

*Alabama's Historic  
Covered Bridges—page 8*

Volume 34, Number 6

June 2007

## The June Meeting

Tuesday, June 26, 2007

Thomas E. McMillan Museum

3:15 p. m

### Program for the June 26 Meeting

**"Science into History: The  
Photographs of Eugene Allen  
Smith, State Geologist."**

*Included in the presentation are*

**Pictures of rural Alabama  
from 1885--1910 including rare  
photos of mineral springs and  
their hotels, ferries and river  
landings, farms and early in-  
dustrial sites.**

**The pictures will be on exhibit  
at the museum through late  
July.**



*Guest  
Speaker  
Frances  
Robb*

Frances Robb is an art historian and museum consultant with a special interest in social history and the history of photography.

A native of Birmingham, she was educated at Birmingham-Southern College and the University of Wisconsin.

She holds Master of Arts

degrees from the University of North Carolina and Yale University.

Robb served as education curator at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and taught art history and humanities at Texas Christian University, The University of North Texas and The University of the South, Sewanee.

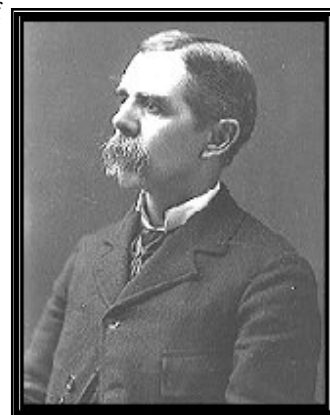
She has curated and judged many art and history exhibitions.

She is completing a book on the history of photography in Alabama and has another in the works on dating and identifying family photographs.

*Robb's presentation is part of the 2007-2008 Alabama Humanities Foundation Road Scholars' Speaker program.*

*The Alabama Humanities Foundation (AHF) is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

*The AHF brings scholars and the public together to explore human values and meaning through the study of history, literature, religion, philosophy and other humanities disciplines. !*



*State Geologist  
Eugene Allen Smith*

*The following article is from the  
Alabama Hall of Fame website.*

"As State Geologist for fifty-four years he explored and surveyed the geological assets of Alabama. His reports serve as the basis for development of the mineral resources of the state.

"A State Geologist for more than half a century, Eugene Allen Smith cleared the way for the development and utilization of the state's natural resources; discovering, mapping and publicizing the rich

*(Continued on page 2)*

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### The July 24 Program

**The Shipwreck in Pensacola Bay of a 16<sup>th</sup>  
Century Spanish Galleon at  
Emmanuel Point**

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Della Scott-Ireton,  
Director of the Northwest Region of the Florida  
Public Archaeology Network**

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## June Program Continued

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(Continued from page 1)

mineral deposits in Alabama - deposits tempting in their abundance, unique in their combination.

"Not content with providing the first comprehensive geological survey of the state, nor with providing a survey of such accuracy that his charts would be regarded as law a century later, Dr. Smith took it upon himself to spread the word of those rich mineral treasures waiting to be grasped.

"Throughout the fifty years he served as State Geologist he wrote official reports to fill volumes. Only a little less extensive, however, were the reports he wrote to the press, bringing to the view of public and capitalists each new discovery of a seam of coal, iron ore or other valuable mineral.

"In other respects Alabama is indebted to Dr. Smith. The Alabama Museum of Natural History as it stands today was given its nucleus from the hands of the doctor. Federal troops burned and sacked the University of Alabama during the Civil War.

"The original museum was destroyed and the carefully labeled specimens were burned or scattered. From his surveys of the length and breadth of the state, Dr. Smith brought back hundreds of thousands of mineral and other specimens.

"His characteristic thoroughness placed the museum collection among the finest in the nation. And, it was Dr. Smith who first realized the historic value of Moundville and its relics and focused public interest on the ancient Indian burial grounds which now attract thousands of visitors annually."



*Geological Map of Alabama prepared by Dr. Smith for Barney's Handbook of Alabama, published in 1878.*

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## *All About the* **ALABAMA HUMANITIES FOUNDATION** STATE AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES



The Alabama Humanities Foundation (AHF) strives to create and foster opportunities, through grants and AHF-conducted programs, for scholars and the public to interact and explore human values and meanings through the humanities. The AHF offers the people of Alabama opportunities to explore the humanities through programs such as seminars, workshops, lectures, exhibitions, documentary videos, and films.

