

At the February 27 meeting, ECHS member Tom McMillan will present a program on the History of the Leigh Place, one of our historic landmarks in downtown Brewton.

The Leigh Place served as the county courthouse for 17 years from September 10 1885 until 1902 when the new courthouse was built and the old courthouse and lot was offered for sale.

The Leigh Place as it stands today was remodeled in 1969 by Thomas E. McMillan and is now being used as an office building.



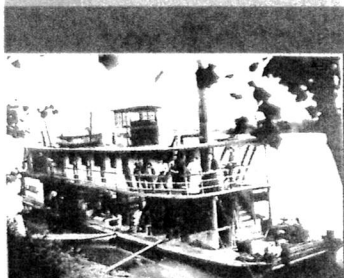
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#### Dues "due" in January

Annual membership fees are due in January—when you write the check for your own membership, why not make a gift for a loved one of a year's membership—only \$15.00.

A form is printed on the last page of this newsletter—just fill out, clip and mail.



*The Steamboat, James H. Dykes*

Volume 34, Number 1

January 2007

## From the President



### Greetings for 2007!

It has truly been an honor to serve with my fellow officers, chairs, and trustees for 2006, the first year of the officers and chairs two year terms.

Each of the following members have given generously of their time and talents this past year: Vice-President, Darryl

Searcy; Secretary, Jacqueline Stone; Treasurer, Susan Crawford; Ranella Merritt, Newsletter Editor; Jerry Simmons, Assistant Newsletter Editor, Curator, Librarian, & Webmaster, Lydia Grimes, Publicity; Paul Merritt, Parliamentarian, and Lynn Wixon, Immediate Past President. Committee chairs include: Alan Baker, Peggy Bracken, Virginia Clark, Susan Crawford, Paul Merritt, Alan Robinson, and Jerry Simmons. Lifetime Trustees are: Doris Bruner, Willeen Elliot, Ranella Merritt, and Mary Catherine Luker;

This is one great team! However, the team is always

looking for new members.

The Society had projects that never started because a leader is needed. If your New Years' Resolution is to volunteer, see me and I will help you find your niche.

I am proud of the infrastructure we now have by instituting monthly board meetings

### Oops, We Goofed: Corrections for the November/December Newsletter

#### Correction

**Emily Mims** was incorrectly identified in the November/December issue as **Emily Adams**. We apologize to our speaker for the November meeting who gave us such a great program.

#### Correction

The **date** for the **oldest grave marker** was incorrectly identified as **1848** but the correct date is **1818**. Our apologies to the winner of the grave marker contest **Debra Wilson**

## ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Scheduled Meetings for 2007

January 23	April 24	July 24	October 23
February 27	May 22	August 28	November No Meeting
March 27	June 26	September 25	Christmas Party TBA

### Sign up to Provide Refreshments at a ECHS 2007 Meeting

If you wish to volunteer to provide refreshments at one of the remaining nine meetings, **please sign up with Susan Crawford**. Society members appreciate the time and efforts of fellow members volunteering in this capacity.

Host and hostess for refreshments for the January 2007 meeting will be **Paul & Ranella Merritt**.

### New Web Cites for Brewton

The **City of Brewton** has unveiled a new website at [www.cityofbrewton.org](http://www.cityofbrewton.org) and we have added a link to the **Escambia County Historical Society** at [www.escohis.org](http://www.escohis.org)

Take a look at both of these sites and you will be impressed.

# Bits and Pieces

The 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Florida Chautauqua will be held in Defuniak Springs, FL from Thursday, Feb. 8 through Sunday, Feb. 11, 2007. The Chautauqua is a celebration of learning featuring keynote speakers and performances, special events and day sessions. The program is based on the four pillars of the Chautauqua which is Education, Art, Religion, and Recreation.

For more info, the website is [www.florida-chautauqua-center.org](http://www.florida-chautauqua-center.org)

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The National Park Service is offering a free class on the Essentials for Cemetery Monument Care. The class will take place on January 30 from 12:00 p. m. until 3:00 p. m. at the George Washington Carver Museum at the Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, AL.