Founded in 1974 as a vehicle for awarding grants to grassroots organizations in Alabama, the AHF now also conducts its own programming benefiting teachers, schoolchildren, families, and the general public.

### **AHF Programs:**

- ! **Road Scholars Speakers Bureau** available to the general public and teacher in-services
- ! **SUPER** (School & University Partners for Educational Renewal)
- ! **Teacher Seminars & Workshops** offered in summer on a competitive basis to 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers statewide
- ! **Family & Community Literacy Programs** including *Motheread* and *My United States*, available to librarians, literacy providers, and all interested in improving literacy in Alabama

! **Jenice Riley Memorial Scholarship** for elementary teachers committed to teaching civic responsibility and citizenship

### **AHF Partnerships:**

- ! **Museums on Main Street** in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution
- ! **Theatre In the Mind** in partnership with the Alabama Shakespeare Festival
- ! **Encyclopedia of Alabama** in partnership with Auburn University

Please visit our website – [www.ahf.net](http://www.ahf.net) – to familiarize yourself with our programs and note the positive changes taking place throughout our state on a daily basis.

**And please be sure to complete the Audience Evaluation Form. Indicate if you would like to receive further information about the AHF, our work and how you can provide financial support to ensure the continuation of this valuable, free cultural and educational resource.**

*The AHF receives its funding from the NEH, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, corporate and private foundations, and individuals like you! Please do what you can to help!*

## Events in Alabama History for July

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### July 5, 1819:

Alabama's first constitutional convention is convened in Huntsville. Less than a month later the forty-four delegates, representing twenty-two counties, adopted what would become known as the Constitution of 1819, the first of six Alabama constitutions.

### July 10, 1862:

Forty men from the hill country of northwest Alabama sneak into Decatur to join the Union army, prompting Gen. Abel Streight to mount an expedition to the south to recruit more volunteers. With the help of an impassioned speech from fervent Unionist Christopher Sheats of Winston County, a center of anti-secessionist sentiment, Streight added another 150 Alabamians to his force.

### July 1, 1915:

Statewide prohibition goes into effect in Alabama, five years before nationwide prohibition. The sale and regulation of alcohol has often been a bitter issue in Alabama politics, and the 1915 ban was first vetoed by Gov. Charles Henderson, but the legislature overrode his veto. Despite prohibition, 386 illegal stills were seized in Alabama in 1915.

### July 19, 1941:

The first black pilots in the American military begin their primary flight training at Tuskegee Institute's Moton Field. This first class of "Tuskegee Airmen" graduated the next March after transferring to Tuskegee Army Air Field to complete their training. The group saw its first action in World War II in 1943 as members of the segregated 99th Fighter Squadron of the Army Air Corps.

### July 26, 1952:

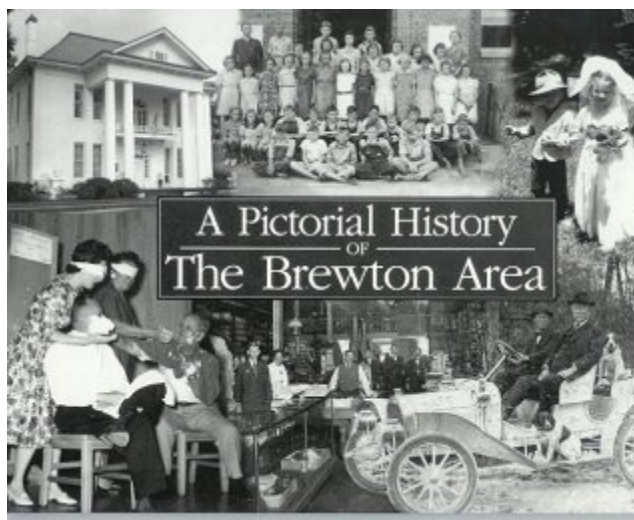
Alabama Senator John Sparkman is named the Democratic vice-presidential running mate with Adlai Stevenson. Sparkman was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Alabama in 1936 and served in that body until 1946 when he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he served until 1979. The Democratic ticket lost the election to Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon.

### July 27, 1813:

The first engagement of the Creek Indian War of 1813-1814 takes place at Burnt Corn Creek in present-day Escambia County, Alabama. Creek leaders Peter McQueen and High Head Jim were returning from Pensacola, where they had secured supplies and arms from the Spanish and British, when they were attacked by American forces. !

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## Don't Forget - the Society has Books for Sale



The Escambia County Historical Society still has a few more copies of the book, A Pictorial History of The Brewton Area. This book is nearing the "sold out" stage; there may be more printings in the future, but you'll want to be sure to get your original **First Edition** right away! They are available by mail and in the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the Jefferson Davis Community College campus.

Price is \$35.00 including tax. You may call the Society at 251-867-7332 or the museum at 251-809-1528 (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-3) for more information. Leave a message if there's no answer.

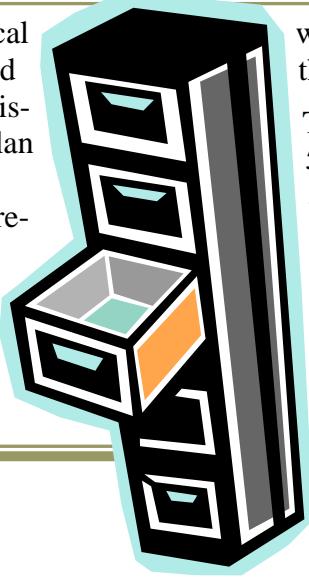
Ordering by mail is easy—just send your check to **Books, Escambia County Historical Society, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427**. Add \$5.00 to cover shipping and handling costs.



## Historical Records Advisory Board Survey Online

The Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board (HRB) is asking for assistance in developing a plan that outlines Alabama's priorities for historical records preservation.

To this end, they are asking individuals and records repositories to complete a survey that



will help them identify these priorities.

The survey takes under 5 minutes and you get a preview of the results so far at the end. The survey will be able until July 31, 2007. The number of participants in the survey thus far is low

as of this posting.

Please help the HRB identify statewide historical records preservation needs.

Following is the link to the survey on the Alabama Department of Archives and History—  
<http://www.archives.alabama.gov/hrb/hrbplansurvey.htm>



At left is a photograph taken in 1918 at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

There are 25,000 men in the picture making up the shape of the Liberty Bell. If you use a magnifying glass you may be able to discern the expressions on some of the men's faces.

The picture was donated to the museum by Robert Winther of Brewton.

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# ESCAMBIA COUNTY'S ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

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By Ann Biggs-Williams

Every year in May, Escambia County has a Memorial Day Service at 9 a.m. on the front courthouse lawn in Brewton. The service pays tribute to service personnel from the county who were killed during wartime. Names of those from past wars are also engraved on a monument in front of the courthouse. As the names of local soldiers from the various wars are read aloud, family members go stand in memory of their loved ones' ultimate sacrifice.

As the names were read aloud this 2007 Memorial Day, it sadly struck me that there were no family members present for those killed in World War I. Of the eighty something names that were read for World War II, there were only three soldiers who had family members present. There were far more family members present for the Korean War, Vietnam, and the War on Terrorism. I believe that the lack of family participation stems either from a lack of awareness of the format of the ceremony to involve the families or that there is a lack of passing down the family stories about relatives who died in service to the United States in World War I and World War II.

To illustrate that point, the first name read aloud for World War II was **Henry Ardis**. I am not related to Mr. Ardis but he did live in my home-

town community, Lottie, Alabama which is located in Baldwin County, only a few miles from the Escambia County line.

I came home from the Memorial Day Ceremony this year and phoned Mr. Ardis' daughter who lives in Florida and said, "Do you know your Daddy's name is engraved on a monument at the Escambia County Courthouse and that they called his name aloud and there was no one to stand for him?" Of course, she didn't even know about the ceremony, but I believe she and her children and grandchildren will make a concerted effort to attend in 2008.



*Escambia County Memorial Day program attendees included L-R, Ethelene Harold, Annie Ruth Nolin and Charles Evans. (Photo courtesy Tri-City Ledger.)*

For the three people who did stand to represent their loved ones who served in World War II, here are their stories:

(1) When the name **Marvin C. Baggett** was called, Ethelene Harold of Brewton was the first person in the audience to go stand at the 2007 observance. Her brother, Marvin, who was born April 15, 1917, enlisted in the Army July 17, 1942. He graduated from Officer's Candidate School January 25, 1943. Marvin's parents were Edmond and Lula Baggett of Wallace. Marvin's first overseas assignment was to New Guinea. He later went to Luzon. He was in the Quartermaster Corps.