The course will emphasize sound maintenance techniques for cemetery and commemorative monuments that are sustainable, cyclic, non-invasive, and do no harm. Topics include documentation, maintenance plans, stone deterioration, cleaning, and resetting headstones.

For more information or to enroll for the class, contact Shirley Baxter with the NPS:

[Shirley\\_K\\_Baxter@nps.gov](mailto:Shirley_K_Baxter@nps.gov) or (334)727-3200

\*\*\*\*\*

"A Day in Pompeii" opened at the Gulf Coast Exploreum in Mobile on January 12th. The exhibit will remain on view through June 3rd.

The exhibit, which combines equal parts of history, art, and science, is collaboration with the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei and is

designed to give visitors a feel for the ebb and flow of daily life in one of Imperial Rome's most cosmopolitan cities.

Visitors will see artwork, artifacts, an IMAX movie and virtual tour, but the exhibit with eight body casts of victims who perished in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius on August 24 in the year 79 A.D. will probably be the most remembered.

The primary Pompeii exhibit tells the story of daily life in the cosmopolitan city, situated just south of Naples, and of the human tragedy of the volcano's victims. The exhibit features hundreds of exceptional objects that lay buried under almost 30 feet of volcanic material for over 17 centuries.

Another part of the exhibit is shown in the Virtual Journeys Theater. Here visitors will take a 3D virtual stroll through sections of Pompeii as it might have appeared before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

The I-Max Theater presentation that accompanies the Pompeii exhibit is "Greece: Secrets of the Past." Viewers will have a glimpse into yet another ancient civilization and the massive volcanic eruption that all but destroyed the island of Santorini in B.C. 1646.

For more info on the Pompeii exhibit, call toll-free 877-625-4386 or on the net, go to [www.exploreum.net](http://www.exploreum.net)

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The Atmore Historical Society will sponsor a field trip to the exhibit on Saturday, Feb. 3.

Cost is \$40 per person. Check must be received by AHS Treasurer John Garrard by Friday, Jan. 26. Mail to: John Garrard,

303 East Pine St., Atmore, AL 36502.

For more information and to sign up, contact Bonnie Ladino, 251-368-3760

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On Wednesday, January 24th, at 7 p.m., Alabama Public Television presents "Oprah's Roots: An African-American Lives Special." In this special, Winfrey and Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. continue their quest to discover the full history of their ancestors' struggles and accomplishments. The quest showcases Winfrey's family legacy and demonstrates how census and slaveholder's property records can help locate ancestors.

\*\*\*\*\*

A Heritage Arts Festival will be held on the Courthouse Square in Monroeville on February 24. Crafts, quilts, art, woodwork and soul food are offered along with a fashion show, gospel music and ethnic dance performances.

The festival is free and includes activities for children. For more info, call 251-743-3359...

\*\*\*\*\*

The Antiques Roadshow episodes that were filmed in Mobile last summer will be shown on PBS over three consecutive Monday nights beginning March 26.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Alabama Trust for Historic Preservation will be sponsoring legislation to be introduced in the 2007 Session of the Alabama Legislature which would allow state income tax credits for the preservation of historic properties--both

(Continued on page 4)

**An Inquiry - How Did Union Cemetery Get Its Name?** Can anyone help with info on the beginnings of Union Cemetery in Brewton? Any information on how the name Union came about? If so, please contact the society at [escobis@escobis.org](mailto:escobis@escobis.org) or phone 251-867-7332.

A genealogical seminar/workshop focusing on the theme of "Early Days in Alabama: Territorial settlement through Antebellum Days." will be held at the Old Monroe County Courthouse in Monroeville, AL on February 3, 2007.

This seminar is designed to be especially helpful to those who are working on documentation of the lineage of the early ancestors in Southwest Alabama.

For further information contact Al Nettles (251-743-2723) or call the courthouse.

## Bits and Pieces Continued

residential and commercial.