Ist Lt. Marvin Baggett was listed as missing in

action but later confirmed that he was killed in action on January 19, 1945 at the age of 27. Marvin and nine others were flying supplies to troops on Luzon. The plane was shot down and all ten perished.



*Marvin C. Baggett*

He was first buried at the U.S. Armed Forces Cemetery in Santa Barbara (the family was notified of this October 1, 1946). This cemetery

*(Continued on page 7)*



## May Meeting Minutes

President **Ann Biggs-Williams** opened the meeting with a word of thanks to those who had organized and worked on the field trip to Herrington Springs/Keego.

Special thanks and recognition were given to **Peggy Bracken** who suggested the field trip and spearheaded the plans for the outing.

Ann also pointed out that, thanks to the work of Publicity Chairman **Lydia Grimes**, pictures of members and guests with an article about the meeting appeared in the *Brewton Standard*.

**Willellen Elliot** was called upon to give a brief report on the belt buckle found in the yard of her home in East Brewton. With the help of **Tom McMillan**, the buckle has been identified as being a uniform buckle possibly from the Spanish-American War period.

Ann pointed out that unfortunately, the picture in the *Brewton Standard* of those attending the dedication of the historic marker at Union Cemetery failed to identify members of the *Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance* and *Alabama Historical Commission*.

**Ted Urquhart**, President of the *Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance*, attended the meeting. Ted an-

nounced that the Alabama Historical Commission will be glad to take applications/nominations for cemeteries to receive historic markers but pointed out that markers have to be paid for by those who apply for the recognition. The Alabama Historical Commission does not pay for the markers.

**Bert Blackmon**, civil war enthusiast, presented a program in the persona of one of his ancestors from Virginia/West Virginia who fought in the war and then came home to build a life even though he was crippled from wounds he received in the war.

Dressed in the uniform of a Confederate Officer, Bert became the family man and farmer, whose life after the war represented the life of most of the men who fought.

Bert also distributed materials on tracking ancestors from the confederacy, joining the **DCSA (Descendants of the Confederate States of America)** and the **MOSB (Military Order of the Stars and Bars)**, as well as information on obtaining civil war markers from the **VA (Veterans Administration)**.

Hostesses for refreshments were Kathryn Wilkinson and Sammie McGlothorn. Jacqueline Stone served the refreshments. !

## ECHS Member News

**Tom McMillan** serves on the Board of Regents for The University of Alabama Museums. **Robert Clouse** and **Kelli Harris** of the University of Alabama Museums in Tuscaloosa were Tom's guests in Brewton and East Brewton to discuss Ft. Crawford on June 6.

While in Brewton, Mr. Clouse and Ms. Harris toured the Thomas E. McMillan Museum and were very impressed with the exhibits. Thanks to **Ranella Merritt** for assisting the visitors.

Many of our members even plan their vacations around historic events! **Paul and Ranella Merritt** are visiting Virginia for the 400th anniversary of Jamestown. **Kathryn Wilkinson** is on a trip that retraces the Oregon Trail.

**Margaret Collier** recently gave a monetary donation to be used toward refreshments for the monthly meeting of the Society.

**Mr. & Mrs. Marshall N. Horsman** from California were visiting the Alabama Room doing genealogical research and gave a very generous donation to the Society.

**John Hoomes** recently returned to Alabama from Texas. John is now employed with the Alabama Wildlife Federation. !



**Tom McMillan**, right, and Museum Coordinator **Jerry Simmons** finish a swapping deal recently. A large unused blueprint cabinet was given to Tom, and in exchange he generously donated a much-needed copier to the museum. Since most of the copies are done for users of the Alabama Room, the 15¢ charge per copy will still apply and be used toward the cost of toner replacement.

# MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM *(continued)*

*(Continued from page 5)*

was located approximately 135 miles north of Manila, Philippine Islands. Since it was impossible to identify individually the remains, the remains of all ten were brought back to the U.S. and buried in graves 180, 181, and 182, Section 84, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri on July 6, 1951. Ethelene was able to attend the service there.

(2) When **Rufus Evans Jr.**'s name was read at the Memorial Day Service, his brother Charles Evans went to stand in memory of his brother Rufus. Everyone called Rufus "Jiggs" since their parents Rufus Sr. & Annie



*Rufus Evans, Jr.  
("Jiggs")*

Was born November 22, 1924.

PFC Rufus Evans Jr. served in the U.S. Army under General Patton in the North African Campaign and then went to Italy and served under General A. M. Patch. Jiggs was wounded in Italy and awarded

the Purple Heart.

Evans was in the hospital on D Day but he went on to France after-

***"Of the eighty something names that were read for World War II, there were only three soldiers who had family members present"***

ward and was killed in France on September 14, 1944. He was buried in one of the mass graves but his body was exhumed and brought back home in 1948.

According to his brother Charles, Rufus Evans Jr. is the only World War II veteran buried in May Creek United Methodist Cemetery, located in Escambia County.

His brother Charles recalls that he and another brother were home when the telegram was delivered about Jiggs' death, but since Brewton was a place where news traveled fast, their parents had already heard the news about Rufus Jr.'s death before they got home that day.

(2) **Sim Ellis Ogletree** was the only other World War II veteran with a family member present this Memorial Day. His widow, Annie Ruth O. Nolin of Brewton went to

stand when Sim's name was called as she has for several years.

Sim was drafted in February 1941. He served as Technician 5<sup>th</sup> Class in the U.S. Army, 167<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. He was in the South Pacific and was in the Medical Detachment. He had been there 17 months when he was killed June 19, 1945 by a sniper on Mindanao Island June 19, 1945.

He is buried in The National Cemetery in Manila, The Philippines. Sim, the son of Sloan S. And Lena Estell Ogletree grew up in the Gum Tree area of North Brewton. Annie Ruth, who was left with a young daughter, received the news of Sim's death by telegram. Sandra Hayes, daughter of Sim and Annie Ruth, was able to attend the World War II Memorial Dedication in Washington D.C.



*Sim Ellis Ogletree*

In this newsletter (page 8), we've listed the names of all the service personnel whose names were called aloud this Memorial Day. If you recognize any of those names, pass on to their families about the annual ceremony so that more

vets will be remembered Memorial Day, 2008.

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# ESCAMBIA COUNTY, ALABAMA RESIDENTS

## KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY

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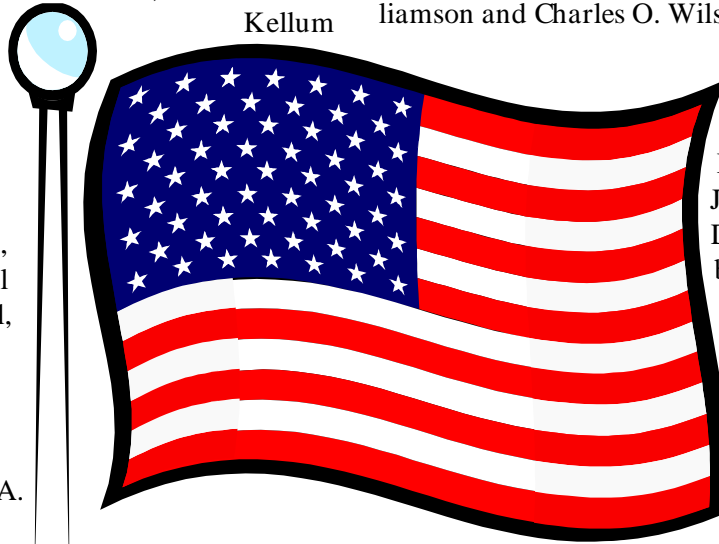
### World War I

John Adams, John Blackman, James Boggan, Everett H. Brown, Clifford Cunningham, Kevie Digmon, Clifford Dunson, Joe Edwards, Abraham Emmons, Claud Franklin, Adrien F. Hardy, Robert B. Hines, Willie Holladay, Quincy Jefferson, Hillery H. Jernigan, Albert Johnson Jr., Joe O. Johnson, Oliver Johnson, Sam Johnson, William J. Ledkins, James H. Mancil, Robert G. McArthur, Claud M. McCall, William McEntire, Charlie G. Miller, Dewey Morris, Carey J. Parker, Lewis Richardson, Billy G. Rushing, Thomas V. Salter, James F. Smith, Albert E. Stanton, Walter Steele, M. Walker and Ned A. White.