Twenty-six states already have legislation of some sort but Alabama does not. For more info, you can contact the Alabama trust for Historic Preservation at 334-834-2727 in Montgomery or by E-mail at [alpre-sal@bellsouth.net](mailto:alpre-sal@bellsouth.net)

Under existing law, there is no income tax credit for the rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings in Alabama

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Clifton Jordan of Mobile is one of our out-of-county members who have renewed his dues. Mr. Jordan, who is 92 years young, used to live in Brewton but resides in Mobile now. Mr. Jordan's sister, Cleo Ansley of Pensacola is also an out-of-county member. The Society appreciates the support of people who have moved away but are committed to maintaining their connection with their ancestral roots

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We welcome new member Kay Wilson of Brewton. Kay was the person graciously serving at the punch bowl at the Christmas party at the Brackin home. Kay has an interest in the beautification and preservation of homes

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ECHS was contacted by the University of Kansas to participate in a project on Southern regional foods. ECHS was chosen to represent a specific geographic area of the south.

Via a survey, the Society is asked to create a hypothetical meal for our-of-state guests, a meal that is typical and representative of our part of the state. The menu should be for the major meal of the day and include beverage and dessert.

Peggy Bracken has graciously agreed to complete this form for ECHS. We'll report on the outcome in a later issue. Thanks Peggy.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Alabama's Indians Today" will be the theme of the final program in the symposium Alabama Frontier Cultural Series presented by Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery, the Alabama Humanities Foundation, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.

Speakers will include Dr. Kathryn Braund, Historian, Teresa Pagilone, Archaeologist, Eloise Josey, Director of Alabama

Indian Affairs Commission, Post Office at Range. Alabama, c. 1918

Jackie Matte, Historian, David Hobbs, Historian & Re-enactor, and a representative from the Alabama Poarch Indians. Moderators are Dr. Craig Sheldon and Dr. John Hall.

Kyle Braund & Tamara Beane will exhibit interpretive & traditional Indian art.

The program will be held at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Auditorium on Saturday, January 27, 2007. Please pre-register by January 25. Cost is \$37 which includes light breakfast, lunch and refreshments. For more information, call 334-240-4500 or 1-888-240-1850.



# The ECHS Journal Section

(Continued from page 5)

## *The T. L. Brown with a Baptism being performed by the side of the ship in the Tennessee River*

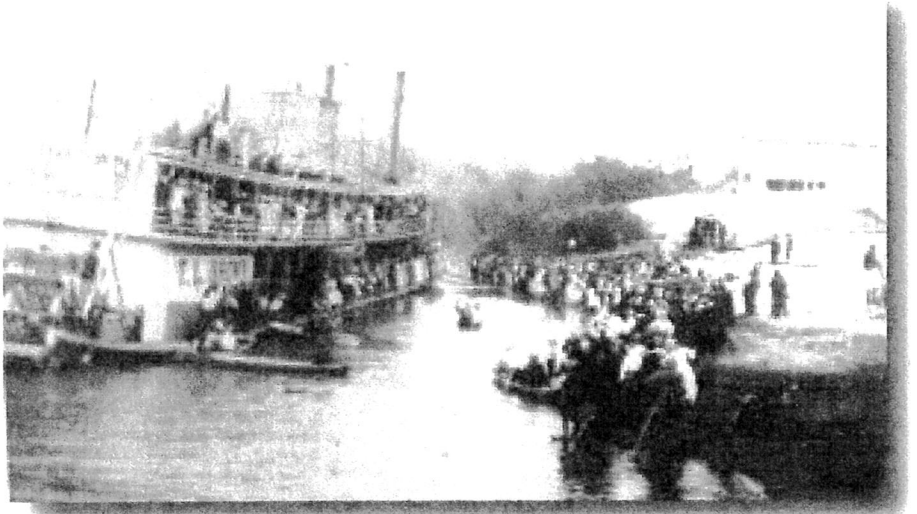
ton and firewood and supplied their own food and drink. The top deck, the hurricane deck, contained a row of cabins called the Texas where the boat's officers slept. The pilot house was also on this third deck ("Steamboat Travel," p. 4).

The saloon, which was usually well-lighted and furnished with a wood burning stove, had tables and an assortment of chairs, including rocking chairs. A curtained partition at the back of the saloon was an area where women passengers could retire to visit with other women or, in general, have privacy. Meals were served in the saloon and since there were several "seatings," quite often the saloon served as a dining room all day ("Steamboat Travel," p. 4).