### World War II

Henry Ardis, Roosevelt Ashford, Robert E. Atkins, Marvin C. Baggett, Samuel M. Bagwell, Edwin M. Bell, Marion F. Bell, Charlie Q. Booth, Arthur C. Bowden, Charlie D. Brown, John I. Brown, Nathan P. Brown Jr., Joseph D. Camp, Ted A. Carter, Oliver G. Cassady, Howard D. Chavers, Homer L. Childress, John H. Clark, Rozell L. Cobb, Charles L. Cooper, William H. Crawford Jr., Harold Daw, Rufus Evans Jr., Tom A. Farrish, Hillary D. Findley, Harvie Foster, Bruce Fuqua, Archie Glass, Luther F. Golden, Charlie A. Grantham, Louis Green Jr., Travis L. Hagood Jr., Daniel F. Hall, Eubie A. Hall, Lawrence C. Hall, B.F. Herrington Jr., Clarence P. Holman Jr., James L. Holmes, Ira M. Holt, Jess W. Huggins, Charles L. Hutto, Elbert Jenks, Robert M. Jernigan, Gaston C. King, Leon Kizer, Huedeen Wilson Lester, George B. Lundy, Solomon E. Marshall, Clyde Mathis, Marvin E. McCawley, Ernest M. McDonald, Almas McKinley, Harry Merriwether, Emmett L. Mixon Jr., Wesley J. Monk, Robert L. Montgomery, Eugene Nall, J.C. Odom, Sim E. Ogletree, Comer Z.

Owens, William V. Phillips, Alfred Pickens, James B. Rodgers, Robert Rowell, Earl T. Simmons, Albert C. Sims, Mason M. Singleton, Linwood E. Stanton, James W. Still, Henry L. Stokes, Malcolm M. Stone, William L. Strength, Fellis Taylor, Calvin C. Thomas, Chester Thomas, Austin C. Thompson, Alton J. Travis, Kenneth L. Turner, Theodore Walton, Arnold A. Waters, Hollis W. Wearren, Virgil K. Weaver, Woodrow W. Weaver, Dewey White, Maurice C. White, Thomas J. White, William S. White, Iva C. Wiggins, Alfred Williamson and Charles O. Wilson.



### Korean War

Ples F. Booth, Vivian D. Bryant, James E. Carter, Joseph D. Chancery, Willie D. Daw, Fred Fuqua, Aubrey Godwin, Paul R. Goodson, Robert H. Hart, Ruel L. Howell, Olan H. Kirkland, Edward W. Rigdon, Barney Tolbert, Leonard Watson and Carlos D. Weaver.

### Vietnam War

Jessie L. Barlow, Yearl Barlow, Benjamin F. Barrow, Richard Benjamin, Loye E. Bradley, Jack E. Clemmons, William R. Ellis, Allen Gandy, Charles D. Gipson, James R. Gohagin, Larry E. Gonzalez, Joseph E. Hammac, David M. Haveard, Habert E. Johnson, James M. Kelly, James C. Kendrick, Wallace S. Little, Dalton B. Lowery, James F. Madden, Allen T. Merritt, Johnson Milligan, Kenneth P. Newton, Edward Nise-wonger, Obie C. Simmons, Donald W. Smith, J.C. Sum-merlin, Elmer J. Taylor, Jimmy R. Thomas, Larry B. Thomas and John W. Winter.

### War on terrorism

Tamara Thurman, Phillip L. Travis and Christopher D. Winchester. !



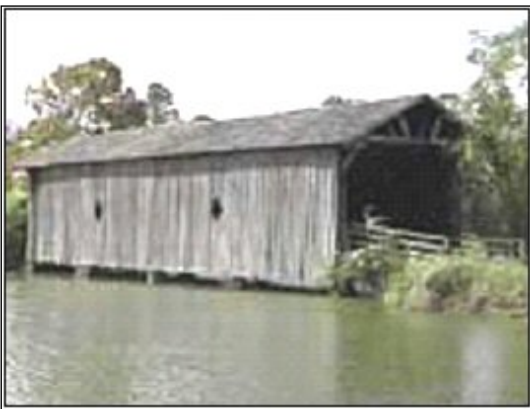
# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Historic Covered Bridges of Alabama by *Ranella Merritt*

Alabama Public Television's documentary on Alabama's Covered Bridges, "*Bridges to the Past*," <http://www.alabamatv.org/bridges/photos.htm>, describes their significance to the state's history and development:

"Wooden covered bridges played an important role in the development of Alabama by providing safe passage over creeks and rivers at locations where crossing in a horse-drawn wagon or buggy would otherwise be extremely difficult or impossible.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hundreds of covered bridges were constructed in the state, but now only a few remain. Those persistent engineering marvels that still stand have become popular tourist attractions, giving visitors insight into the needs and hardships of our ancestors."