The quality of the meals and the level of the service varied. Some of the steamers offered luxuriously furnished saloons with silver and fine china at meals. However, most of the boats seemed to have offered two pronged knives with buckhorn handles rather than fine silver, and thick crockery, often cracked with broken handles (and according to some reports, dirty) rather than fine china ("Steamboat Travel," p. 4).

The main dishes for the meals were placed on sideboards from which stewards "served plates, piling them high with food and then covering everything with sauces and gravy" ("Steamboat Travel," p. 4). One observer, who traveled on the steamship Medora, commented that although the passengers did not have any control over what and how much they were served, they seemed content with what was set before them and made no complaints.

This observer noted that he was pleased over all with the food and service aboard the Medora ("Steamboat Travel," p. 5). Other travelers on other boats recorded



that they found the food scanty and far from tempting and the service poor with dirty dishes and scanty, dirty table cloths ("Steamboat Travel," p. 6).

Although steamboat travel was preferable to traveling by stagecoach because the roads were so bad, the traveler was taking a very circuitous route. The

famous Scottish scientist, Sir Charles Lyell, who was traveling in Alabama in 1845, found, when he wanted to go from Montgomery to Tuscaloosa, that although he would be more comfortable on a steamboat than a stagecoach, the ninety mile trip would take two and a half days. He took a south bound steamer from Montgomery to Mobile where he caught another steamer traveling north to Demopolis. He then went northwest on the Black Warrior River to Tuscaloosa ("Steamboat Travel," p. 3).

Passengers entertained themselves by watching the scenic views, playing cards (gambling), and reading. One writer observed that a favorite pastime for both men and boys was smoking and chewing tobacco. Travel writer James Silk Buckingham, who traveled by steamboat in Alabama in 1839, observed that "almost all the men, young and old," and "some lads of fifteen or sixteen" were chewing and smoking tobacco at the same time. Buckingham comments that he was glad to see spittoons

lined up on each side of the saloon as his fellow passengers enjoying their tobacco ("Steamboat Travel," p. 6).

Robert Mellow's article suggests that the passengers could have been entertained also by watching the bales of cotton being loaded onto the boats when the steamers stopped at landings. The warehouses where the cotton bales were stored were located on high bluffs above the actual landing. Covered chutes made of planks ran down the bluff to the landing. Workers at the top, called "rollodores," would put the cotton bales into the chute where they would slide down gaining speed as they reached the bottom.

At the bottom of the chute, the bales hit a gangplank set at right angles to the chute and then bounced onto the ship and, hopefully, had a safe landing at a barrier of stacked cotton bales. Stevedores would then fork the bales into place and secure them on the decks. Of course, bales didn't always stop at the barricade. Some bounced onto the decks breaking stanchions and railings and endangering the stevedores or any passengers who might be in the way ("Steamboat Travel," pp. 6-7).

Steamboats were frequently overloaded with cotton bales. An Irish visitor aboard the Alabama steamer, the Carolina,

(Continued on page 7)

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

(Continued from page 6)

in writing of his experience on the river, recounted that the ship had nearly a hundred people aboard. He recounted that each day as the ship added cotton bales from various landings the space for the passengers on the ship grew more and more limited as the bottom deck and then the side galleries outside the saloon and passenger cabins were filled up with cotton.

The windows to the saloon and cabins were blocked by the cotton bales so that the passengers had to burn lights. The lights created a dangerous condition, since one spark could have set the flammable cotton bales and wooden ship on fire ("Steamboat Travel," p. 8).

Steamboat travel faced several dangers. Fire and boiler explosions were the greatest threat. A tragic fire on board the steamer Online St. John caused the death of seventy of the one hundred twenty people on board. The boat caught fire when it was four miles from Bridgeport, Alabama. The cabin was completely engulfed with flames three minutes after the fire started and every woman and child on board died ("Steamboat Travel," p. 9).

Another constant danger for steamboat travel was the possibility of a boiler explosion. In 1836, the packet Ben Franklin exploded just after it left the docks in Mobile. The force of the explosion shook the city. An eye witness reported that the ship was a shattered wreck after the explosion with mutilated corpses and wounded passengers lying on the deck ("steamboat Travel," p. 8)

This was the first in a series of explosions on boats in Mobile Bay. As a result, by the 1850's, an Alabama Law required yearly inspections of any boats that would be navigating the waterways leading into Mobile Bay to certify that the machinery was in working condition. There were even stiff prison sentences for engineers and officers if a boiler explosion which resulted in injury or death seemed to

be the result of negligence. However, the danger of the boilers exploding remained a threat throughout the nineteenth century ("Steamboat Travel," p. 8-9).

In addition to the danger of boiler explosions and fire (the two greatest threats), there was the problem of getting stuck on a sand bar or having a boat damaged by snags, submerged tree branches and debris. One passenger recorded the incident of a huge tree branch which came through a side door of the boat's saloon and nearly "impaled" a passenger ("Steamboat Travel," p. 7).

Considering the difficulties and dangers faced by the steamboats, it is understandable that during the 1830's and 1840's, steamboats were lucky to last five years (from the web site U. S. Snagboat Montgomery).

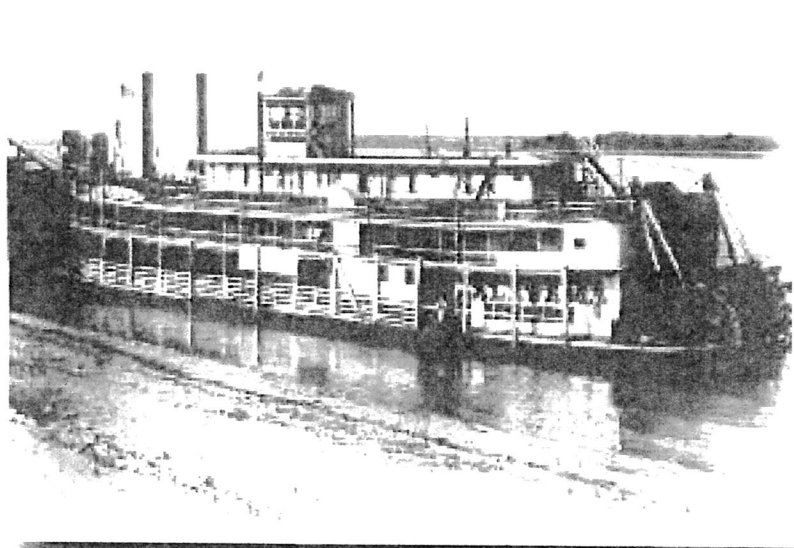
The heyday of the steamboat was the 1850's. Although steamboats would continue to operate in the second part of the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth, the "golden age" of the steamboat and the river towns would never be the same.

The Civil War was one factor in bringing an end to the first great period of the

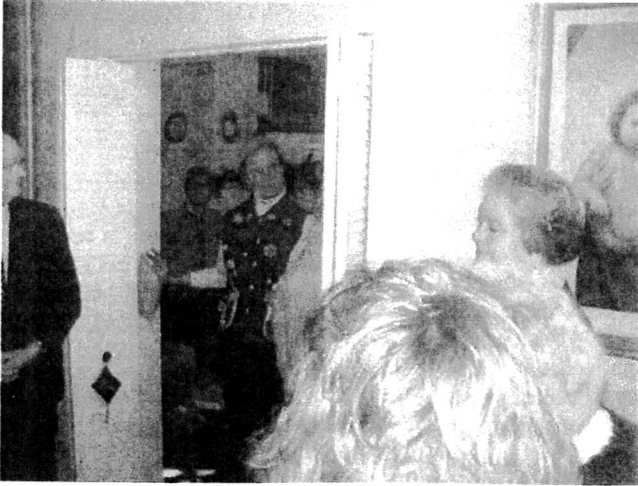
steamboat. However, the biggest factor in the decline of the steamboat era was the development of the railroads. The first period of railroad development brought a surge of traffic in commercial goods to the river towns and an increase in business for the steamboats. However, with the further construction of rail lines, the railroads proved to be a cheaper method of shipment.