*Alamuchee-Bellamy Bridge (1861)*

Considered one of Alabama's oldest remaining covered bridges, the structure was built in 1850 by a former slave (from *Covered Bridge Trail*). Located in Oxford City Park just off Highway I22 in Oxford, it has been restored and moved from its original location on Coldwater Creek.

Constructed of pine, as are most of the covered bridges in Alabama, the remains of a dam and mill show the original location over Coldwater Creek (from *Bridges to the Past*).



*Clarkson-Legg Bridge (1904-1908)*

The Clarkson-Legg Bridge extends 250 feet across a gorge formed by Crooked Creek in Cullman County. A local mail carrier, James Wordlaw Legg gave the timber, nails, and sand, which were used to build the bridge. As the mail carrier he knew the need for improved transportation in his area (from the website *Covered Bridge Trail*)

A truss bridge, it is constructed with lattice-style planks. Built around 1904/1908, it was restored in 1975. The bridge is near the site of the Battle of Hog Mountain (from the website *Covered Bridge Trails*).

*Coldwater Bridge (1850)*



One of Alabama's tourism websites, *Covered Bridge Trails* <<http://www.800alabama.com/things-to-do/tours-trails/covered-bridge/>>, states that the Alamuchee-Bellamy Bridge was built over the Sucarnoochee River in 1861 and later moved to Alamuchee Creek. Constructed of hand-hewn timbers joined with wooden pegs, it is west Alabama's only remaining covered bridge. It was restored and moved to its current location on the campus of the

(Continued on page 10)

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Historic Covered Bridges of Alabama (*continued*)

(Continued from page 9)

University of West Alabama in Livingston in 1969.

According to the University of Alabama Center for Public Television & Radio's website The Alabama Experience <<http://www.alabamatv.org/bridges/photos.htm>>, the bridge was used by Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest to move his troops into Mississippi during the Civil War.

In its previous location at Alamuchee Creek, the bridge was where horse thief Steve Renfro was executed by hanging. Ironically, Renfro was serving as the county Sheriff when he was apprehended.



*The Old Easley Bridge (1927/1930)*

The Easley Bridge, located 1.5 miles from U. S. 231 in Blount county is described in the website **Covered Bridge Trail** as a "one-span town bridge, . . . Tin covered and in fairly good repair, all 95 feet of its single span are preserved for enthusiastic backwoods travelers or for those searching for treasure of a nostalgic era."

The web page **Bridges to the Past** notes that this is the oldest of the three remaining covered bridges in Blount County and that all are still in use. All of the bridges in the county were built by one family, the Tidwell family.

*Gilliland Bridge (1899)*

The web page **Covered Bridge Trail** com-



ments, "This 1899 bridge was made of rough-hewn lumber and covered with weathered shingles. It was hauled to the pioneer setting of Noccalula Falls Park in 1968 and carefully restored."

**Bridges to the Past** adds this comment to its description of the bridge, "A wedding took place at the bridge when a couple happened to meet the preacher there after going to Gadsden to get their marriage license."

Noted as one of the highest covered



*Horton Mill Bridge (1935)*

bridges over water in the U. S., it stands 70 feet "over a deep gorge created by the (Black) Warrior

River" (**Bridges to the Past**). It is one of three in Blount County, Alabama's Covered Bridge Capital.

**Bridges to the Past** gives the comment of Talmedge Horton, who helped construct the bridge and says it took "fifteen men working from sunup to sundown for a year and a half." Mr. Horton is part of the family who founded the gristmill for which the gristmill is named.

(Continued on page 11)

# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Historic Covered Bridges of Alabama (*continued*)

(Continued from page 10)



*Kymulga Bridge (1861)*

This 105 foot long bridge, located at Kymulga Grist Mill Park in Talladega County, crosses Talladega Creek in the Kymulga community near Childersburg.