Smaller and faster stern-wheel steamboats were used for hauling cargo on the rivers into the early part of the twentieth century, but these were gradually replaced by tug boats which could push several barges of cargo at one time ("Steamboat Travel," p. 11).

*The Sternwheeler "ALABAMA", built in 1912 at Point Pleasant, West Virginia. The Alabama when first built had no Texas deck, but one was added later. She ran from Paducah, Shiloh, Decatur, Gunter'sville, and Chattanooga until 1929. She was the last regular packet boat operating on the Tennessee River.*



## *Snapshots from the Christmas Party*



*President Ann Biggs Williams Looking in*



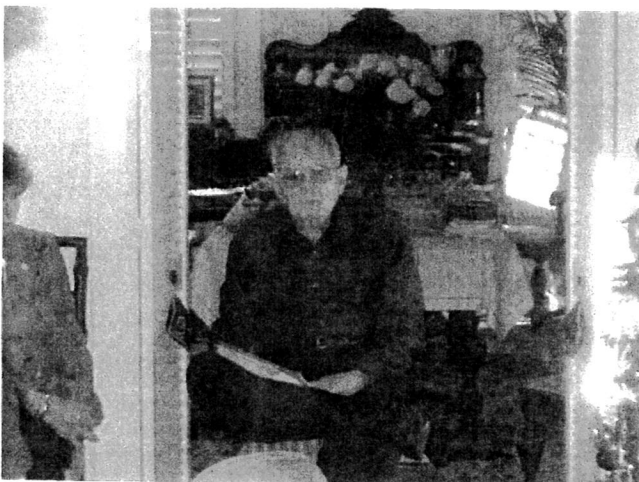
*Marjorie Haigler in Her Christmas Sweater*



*Annie Smith and Darryl Searcy*



*Hostess for the Christmas Party, Donna Brackin*



*Frank Luttrell Shares Memories of Grandparents'*



*Dining Room Table and Some of the Delicious Food*

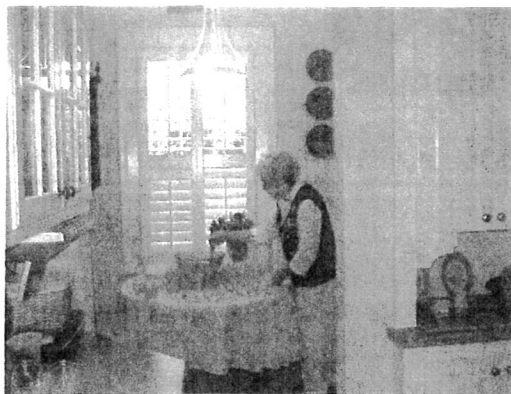
# ECHOES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR  
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Escambia County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 276  
Brewton, AL 36427

Phone: 251-867-7332

E-mail: [escohis@escohis.org](mailto:escohis@escohis.org)



*Peggy Bracken Chaired All Arrangements for the Party*

**We're on the web!**

**[www.escohis.org](http://www.escohis.org)**

## Books for Sale Price

	Mailed	Regular
<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
<u>Wildflowers of The Escambia CD</u>	\$17.50	\$15.00
<u>A Picture Story of Century DVD</u>	\$17.50	\$15.00
<u>Old 100 in Indiana DVD</u>	\$17.50	\$15.00

**Clip the following form and send to Treasurer,  
ECHS, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427.**

Notice that pages 5 through 7 are "Journal" pages. On these pages are longer and often more in-depth stories of interest usually found in the Society's *Journal*. You may expect 2 or more journal pages in each newsletter.

Due to rising costs and to keep membership rates the same, the membership voted to include journal-type pages in the newsletter instead of making a separate publication. We hope you enjoy this new format.

If you have a suggestion for a topic, or will help in research, please let us know!

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Middle

Last

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City

State

Zip

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

Dues (\$15.00/person) \_\_\_\_\_ (or \$100.00/person Lifetime)

Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Your interests \_\_\_\_\_

You will help with \_\_\_\_\_

❖ Dues are to be paid at the beginning of the year. Give a membership as a gift this Christmas!

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

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

*Mailing address:*

**ECHOES**

**Escambia County Historical Society  
PO Box 276  
Brewton, AL 36427.**