Built just before the Civil War, both the bridge and the grist mill, which was built there during the war, have been restored. At the mill one can see corn ground with the original millstones imported from France. The turbines in the mill are powered by water (from *Bridges to the Past*).

*"Covered bridges symbolize small-town America. Something from the nineteenth century, a little archaic and strange to [20th century] eyes, picturesque and sentimental, 'kissing bridges' recall a time when life was simpler and closer to the land -- if only in our dreams,"*

*(from the website , A Guide to Old Covered Bridges of Southeastern Pennsylvania and Nearby Areas)*

*Nectar Bridge  
Pillars (bridge  
constructed 1932  
and burned in  
1993)*



*Bridges to  
the Past* com-  
ments, "Nectar  
Bridge (1932)  
was the sev-

enth longest covered bridge in the world. It burned in 1993 leaving the Nectar community of Blount County with a great sense of loss.

The bridge was a community meeting place and the site of large baptism ceremonies. It was also said to have been haunted by the ghost of a mail carrier who had died there."



*Okachoy Creek Bridge (1916)*

The bridge, constructed of hand-hewn oak pegs which joined all the latticework roof trusses, and sub-structure The bridge supports have been damaged by high water and erosion. Local citizens hope the bridge can be restored (*Bridges to the Past*).

The bridge (1900) connected the Lee county communities of Salem and Shotwell, separated by Wacooche

(Continued on page 12)



# The ECHS *Journal* Section

## Historic Covered Bridges of Alabama (*continued*)

(Continued from page 11)

Creek. Hand-hewn oak pegs join all the latticework, roof trusses, and substructure (*Bridges to the Past*).

*Swann-Joy Bridge (1933)*



According to *Covered Bridge Trail*, it is the longest surviving covered bridge in Alabama (324 feet in length). Located one mile west of Cleveland, AL on Hwy. 79 in Blount County, the bridge spans Locust Fork on the Warrior River in Blount County.

*Bridges to the Past* notes that it “is frequently visited by tourists and picnickers,” and that “it was built on the Swann farm to provide access to the Joy community,” thus the name. The bridge is said to be haunted.



*Waldo Bridge (1858)*

One of Alabama's oldest covered bridges, its 115 foot length rests on two stone piers. It spans Talladega Creek in the Waldo community south-east of Talladega on the site of old Socopatoy Indian Trail, (*Covered Bridge Trail*).

*Bridges to the Past* notes that the bridge was built at Riddle's Mill, a gristmill (now converted into a restaurant) operated by the Riddle brothers. *Bridges to the Past* points out two other pieces of history associated with the

bridge. It was used by Wilson's Raiders during the Civil War and is near Riddle's Hole, an 1840 gold mine that continued operating until World War II.



*Old Union Crossing Bridge (Moved from Lincoln in 1972 and Rebuilt in 1980)*

The *Covered Bridge Trail* notes

that this rebuilt bridge is 90 feet long and is located at the Shady Grove Dude Ranch near Mentone. It spans the West Fork of Little River. The bridge was moved from Lincoln in 1972 and rebuilt in 1980 over an existing cable bridge from the late 1800s.

Alabama's historic covered bridges have witnessed history and “have withstood the tests of time, high water, and heavy loads.

“Because of their importance to communities, these bridges were used as meeting places for baptisms, weddings, and at least one hanging.

“Some were strategic participants in the Civil War while others simply served the daily needs of farmers and merchants.

“Spanning locations ranging from peaceful brooks to ominous gorges, Alabama's covered bridges provide picturesque settings for reflecting on life in the past” (*Bridges to the Past*).

END

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# May Meeting Snapshots

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## 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

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We're on the web!

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

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### Books for Sale

	Price:	Mailed	Regular
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<u>Old 100 in Indiana DVD</u>		\$12.50	\$10.00
<u>Pictorial History of Brewton</u>		\$40.00	\$35.00

Clip the following form and send to ECHS  
Treasurer, P.O. Box 276, Brewton, AL 36427.  
Membership Renewal/ Application Form

**Notice that some pages are "Journal" pages.** On these pages are longer and often more in-depth stories of interest formerly found in the Society's **Journal**. You may expect at least 2 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!

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*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.*

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**ECHOES**

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